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## **ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT**

Catalysis, kinetics and reaction engineering

### A Sensitivity Analysis and Multi-Objective Optimization to Enhance Ethylene Production by Oxidative Dehydrogenation of Ethane in a Membrane-Assisted Reactor

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#### Abstract

Owing to the importance of process intensification in the natural gas associated processes, the present contribution aims to investigate the production of an important natural gas downstream product in an improved system. Accordingly, a membrane-assisted reactor for the oxidative dehydrogenation of ethane is presented. The presented system includes a membrane for axial oxygen dosing into the reaction side. Such a strategy would lead to optimum oxygen distribution along the reactor length and prevention of hot spot formation as well. A feasibility study is conducted by developing a validated mathematical model composed of mass and energy balance equations. The effects of various operating variables are investigated by a rigorous sensitivity analysis. Then, by applying the genetic algorithm, a multi-objective optimization procedure is implemented to obtain the optimum operating condition. Considerable increase in the ethane conversion and ethylene yield are the advancements of membrane-assisted oxidative dehydrogenation reactor working under the optimum condition. More than 30 % increase in the ethane conversion is obtained. Furthermore, the ethylene yield is enhanced up to 0.45.

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