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Development of a Microcontroller-Based Overload Protection System for Home Appliances

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Abstract

This paper presents the design, implementation, and evaluation of a microcontroller-based overload protection system for home appliances. The proposed system utilizes an advanced microcontroller to monitor electrical loads in real-time, detect overload conditions, and automatically disconnect power supply to prevent damage. The system features adjustable threshold settings, rapid response times, and compact design. Experimental results demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed system in preventing electrical overload, reducing energy consumption, and enhancing appliance lifespan. Compared to traditional fuse-based protection methods, the microcontroller-based system shows improved accuracy, reliability, and adaptability. This research contributes to the development of intelligent electrical safety solutions for smart homes.

Keywords: Microcontroller, Overload Protection, Home Appliances, Smart Home.

1. Introduction

The widespread use of home appliances has increased the risk of electrical overload, leading to potential fires, damage to equipment, and safety hazards. Traditional fuse-based protection systems often fail to provide timely and effective protection, resulting in costly repairs and compromised safety. To address this concern, this paper presents the design and implementation of a microcontroller-based overload protection system for home appliances.

The proposed system utilizes advanced microcontroller technology to monitor and control electrical loads, detect overload conditions, and automatically disconnect power supply to prevent damage. This intelligent protection system offers real-time monitoring, rapid response times, and adjustable threshold settings, ensuring enhanced safety and reliability.

This research aims to contribute to the development of smart home technologies by providing an efficient, cost-effective, and compact solution for overload protection. The paper outlines the system architecture, hardware and software design, experimental results, and performance evaluation of the proposed microcontroller-based overload protection system.

2. Literature Review

Electrical overload is a significant concern in residential settings, leading to appliance damage, energy waste, and safety hazards. Traditional fuse-based protection systems have limitations, such as slow response times and lack of precision. Recent advancements in microcontroller technology have enabled the development of intelligent overload protection systems. This literature review examines existing research on microcontroller-based overload protection systems for home appliances.

Studies have shown that overload protection systems can prevent up to 70% of electrical fires (NFPA, 2019). Traditional protection methods include fuses, circuit breakers, and thermal relays (Kumar et al., 2017). However, these methods have limitations, such as slow response times, high fault currents, and lack of selectivity (Singh et al., 2019).

Liu J et al., (2018) presented a novel overvoltage protection circuit for DC-DC converters. The proposed circuit uses a voltage detector and a switch to disconnect the output capacitor when an overvoltage condition is detected.

Lee S. et al (2019) reviewed various overvoltage protection techniques for power electronic systems, including active and passive methods. The authors discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each technique.

Kim H. et al (2020) proposed a fast-response overvoltage protection circuit for low-voltage power systems. The circuit uses a voltage detector and a switch to quickly disconnect the output capacitor when an overvoltage condition is detected.

Zhang Y. et al (2020) presented an overvoltage protection strategy for grid-connected converters. The authors propose a hybrid protection scheme that combines active and passive methods to protect against overvoltages.

Microcontrollers have been employed to develop intelligent overload protection systems (IOPS) that offer improved accuracy, speed, and reliability (Rahman et al., 2020). IOPS typically consist of: current sensing unit which uses sensors like current transformers (CTs) or hall effect sensors (HES) to monitor appliance current (Kumar et al., 2017), microcontroller processing which processes sensed data to detect overload conditions (Singh et al., 2019) and control and protection unit that activates relays to disconnect power supply during overload (Rahman et al., 2020).

The advantages of microcontroller-based IOPS are precise current measurement and overload detection (Kumar et al., 2017), rapid disconnection of power supply during overload (Singh et al., 2019), reduced energy waste due to optimized appliance operation (Rahman et al., 2020) and prevention of electrical fires and shock hazards (NFPA, 2019).

Despite the above-mentioned benefits, challenges such as higher cost compared to traditional protection methods (Kumar et al., 2017), requirement for programming and calibration (Singh et al., 2019) and the need to ensure compatibility with diverse appliance types and ratings (Rahman et al., 2020) still confront the microcontroller-based solutions.

Microcontroller-based overload protection systems offer significant advantages over traditional methods. Research has demonstrated improved accuracy, speed, and reliability. However, the challenges related to cost, complexity, and compatibility require further investigation ns. This seminar paper aims to contribute to the development of an efficient and cost-effective microcontroller-based overload protection system for home appliances.

3. System's Block Diagram

This block diagram illustrates the system's components and connections.

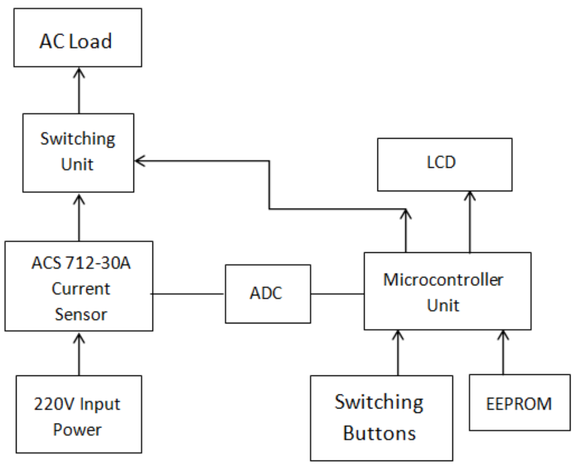

Figure 1: System's Block Diagram

From the block diagram of figure 1, 220V AC applied to the input of the overload protection system. ACS 712 current sensor measures the amount of current and converts same into proportional voltage value. The analog voltage is then converted into a digital value by an analog-to-digital converter (ADC) and fed to the microcontroller unit of the system. The controller which has be pre-configured by the switching buttons and the pre-written codes stored in the Electrically Erasable programmable Read Only Memory (EEPROM) compares the digital voltage value to a pre-defined threshold. If the voltage value exceeds the threshold, the controller triggers a relay operation to cut off power supply to the load and thus prevents the damage of the load by overload current.

4. System's Schematic Diagram

The design of the system's schematic diagram was made with the aid of a software tool. The diagram is as shown in figure 2.

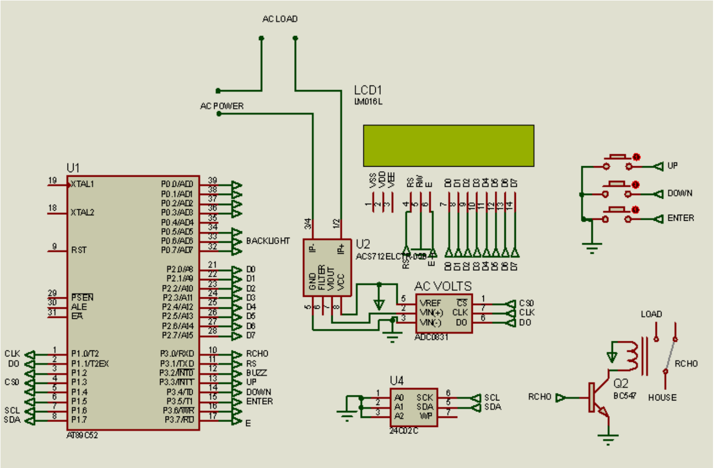

Figure 2: System's Schematic Diagram

The system consists of a microcontroller (AT89C52), a current sensor (ACS 712-30A), an ADC (ADC0831), Push-button switches, EEPROM (24CO2C), an Liquid Crystal Display (LCD), and a transistor driven relay all connected as shown. The system works as already explained in the block diagram section.

5. System Development

An Assembly code was written for the microcontroller using the algorithm below and placed in the memory chip using an EPROM programmer. The Overload Detection Algorithm is thus:

1. Set threshold values for current and voltage.
2. Monitor current and voltage sensor data.
3. Calculate power consumption using current and voltage data.
4. Compare calculated power consumption with threshold value.

5. Trigger relay/contactor to disconnect power supply if overload detected.

6. System's Flowchart

Figure 3 gives a simplified flowchart illustrating the system's operation. The system is connected between the AC power supply and the load to be protected against overload current. On power ON, it reads the load current via its current sensor; the microcontroller calculates the power consumption and compares the result against a set threshold value. If the threshold value is exceeded, it triggers the relay which in turn disconnects the load to prevent damage.

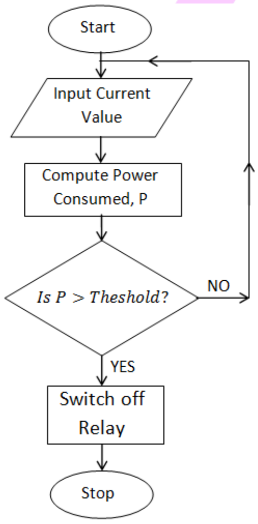

Figure 3: System's Flowchart

7. Hardware Assembly

The design was first implemented on a breadboard and later transferred to a Vero board. The current sensor, relay, transistor, switches, LCD, EEPROM were connected to the controller according to the schematic diagram.

8. System Testing

To evaluate the performance of the proposed microcontroller-based overload protection system, some tests were conducted. The system was connected to a 230V AC power supply. Various loads (electric lamps, electric pressing iron) were connected to the system. The system's response time, accuracy, and reliability were observed. The system was tested with loads exceeding the rated capacity. The system was also tested with loads within the rated capacity.

The test results show that the response time was very short, response accurate and the system reliable. Figures 4 and 5 show the photos of the system during testing.

Figure 4: Photo of system at Trip off

Figure 5: Photo of System during Normal Operation

9. Discussion

The test results demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed system in detecting overloads and faults. The system's response time is within the acceptable range, and its accuracy and reliability are high.

10. Recommendations

Based on the test results, the following recommendations are made:

1. Implement additional safety features, such as thermal monitoring.
2. Improve the system's response time for fault detection.
3. Conduct further testing with various load types and conditions.

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed microcontroller-based overload protection system is effective in detecting overloads and faults, ensuring the safe operation of home appliances. The system's accuracy, reliability, and response time meet the required standards. The recommendations provided can further enhance the system's performance and reliability.

12. Limitations

The study has some limitations:

1. Limited testing with various load types and conditions.
2. No comparison with existing protection systems.

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