US 20250263878A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2025/0263878 A1**

KIM et al. (43) **Pub. Date: Aug. 21, 2025**

(54) **WASHING MACHINE WITH DRYING FUNCTION**

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(21) Appl. No.: **19/203,893**

(22) Filed: **May 9, 2025**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 18/120,049, filed on Mar. 10, 2023, now Pat. No. 12,320,051, which is a continuation of application No. PCT/KR2022/016768, filed on Oct. 28, 2022.

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Dec. 30, 2021 (KR) 10-2021-0193394

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
D06F 25/00 (2006.01)
D06F 39/04 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***D06F 25/00*** (2013.01); ***D06F 39/04*** (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A washing machine with drying function includes a cabinet having a laundry insertion hole; a tub having a front opening, and a back opening; a drum; and a heated air supplying device above the tub that includes an evaporator, a condenser, a heater, a heat exchange duct, an inlet, a supply duct, and a blower fan. Air from the back opening of the tub is introduced into the inlet duct and is guided by the inlet duct and received by the heat exchange duct and then passes through the heat exchange duct in a lateral direction of the tub. The air passed through the heat exchange duct is received by the supply duct and discharged by the supply duct toward a front side of the tub. The blower fan forms causes the air discharged from the supply duct to be supplied to the tub.

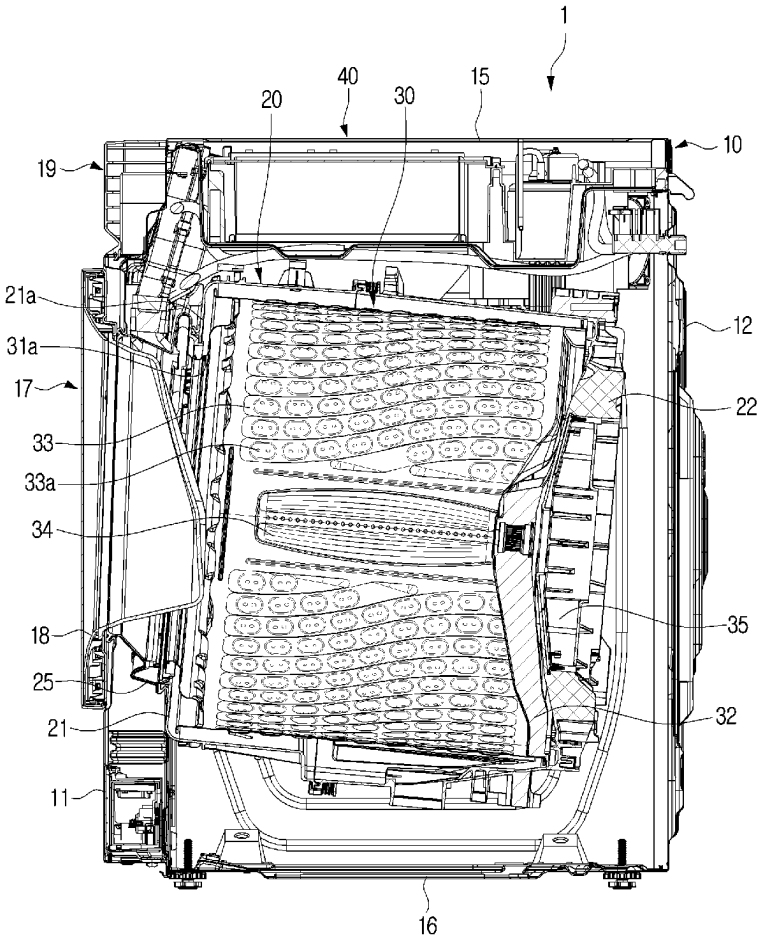


FIG. 1

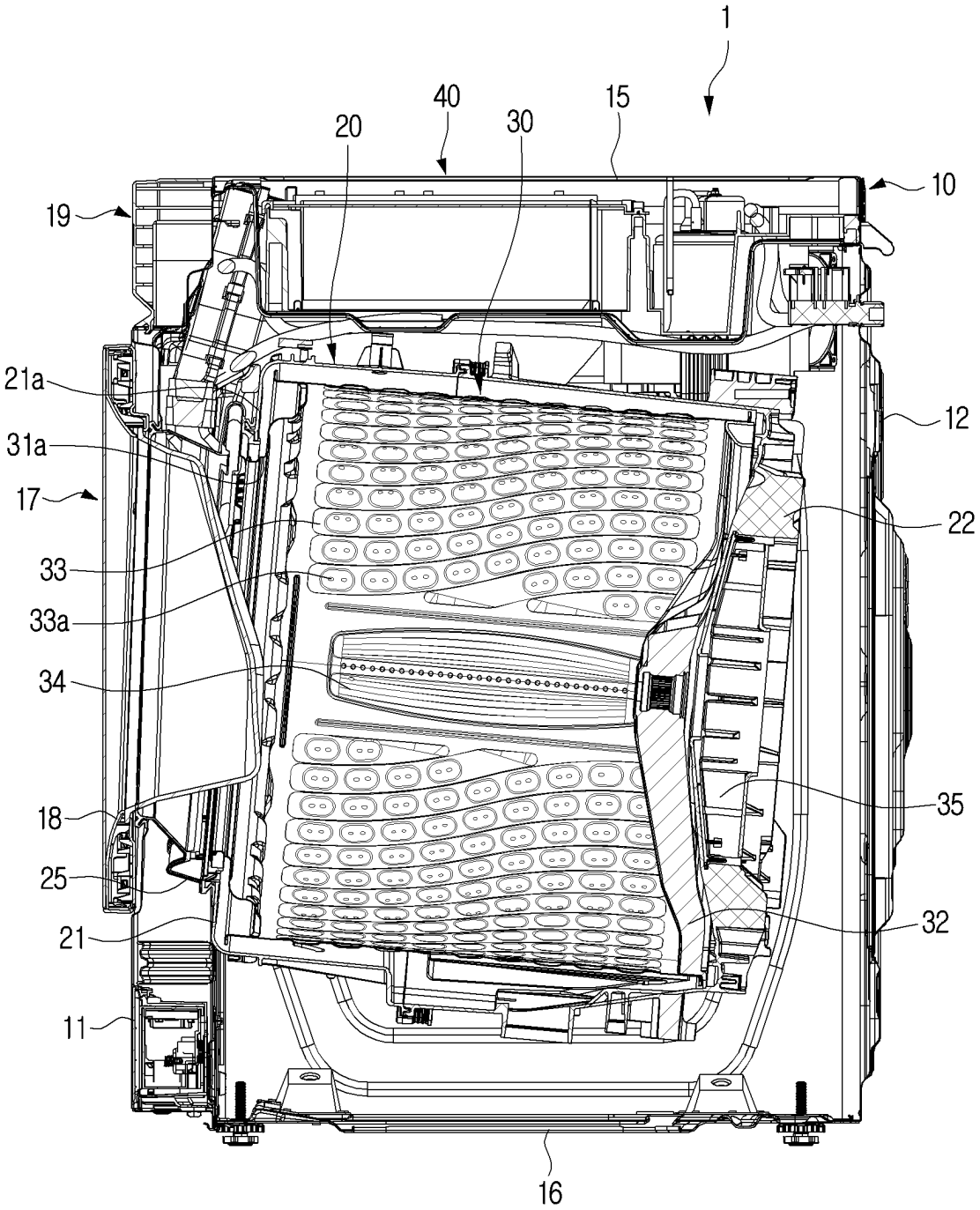


FIG. 2

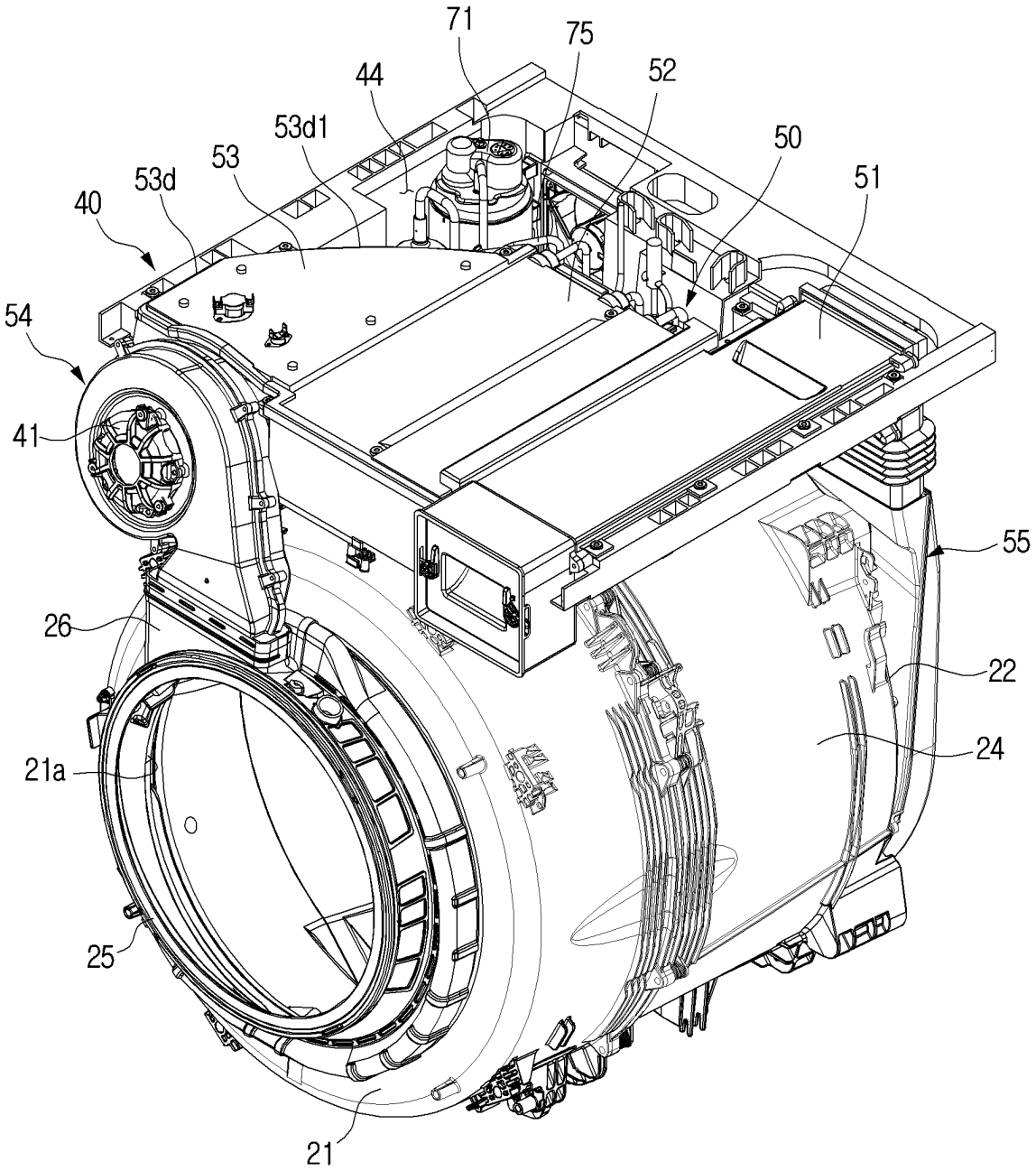
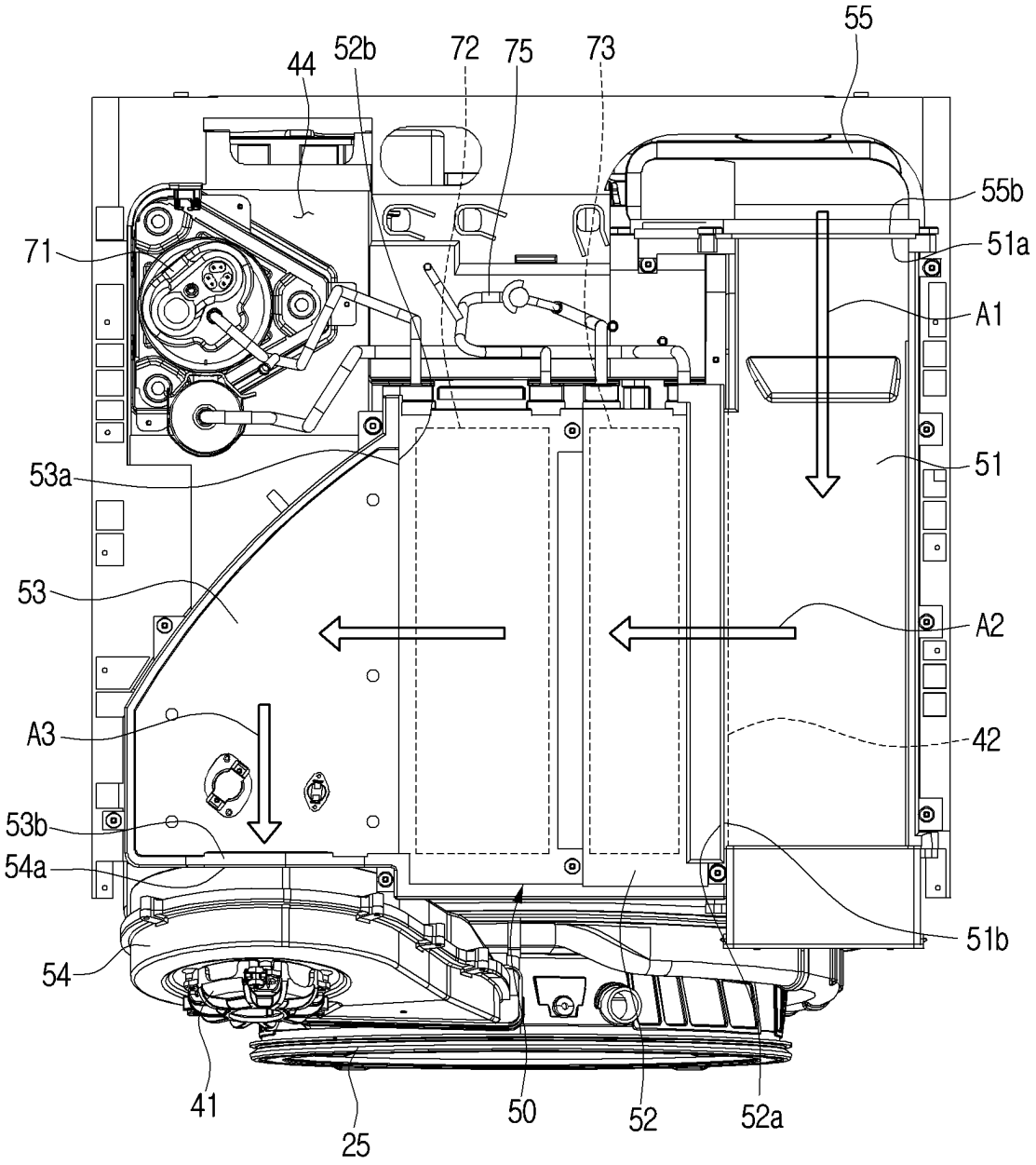


FIG. 3


55
44
52b
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51a
A1
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52
52a

FIG. 4

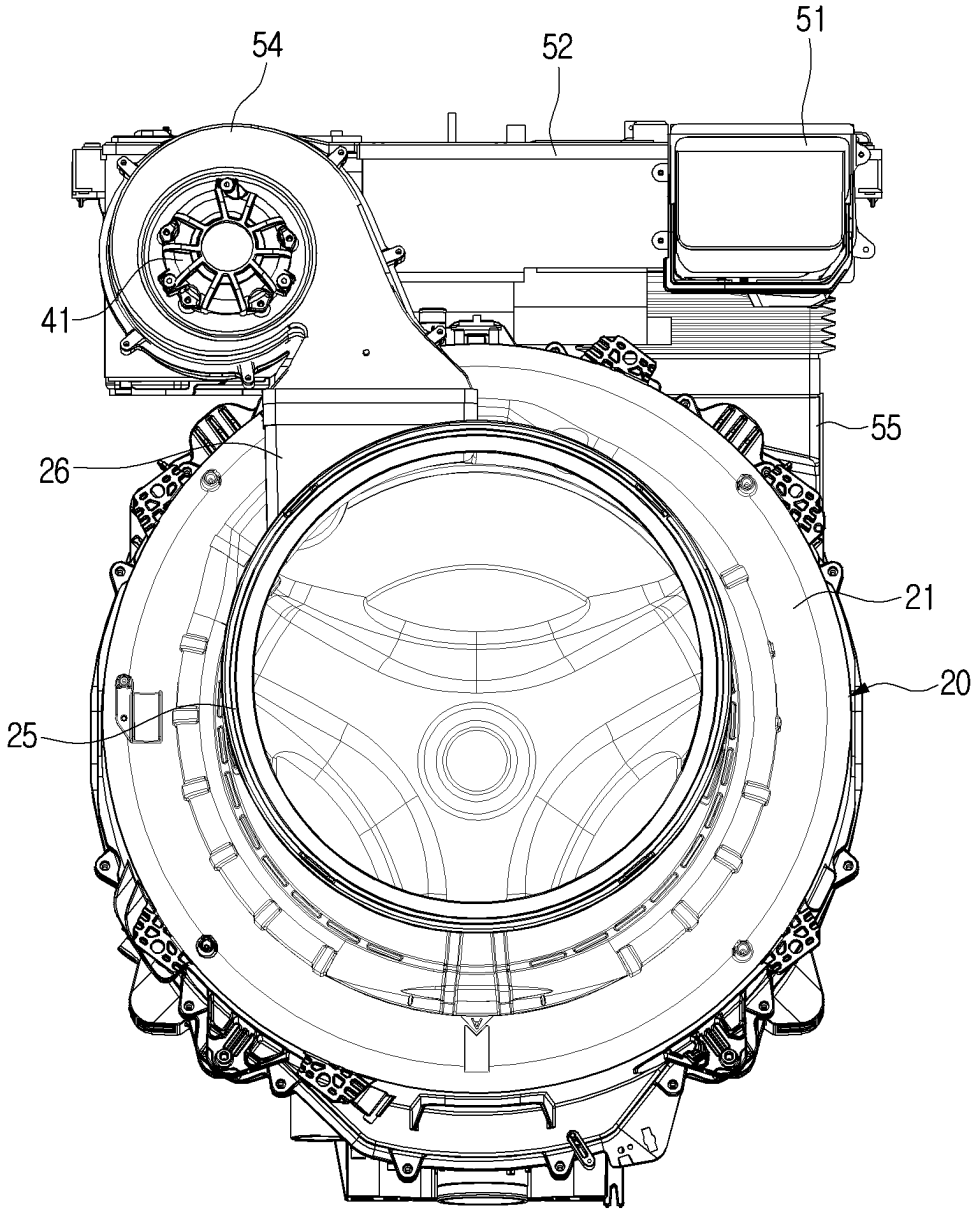


FIG. 5

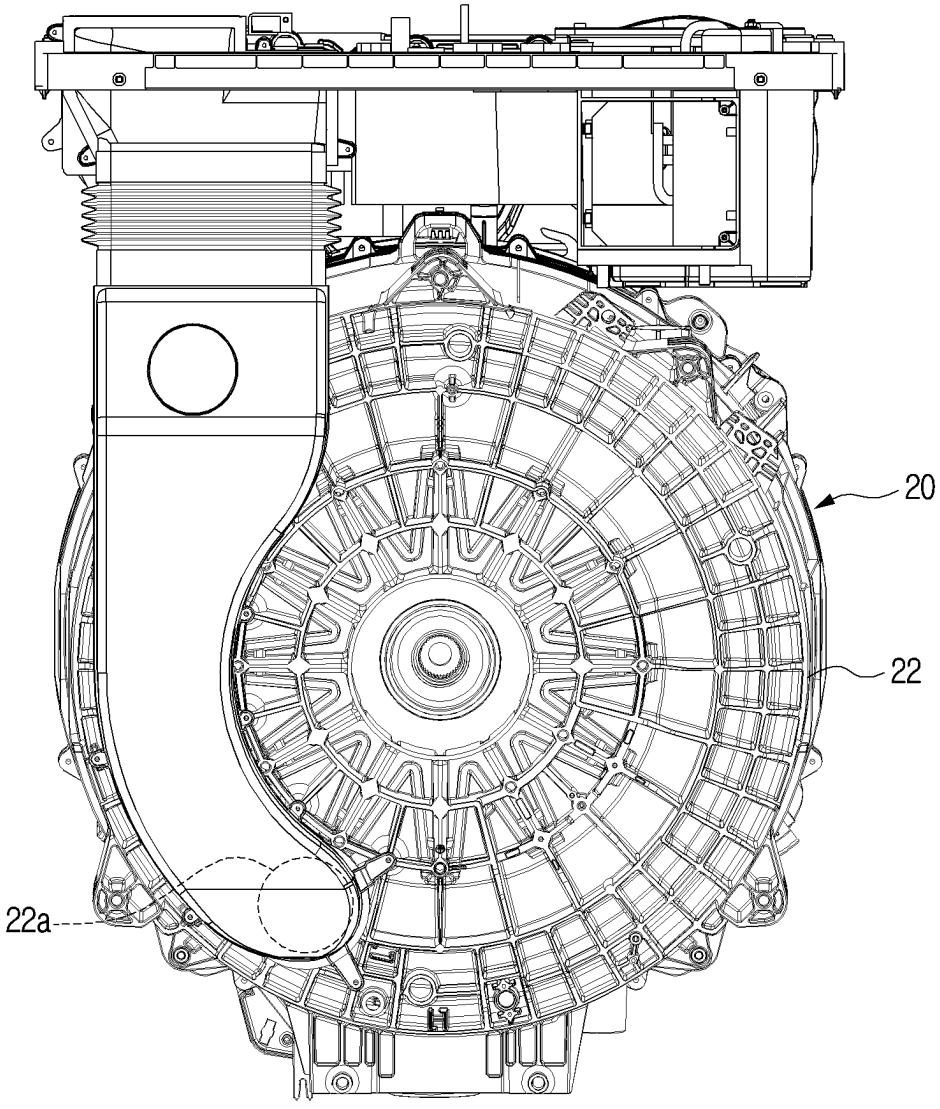


FIG. 6

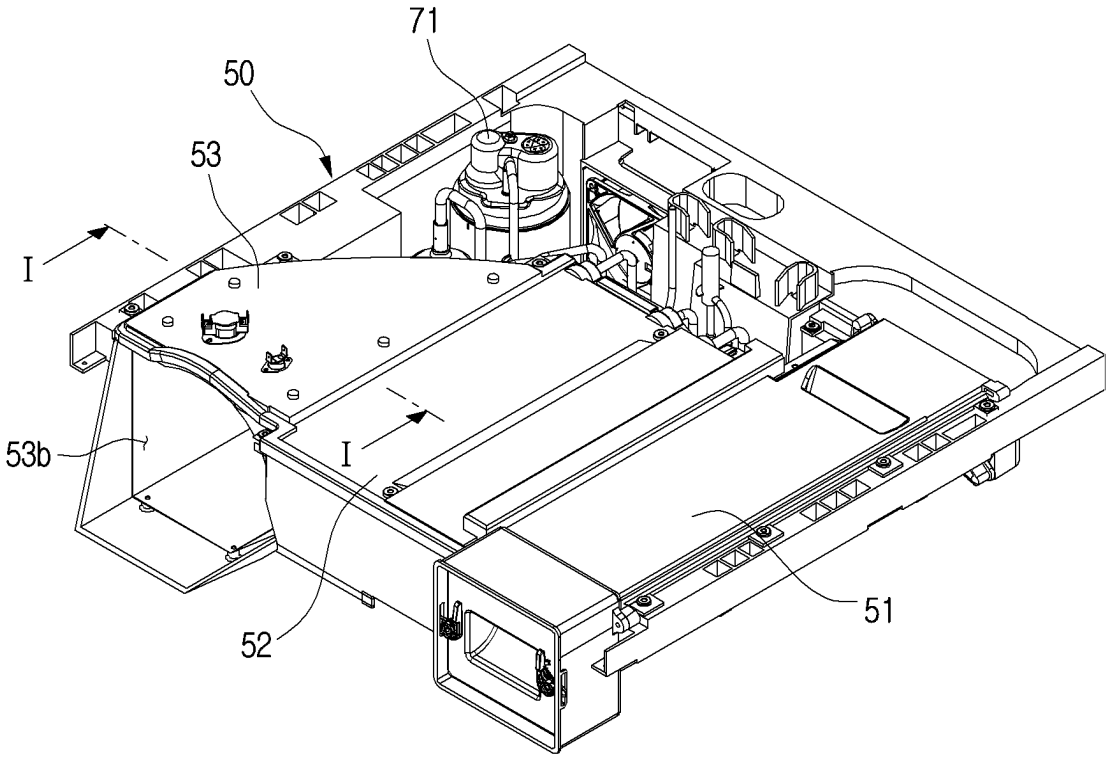
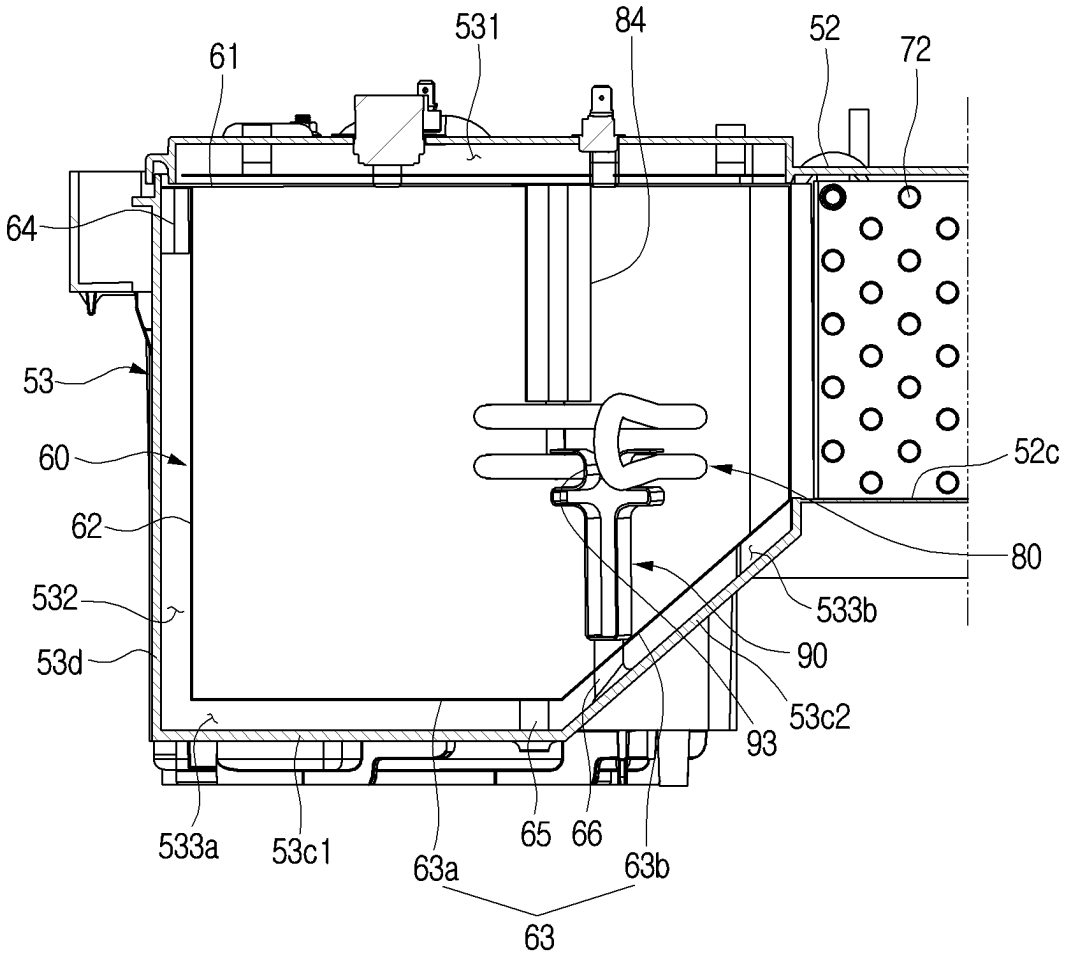


FIG. 7


531
84
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72
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64
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60
62
532
53d
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80
533b
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53c2
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533a
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63a
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63b
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FIG. 8

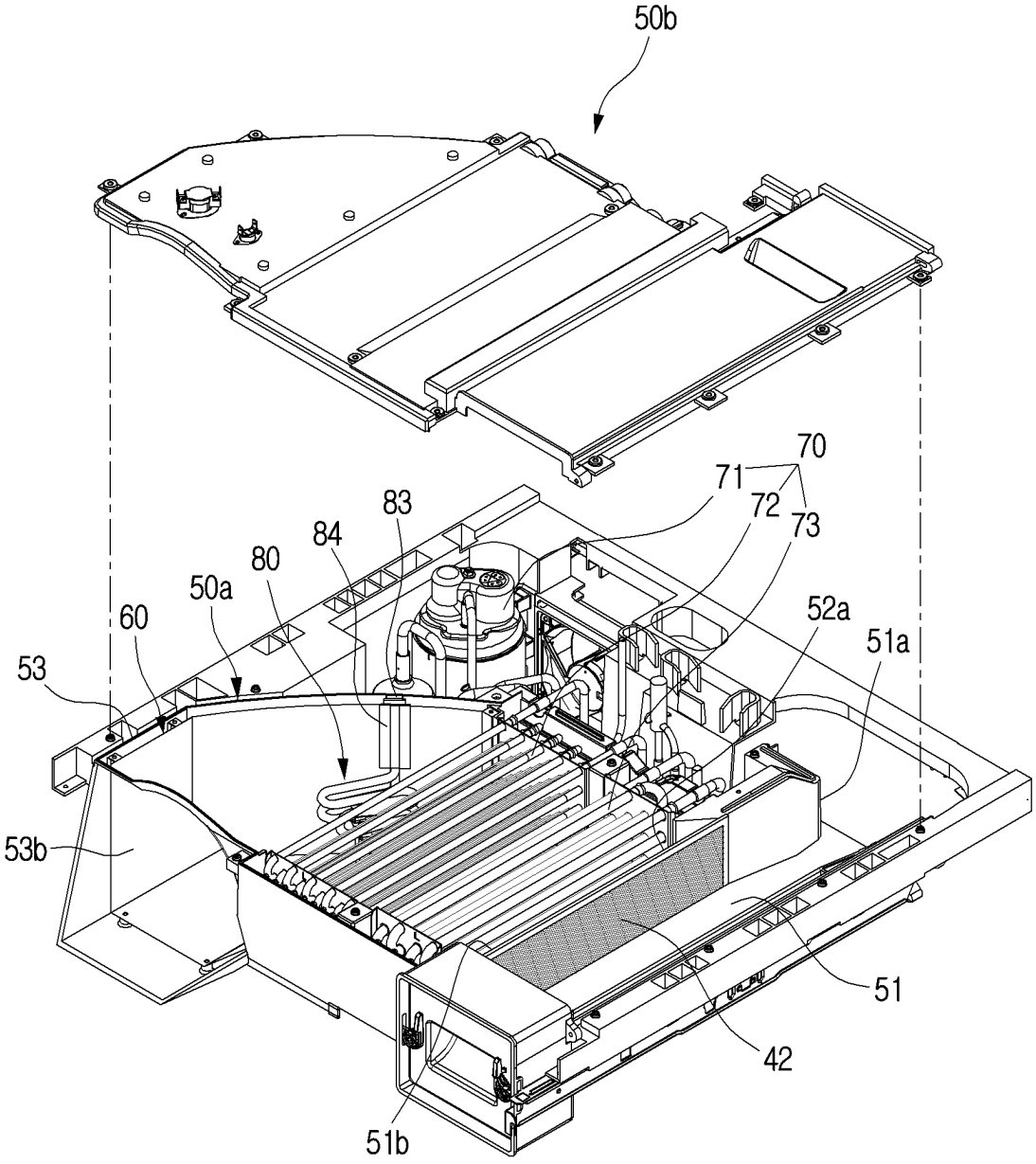


FIG. 9

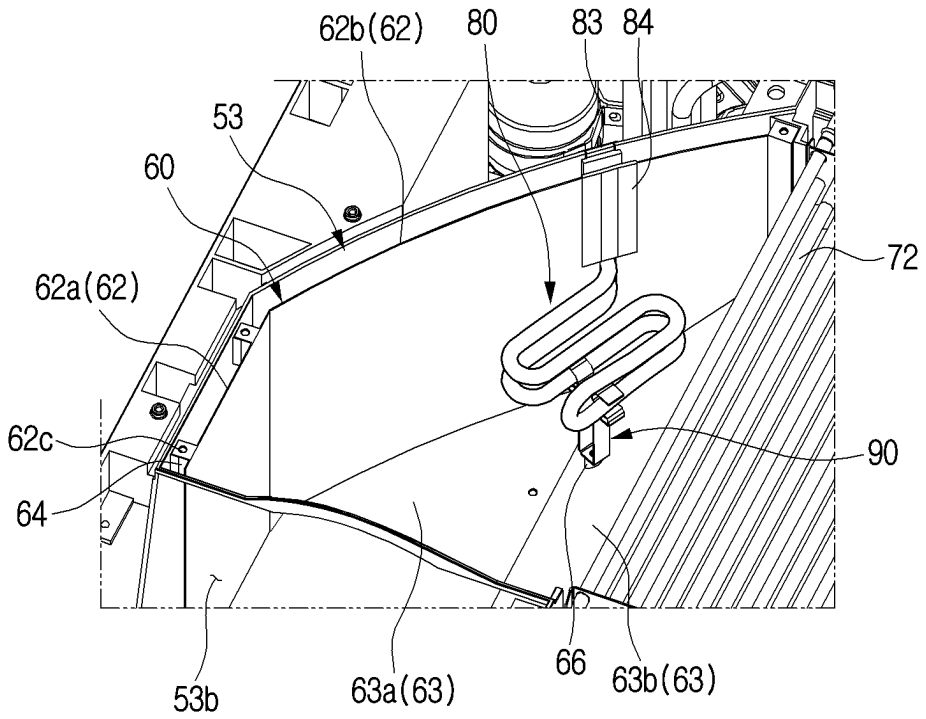
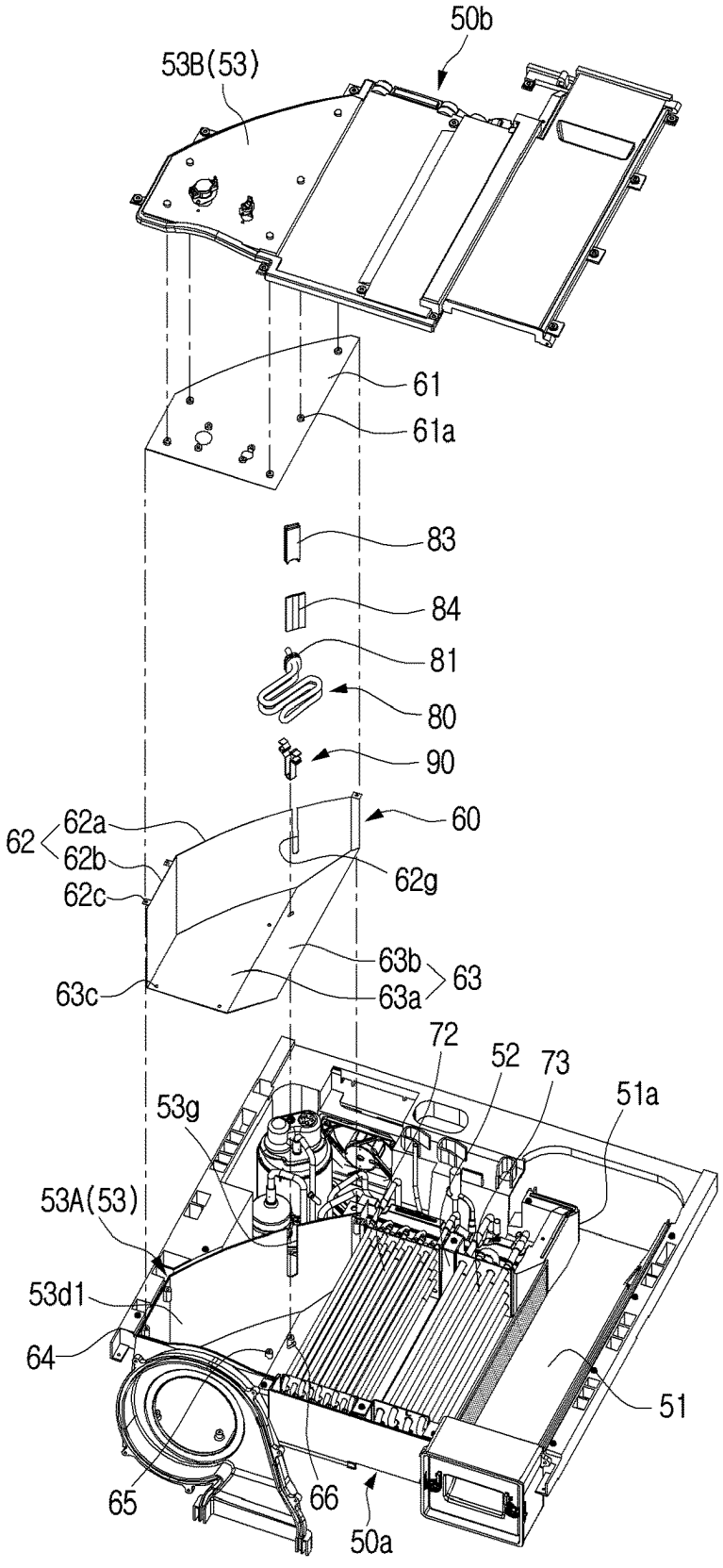


FIG. 10


50b
53B(53)
61
61a
83
84
81
80
90
62
62a
62b
62c
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62g
63
63b
63a
63c
72
52
73
51a
53g
53A(53)
53d1
64
51
65
66
50a

FIG. 11

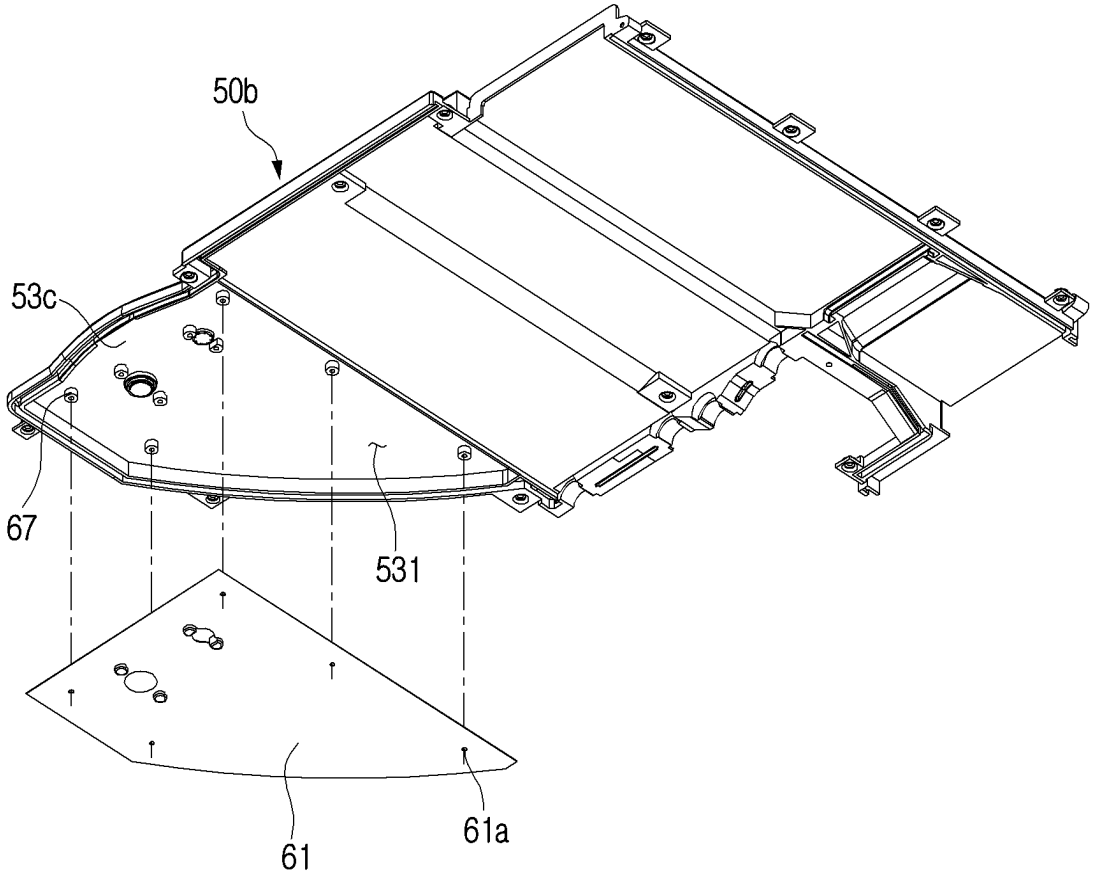


FIG. 12

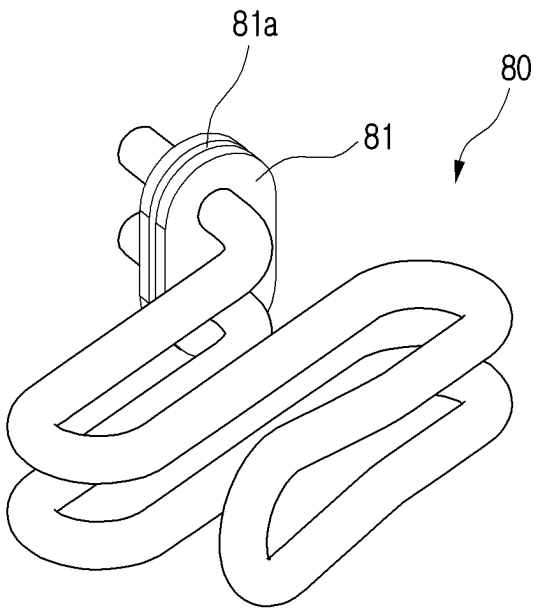


FIG. 13

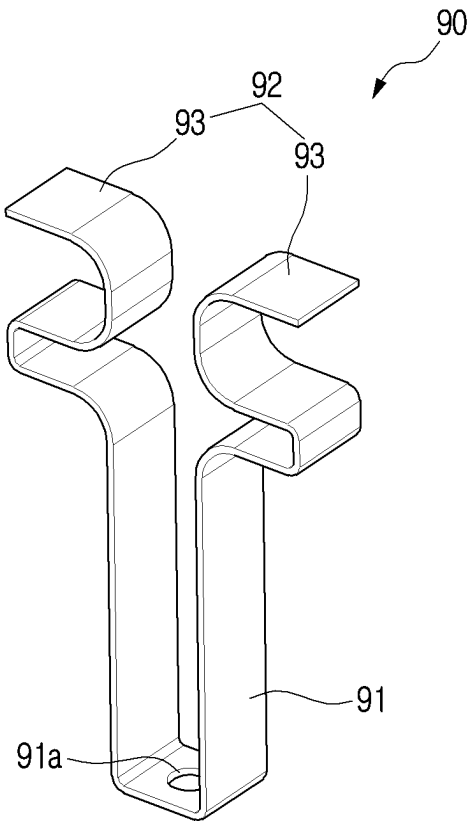
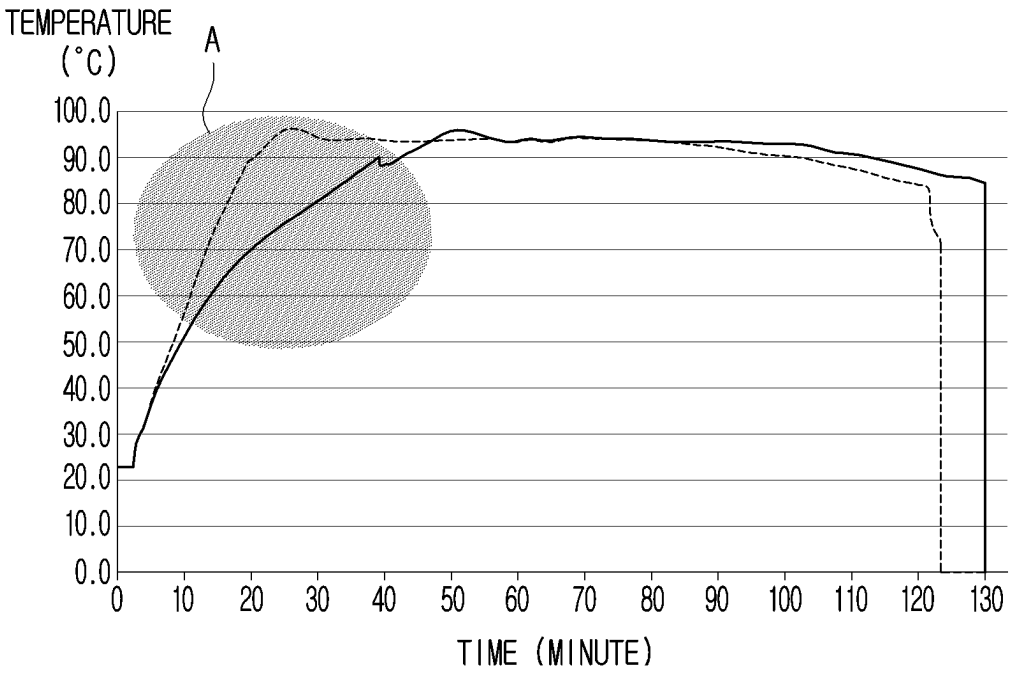


FIG. 14


TEMPERATURE
(°C)
A
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90.0
80.0
70.0
60.0
50.0
40.0
30.0
20.0
10.0
0.0
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10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
110
120
130
TIME (MINUTE)

WASHING MACHINE WITH DRYING FUNCTION

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 18/120,049, filed Mar. 10, 2023, which is a continuation of International Application No. PCT/KR2022/016768 designating the United States, filed on Oct. 28, 2022, in the Korean Intellectual Property Receiving Office and claiming priority to Korean Patent Application No. 10-2021-0193394, filed on Dec. 30, 2021, in the Korean Intellectual Property Office, the disclosures of which are incorporated by reference herein in their entireties.

BACKGROUND

1. Field

[0002] The disclosure relates to a washing machine, and more particularly to a washing machine with drying function capable of washing and drying laundry.

2. Description of Related Art

[0003] In general, washing machines which wash laundry and dryers which dry laundry are formed as separate devices.

[0004] Accordingly, consumers dry laundry which has completed washing by using a dryer after washing the laundry using a washing machine.

[0005] However, in cases where the washing machine and the dryer are formed as separate devices as described above, there is an inconvenience of a user having to wait until the laundry is completed and then move the laundry which has completed washing to the dryer.

[0006] To solve the inconvenience described above, a washing machine with drying function has been developed and is being used.

[0007] However, the washing machine with drying function of the related art has a problem of the drying function being relatively weaker compared to a dryer having only the drying function.

SUMMARY

[0008] According to an embodiment, a washing machine with drying function may include a cabinet having a laundry insertion hole at a front surface of the cabinet; a tub, inside the cabinet having a front opening so that laundry is insertable through the laundry insertion hole and then through the front opening to be received into the tub, and a back opening; a drum rotatably disposed inside the tub; and a heated air supplying device above the tub and including: an evaporator, a condenser, a heater, a heat exchange duct in which the evaporator and the condenser are disposed, an inlet duct at one side of the heat exchange duct, a supply duct at an opposite side of the heat exchange duct than the inlet duct and in which the heater is disposed, and a blower fan at a front side of the tub. The heat exchange duct, the inlet duct, the supply duct, and the blower fan are configured so that air from the back opening of the tub is introduced into the inlet duct and is guided by the inlet duct, the air guided by the inlet duct is received by the heat exchange duct and then passes through the heat exchange duct in a lateral direction of the tub, the air passed through the heat exchange duct is received by the supply duct and discharged by the supply duct in a direction toward a front side of the tub, and the blower fan forms an airflow that causes the air discharged from the supply duct to be supplied to the front opening.

[0009] The heater may be fixed to a side surface of the supply duct.

[0010] The washing machine with drying function may include a heater bracket that is installed on a lower surface of the supply duct and that supports the heater.

[0011] The washing machine with drying function may include a barrier on an inner surface of the supply duct.

[0012] The washing machine with drying function may include a barrier groove on the inner surface of the supply duct, and the barrier may be configured to be installed in the barrier groove.

[0013] The barrier may include: an upper barrier covering an upper surface of the supply duct; a side barrier covering a side surface of the supply duct; and a lower barrier covering a lower surface of the supply duct.

[0014] The barrier may be spaced apart from the inner surface of the supply duct.

[0015] The barrier may be spaced apart from a bottom of the barrier groove.

[0016] The barrier may include a metal material.

[0017] The heater may include a sheath heater.

[0018] The supply duct may include: a supply duct body to which the heater can be installed, and a supply duct cover covering an upper surface of the supply duct body and that is separable from the supply duct body.

[0019] According to an embodiment, a washing machine with drying function may include: a cabinet having a laundry insertion hole at a front surface of the cabinet; a cylindrical tub, inside the cabinet, having a front opening so that laundry is insertable through the laundry insertion hole and then through the front opening to be received into the tub, and a back opening; a diaphragm configured to connect the laundry insertion hole with the front opening of the tub; a drum rotatably disposed inside the tub; and a heated air supplying device including: an evaporator, a condenser, a heater, a heat exchange duct in which the evaporator and the condenser are disposed, an inlet duct at one side of the heat exchange duct, a supply duct at an opposite side of the heat exchange duct than the inlet duct, a barrier at an inner surface of the supply duct, a heater inside the supply duct and spaced apart from the barrier, and a blow duct at a front side of the tub connecting the supply duct to the diaphragm. The heat exchange duct, the inlet duct, the supply duct, and the blow duct are configured so that air from the back opening of the tub is introduced into the inlet duct and is guided by the inlet duct, the air guided by the inlet duct is received by the heat exchange duct and then passes through the heat exchange duct in a lateral direction of the tub, the air passed through the heat exchange duct is received by the supply duct and discharged by the supply duct in a direction toward a front side of the tub.

[0020] The washing machine with drying function may further include a heater bracket that is installed on a lower surface of the supply duct and that supports the heater.

[0021] The washing machine with drying function may further include a barrier groove on an inner surface of the supply duct and to which the barrier is fixed.

[0022] The barrier may be spaced apart from a bottom of the barrier groove.

[0023] The barrier may further include: an upper barrier covering an upper surface of the supply duct; a side barrier covering a side surface of the supply duct; and a lower barrier covering a lower surface of the supply duct.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0024] Aspects, features, and advantages of certain embodiments of the present disclosure will be more apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0025] FIG. **1** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment;

[0026] FIG. **2** is a perspective view illustrating a heated air supplying device of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment;

[0027] FIG. **3** is a plane view illustrating a heated air supplying device of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment;

[0028] FIG. **4** is a front view illustrating a heated air supplying device of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment;

[0029] FIG. **5** is a back view illustrating a heated air supplying device of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment;

[0030] FIG. **6** is a perspective view illustrating an upper duct of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment;

[0031] FIG. **7** is a partial cross-sectional view of the upper duct of FIG. **6** taken along line I-I;

[0032] FIG. **8** is a perspective view illustrating a state in which a duct cover is separated from the upper duct of FIG. **6**;

[0033] FIG. **9** is a partial perspective view illustrating a supply duct in FIG. **8**;

[0034] FIG. **10** is an exploded perspective view illustrating the upper duct of FIG. **6**;

[0035] FIG. **11** is a bottom perspective view illustrating a duct cover of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment;

[0036] FIG. **12** is a perspective view illustrating a heater of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment;

[0037] FIG. **13** is a perspective view illustrating a heater bracket of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment; and

[0038] FIG. **14** is a graph comparing drying times of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment and a washing machine with drying function without a heater.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0039] Descriptions below, which takes into reference the accompanying drawings, is provided to assist in a comprehensive understanding of various embodiments of the disclosure as defined by the claims and its equivalent. Although various specific details are included to assist in the understanding herein, the above are to be understood as merely example embodiments. Accordingly, it will be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art that various modifications may be made to various embodiments described herein without departing from the scope and spirit of the disclosure. In addition, descriptions on well-known functions and configurations will be omitted for clarity and conciseness.

[0040] Terms and words used in the description below and in the claims are not limited to its bibliographical meaning, and are used merely to assist in a clear and coherent understanding of the disclosure. Accordingly, the description below on the various embodiments of the disclosure are provided simply as examples and it will be clear to those of ordinary skill in the art that the example embodiments as defined by the appended claims and its equivalent are not for limiting the disclosure.

[0041] Terms such as first and second may be used in describing various elements, but the elements are not limited by the above-described terms. The above-described terms may be used only for the purpose of distinguishing one element from another element. For example, a first element may be designated as a second element, and likewise, a second element may be designated as a first element without exceeding the scope of protection.

[0042] The terms used in the embodiments of the disclosure may be interpreted to have meanings generally understood to one of ordinary skill in the art unless otherwise defined.

[0043] In addition, terms such as 'tip end,' 'back end,' 'upper part,' 'lower part,' 'upper end,' 'lower end,' and the like used in the disclosure may be defined based on the drawings, and forms and locations of each element are not limited by these terms.

[0044] A washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment will be described in detail below with reference to the accompanied drawings.

[0045] FIG. **1** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment.

[0046] Referring to FIG. **1**, the washing machine with drying function **1** according to an embodiment may include a cabinet **10**, a tub **20**, a drum **30**, and a heated air supplying device **40**.

[0047] The cabinet **10** may form an exterior of the washing machine with drying function **1**, and may be formed roughly in a rectangular parallelepiped shape. The cabinet **10** may include a front surface cover **11**, a back surface cover **12**, a left-side cover **13** (referring to FIG. **2**), a right-side cover **14** (referring to FIG. **2**), an upper cover **15**, and a lower cover **16**.

[0048] At a front surface of the cabinet **10**, a laundry insertion hole **18** may be provided to load and unload laundry to an inside of the cabinet **10**. That is, the laundry insertion hole **18** may be formed at the front surface cover **11** of the cabinet **10**.

[0049] At the laundry insertion hole **18**, a door **17** may be installed so as to be openable and closeable. At an upper part of the front surface cover **11** of the cabinet **10**, a control panel **19** which may control the washing machine **1** may be provided. The control panel **19** may include a plurality of buttons for controlling the washing machine **1**, a display to show the washing machine **1** and information associated with a washing process, and a processor configured to control the washing machine.

[0050] The tub **20** may be installed at the inside of the cabinet **10**, and may be formed in a hollow cylindrical shape on which a front opening **21***a* is provided toward the laundry insertion hole **18** of the front surface cover **11**. The front opening **21***a* of the tub **20** may be formed to have a size

corresponding to the laundry insertion hole **18**. At a back end of the tub **20**, a back surface plate **22** may be provided. At the back surface plate **22**, a back opening **22***a* through which air inside the tub **20** is discharged may be provided.

[0051] The tub **20** may contain washing water of a predetermined amount necessary in washing. The tub **20** may be supported and fixed at an inner surface of the cabinet **10** by a tension spring, an oil damper, and the like.

[0052] Between the tub **20** and the front surface cover **11** of the cabinet **10**, a diaphragm **25** may be installed. The diaphragm **25** may be formed roughly in an annular shape. One end of the diaphragm **25** may be fixed to a front surface **21** of the tub **20** at which the front opening **21***a* is provided, and the other end of the diaphragm **25** may be fixed to an inner circumference of the laundry insertion hole **18** of the front surface cover **11** of the cabinet **10**.

[0053] The diaphragm **25** may be configured such that the washing water contained in the tub **20** is not leaked to an outside of the tub **20**, and may form a pathway through which the laundry passes. In addition, the diaphragm **25** may block vibration which is generated when the drum **30** is rotated from being transferred to the front surface cover **11** of the cabinet **10** through the tub **20**.

[0054] The drum **30** may be installed at an inside of the tub **20** to be rotatable, and may be formed roughly in a hollow cylindrical shape. At a front surface of the drum **30**, a drum opening **31***a* corresponding to the laundry insertion hole **18** of the cabinet **10** and the front opening **21***a* of the tub **20** may be provided, and at a back end of the drum **30**, a back surface plate **32** may be provided.

[0055] At a side surface **33** of the drum **30**, a plurality of through-holes **33***a* through which the washing water may pass may be provided. The back surface plate **32** of the drum **30** may be provided with a plurality of through-holes. Accordingly, air inside the drum may be discharged to a space between the drum **30** and the tub **20** through the plurality of through-holes **33***a* formed at the side surface **33** of the drum **30** and the plurality of through-holes formed at the back surface plate **32**.

[0056] In addition, at an inner circumferential surface of the drum **30**, a plurality of lifts **34** which may raise the laundry may be provided. The drum **30** may rotate about a central axis by a driving device which includes a driving motor **35** installed at the back surface plate **32**.

[0057] A water supply device for supplying water to the tub **20** may be provided above the tub **20**, and a water draining device for draining water from the tub **20** to the outside may be disposed below the tub **20**.

[0058] The water supplying device may include a water supply pipe connected with an external water supply source and a water supply valve which opens and closes the water supply pipe. One end of the water supply pipe may be connected to the diaphragm **25**. The water supply pipe may be provided with a detergent intake part.

[0059] The water draining device may be formed to discharge the washing water contained in the tub **20** to the outside of the washing machine with drying function **1**. The water draining device may be installed below the tub **20**, and include a pump and a water drain pipe. When the pump is operated, the washing water contained in the tub **20** may be discharged to the outside of the washing machine **1** through the water drain pipe.

[0060] At an upper side of the tub **20**, the heated air supplying device **40** may be installed to dry the laundry which was washed by a rotation of the drum **30**. The heated air supplying device **40** may be formed to generate heated air by heating and drying air which is discharged from the tub **20** and to circulate the heated air through the inside of the tub **20** so as to dry the laundry which is located at an inside of the drum **30**. In the description below, heated air may refer to air which is heated and dried by the heated air supplying device **40**.

[0061] The heated air supplying device **40** according to an embodiment will be described in detail below with reference to FIGS. **2** to **5**.

[0062] FIG. **2** is a perspective view illustrating a heated air supplying device of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment. FIG. **3** is a plane view illustrating the heated air supplying device of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment. FIG. **4** is a front view illustrating the heated air supplying device of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment. FIG. **5** is a back view illustrating the heated air supplying device of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment.

[0063] Referring to FIGS. **2** to **5**, the washing machine with drying function **1** according to an embodiment may include the tub **20**, the drum **30**, and the heated air supplying device **40**.

[0064] The heated air supplying device **40** may be installed above the tub **20**, and may be formed so as to dry the laundry which is washed by the rotation of the drum **30**. The heated air supplying device **40** may be formed to generate heated air by drying and heating air which is discharged from the tub **20** and to circulate the heated air through the inside of the tub **20** so as to dry the laundry which is located at the inside of the drum **30**.

[0065] Referring to FIG. **2**, the heated air supplying device **40** may include an upper duct **50** which is provided at the upper side of the tub **20**, a back duct **55** which is provided at a back side of the tub **20**, a blower fan **41** which generates a circulating airflow, and a heat exchange part **70** which removes moisture included in an airflow and heats the airflow.

[0066] The upper duct **50** may be formed to connect the back duct **55** and the blower fan **41** which is installed at the front side of the tub **20**. The upper duct **50** may be formed roughly in an L-shape. At a back surface of the upper duct **50**, an inlet port through which air that is discharged from the tub **20** is introduced may be provided, and at a front surface of the upper duct **50**, an outlet port through which air is discharged may be provided. Here, the front surface and the back surface of the upper duct **50** may respectively mean surfaces corresponding to the front surface cover **11** and the back surface cover **12** of the cabinet **10**.

[0067] The upper duct **50** may be formed such that the airflow which is introduced from the back side is bent in a right-angle direction, moved in a straight line for a certain distance, and then bent again in the right-angle direction to be discharged to the outside toward the front side of the cabinet **10**. That is, the upper duct **50** may form an upper flow path which guides the airflow such that the airflow introduced from the back side is bent in a right-angle direction, moved in a straight line for a certain distance, and then bent again in the right-angle direction to be discharged to the outside toward the front side of the cabinet **10**

[0068] The upper duct **50** may be installed adjacent to the front surface **21** of the tub **20**. Accordingly, a space **44** in

which the compressor **71** of the heat exchange part **70** is disposed may be provided between the back surface of the tub **20** and the upper duct **50** above the tub **20**. Here, the front surface **21** of the tub **20** may refer to a surface at which the front opening **21***a* is formed. One side of the tub **20** may refer to a left side or a right side based on the front surface **21** of the tub **20**, and the other side of the tub **20** may refer to the opposite side of the one side of the tub **20** based on the front surface **21** of the tub **20**.

[0069] In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **2** and **3**, the upper duct **50** may be installed to be adjacent to the front surface **21** of the tub **20**. Accordingly, the space **44** in which the compressor **71** is to be installed may be provided between the upper duct **50** and the back surface of the tub **20** above the tub **20**.

[0070] The inlet port **51***a* of the upper duct **50** may be provided to be adjacent to the one side and the back surface of the tub **20**. The inlet port **51***a* of the upper duct **50** may be in communication with the outlet port **55***b* of the back duct **55**. Accordingly, the air that is discharged from the tub **20** may be introduced into the upper duct **50** in a direction from the back side of the tub **20** toward the front side of the tub **20**.

[0071] An outlet port **53***b* of the upper duct **50** may be provided to be adjacent to the other side and the front surface **21** of the tub **20**. Accordingly, the air that is discharged from the upper duct **50** may be discharged toward the front side of the tub **20**.

[0072] The inlet port **51***a* and the outlet port **53***b* of the upper duct **50** may be provided in a diagonal direction above the tub **20**. In other words, the inlet port **51***a* of the upper duct **50** may be provided at one side edge of the tub **20**, and the outlet port **53***b* of the upper duct **50** may be provided at other side edge of the tub **20** which is positioned at an opposite side in the diagonal direction.

[0073] At the outlet port **53***b* of the upper duct **50**, the blower fan **41** may be installed. The blower fan **41** may be contained inside a blow duct **54** which connects the upper duct **50** and the tub **20**. An inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54** may be formed so as to suction air that is being discharged from the outlet port **53***b* of the upper duct **50** toward the front side, and an outlet **54***b* of the blow duct **54** may be provided to discharge the airflow toward the diaphragm **25**.

[0074] The upper duct **50** may include an inlet duct **51**, a heat exchange duct **52**, and a supply duct **53**.

[0075] The inlet duct **51** may be provided to be adjacent to the one side of the tub **20** above the tub **20**, and formed for the airflow which is discharged from the back opening **22***a* of the back surface plate **22** of the tub **20** to be introduced. The inlet duct **51** may be formed so that the introduced airflow flows in a straight line.

[0076] An inlet **51***a* of the inlet duct **51** may be connected with an outlet **55***b* of the back duct **55**. The inlet **51***a* of the inlet duct **51** may form the inlet port **51***a* of the upper duct **50**.

[0077] The inlet **51***a* of the inlet duct **51** may be provided at the back end of the inlet duct **51**, and an outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be provided at one side surface of the inlet duct **51**, that is, the side surface that contacts the heat exchange duct **52**. Accordingly, the outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may form a right-angle with the inlet **51***a* of the inlet duct **51**.

[0078] A lint filter **42** may be installed at the inlet duct **51**. The lint filter **42** may be installed to be separable from the inlet duct **51**. The lint filter **42** may be installed to be attachable to or detachable from the inlet duct **51** from the front side of the tub **20**.

[0079] The outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be formed to be greater than the inlet **51***a*. For example, the outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be formed to be greater by two times or more than the inlet **51***a* of the inlet duct **51**. As described above, based on forming the outlet **51*b*** of the inlet duct **51** to be greater than the inlet, the size of the lint filter **42** that is installed at the outlet **51*b*** of the inlet duct **51** may be formed to be greater.

[0080] That is, the lint filter **42** may be formed to have a size corresponding to the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52**. When the size of the lint filter **42** is made greater, resistance in the duct by the lint filter **42** may be reduced.

[0081] The inlet duct **51** may have a rectangular cross-section, and the back end thereof may be connected to the back duct **55**. That is, the inlet **51***a* may be provided at the back surface of the inlet duct **51**. The inlet duct **51** may be installed to be adjacent to the one side of the tub **20** above the tub **20**. A front surface of the inlet duct **51** may be adjacent to the front surface **21** of the tub **20**, and the back surface thereof may be installed to be adjacent to the back surface of the tub **20**.

[0082] The outlet **51***b* may be provided at the one side surface of the inlet duct **51**. The outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds to an inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52**. The outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** and the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be formed in a rectangular shape. The outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be formed to be the same as or greater than the size of the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52**. A width of the outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be smaller than a length of the inlet duct **51**.

[0083] The airflow introduced into the inlet **51***a* of the inlet duct **51** may be introduced into the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52** after passing the lint filter **42** which is installed at the outlet **51***b*.

[0084] The heat exchange duct **52** may be provided at a right-angle with respect to the inlet duct **51** above the tub **20**, and connected at one side of the inlet duct **51**. The heat exchange duct **52** may be formed so that the introduced airflow flows in a straight line.

[0085] A width of the heat exchange duct **52** may be maximized as much as possible to maximize a heat transfer area. However, the width of the heat exchange duct **52** may be smaller than the length of the inlet duct **51**. For example, the width of the heat exchange duct **52** may be formed to be greater than or equal to half of a length of the tub **20**. Accordingly, a part of the inlet duct **51** may protruded from a back surface of the heat exchange duct **52** toward the back surface cover **12** of the cabinet **10**.

[0086] The inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be provided at one end of the heat exchange duct **52**, and an outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be provided at the other end of the heat exchange duct **52**. That is, the inlet **52***a* and the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be provided to face each other in a straight line. The inlet **52***a* and the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be formed to be the same as the cross-section of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0087] The inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be connected with the outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51**. The outlet

51*b* of the inlet duct **51** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds to the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0088] The heat exchange duct **52** may have a rectangular cross-section, and both side ends thereof may be opened. The heat exchange duct **52** may be formed to have a widest possible cross-section area so as to fully maximize the heat transfer area.

[0089] The heat exchange duct **52** may be connected at a right-angle with the inlet duct **51**. That is, the heat exchange duct **52** and the inlet duct **51** may be connected to each other so that a center line in a length direction of the heat exchange duct **52** and a center line in a length direction of the inlet duct **51** may be connected to form a right-angle.

[0090] The inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be connected with the outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51**. The outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds to the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0091] The heat exchange duct **52** may be installed above the tub **20** so that the front surface thereof is adjacent to the front surface **21** of the tub **20**. The back surface of the heat exchange duct **52** may be spaced apart by a certain distance from the back surface of the tub **20**.

[0092] At an inside of the heat exchange duct **52**, an evaporator **73** and a condenser **72** of the heat exchange part **70** may be installed. Accordingly, the airflow that flows through the heat exchange duct **52** may sequentially pass the evaporator **73** and the condenser **72**.

[0093] The supply duct **53** may be provided to be adjacent to the other side of the tub **20** above the tub **20**, and formed to discharge the airflow introduced from the heat exchange duct **52** to the blower fan **41**. The supply duct **53** may be connected with the heat exchange duct **52** at a right-angle. The supply duct **53** may be formed for the inlet airflow to flow in a straight line.

[0094] An inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** may be connected with the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52**. The inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** may be provided at one side surface of the supply duct **53**, that is, a side surface which contacts the heat exchange duct **52**. The inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds to the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0095] An outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** may be formed at a front surface of the supply duct **53**, and provided at a right-angle with the inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53**. The outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** may be connected with a suction hole of the blower fan **41**, that is, the inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54**. The outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** may form the outlet port **53***b* of the upper duct **50**.

[0096] The outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** may be formed to discharge air toward the front side of the tub **20**. Accordingly, the air may be discharged from the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** in a direction that is roughly perpendicular to the front surface of the cabinet **10**.

[0097] For example, the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** and the suction hole of the blower fan **41** which is installed at the front side of the tub **20**, that is, the inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54**, may be formed for the airflow that is discharged from the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** to be suctioned into the blower fan **41** in a straight line.

[0098] The supply duct **53** may have a rectangular cross-section, and a front end thereof may be connected with the blower fan **41**. That is, the outlet **53***b* may be provided at the front end of the supply duct **53**. The outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds with the suction hole of the blower fan **41**.

[0099] The supply duct **53** may be installed to be adjacent to the other side of the tub **20** above the tub **20**. The front surface of the supply duct **53** may be adjacent to the front surface **21** of the tub **20**, and the back surface thereof may be installed to be spaced apart at a certain distance from the back surface of the tub **20**.

[0100] The supply duct **53** may be connected at a right-angle with the heat exchange duct **52**. That is, the supply duct **53** and the heat exchange duct **52** may be connected to each other so that the center line in the length direction of the heat exchange duct **52** and a center line in a length direction of the supply duct **53** form a right-angle.

[0101] The inlet **53***a* may be provided at the one side surface of the supply duct **53**. The inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds to the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52**. For example, the inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** and the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be formed in a rectangular shape. The supply duct **53** may be formed to have a length that is roughly the same as the width of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0102] The back surface and other side surface of the supply duct **53** may be connected by an inclined surface **53***d***1**. Based on the above, the airflow introduced into the inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** may collide with the inclined surface **53***d***1** and be discharged through the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53**. When the inclined surface **53***d***1** is installed at the supply duct **53** as described above, the airflow introduced into the supply duct **53** may be effectively guided to the outlet **53***b*. In another example, the inclined surface **53***d***1** of the supply duct **53** may be formed as a curved surface which can guide the airflow introduced into the inlet **53***a* to the outlet **53***b*.

[0103] At an inside of the supply duct **53**, a heater **80** may be installed.

[0104] The front surface of the inlet duct **51**, a front surface of the heat exchange duct **52**, and the front surface of the supply duct **53** may be positioned on roughly a same plane. In addition, between the one side surface of the inlet duct **51**, the back surface of the heat exchange duct **52**, the back surface of the supply duct **53**, and the back surface of the tub **20**, the space **44** may be formed. In the space **44**, the compressor **71**, an expansion valve **74**, and a refrigerant pipe **75** of the heat exchange part **70** may be installed.

[0105] The back duct **55** may be provided at the back surface plate **22** of the tub **20**, and formed to guide the airflow that is discharged from the tub **20** toward the upper side of the tub **20**. At the back surface plate **22** of the tub **20**, the back opening **22***a* through which the airflow is discharged may be provided. An inlet of the back duct **55** may be connected with the back opening **22***a* of the tub **20**.

[0106] The outlet **55***b* of the back duct **55** may be provided to be biased to one side on the back surface of the tub **20**, and connected with the inlet **51***a* of the inlet duct **51**. The outlet **55***b* of the back duct **55** may be formed to have a shape and size corresponding to the inlet **51***a* of the inlet duct **51**. Accordingly, the air that is discharged from the back opening **22***a* of the tub **20** may be introduced into the inlet duct **51** through the back duct **55**.

[0107] The back duct **55** may be installed to be biased toward one side on the back surface plate **22** of the tub **20**.

[0108] The blower fan **41** may be formed to form a flow of air, that is, an airflow so that the air that is discharged from the supply duct **53** may be supplied to the front opening **21***a* of the tub **20**.

[0109] The blower fan **41** may be installed at the front surface **21** of the tub **20**. The blower fan **41** may be formed for the airflow to be introduced into the back surface thereof and discharged through a lower surface thereof. That is, the blower fan **41** may be formed for a discharge direction of the airflow to roughly form 90 degrees with an inlet direction of the airflow. Accordingly, when the blower fan **41** is operated, the air which is discharged from an outlet of the supply duct **53** toward the front side of the tub **20** may be introduced into the blower fan **41**, and the air may be discharged downwards from the blower fan **41** toward the diaphragm **25**.

[0110] The blower fan **41** may be contained at an inside of the blow duct **54**. The blow duct **54** may be installed at the front surface **21** of the tub **20**, and connect the supply duct **53** and the diaphragm **25**. Accordingly, the air that is discharged from the supply duct **53** may be supplied to an inside of the diaphragm **25** through the blow duct **54**.

[0111] The blow duct **54** may be formed for the airflow that is discharged from the blower fan **41** to be supplied to the diaphragm **25** positioned below. The blow duct **54** may be formed for the airflow that is formed by the blower fan **41** to be supplied in a straight line to the inside of the diaphragm **25**.

[0112] The inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54** may be provided at the back surface thereof, and form the suction hole of the blower fan **41**. The inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54** may be connected with the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53**. The inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54** and the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** may be positioned in a straight line. That is, the inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54** may be directly connected to the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53**.

[0113] The outlet **54***b* of the blow duct **54** may be provided at a lower surface of the blow duct **54**, and connected with an inlet port **25***a* of the diaphragm **25**. The outlet **54***b* of the blow duct **54** and the inlet port **25***a* of the diaphragm **25** may be positioned in a straight line. That is, the outlet **54***b* of the blow duct **54** may be directly connected with the inlet port **25***a* of the diaphragm **25**.

[0114] At an upper part of the diaphragm **25**, a connecting part **26** to which the blow duct **54** is connected may be provided. The connecting part **26** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds to the lower surface of the blow duct **54**, and the inlet port **25***a* corresponding to the outlet **54***b* of the blow duct **54** may be provided inside the connecting part **26**.

[0115] Accordingly, the airflow that is discharged by the blower fan **41** may be introduced into the inside of the diaphragm **25**, that is, the inside of the drum **30**, in a straight line through the blow duct **54** and the connecting part **26**.

[0116] As the blower fan **41**, a sirocco fan may be used.

[0117] When the blower fan **41** rotates, the air may be suctioned into the inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54** and then discharged through the outlet **54***b* provided on the lower surface of the blow duct **54**. Accordingly, the direction of the airflow discharged from the outlet **54***b* of the blow duct **54** may roughly form 90 degrees with the direction of the airflow which is suctioned into the inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54**.

[0118] The heat exchange part **70** may be formed to remove moisture from the air that passes the heat exchange duct **52** and heat the air, thereby generating dried air in high temperature. The heat exchange part **70** may be formed as a heat pump. If necessary, the dried air in high temperature may be referred to as the heated air.

[0119] The heat exchange part **70** may include the compressor **71**, the evaporator **73**, the condenser **72**, and the expansion valve **74**. In addition, the heat exchange part **70** may include the refrigerant pipe **75** through which the refrigerant circulates by connecting the compressor **71**, the evaporator **73**, the condenser **72**, and the expansion valve **74**.

[0120] The heat exchange part **70** may be formed to remove the moisture contained in the air and heat the air through heat exchange between the refrigerant and the air while the refrigerant circulates through the condenser **72**, the expansion valve **74**, and the evaporator **73** by the compressor **71**.

[0121] The evaporator **73** and the condenser **72** may be installed at the heat exchange duct **52**. The evaporator **73** and the condenser **72** may be installed at an inside of the heat exchange duct **52** to be spaced apart at a certain distance, and the condenser **72** may be installed at a downstream of the evaporator **73** in a circulating direction of the airflow.

[0122] The evaporator **73** may be installed to be adjacent to the inlet duct **51**, and may remove the moisture by cooling humid air that is discharged from the tub **20**.

[0123] The condenser **72** may be installed to be adjacent to the supply duct **53**, and may heat the air that passed the evaporator **73**. Accordingly, the dried air in high temperature may be discharged into the diaphragm **25** by the blower fan **41**.

[0124] The compressor **71** may be installed at an outer side of the upper duct **50**, that is, the supply duct **53** above the tub **20**. That is, the compressor **71** may be installed in the space **44** between the supply duct **53** and the back surface of the tub **20**. A refrigerant pipe **45** may be installed in the space **44** that is formed by the inlet duct **51**, the heat exchange duct **52**, the supply duct **53**, and the back surface of the tub **20** above the tub **20**.

[0125] The inlet duct **51**, the heat exchange duct **52**, the supply duct **53**, the back duct **55**, and the blow duct **54** may respectively form an inlet flow path, a heat exchange flow path, a supply flow path, a back flow path, and a blow flow path.

[0126] For example, an inner space of the inlet duct **51** may form the inlet flow path, an inner space of the heat exchange duct **52** may form the heat exchange flow path, and an inner space of the supply duct **53** may form the supply flow path. In addition, an inner space of the back duct **55** may form the back flow path, and an inner space of the blow duct **54** may form a blow flow path.

[0127] The inlet flow path, the heat exchange flow path, and the supply flow path may form an upper flow path which is provided at the upper side of the tub **20**. Accordingly, the tub **20**, the back flow path which is provided at the back surface of the tub **20**, the upper flow path which is provided at the upper side of the tub **20**, and the blow flow path which is provided at the front surface of the tub **20** may form a circulating flow path.

[0128] Accordingly, when the blower fan **41** which is disposed in the blow flow path is operated, the air inside the drum **30** may circulate along the circulating flow path.

[0129] The upper duct **50** of the washing machine with drying function **1** according to an embodiment will be described in detail below with reference to FIGS. **6** to **11**.

[0130] FIG. **6** is a perspective view illustrating an upper duct of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment. FIG. **7** is a partial cross-sectional view of the upper duct of FIG. **6** taken along line I-I. FIG. **8** is a perspective view illustrating a state in which a duct cover is separated from the upper duct of FIG. **6**. FIG. **9** is a partial perspective view illustrating a supply duct in FIG. **8**. FIG. **10** is an exploded perspective view illustrating the upper duct of FIG. **6**. FIG. **11** is a bottom perspective view illustrating the duct cover of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment.

[0131] Referring to FIGS. **6** to **10**, the upper duct **50** of the washing machine with drying function **1** according to an embodiment may include the inlet duct **51**, the heat exchange duct **52**, and the supply duct **53**.

[0132] The inlet duct **51** may have a rectangular cross-section, and the back end thereof may be connected to the back duct **55**. That is, the inlet **51***a* may be provided at the back surface of the inlet duct **51**. The inlet duct **51** may be installed to be adjacent to the one side of the tub **20** above the tub **20**. The front surface of the inlet duct **51** may be adjacent to the front surface **21** of the tub **20**, and the back surface thereof may be installed to be adjacent to the back surface of the tub **20**.

[0133] The outlet **51***b* may be provided at the one side surface of the inlet duct **51**. The outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be greater than the inlet **51***a* thereof. The outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds to the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0134] The outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** and the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be formed in a rectangular shape. The width of the outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be smaller than the length of the inlet duct **51**.

[0135] The inlet **51***a* and the outlet **51***b* of the inlet duct **51** may be disposed at a right-angle.

[0136] The heat exchange duct **52** may have a rectangular cross-section, and both side ends thereof may be opened. The heat exchange duct **52** may be formed to have a widest possible cross-section area so as to fully maximize the heat transfer area.

[0137] The inlet **52***a* and the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be formed to have a cross-section that is the same as the cross-section of the heat exchange duct **52**. The heat exchange duct **52** may be disposed at a right-angle with the inlet duct **51**.

[0138] The outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be provided to face the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52**. That is, the outlet **52***b* and the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be disposed in a straight line.

[0139] The evaporator **73** and the condenser **72** of the heat exchange part **70** may be installed at the inside of the heat exchange duct **52**. Accordingly, the airflow that flows through the heat exchange duct **52** may sequentially pass the evaporator **73** and the condenser **72**.

[0140] The supply duct **53** may have a rectangular cross-section, and the outlet **53***b* thereof may be provided at the front end of the supply duct **53**. The outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds with the inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54**.

[0141] The supply duct **53** may be disposed at a right-angle with respect to the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0142] The supply duct **53** may be disposed at an opposite side with the inlet duct **51** based on the heat exchange duct **52**. That is, the inlet duct **51** may be disposed at the one end of the heat exchange duct **52**, and the supply duct **53** may be disposed at the other end of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0143] The inlet **53***a* may be provided at the one side surface of the supply duct **53**. The inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** may be formed to have a shape and size that corresponds to the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52**. For example, the inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** and the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52** may be formed in a rectangular shape. The supply duct **53** may be formed to have a length that is roughly the same as the width of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0144] The inlet **53***a* and the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** may be disposed at a right-angle.

[0145] The supply duct **53** may include an inclined surface. For example, the supply duct **53** may include the inclined surface **53***d***1** that connects the back surface and the other side surface of the supply duct **53**. The airflow introduced into the inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** may be discharged through the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** by colliding with the inclined surface **53***d***1**. In another example, the inclined surface **53***d***1** may form a curved surface which can convert a moving direction of the airflow introduced into the inlet **53***a* by roughly 90 degrees and guide to the outlet **53***b*.

[0146] The supply duct **53** may be formed to have a size corresponding to the suction hole of the blower fan **41**. For example, a height of the supply duct **53** may be greater than a height of the heat exchange duct **52**. At this time, because the supply duct **53** is positioned to be adjacent to the other side of the tub **20**, it may be formed to be higher than the height of the heat exchange duct **52** which is positioned at a center of a width direction of the tub **20**. That is, because the supply duct **53** is biased to one side from the center of the width direction of the tub **20** having a cylindrical shape, the height of the supply duct **53** may be made higher than the heat exchange duct **52** which is positioned at the center of the width direction.

[0147] An upper surface of the supply duct **53** may be formed with roughly a same plane as with an upper surface of the heat exchange duct **52**. A lower surface of the supply duct **53** may be formed to be positioned lower than a lower surface **52***c* of the heat exchange duct **52**. The lower surface of the supply duct **53** may include a horizontal surface **53***c***1** and a lower inclined surface **53***c***2**. The lower inclined surface **53***c***2** may be formed to connect the horizontal surface **53***c***1** of the supply duct **53** and the lower surface **52***c* of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0148] The side surface **53***d* of the supply duct **53** may be formed to connect the upper surface and a lower surface **53***c***1**. The inclined surface **53***d***1** which is extended from the side surface **53***d* of the supply duct **53** may be formed to connect the upper surface and the lower surface, that is, the horizontal surface **53***c***1** and the lower inclined surface **53***c***2**.

[0149] The front surface of the inlet duct **51**, the front surface of the heat exchange duct **52**, and the front surface of the supply duct **53** may be positioned on roughly the same plane. That is, the front surface of the inlet duct **51**, the front surface of the heat exchange duct **52**, and the front surface of the supply duct **53** may form the front surface of the upper duct **50**.

[0150] The inlet duct **51**, the heat exchange duct **52**, and the supply duct **53** may be formed as one body. That is, the

inlet duct **51**, the heat exchange duct **52**, and the supply duct **53** may form the upper duct **50** by being formed as one body.

[0151] As shown in FIGS. **8** and **10**, the upper duct **50** may include a duct body **50***a* and a duct cover **50***b*. The duct body **50***a* may be formed in a U-shape with a flat bottom and an upper surface thereof may be opened. The duct cover **50***b* may be formed to cover the upper surface of the duct body **50***a*. That is, the duct cover **50***b* is coupled to the upper surface of the duct body **50***a*, thereby forming the upper duct **50**.

[0152] When the duct cover **50***b* is opened, the evaporator **73**, the condenser **72**, and the heater **80** may be installed at an inside of the duct body **50***a*.

[0153] At the inside of the supply duct **53**, the heater **80** may be installed. That is, the heater **80** may be disposed at a downstream of the condenser **72** based on the circulating direction of air.

[0154] The heater **80** may be formed to heat the air that passes through the supply duct **53**.

[0155] For the heater **80**, a heater that is small in size with strong heating capabilities may be used. That is, for the heater **80**, a heater with strong heating capabilities per unit area may be used. For example, a sheath heater may be used as the heater **80**.

[0156] The heater **80** may be formed to minimize the flow resistance. For example, the heater **80** may be formed in a shape in which a cross-section area is minimized in the air flowing direction. To this end, a sheath heater **80** of a circular pipe shape may be bent several times to form the heater **80**.

[0157] FIG. **12** is a perspective view illustrating a heater of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment.

[0158] Referring to FIG. **12**, the heater **80** may be formed by forming a U-shape with a narrow width by folding the sheath heater of a certain length in half, and bending the sheath heater which is bent in the U-shape twice to the U-shape with the narrow width to the upper side.

[0159] At one end of the heater **80**, a fixing bracket **81** for fixing the heater **80** may be installed. The fixing bracket **81** may be formed so as to be inserted into a fixing groove **53***g* of the supply duct **53**.

[0160] The heater **80** may be fixed to one side surface of the supply duct **53**. The heater **80** maybe protruded to the inside of the supply duct **53**, and wiring which is connected to the heater **80** may be disposed at the outer side of the supply duct **53**.

[0161] Atone side surface of the supply duct **53**, the fixing groove **53***g* may be provided. A depth of the fixing groove **53***g* may be formed up to a height which is roughly half of the height of the supply duct **53** from the upper end of the supply duct **53**.

[0162] When the fixing bracket **81** of the heater **80** is inserted in the fixing groove **53***g* of the supply duct **53**, the heater **80** may be fixed to the supply duct **53**.

[0163] At both side surfaces of the fixing bracket **81**, a pair of guiding grooves **81***a* into which both side walls of the supply duct **53** forming the fixing groove **53***g* can be inserted may be provided. Accordingly, when the pair of guiding grooves **81***a* of the fixing bracket **81** is inserted into both side walls of the supply duct **53** that form the fixing groove **53***g*, the fixing bracket **81** of the heater **80** may be fixed to the side surface of the supply duct **53**.

[0164] At the fixing groove **53***g* of the supply duct **53**, a blocking piece **83** that blocks the fixing groove **53***g* may be installed. Accordingly, when the fixing bracket **81** of the heater **80** is inserted into the fixing groove **53***g* and then the blocking piece **83** is inserted into the fixing groove **53***g*, the heater **80** may be fixed to the supply duct **53**.

[0165] At both side surfaces of the blocking piece **83**, a pair of guiding grooves into which both side walls of the fixing groove **53***g* can be inserted may be provided. Accordingly, when the pair of guiding grooves of the blocking piece **83** is inserted into both side walls of the supply duct **53** that form the fixing groove **53***g*, the blocking piece **83** may be fixed to the side surface of the supply duct **53**.

[0166] In the embodiment, the heater **80** may be fixed to the inclined surface **53***d***1** of the supply duct **53**. The fixing bracket **81** of the heater **80** may be inserted into the fixing groove **53***g* which is formed at the inclined surface **53***d***1** of the supply duct **53**.

[0167] The heater **80** may be supported by a heater bracket **90** that is installed at the supply duct **53**. When the heater **80** is supported by the heater bracket **90**, the heater **80** may be prevented from contacting an inner surface of the supply duct **53**. The heater bracket **90** may be installed at the lower surface **53***c***1** or at the lower inclined surface **53***c***2** of the supply duct **53**.

[0168] Referring to FIGS. **7** and **9**, the heater bracket **90** may be installed at the lower inclined surface **53***c***2** of the supply duct **53** according to an embodiment.

[0169] The heater bracket **90** may be fixed to the lower inclined surface **53***c***2** of the supply duct **53** and formed so as to support the heater **80**. The heater bracket **90** may be formed to support a leading end portion of the heater **80**.

[0170] FIG. **13** is a perspective view illustrating a heater bracket of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment.

[0171] Referring to FIG. **13**, the heater bracket **90** may include a fixing part **91** and a supporting part **92**.

[0172] The fixing part **91** may be formed in a U-shape with a flat bottom. At the bottom of the fixing part **91**, a fixing hole **91***a* through which a bolt or a screw can be inserted may be provided.

[0173] The supporting part **92** may be extended from both arms of the fixing part **91**, and formed to support the heater **80**.

[0174] For example, the supporting part **92** may be formed to be coupled to two circular pipe parts of the heater **80** which are disposed parallel as shown in FIGS. **7** and **9**. At this time, the two circular pipe parts may be disposed to be in a horizontal state.

[0175] The supporting part **92** may be formed in a U-shape for the circular pipe part to be inserted. That is, the supporting part **92** may include two U-shaped parts **93** into which two circular pipe parts are inserted. Inlets of the two U-shaped parts **93** may be formed toward the outer side. The two U-shaped parts **93** may be formed in line symmetry.

[0176] Accordingly, when the two U-shaped parts **93** are positioned between the two circular pipe parts of the heater **80**, the two U-shaped parts **93** may push the two circular pipe parts toward the outside. Accordingly, the two U-shaped parts **93** may not be easily separated from the two circular pipe parts of the heater **80**.

[0177] The heater bracket **90** having a structure as described above may be formed by bending a thin steel plate having a strip shape. Then, the heater bracket **90** may

support the heater **80** as the two U-shaped parts **93** are in close contact with the two circular pipe parts of the heater **80** by elasticity.

[0178] At the lower inclined surface **53***c***2** of the supply duct **53**, a fixing boss **66** may be provided. A female screw may be formed at the fixing boss **66**. Accordingly, when a bolt or a screw is inserted into the fixing hole **91***a* of the heater bracket **90** and fastened to the female screw of the fixing boss **66** of the supply duct **53**, the heater bracket **90** may be fixed to the supply duct **53**.

[0179] In the above, a shape of the heater bracket **90** has been described with reference to FIG. **13**, but the shape of the heater bracket **90** is not limited thereto. As long as the heater bracket **90** can support the heater **80** installed at the one side surface of the supply duct **53**, the heater bracket **90** may be formed in various shapes.

[0180] At the inside of the supply duct **53**, a barrier **60** may be provided. Because the supply duct **53** is formed of an injection-molded product of plastic or resin, it may be deformed or ignited by heat from the heater **80**. The barrier **60** may be formed to prevent the supply duct **53** from being deformed or ignited by the heat of the heater **80**.

[0181] The barrier **60** may be installed at the inner surface of the supply duct **53**. The barrier **60** may be disposed parallel with the inner surface of the of the supply duct **53**. The barrier **60** may be installed to be spaced apart by a certain distance from the inner surface of the supply duct **53**.

[0182] The barrier **60** may be formed as a flat plate. The barrier **60** may be formed of a metal material so as to prevent ignition. For example, the barrier **60** may be formed with a steel plate, an aluminum plate, and an aluminum foil.

[0183] The barrier **60** may be formed to cover the inner surface of the supply duct **53**, that is, the upper surface, the lower surface, and the side surface. The barrier **60** may be disposed to be parallel with the upper surface, the lower surface, and the side surface of the supply duct **53**.

[0184] For example, the barrier **60** may include an upper barrier **61** which is formed to cover the upper surface of the supply duct **53**, a side barrier **62** which is formed to cover the side surface of the supply duct **53**, and a lower barrier **63** which is formed to cover the lower surface of the supply duct **53**.

[0185] The upper barrier **61** may be formed in a flat plate having a shape and size that corresponds to the upper surface of the supply duct **53**.

[0186] The side barrier **62** may be formed in a flat plate having a shape and size that corresponds to the side surface of the supply duct **53**. The side barrier **62** may be bent to correspond to the inclined surface **53***d***1** of the supply duct **53**. The side barrier **62** may be provided with a barrier fixing groove **62***g* corresponding to the fixing groove **53***g* of the supply duct **53**.

[0187] The barrier fixing groove **62***g* may be formed to have a depth that corresponds to the fixing groove **53***g* of the supply duct **53**. Into the barrier fixing groove **62***g*, the heater **80** may be inserted.

[0188] At the barrier fixing groove **62***g*, a barrier blocking piece **84** may be installed. The barrier blocking piece **84** may be formed to block an upper part of the barrier fixing groove **62***g* when the heater **80** is inserted into the barrier fixing groove **62***g*. The barrier blocking piece **84** may be formed by folding a thin metal sheet having a width wider than the barrier fixing groove **62***g* in half. When the bent barrier blocking piece **84** is inserted into the side barrier **62** to cover the barrier fixing groove **62***g*, the barrier fixing groove **62***g* may be blocked.

[0189] The lower barrier **63** may be formed as a flat plate having a shape and size that corresponds to the lower surface of the supply duct **53**. The lower barrier **63** may include a horizontal barrier **63***a* and a lower inclined barrier **63***b* that correspond to the horizontal surface **53***c***1** and the lower inclined surface **53***c***2** of the lower surface of the supply duct **53**.

[0190] The side barrier **62** and the lower barrier **63** may be formed as one body. The upper barrier **61** may be formed separately from the side barrier **62** and the lower barrier **63**. The upper barrier **61** may be installed so as to be coupled to upper ends of the side barrier **62** and the lower barrier **63**.

[0191] At the inner surface of the supply duct **53**, a barrier groove in which the barrier **60** is installed may be provided. The barrier groove may be formed such that an upper surface of the barrier **60** matches with an inner surface of the heat exchange duct **52**. That is, the barrier groove may be formed so that the barrier **60** installed at the inner surface of the supply duct **53** does not protrude from the inner surface of the heat exchange duct **52**. In addition, the barrier groove may be formed so that the barrier **60** is spaced apart by a certain distance from the inner surface of the supply duct **53**. The barrier groove may be formed at the inner surface of the supply duct **53**.

[0192] The barrier groove may include an upper barrier groove **531**, a side barrier groove **532**, and lower barrier grooves **533***a* and **533***b*.

[0193] As shown in FIG. **11**, the upper barrier groove **531** may be formed at the duct cover **50***b*. That is, the upper barrier groove **531** may be formed at a part of the dust cover **50***b* that corresponds to a supply duct body **53**A, that is, a supply duct cover **53**B. The upper barrier groove **531** may be formed at a whole of the supply duct cover **53**B in a shape that corresponds to an upper surface of the supply duct body **53**A.

[0194] Ata bottom of the upper barrier groove **531**, a plurality of fixing protrusions **67** may be provided. The plurality of fixing protrusions **67** may be protruded from the bottom of the upper barrier groove **531** to a certain height. Each of the plurality of fixing protrusions **67** may have the female screw formed.

[0195] The upper barrier **61** may be provided with a plurality of fixing holes **61***a* that correspond to the plurality of fixing protrusions **67** of the upper barrier groove **531**. Accordingly, the upper barrier **61** may be fixed to the upper barrier groove **531** by using a plurality of bolts or screws. At this time, the upper barrier **61** may be spaced apart from the bottom of the upper barrier groove **531**, that is, the upper surface of the supply duct **53**, by the plurality of fixing protrusions **67**.

[0196] As shown in FIG. **7**, the side barrier groove **532** and the lower barrier grooves **533***a* and **533***b* may be formed at the side surface and the lower surface of the supply duct **53**.

[0197] The side barrier groove **532** may be formed at a part of the duct body, that is, the supply duct body **53**A, that form the supply duct **53**. The side barrier groove **532** may be formed to correspond to a whole side surface area of the supply duct **53**. That is, the side barrier groove **532** may be formed to be stepped with respect to the side surface of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0198] At a bottom of the side barrier groove **532**, a plurality of fixing parts **64** may be provided. The plurality of fixing parts **64** may be provided at an upper end of the side barrier groove **532**, that is, the upper end of the side surface of the supply duct body **53**A. Each of the plurality of fixing parts **64** may have the female screw formed.

[0199] At an upper end of the side barrier **62**, a plurality of fixing pieces **62***c* that correspond to the plurality of fixing parts **64** of the side barrier groove **532** may be provided. At each of the plurality of fixing pieces **62***c*, the fixing hole may be provided. Accordingly, the side barrier **62** may be fixed to the side barrier groove **532** by using the plurality of bolts or screws. At this time, the side barrier **62** may be spaced apart from the bottom of the side barrier groove **532**, that is, the side surface of the supply duct **53**, by the plurality of fixing parts **64**.

[0200] The lower barrier groove may be formed at a part of the duct body **50***a* that form the supply duct **53**, that is, the supply duct body **53**A. The lower barrier groove may be formed to correspond to a whole lower surface area of the supply duct **53**. That is, the lower barrier groove may be formed to be stepped with respect to the lower surface **52***c* of the heat exchange duct **52**.

[0201] The lower barrier groove may include a horizontal barrier groove **533***a* which is formed to correspond to the horizontal surface **53***c***1** of the supply duct **53** and an inclined barrier groove **533***b* which is formed to correspond to the lower inclined surface **53***c***2** of the supply duct **53**.

[0202] At the bottom of the lower barrier groove, a plurality of fixing protrusions **65** may be provided. For example, the plurality of fixing protrusions **65** may be provided at the horizontal barrier groove **533***a*. The plurality of fixing protrusions **65** may be protruded from the bottom of the lower barrier groove to a certain height. Each of the plurality of fixing protrusions **65** may have the female screw formed.

[0203] The lower barrier **63** may be provided with a plurality of fixing holes **63***c* that correspond to the plurality of fixing protrusions **65** of the lower barrier groove. Accordingly, the lower barrier **63** may be fixed to the lower barrier groove by using the plurality of bolts or screws. At this time, the lower barrier **63** may be spaced apart from the bottom of the lower barrier groove, that is, the lower surface of the supply duct **53**, by the plurality of fixing protrusions **65**.

[0204] At the inclined barrier groove **533***b* of the lower barrier groove, the fixing boss **66** for fixing the heater bracket **90** may be provided. The fixing boss **66** may have the female screw formed. The lower barrier **63** may be formed to have a through-hole through which the fixing boss **66** is inserted.

[0205] Accordingly, when the lower barrier **63** is installed at the lower barrier groove, the fixing boss **66** may be protruded to the upper side of the lower barrier **63**. Then, the heater bracket **90** may be fixed to the fixing boss **66** by using a bolt or a screw.

[0206] As described above, when the barrier **60** is installed at the inside of the supply duct **53**, the barrier **60** may block the heat that is generated by the heater **80**. Accordingly, the supply duct **53** may be prevented from being deformed or ignited by the heat of the heater **80**.

[0207] In the above description, the inlet duct **51**, the heat exchange duct **52**, and the supply duct **53** are formed as one body, but in another embodiment, the inlet duct **51**, the heat exchange duct **52**, and the supply duct **53** may be formed separately.

[0208] In this case, the inlet duct **51**, the heat exchange duct **52**, and the supply duct **53** may be respectively formed with a body of which the upper surface is opened and a cover which covers the upper surface of the body like the upper duct **50** described above.

[0209] For example, the inlet duct **51** may be formed with an inlet duct body of which the upper surface is opened and an inlet duct cover which covers the upper surface thereof. The heat exchange duct **52** may be formed with a heat exchange duct body of which the upper surface is opened and a heat exchange duct cover which covers the upper surface thereof. In addition, the supply duct **53** may be formed with the supply duct body **53**A of which the upper surface is opened and the supply duct cover **53**B which covers the upper surface thereof.

[0210] When forming as described above, the supply duct cover **53**B, the heat exchange duct cover, and the inlet duct cover may be individually opened. That is, the heater **80** may be installed at the supply duct body **53**A by opening the supply duct cover **53**B. In addition, the evaporator **73** and the condenser **72** may be installed at the heat ex change duct body by opening the heat exchange duct cover. In addition, lint caught in the lint filter **42** may be removed by opening the inlet duct cover.

[0211] A drying cycle of the washing machine with drying function **1** according to an embodiment having the structure as described above will be described in detail below.

[0212] Because the washing machine with drying function **1** according to an embodiment may perform a washing cycle, a rinsing cycle, a spin drying cycle, and the like as same as a washing machine of the related art, descriptions thereof are omitted.

[0213] When the drying cycle is started, the processor of the washing machine **1** may operate the blower fan **41**, the compressor **71** of the heat exchange part **70**, and the heater **80**.

[0214] When the compressor **71** is operated, the refrigerant may circulate through the compressor **71**, the condenser **72**, the expansion valve **74**, and the evaporator **73**. At this time, the evaporator **73** and the condenser **72** may be installed at the heat exchange duct **52**, and the condenser **72** may be installed at a downstream of the evaporator **73** in the circulating direction of air.

[0215] When the blower fan **41** is operated, the air inside the drum **30** may circulate through the back duct **55**, the inlet duct **51**, the heat exchange duct **52**, a discharge duct **53**, the blower fan **41**, and the blow duct **54**, thereby drying the laundry.

[0216] For example, the humid air in the drum **30** may be discharged into a space between a back surface plate **32** of the drum **30** and the back surface plate **22** of the tub **20** through the plurality of through-holes of the back surface plate **32** of the drum **30**. The humid air that is discharged between the back surface plate **32** of the drum **30** and the back surface plate **22** of the tub **20** may be introduced into the back duct **55** through the back opening **22***a* of the tub **20**.

[0217] The humid air introduced into the back duct **55** may be discharged to the inlet duct **51** through the outlet **55***b*.

[0218] The humid air A**1** introduced into the inlet **51***a* of the inlet duct **51** may flow in a direction perpendicular to the

front surface cover **11** of the cabinet **10**, that is, the front surface **21** of the tub **20**. The humid air introduced into the inlet duct **51** may be discharged to the heat exchange duct **52** through the lint filter **42**. At this time, foreign material such as the lint contained in the humid air may be filtered by the lint filter **42**.

[0219] The humid air introduced into the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52** may flow in a direction parallel to the front surface cover **11** of the cabinet **10**. That is, air A**2** that flows through the heat exchange duct **52** may form a right-angle with air A**1** that flows through the inlet duct **51**.

[0220] The humid air introduced into the inlet **52***a* of the heat exchange duct **52** may pass the evaporator **73** to remove moisture. The air from which the moisture was removed may be heated while passing the condenser **72**. Accordingly, from the outlet **52***b* of the heat exchange duct **52**, the dried air in high temperature may be discharged into the supply duct **53**.

[0221] The dried air in high temperature introduced into the inlet **53***a* of the supply duct **53** may flow in a direction perpendicular to the front surface cover **11** of the cabinet **10**. That is, air A**3** that flows through the supply duct **53** may form a right-angle with the air A**2** that flows through the heat exchange duct **52**, and may be in parallel with the air A**1** that flows through the inlet duct **51**.

[0222] The air introduced into the supply duct **53** may be heated by the heater **80**. The heater **80** may heat the air introduced into the supply duct **53** at an initial stage of the drying cycle, that is, before the heat exchange part **70** heats the air to greater than or equal to 90 degrees (C.). When preheating of the heat exchange part **70** is completed, the heater **80** may be turned-off, and the air may only be heated by the heat exchange part **70**.

[0223] The air that is discharged from the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **53** may be introduced into the suction hole of the blower fan **41**, that is, the inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54**. At this time, because the outlet **53***b* of the supply duct **153** and the inlet **54***a* of the blow duct **54** are disposed in a straight line, the flow resistance of air that is introduced into the blower fan **41** may be minimized.

[0224] The blow duct **54** may discharge the dried air in high temperature suctioned into the inlet **54***a* downward to the diaphragm **25** through the outlet **54***b*. At this time, the direction of air that is discharged from the outlet **54***b* of the blow duct **54** may form a right-angle with the direction of air that is suctioned into the inlet **54***a*.

[0225] The dried air in high temperature from the outlet **54***b* of the blow duct **54** may be introduced into the inside of the diaphragm **25** through the connecting part **26**. At this time, because the outlet **54***b* of the blow duct **54** and the connecting part **26** are disposed in a straight line, the dried air in high temperature that is discharged by the blower fan **41** may be introduced into the inside of the diaphragm **25** in a straight line.

[0226] Because the diaphragm **25** is in communication with the drum opening **31***a* provided at the front surface **31** of the drum **30**, the dried air in high temperature may be introduced into the inside of the drum **30** through the diaphragm **25**.

[0227] The dried air in high temperature introduced into the inside of the drum **30** may dry the laundry by contacting the laundry. The dried air in high temperature may become humid air in low temperature due to the drying of the laundry.

[0228] The humid air in the drum **30** may continue the above-described circulation by being discharged to the back duct **55** through the plurality of through-holes of the back surface plate **32** of the drum **30**.

[0229] The washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment as described above may reduce drying time by installing the heater in the supply duct.

[0230] FIG. **14** is a graph comparing drying times of a washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment and a washing machine with drying function without a heater.

[0231] In FIG. **14**, a vertical axis may represent temperature, and a unit may be ° C. A horizontal axis may represent time, and a unit may be minutes (Min). In addition, a dotted line represents a drying time of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment. A solid line represents a drying time of the washing machine with drying function without the heater.

[0232] The washing machine with drying function without the heater is the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment from which only the heater is removed. That is, the washing machine with drying function without the heater may have the same structure as the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment except for the heater.

[0233] Referring to FIG. **4**, the drying time of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment may be reduced by about 10 minutes compared to the drying time of the washing machine with drying function without the heater.

[0234] A temperature rising time during which the temperature of air that is supplied to the drum reaches 90 degrees in the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment may be short compared to the temperature rising time during which the temperature of air that is supplied to the drum reaches 90 degrees in the washing machine with drying function without the heater (see part A in FIG. **14**).

[0235] In FIG. **14**, the temperature rising time of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment may be about 20 minutes, but the temperature rising time of the washing machine with drying function without the heater is about 40 minutes.

[0236] The washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment may have a short temperature rising time because the heater heats the air while the compressor is being preheated, but the washing machine with drying function without the heater has a relatively long temperature rising time because the air is not heated while the compressor is being preheated.

[0237] Accordingly, the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment may have a drying function that substantially equals a drying-only dryer.

[0238] In addition, the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment may prevent drying performance of the washing machine with drying function from deteriorating at winter because the heater heats the air while the compressor is being preheated.

[0239] In general, because ambient temperature drops to below zero at winter, the drying time of the washing machine with drying function increases compared to when ambient temperature is above zero. This occurs because the time it takes for the compressor of the washing machine with drying function to be preheated may take longer. Accord-

ingly, the drying performance of the washing machine with drying function may be deteriorated at winter.

[0240] However, in the case of the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment, the drying time may be reduced because the heater heats the air while the compressor is being preheated. Accordingly, the washing machine with drying function according to an embodiment may prevent the drying performance from being deteriorated at winter.

[0241] While the disclosure has been illustrated and described with reference to various example embodiments thereof, it will be understood that the various example embodiments are intended to be illustrative, not limiting. It will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the true spirit and full scope of the disclosure, including the appended claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A washing machine with drying function, comprising:
- a cabinet having a laundry insertion hole at a front side of the cabinet;
- a tub, inside the cabinet, having a front opening;
- a drum rotatably disposed inside the tub so that laundry is insertable through the laundry insertion hole and then through the front opening to be received into the drum;
- an upper duct at an upper side of the tub and having a first end and a second end;
- a back duct at a back side of the tub and connected to the first end of the upper duct;
- a blow duct at a front side of the tub and connected to the second end of the upper duct;
- a blower fan in the blow duct so that a circulating airflow circulating through the drum, then through the back duct, and then the upper duct is formable;
- a heat pump configured to heat the circulating airflow;
- a heater in the upper duct downstream of the heat pump in a moving direction of the circulating airflow to heat the circulating airflow; and
- a processor configured to:
  - based on a start of a drying process in which the circulating airflow circulates through the drum, turn on the heat pump and the heater so that the circulating airflow is heated by the heat pump and the heater, and,
  - based on a temperature of the circulating airflow exceeding a reference temperature due to being heated by the heat pump and the heater, turn off the heater while maintaining the heat pump to be turned on so that the circulating airflow continues to be heated by the heat pump.

2. The washing machine with drying function of claim **1**, wherein the reference temperature is 90° C.

3. The washing machine with drying function of claim **1**, wherein the upper duct includes:
- an inlet duct connected to the back duct,
- a heat exchange duct connected to the inlet duct, and
- a supply duct having a first end connected to the heat exchange duct and a second end connected to the blow duct.

4. The washing machine with drying function of claim **3**, wherein the heat pump includes:
- an evaporator and a condenser inside the heat exchange duct, and
- a compressor outside the heat exchange duct.

5. The washing machine with drying function of claim **3**, wherein the heater is inside the supply duct.

6. The washing machine with drying function of claim **5**, further comprising:
- a heater bracket on a lower surface of the supply duct and supporting the heater.

7. The washing machine with drying function of claim **3**, further comprising:
- a barrier on an inner surface of the supply duct.

8. The washing machine with drying function of claim **7**, further comprising:
- a barrier groove on the inner surface of the supply duct,
- wherein the barrier is configured to be disposed in the barrier groove.

9. The washing machine with drying function of claim **7**, wherein the barrier includes:
- an upper barrier covering an upper surface of the supply duct,
- a side barrier covering a side surface of the supply duct, and
- a lower barrier covering a lower surface of the supply duct.

10. A washing machine with drying function, comprising:
- a tub inside a cabinet;
- a drum rotatably disposed inside the tub;
- an upper duct at an upper side of the tub and including an inlet port for air discharged from the tub to flow through to be introduced into the upper duct, and an outlet port through which air flowing through the upper duct is discharged to be provided to the drum;
- a blower fan configured to form a circulating airflow circulating through upper duct and the drum and by which air discharged through the outlet port of the upper duct is moved to the drum;
- a heater inside the upper duct to heat air introduced into the upper duct through the inlet port of the upper duct;
- a heat pump configured to heat air introduced into the upper duct through the inlet port of the upper duct, the heat pump including:
  - an evaporator and a condenser inside the upper duct and upstream of the heater, and
  - a compressor outside the upper duct; and
- a processor configured to:
  - operates the compressor and the heater based on a start of a drying process in which the circulating airflow flows through the upper duct and the drum, and,
  - based on a temperature of the heated air exceeding a reference temperature, stop operating the heater.

11. The washing machine with drying function of claim **10**, wherein the reference temperature is 90° C.

12. The washing machine with drying function of claim **10**, further comprising:
- a back duct connected to one end of the upper duct and disposed on a back side of the tub;
- a blow duct connected to another end of the upper duct and accommodating the blower fan.

13. The washing machine with drying function of claim **12**, wherein the upper duct includes:
- an inlet duct connected to the back duct,
- a heat exchange duct connected to the inlet duct, and
- a supply duct having one end connected to the heat exchange duct and another end connected to the blow duct.

14. The washing machine with drying function of claim **13**, wherein the heater is inside the supply duct.

15. The washing machine with drying function of claim **13**, further comprising:

a barrier on an inner surface of the supply duct.

* * * * *