Journal Publication of International Research for Engineering and Management (JOIREM)
Volume: 04 Issue: 01 | Jan-2026
ISSN (O) 3107-6696

Temperature Based Fan controller

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Abstract - caused by excessive heat. This work presents the design and development of a temperature-based fan controller using an IC 741 operational amplifier and basic analog components. An NTC thermistor is employed to sense ambient temperature variations and convert them into corresponding electrical changes. These changes are processed using a comparator circuit, where the sensed signal is evaluated against a predefined reference level adjusted through a potentiometer. When the temperature exceeds the set limit, a transistor switching stage activates the cooling fan automatically. The proposed system operates entirely in the analog domain and does not require any programmable devices, making it simple, economical, and suitable for educational applications. Experimental observations indicate reliable switching behavior and effective thermal response, demonstrating the practicality of the design for basic temperature control applications.

Key Words: IC 741, NTC thermistor, Potentiometer, Transistor, DC fan.

I. INTRODUCTION

Temperature regulation is an essential requirement in electronic systems to ensure safe operation, stable performance, and long service life of components. During continuous operation, electronic devices generate heat, and excessive temperature rise can lead to reduced efficiency, malfunction, or permanent damage. Hence, automatic temperature monitoring and control mechanisms are widely used in electronic equipment.

A temperature-based fan controller provides an effective solution by activating a cooling fan only when the surrounding temperature exceeds a predefined limit. In this work, an IC 741 operational amplifier is used as a comparator to process temperature-dependent electrical signals obtained from a thermistor. The thermistor exhibits a predictable change in resistance with temperature, which is converted into a voltage signal using a resistor network. This signal is compared with a reference voltage set by a potentiometer to determine the operating condition of the fan.

The proposed system operates entirely using analog components and does not require programmable devices or software. This simplifies the design, reduces cost, and improves reliability. Due to its straightforward architecture and educational value, the system is suitable for academic mini-projects and basic thermal control applications.

II. Literature Review

electronic devices explain that excessive temperature adversely affects the performance and lifetime of electronic components. To prevent overheating, automatic cooling systems are employed, where a cooling device such as a fan is activated only when the temperature exceeds a predefined limit.[6]

temperature-sensitive elements such as thermistors and semiconductor temperature sensors are commonly used to convert temperature variations into corresponding electrical signals. These signals can be processed using analog circuits without the need for digital controllers. Linear temperature sensors provide proportional voltage outputs, which simplifies threshold-based control.[6]

operational amplifier IC 741 as a versatile linear integrated circuit widely used in comparator applications. When configured as a comparator, the IC 741 compares an input voltage with a reference voltage and produces a saturated output depending on the comparison result. This property is extensively used in temperature detection, alarm circuits, and automatic switching applications.[7]

comparator-based analog control systems exhibit fast response and stable switching characteristics due to their continuous-time operation. By using a potentiometer to set the reference voltage and a transistor as a current amplifier, the low-power output of the operational amplifier can be used to control higher-power devices such as DC fans.[8]

From the discussion in standard electronics literature, it is evident that purely analog temperature-based fan controllers using IC 741 and discrete components provide a simple, reliable, and cost-effective solution. Such systems are particularly suitable for educational mini-projects and basic thermal control applications where ON/OFF operation is sufficient and digital control is not required.

III. System Architecture & Methodology

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The system consists of a temperature sensing stage, a reference voltage setting stage, a comparison stage, and an actuation stage. The temperature sensor converts variations in ambient temperature into a corresponding analog voltage. A potentiometer-based resistive network generates a reference voltage representing the desired temperature threshold.

An IC 741 operational amplifier configured as a comparator continuously compares the sensor voltage with the reference voltage. The comparator output is connected to a transistor driver stage, which provides sufficient current to operate the DC fan. A diode is used to protect the circuit from reverse voltage, and a regulated DC power supply provides the required Operating Voltage

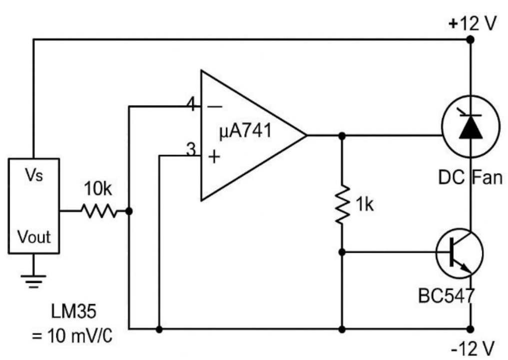

Fig.1 Temperature based fan controller block diagram

A. Potentiometer

A potentiometer is a three-terminal variable resistor used to obtain an adjustable voltage level. In analog control circuits, it is commonly used to set a reference or threshold voltage. In this system, the potentiometer establishes the temperature set point at which the control action occurs.

B. Transistor

A transistor can operate as an electronic switch or current amplifier. Since operational amplifiers cannot supply sufficient current to drive loads directly, a transistor is used to amplify the control signal and drive the DC fan efficiently.

C. Resistor

Resistors as passive components used to limit current, divide voltage, and provide proper biasing. In this circuit, resistors protect the op-amp output and control the base current of the transistor to ensure safe and stable operation.

D. Thermistor

A thermistor is a temperature-sensitive resistor whose resistance varies with temperature. Negative Temperature Coefficient (NTC) thermistors decrease in resistance as temperature increases, making them suitable for temperature sensing and control applications.

E. Diode

allow current flow in one direction and block it in the opposite direction. When connected across inductive loads such as DC fans, a diode protects the circuit from reverse voltage generated during switching, commonly known as back EMF.

F. Operational Amplifier (Op-Amp – IC 741)

The IC 741 as a general-purpose operational amplifier widely used in comparator applications. When operated in open-loop mode, it compares two input voltages and produces a saturated output depending on the voltage difference, enabling threshold- based control.

G. Power Supply

According to standard circuit design principles, a regulated power supply is required to provide stable operating voltages to electronic circuits. In this system, the IC 741 requires a dual power supply for proper operation, while the remaining components operate from a single DC source.

The development of the temperature-based fan controller follows a systematic and structured methodology to ensure reliable operation and ease of implementation. Initially, a suitable NTC thermistor is selected to sense ambient temperature variations due to its high sensitivity and predictable resistance-temperature characteristics. The thermistor is connected in a voltage divider configuration to convert resistance changes into a proportional voltage signal.

Next, an IC 741 operational amplifier is configured to operate as a voltage comparator. One input of the comparator receives the temperature-dependent voltage from the sensing circuit, while the other input is connected to a reference voltage generated using a potentiometer. This arrangement allows the user to set the desired temperature threshold at which the cooling fan should operate.

A transistor switching stage is then designed to amplify the comparator output current, enabling safe and efficient operation of the DC fan. The entire circuit is assembled using discrete components, and proper power supply connections are ensured. Finally, the system is tested under varying temperature conditions, and the threshold level is adjusted to achieve accurate and stable fan control. [6].

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The temperature-based fan controller was successfully designed, implemented, and tested under varying ambient temperature conditions. The system performance was evaluated by observing the switching behavior of the fan at different temperature levels set using the potentiometer [1].

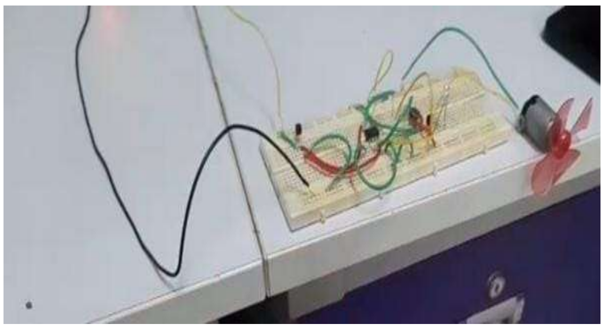

Fig.2 Temperature based fan controller Results diagram

A. Observed Results

At room temperature, the resistance of the NTC thermistor remained high, resulting in a lower voltage at the comparator input. Since this voltage was below the reference level, the IC 741 output remained in the low saturation state. Consequently, the transistor stayed in cutoff mode and the DC fan remained OFF [1]. As the ambient temperature increased, the thermistor resistance decreased, causing an increase in the sensed voltage. When this voltage exceeded the preset reference voltage, the comparator output switched to a high saturation level. This activated the transistor driver circuit, allowing sufficient current to flow through the fan and turning it ON. The switching temperature was found to be adjustable by varying the potentiometer setting. The system responded quickly to temperature changes and exhibited stable operation without oscillations near the threshold [1].

B. Performance Analysis

The experimental results confirm that the IC 741 effectively functions as a comparator for temperature-based switching applications. The transistor driver stage provided adequate current amplification, ensuring reliable fan operation without loading the comparator output. The circuit demonstrated low power consumption, simple construction, and consistent performance. Minor variations in switching temperature were observed due to component tolerances and environmental factors [1].

C. Discussion

The results validate the effectiveness of an analog control approach for temperature-based fan control. The use of basic components such as a thermistor, IC 741, and transistor makes the system cost-effective and suitable for educational applications. While the system provides ON- OFF control rather than proportional speed control, it fulfills the primary objective of automatic temperature- dependent cooling. Overall, the experimental observations align well with theoretical expectations derived from standard electronic device and operational amplifier principles [1]

V. Future Scope

The present temperature-based fan controller demonstrates effective operation using a purely analog approach. In future, the system can be enhanced by incorporating hysteresis in the comparator stage to eliminate rapid switching near the threshold temperature. The use of precision operational amplifiers with single-supply operation can improve performance and reduce power requirements. The circuit can also be extended to control fan speed instead of simple ON/OFF operation by employing analog PWM or linear control techniques. Integration with additional temperature sensors at multiple locations can enable better thermal management in larger systems. Furthermore, the design can be miniaturized using printed circuit boards, making it suitable for commercial and industrial applications while retaining its low-cost and reliable analog nature.

VI. Security and Challenges

The proposed temperature-based fan controller is a purely analog system and does not employ any programmable or communication-enabled components. Therefore, it is inherently secure against software-related threats such as unauthorized access, data manipulation, or cyber-attacks. System security mainly depends on electrical safety measures, including proper power-supply regulation, correct component polarity, and insulation. The inclusion of a protection diode across the DC fan safeguards the circuit from reverse voltage generated during switching, thereby enhancing operational reliability.

However, the system presents certain challenges due to its analog nature. The controller operates on a simple ON/OFF mechanism, which limits precise temperature regulation. The IC 741 operational amplifier requires a dual power supply, increasing circuit complexity and power consumption. Additionally, variations in component tolerances and electrical noise can cause minor instability near the switching threshold, necessitating careful calibration. Environmental factors such as sensor placement and airflow conditions may also affect temperature sensing accuracy.

VII. CONCLUSION

A temperature-based fan controller using IC 741 has been successfully designed, implemented, and tested. The system automatically switches the DC fan ON or OFF depending on ambient temperature, ensuring reliable cooling and protection of electronic devices [1].

The NTC thermistor effectively senses temperature changes, while the IC 741 comparator provides accurate threshold detection. The transistor driver allows safe and sufficient current to operate the fan without loading the comparator. The experimental results demonstrate that the system is simple, cost-effective, and stable, with quick response to temperature variations. Its analog design makes it suitable for educational purposes and low-power applications. Overall, the project confirms that basic analog components can be effectively used to achieve automatic temperature-dependent control, fulfilling the objectives of the mini-project [1]

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