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Numerical research on disastrous OPEN mechanism of seepage instability of karst collapse column considering variable mass efect

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In order to reveal the disastrous mechanism of seepage instability of karst collapse column considering variable mass efect, a variable mass fuid–solid coupling mechanical model of water inrush is established, by considering the random distribution characteristics of a collapse column. Taking Qianjin coal mine as the research background, based on the Weibull distribution theory, the heterogeneous distribution characteristics of rock mass is described, and COMSOL Multiphysics numerical simulation software is employed to simulate the seepage characteristics and inrush water changes in collapse columns under diferent conditions of homogeneity, water pressure, and initial porosity. The research results show that the greater the homogeneity is, the more water conduction channels are formed, and the porosity increases accordingly, when considering the infuence of diferent homogeneity on the seepage characteristics of broken rock mass, which eventually leads to water inrush accidents and a sharp increase in water infow. Besides, when studying the seepage evolution law of diferent water pressures on a broken rock mass, an elevation of water pressure dramatically increases the porosity and seepage rate of the water. Over time, the broken rock particles gradually migrate and the fne particles are transported and eroded by the water fow, resulting in changes in the seepage characteristics and the formation of potential water diversion channels. Finally, when taking into account the efect of diferent initial porosity on the fractured rock mass seepage characteristics, the greater the original porosity is, the higher the seepage velocity is, and the particle migration increases the permeability. This leads to a more pronounced conductive water passage formation, which reveals the disastrous mechanism of seepage instability of karst collapse column considering variable mass efect.

Keywords Collapse column, Water inrush, Disastrous mechanism, Seepage instability, Variable mass efect

Karst collapse column is a naturally formed geological structures and is one of the disasters that seriously threaten the safety aspect of coal mine production. Ground karst landforms have ecological problems, such as scarce soil, scarce surface streams, and a rugged terrain^{[1](#page-11-0),[2](#page-11-1)}. Ground karst landforms include sinkholes, karst buckets, karst springs, etc. Atmospheric precipitation seepage into karst caves and underground rivers through karst structures, and a large amount of karst water is stored in rock layers, providing a sufficient water supply. Under mining-disturbance conditions, the collapse column easily connects to natural aquifers, forming a smooth water channel^{[3](#page-11-2)}. The filling material of the collapse column migrates and loosens with the water flow, affecting the normal mining conditions in coal mines and leading to water inrush disaster^{4,[5](#page-11-4)}.

Yin Shangxian et al.⁶ established a "thick-walled cylinder" mechanical model for water inrush in collapse columns and applied the shear damage theory method of structural analysis to derive the theoretical model of water inrush of collapse column. Pradipkumar et al.⁷ and Cherubini et al.^{[8](#page-11-7)} carried out steady-state permeability tests

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on fractured rock masses, which shows that seepage in fractured rock masses generally obey the Forchheimer equation rather than Darcy's law. Based on the water inrush mechanical model of collapse column, Tang et al.⁹ used the medium-thickness plate theory and the yield damage criterion to obtain the level of the crucial water pressure concerning hidden collapse column water inrush in a foor plate. In this study of fuid–solid coupling effect, Terzaghi¹⁰ studied the fluid–solid interaction and proposed the concept of "effective stress" for the first time, which was widely used in soil mechanics studies. Javadi et al.¹¹ established a geometric model based on CFD, and the fow law of the fuid in the fracture was described by using a polynomial similar to the Forchheimer equation. Wu Yongping et al.¹² studied the failure mechanism of the surrounding rock of collapse columns by considering the fuid–solid coupling efect. Yao et al.[13](#page-11-12) studied the water inrush process of collapse column under the action of flling particle loss by considering the in-homogeneity of the fractured rock mass of the collapse column, and obtained the water inrush mechanism of collapse column under the action of stress–seepage coupling. Zhang Hongmei et al.[14](#page-11-13) analyzed the damage characteristics of collapse columns under the action of stress–seepage coupling. Basak et al.¹⁵ and Tartakovsky et al.^{[16](#page-11-15)} discovered the existence of the high-speed non-Darcy flow when they observed the problem of flow movement in confined aquifers.

In terms of the numerical simulation of water inrush in collapse column, previous researchers have employed various numerical calculation sofware to calculate and simulate the evolution characteristics of the seepage feld and the entire process of water inrush of collapse column under different mining conditions. Zhang Kai et al.^{[17](#page-11-16)} utilized Comsol Multiphysics numerical simulation sofware to obtain the variations of porosity and permeability velocity in fractured rock mass of a collapse column in diferent time periods. Zhu et al.[18](#page-11-17) adopted Comsol Multiphysics programming to develop the intrinsic relationship of the rock breakage process under the fuid–solid coupling condition, and developed an ontological relationship for the rock damage process under the condition of fuid–solid coupling. Liu Zhijun et al.[19](#page-11-18) utilized the ANSYS fnite element sofware to study the water inrush of collapse column, and investigated the distribution of strain, hydraulic pressure, and stress in the foor of coal seam. Yin Shangxian et al.²⁰ applied FLAC3D numerical simulation software to analyze the mechanism of water inrush of collapse column. Shi Wenhao et al.²¹ applied FEPG finite element software to create the Fortran source program and calculated the non-Darcy fow model of the broken rock mass, which simulated the transient fow of water inrush. The numerical calculations were carried out to simulate the whole process of water transient flow in the fractured rock mass. Yang Tianhong et al.²² and Huo Bingjie et al.^{[23](#page-11-22)} used COMSOL Multiphysics numerical sofware to propose the principle of the three fow regime transitions of water inrush in collapse column.

For the prevention of water inrush disasters, Ma Tianxing²⁴ developed an normal cloud model for predicting the risk of water inrush in the floor plate of coal seam. Ma Lianjing²⁵ constructed a water damage prevention and control method of hydrophobic depressurization, using water discharge test and numerical modelling of groundwater flow. Wang Wenqiang et al.²⁶ proposed an mining method to control roof water inrush, which provided a reliable basis for preventing and controlling roof water inrush disasters. Hoang, UT et al.²⁷ adopted the super-quadratic discrete element method to systematically study the infuence of particle shape on particle collapse, and further enhanced understanding of the unique influence of particle shape. Wang et al.^{[28](#page-12-2),[29](#page-12-3)} conducted the application of liquid nitrogen cooling treatment of granite, and proposed that this method can efectively weaken the mechanical properties of the rock layers. Cao et al.³⁰ established a numerical simulation of grout difusion in single slab crack sand, and analyzed the difusion law of grouting slurry in cracks with diferent rheological and consistency indices. In the detection of collapse column, the three-dimensional seismic method is the most commonly used technique. Many scholars summarized the latest acquisition method technologies and observation system design methods, which provided a comprehensive and systematic introduction to the design and construction of three-dimensional seismic observation system on land[31](#page-12-5)[–33](#page-12-6).

For the research on water inrush of collapse column, seepage change is identifed as the root cause of water inrush disaster. Most prior researches are focused on the perspective of structural damage to study the changes in rock seepage characteristics, and the signifcant impact of water erosion on the permeability characteristics of broken rocks in collapse column is overlooked. Therefore, this paper adopts the perspective of the variable mass fuid–solid coupling efect to study the disastrous mechanism of seepage instability of karst collapse column, in order to unveil the mechanisms of water inrush of collapse column.

Establishment of mechanical model Basic hypothesis

To establish a mechanical model of water inrush in collapse column and the evolution of fuid particle loss, the following assumptions are proposed: the motion velocity of suspended particles is approximately equal to the fuid velocity; the infuence of particles in the fuid on the fuid permeability characteristics is neglected.

Particle mass conservation equation

The motion equation of particles is $34,35$ $34,35$ $34,35$

$$
\frac{\partial}{\partial t} \left[\varphi(1-c) + \nabla \cdot \left[\varphi(1-c) q_f \right] \right] = 0 \tag{1}
$$

In the above Eq. ([1](#page-1-0)), φ is the porosity; *c* is the volume concentration of suspended particles; q_f is the seepage velocity; $\vec{\nabla} = \frac{\partial}{\partial r}\vec{e}_r + \frac{1}{r}\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta}\vec{e}_{\theta} + \frac{\partial}{\partial z}\vec{e}_z$ is the Hamiltonian operator.

Seepage feld equation

The Brinkman equation is an infiltration equation between Darcy flow and Navier–Stokes flow^{36–[38](#page-12-10)}. In COMSOL Multiphysics, this Brinkman equation with Forchheimer correction is used to describe fuid fow:

2

$$
q_f\left(\frac{\eta}{k} + \beta_f|q_f| + \frac{Q_{br}}{\varphi}\right) = \nabla \left\{-pI + \frac{\eta}{\varphi} \left[\nabla q_f + \left(\nabla q_f\right)^T\right]\right\} + F\tag{2}
$$

$$
\rho_l \nabla \cdot (q_f) = Q_{br} \tag{3}
$$

In the above equations, *k* is the infiltration rate; *p* is the fluid pressure; ρ_l is the fluid density; Q_{br} is the source sink term; η is the dynamic viscosity; β_f is the no-Darcy divisor; *F* is the the volume force affecting the fluid; *I* is the unit matrix.

Porosity permeability relationship equation

The relationship between permeability and porosity of a fractured rock mass is described by the following equation:

$$
k = k_0 \left(\frac{\varphi}{\varphi_0}\right)^3 \left(\frac{1-\varphi_0}{1-\varphi}\right)^2 \tag{4}
$$

In the equation, k_0 is the initial permeability; φ_0 is the initial porosity.

Heterogeneous theory of rock parameter

The distribution of natural micro-defects in rock masses leads to significant discontinuities, heterogeneity, and anisotropy in physical and mechanical properties. A collapse column represents a form of heterogeneous geological material. In numerical simulations, heterogeneity in rock masses is typically modeled by assigning varied physical and mechanical parameter values to the microscopic structural units. Te distribution characteristics of heterogeneity in rock masses can be described by the WeiBull distribution. By utilizing Matlab to generate data series conforming to the WeiBull distribution, and then assigning these to the corresponding micro-elements of rock masses, the non-homogeneity within rock specimens can be characterized. Integrating the above equation yields a cumulative distribution function:

$$
f(x) = \frac{m}{n} \left(\frac{x}{n}\right)^{m-1} \exp\left[-\left(\frac{x}{n}\right)^m\right]
$$
 (5)

Given that *n* and *m* are constant, rational numbers can be derived using the inverse function,

$$
x = n(-\log(1 - F(n)))^{\frac{1}{m}}
$$
 (6)

WeiBull-distribution function expectation is:

$$
E(x) = n\Gamma\left(1 + \frac{1}{m}\right) \tag{7}
$$

In the above equations presented above, *x* is the independent autonomous variable, representing the physical–mechanical parameters to be produced; *n* is the scale parameter; *m* is the shape parameter, indicative of representing the rock heterogeneity.

The Weibull distribution function image is formed when $n=2$ and m is [1](#page-3-0), 2, 3, 5, and 7, as depicted in Fig. 1. The Weibull distribution simplifies to an exponential function when *m* is set to 1. When *m* is set to different values, the abscissa value corresponding to the curve highest point is near; the more random numbers are concentrated in the middle of the curve, the greater the shape parameter *m* is. The Weibull distribution effectively models the heterogeneity within rock masses, and a signifcant infuencing component is the shape parameter *m*.

Numerical model of water inrush in collapse column

Coal mining can induce water inrush in collapse column. The excavation in coal seam disrupts the equilibrium of surrounding rock and water, generating numerous random pores within the collapse column. Water seepage causes the particles in the pore space to be continuously brought out, resulting in the further expansion and penetration of the fssures. Erosion by the liquids leads to expansions of fne particles and penetrations fssures, ultimately forming a stable water-conducting channel.

Establishment of a numerical calculation model

Figure [2](#page-3-1) illustrates the cross-section of the model. The collapse column is characterized by a height of 185 m, with bottom and top diameters of 20 m and of 10 m. The seepage boundary conditions are as follows: the water pressure at the upper boundary is $p=2$ MPa, the water outlet serves as the bottom boundary, with the pressure set to air pressure ($p = 0.1$ MPa). The left and right boundaries are impermeable. Monitoring time points are set at 5000 s, 10,000 s, 15,000 s, and 25,000 s. The surrounding rock of the broken rock mass is set to 0.6 MPa, with homogeneity *m* set to 3. Table [1](#page-4-0) is the main parameters of the model.

Numerical simulation calculation scheme

To investigate the impact of various variables on fuid fow in fractured rock formations, this study simulates the seepage characteristics of such formations under two distinct conditions. Table [2](#page-4-1) provides details of the specifc scenarios. Scenario 1 investigates the impact of varying initial pore homogeneity on water fow. Scenario 2

Figure 1. Weibull probability density function curve with different parameters.

Figure 2. Numerical calculation model.

examines the impact of varying water pressures on the evolution of porosity and seepage velocity in the fractured rock mass. Scenario 3 explores the efect of varying initial porosity on water fow in the fractured rock mass.

Results analysis of numerical simulation The efect of diferent pore homogeneity on water inrush

Considering the evolution law of infltration in fractured rock mass under varying pore homogeneity conditions, the pore homogeneity is set to $m=2$, $m=3$, $m=5$, and $m=7$, respectively. Setting the surrounding rock pressure of the fractured rock mass at 0.5 MPa, the water pressure at 2 MPa, and the initial porosity at 0.1. Figure [3](#page-4-2)

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Physical parameter	Collapse column	Units
Rock mass density ρ_s	2260	Kg/m^3
Elastic modulus of rock mass E	1.0	GPa
Poisson ratio v	0.3	
The dynamic viscosity of water μ	1×10^{-3}	$(Pa-s)$
Initial average porosity φ_0	0.1	
Upper boundary pressure P	2×10^6	Pa
Concentration c	0.01	-
Initial permeability k_0	5×10^{-12}	m ²
Homogeneity m	2/3/5/7	

Table 1. Values of major model parameters.

Table 2. Numerical simulation schemes.

(a)the homogeneity $m=2$

(b) the homogeneity $m=3$

(c) the homogeneity $m=5$

(d) the homogeneity $m=7$

Figure 3. Porosity distribution with different homogeneity at the same time.

illustrates the variation in porosity of the fractured rock mass at time $t = 25,000$ s under various pore homogeneity conditions. From the porosity distribution cloud map in Fig. [3,](#page-4-2) the confguration of the water channel is intricately linked to the pore homogeneity of the fractured rock mass. Specifcally, when the *m* value is small, the formed water channel is single; when the homogeneity *m* is high, multiple water channel is formed, leading to an increase in water inrush. Figure [4](#page-5-0) illustrates the variation curve of water infow in collapse columns under various conditions of pore homogeneity in fractured rock masses. From the water inrush curve in Fig. [4](#page-5-0), it can be seen that afer 15,000 s, the water infow of the collapse column suddenly increases, culminating in a water inrush disaster. Applying grouting reinforcement to the collapse column before this critical juncture can prevent water inrush accidents.

Figure 4. Relation curve of water infow and time of broken rock mass under diferent homogeneity.

Impact of varying water pressures on the permeability properties of confned columns

Porosity evolution over time under varying water pressures To investigate the efect of water pressure on the percolation characteristics of the fractured rock mass, water pressures of 0.5 MPa, 1.0 MPa, 1.5 MPa, and 2.0 MPa are applied, respectively. The homogeneity parameter *m* is set to 3, and the surrounding rock of the fractured rock mass is established at 0.5 MPa. Selecting 5000 s, 10,000 s, 15,000 s, and 25,000 s for analysis. Figures [5,](#page-5-1) [6](#page-6-0), [7,](#page-6-1) [8](#page-6-2) correspond to the distribution cloud maps of the model porosity at diferent times points under water pressures of 0.5 MPa, 1 MPa, 1.5 MPa, and 2 MPa, respectively.

By analyzing porosity under varying water pressures, it is evident that as water pressure increases, porosity increases more rapidly and the formation of water-conducting channels becomes more pronounced. At the initial stage, the porosity distribution is random. As seepage time increases, the porosity value also ascends. Water seepage and erosion cause broken rock particles to migrate, damaging the internal pore and skeleton structure. Fine particles are transported by the water fow, leading to rapid porosity increase in some areas, while changes in other areas manifest more gradually. The occurrence of water inrush disaster can be attributed to the gradual expansion of the seepage fssure connection, which eventually formed a water conduction channel.

Figure [9](#page-7-0) illustrates the curves depicting the relationship between water infux and time across diferent aquifer water pressures. It is evident from the Fig. [9](#page-7-0) that higher aquifer water pressures result in greater water influx; the more pronounced the water channel is formed, the larger the porosity is, and the greater the increase at the outlet, resulting in a higher risk of water inrush. Initially, the increase in water inrush is relatively slow. As time progresses, at the moment of 15,000 s, the water inrush suddenly increases, which can be the trigger point for water inrush. This moment can be referred to as the "critical point of water inrush".

Evolution of seepage velocity over time under diferent water pressures

To assess the impact of water pressure on the seepage rate of the crushed rock mass, water pressures of 0.5 MPa, 1.0 MPa, 1.5 MPa, and 2.0 MPa are examined. The homogeneity parameter is set at $m=3$, and the surrounding

Figure 5. When the water pressure $p = 0.5$ MPa, the porosity distribution at different times.

Figure 6. When the water pressure $p = 1$ MPa, the porosity distribution at different times.

Figure 8. When the water pressure $p = 2$ MPa, the porosity distribution at different times.

rock of the fractured rock mass is maintained at 0.5 MPa. Selecting 5000 s, 10,000 s, 15,000 s, and 25,000 s for analysis. Figures [10,](#page-7-1) [11,](#page-7-2) [12,](#page-8-0) [13](#page-8-1) show the distribution of the modeled seepage velocity at diferent time intervals for water pressures of 0.5 MPa, 1 MPa, 1.5 MPa and 2 MPa, respectively.

By analyzing the seepage velocity under various water pressures, it is evident that the growth rate of seepage velocity increases with increasing water pressure at the same time. Seepage velocity correlates with changes in porosity. As porosity enlarges, infltration velocity intensifes. As the porosity change rate increases, the seepage velocity increases again. As seepage time increases, broken rock particles gradually migrate, undermining the internal pore and skeleton structure. Fine particles are relocated and eroded by water fow, modifying the seepage characteristics of the broken rock and establishing potential water-conducting channels. Tis leads to a signifcant augmentation in seepage rate. Eventually, the pores interconnect and form the primary channel of seepage fow.

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Figure 9. Influence of different water pressure on water inflow.

Figure 10. When the water pressure $p = 0.5$ MPa, seepage velocity distribution at different time.

Efect of initial porosity on permeability properties of collapse column

Porosity evolution pattern for various initial porosities

This paper investigates the evolution of permeability in fractured rock bodies with varying initial porosities of φ =0.05, φ =0.075, φ =0.15, and φ =0.175. In numerical simulation, the homogeneity parameter *m* is set to 3, the surrounding rock of the fractured rock mass is 0.5 MPa, and the applied water pressure is 2 MPa. Figure [14](#page-8-2)

Figure 14. Different initial porosity, porosity distribution cloud map at the same time.

illustrates the evolution of porosity at *t*=25,000 s for fractured rock masses with varying initial porosities; Fig. [15](#page-9-0) presents the relationship curve of water infow with time under diferent initial porosity of the fractured rock masses. Figures [14](#page-8-2) and [15](#page-9-0) demonstrate that a larger initial porosity of the fractured rock mass results in a more pronounced water-conducting channel and a significant increase in porosity. The larger the initial porosity is, the more rapid the increase in water infux of the fractured rock mass is, which escalates the risk of a water inrush accident upon reaching the "critical point of time of water inrush".

Evolution of Seepage Velocity with Varying Initial Porosity

Considering the efect of initial porosity on the permeability of crushed rock mass, the initial porosity is set at 0.05, 0.075, 0.15 and 0.175, respectively. For the simulation, taking the homogeneity *m*=3. Figure [16](#page-9-1) shows the evolution characteristics of seepage velocity in fractured rock masses with diferent initial porosity when the water pressure in the aquifer is 2 MPa. Figure [16](#page-9-1) illustrates that the seepage rate increases with the initial

Figure 15. Relation curve of water infow and time in broken rock mass with diferent initial porosity.

Figure 16. Distribution nephogram of seepage velocity at the same time with diferent initial porosity.

porosity. Water seepage and erosion prompt the fssures to progressively expand and coalesce, resulting in a more pronounced water channel, accelerating the seepage and fow of water, and leading to a sharp increase in water inrush, thereby increasing the risk of water inrush accidents.

Permeability evolution law under diferent initial porosity

Figure [17](#page-10-0) illustrates the evolution characteristics of permeability of fractured rock masses with varying initial porosity when the water pressure of the aquifer is 2 MPa and the homogeneity is $m=3$. The Fig. [17](#page-10-0) demonstrates that a larger initial porosity correlates with increased permeability. Water seepage and erosion induce the migration of mass particles, leading to an increase in permeability of the collapse column. As seepage channels develop, there is a loss of rock mass, culminating in a gradual increase in permeability. The changes in permeability and porosity exhibit a parallel trend.

On‑site monitoring of water inrush pattern of collapse column in working face

During the advancement of the working face passing through collapse column, real-time monitoring is carried out for the water inrush of collapse column at the 1908 working face of Qianjin coal mine. The dynamic monitoring curve of water-surging volume of the collapse column is shown in Fig. [18.](#page-10-1)

The monitoring curve reveals that the initial water inflow of the water-gushing collapse column is relatively low, escalating from 2.7 m³/h at the outset to 6.8 m³/h by the 4.2 h, with the water inflow changes slowly. However, the change speed of water inflow after 4.2 h obviously accelerates, with the water inflow escalating from 6.8 m^3/h to 42.2 m³/h between 4.2 h and 5.9 h. The data indicate that the water inflow of the collapse column increases in vain afer 4.2 h, and serious water inrush accident occurs, namely, this moment is the "critical point of water inrush" of the collapse column. If the measurement technology such as grouting reinforcement is taken before this time, the occurrence of water inrush accident can be efectively prevented.

Figure 17. Distribution nephogram of permeability distribution at the same time with diferent initial porosity.

Figure 18. Dynamic detection curve of water quantity of collapse column in 1908 working face.

By comparing the simulation and the feld measurement data, the change trend of both is basically the same, which proves the correctness of variable mass fuid–solid coupling mechanical model of the collapse column established in this paper. The permeability change law of the fractured rock mass under the effect of the migration of fller particles is mastered, which is mainly divided into slow change stage, sudden change stage and stable stage. In the slow stage, the fracture opening degree and the water infow inside the collapse column are small. Under the efect of water erosion, the particles of the rock mass particles migrate, the internal pores and skeletal structure are damaged, the permeability of the collapse column continues to increase, and some cracks continue to widen and penetrate to form potential water channels, resulting in a sharp increase in water infow and eventually water collapse accidents.

Conclusions

To solve the problem of water inrush of collapse column infuenced by variable mass efect, a mechanical model of variety mass fow-solid coupling in the collapse column is established considering the random distribution characteristics of the collapse column. The seepage characteristics and the change law of water flow in the collapse column under diferent uniformity, water pressure, and initial porosity conditions are investigated by numerical simulation. The simulation results show that the change law of water inflow in the collapse column is consistent with the feld measured data, which verifes the correctness of the variable mass fow-solid coupling mechanical model, and systematically explains the seepage law of variety mass and the occurrence mechanism of water inrush disaster in collapse column. The main conclusions are as follows:

- 1. Considering the infuence of diferent homogeneity on the seepage of fractured rock masses, the higher the homogeneity is, the more water channels are formed and the higher the porosity value is. At the moment of 15,000 s, due to the continuous transport and loss of the flling material inside the collapse column, it leads to the expansion and interconnection of some fractures in the collapse column, and eventually forms a dominant water-conducting channel. Afer that, the water infow of the collapse column suddenly increases, and a sudden water inrush accident occurs. Tis moment is the "critical point of water infow" of the collapse column. If grouting reinforcement can be applied to the collapse column before this moment, it can prevent the occurrence of water inrush accidents.
- 2. When studying the evolution of seepage under diferent water pressures on fractured rock bodies, it is observed that higher water pressures lead to a rapid increase in porosity and seepage rate. As the seepage time increases, rock particles gradually migrate, causing damage to the internal pore and skeletal structure. Fine particles migrate and erode under the water fow, altering the seepage characteristics of the rock mass and potentially forming water-conducting channels.
- 3. When examining the efects of varying initial porosity on the seepage characteristics of a fractured rock masses, it is observed that higher initial porosity leads to increased permeability in the collapse column due to the migration of mass particles under the influence of water seepage and erosion. This results in the formation of more pronounced water-conducting channels and a faster attainment of the "critical moment points of water inrush", consequently heightening the risk of water inrush.

Data availability

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this article.

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Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Additional information

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