



# Thermodynamic and economic evaluation of a novel concentrated solar power system integrated with absorption refrigeration and desalination cycles



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## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Concentrated solar power  
Absorption refrigeration  
Multi-effect desalination  
Exergy analysis  
Economic analysis

## ABSTRACT

In this study, an innovative concentrated solar power plant integrated with desalination process and absorption refrigeration cycle aimed at supplying power, fresh water and refrigeration, was developed and exergetically assessed. The system comprised a concentrated solar thermal power plant with parabolic dish collectors and steam turbine, a multi-effect desalination process with parallel feed of seawater, and a single-stage ammonia-water absorption refrigeration system. Generally, the collectors provided 21,030 kW thermal power to the steam power plant and 4632 kW of which was converted to electrical power in steam power plant. The absorption refrigeration cycle produced 820.8 kW refrigeration and the desalination cycle provided fresh water at a rate of 22.79 kg/s. The integrated system was simulated in Aspen Hysys and all the components of the integrated system were individually scrutinized based on the second law of thermodynamics; as well, the exergy destruction rate and exergy efficiency of each component were obtained and discussed thoroughly. According to the results, about 86% of the total exergy destruction rate of the system belonged to the distillation column and heat exchangers. The overall exergy efficiency of the cycle was 66.05%, while, the net overall thermal efficiency of the integrated system was 80.70%. The results of the economic analysis showed that the proposed integrated structure had an investment return period of 5.738 years and a net annual profit of 6.828 million US\$ per year. Moreover, the impact of various factors on the performance of the integrated system was investigated using sensitivity analysis.

## 1. Introduction

Since energy plays a more and more important role in human life, well-being, and economic and industrial growth of the countries across the globe, meeting the growing demand for energy in a secure and environmentally friendly manner is a big challenge [1]. Meanwhile, according to the BP statistical review of world energy (2017) [2], the majority of the global energy consumption (85.5%) is met by fossil-based fuels, i.e. oil, natural gas and coal, speculated to be fairly responsible for a large share of overall carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions [3], global warming, climate change [4], ecosystem toxicity and health risks [5]. In addition, the scarcity, fast depletion, and unreliable distribution of fossil fuels [6] have caused an intensified search for alternative renewable sources of energy [7]. Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) is one of the most promising solar energy harnessing technologies in providing heat and power [8], in which the incoming solar radiation

is absorbed by a set of solar collectors (high-magnification mirrors) and then the absorbed heat is delivered to a working fluid which can be used in power cycles, cooling systems and many other applications [9]. The high potential of CSP systems in hybridizing with other energy conversion systems [10], the better performance in effectively and efficiently dealing with the intermittency of the natural resources than other renewable energy resources [11], and providing a dispatchable electricity generation through thermal energy storage [12] have been confirmed as the advantages of CSP systems. Currently, the developed CSP technologies are available in four types, including parabolic troughs, Fresnel mirrors, solar towers, and solar dish collectors, each has its own specifications, configurations and pros and cons [13].

To date, a great deal of research is focused on the application of CSP technologies in different energy consuming processes, including desalination [14], electricity generation [15], hydrogen production [16], cooling, multi-generation [17] and also hybridizing with other

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**Nomenclature**

$A_a$  surface area of the concentrator ( $m^2$ )  
 $A_c$  surface area of the receiver aperture ( $m^2$ )  
 $A_w$  cavity internal area of receiver ( $m^2$ )  
 $\mathcal{A}$  ash contents of the component (wt%)  
 $B$  mass flow rate of the brine (kg/s)  
 $c$  geometrical concentration ratio (-)  
 $C_p$  specific heat capacity (kJ/kg)  
 $\mathcal{C}$  carbon contents of the component in wt.%  
 $C$  cost (US\$)  
 $D_1$  distilled mass flow rate (kg/s)  
 $D$  mass flow rate of the desalinated water (kg/s)  
 $D$  diameter  
 $\mathcal{D}_s, \mathcal{D}_t$  pressure drops in shell side and tube (Pa)  
 $\dot{E}_x$  exergy rate (kW)  
 $ex$  specific exergy (kJ/kg)  
 $F$  mass flow rate of the seawater (kg/s)  
 $f$  material Factor (-)  
 $f$  dilution factor ( $1.3 \times 10^{-5}$ ).  
 $g$  gravitational acceleration ( $9.806 m/s^2$ )  
 $G\eta$  Grashof number (-)  
 $G_{on}$  extraterrestrial radiation incident ( $W/m^2$ )  
 $G_{sc}$  solar constant ( $1367 W/m^2$ )  
 $h$  specific enthalpy (kJ/kg)  
 $h_c$  convection heat transfer coefficient between the absorber and ambient air ( $W/m^2 K$ )  
 $H_0$  extraterrestrial solar radiation on a horizontal surface ( $W/m^2$ )  
 $H_d$  daily diffuse solar radiation ( $W/m^2$ )  
 $\mathcal{H}$  hydrogen contents of component (wt%)  
 $I_s$  beam solar radiation reached to concentrator surface ( $W/m^2$ )  
 $I_d$  hourly diffuse solar radiation on the horizontal surface ( $W/m^2$ )  
 $K$  thermal conductivity of the ambient air ( $W/m \cdot K$ )  
 $K_t$  clearness index of a day (-)  
 $\mathbf{W}$  wight (N)  
 $\mathbf{L}$  length (m)  
 $L_{Log}$  local geographical longitude  
 $M$  molar mass (kg/mole)  
 $\dot{m}$  mass flow rate (kg/s)  
 $N$  number of the effects  
 $\mathcal{N}$  nitrogen contents of component (wt%)  
 $\mathbf{N}$  surface area ( $m^2$ )  
 $Nu_t$  Nusselt number (-)  
 $\dot{n}$  mole rate (mole/kg)  
 $\mathcal{O}$  oxygen contents of component (wt%)  
 $P$  pressure (bar), power consumption (kW)  
 $\mathcal{Q}$  heating load (kW)  
 $Q_1$  heat supplied by heating steam in first stage (kW)  
 $Q_i$  heat supplied by heating steam in effects (kW)  
 $Q_l$  power lost in the receiver (W)  
 $Q_r$  power reached to the receiver (W)  
 $Q_s$  power reached on the surface of the dish (W)  
 $Q_u$  thermal power reached to receiver (W)  
 $\dot{Q}$  rate of heat transfer (kW)  
 $r$  mole fraction (-)  
 $\mathcal{R}$  universal gas constant ( $8.314 J/mol \cdot K$ )  
 $Ra$  entrainment ratio of the steam ejector (-)  
 $s$  specific entropy (kJ/kgK)  
 $\mathcal{S}$  sulfur contents of component (wt%)  
 $T$  temperature (K)  
 $T_N$  temperature of the heating steam in the final effect  
 $T_s$  temperature of heating steam line in the first effect

$T_w$  receiver temperature ( $^{\circ}C$ )  
 $T'$  temperature of the desalinated water from the previous effect  
 $\dot{W}$  rate of shaft work (kW)  
 $\mathbf{W}$  shell weight (lb.)  
 $x$  salinity percent (%)  
  
*Greek*  
 $\phi$  standard chemical exergy of the component in the stream (kJ/mole)  
 $\rho$  Reflectance  
 $\tau$  transmittance  
 $\alpha$  absorptance  
 $\gamma$  intercept factor  
 $\eta$  efficiency (%)  
 $\varphi_1$  tilt angle of cavity (Radian)  
 $\beta$  coefficient of thermal expansion ( $1/^{\circ}C$ )  
 $\nu$  kinematic viscosity ( $m^2/s$ )  
 $\delta$  declination  
 $\emptyset$  latitude  
 $\omega_s$  sunset hour angle  
 $\epsilon_{eff}$  effective infrared emittance of cavity  
 $\epsilon_c$  cavity surface emittance  
 $\sigma$  Stefan-Boltzmann constant ( $5.67 \times 10^{-8} W/m^2 K^4$ )  
 $\omega$  hour angle  
 $\Delta$  difference  
 $i$  annual interest rate  
 $r$  real interest rate (%)  
 $\mathbf{N}$  annual inflation rate (%)  
 $\mathcal{Y}$  economic life cycle of the system (year)

*Subscript*

0 reference state  
 $a$  ambient  
 $acap$  annualized capital  
 $arep$  annualized replacement  
 $amain$  annualized maintenance  
 $aope$  annualized operating  
 $b$  brine  
 $c$  collector, convection, cold  
 $cap$  capital  
 $des$  destruction  
 $eff$  effective  
 $ev$  entrained vapor  
 $evap$  evaporator  
 $ex$  exergy  
 $f$  seawater  
 $gen$  generator  
 $h$  hot  
 $hs$  heating steam  
 $HX$  heat exchanger  
 $i$  desalinated water, stream number  $i$ , inpt  
 $j$  stream number, component number,  
 $k$  conduction  
 $ms$  motive steam  
 $o$  optical, output  
 $r$  receiver, radiation  
 $s$  sun  
 $ST$  steam Turbine  
 $v$  Vapor

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