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# **Modelling and Optimization Combined Heat and Power with Photovoltaic/Thermal system**

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#### **Abstract**

In the present study, the aim is to model and optimize the photovoltaic/thermal system (PVT) to achieve the highest thermal and electrical efficiencies by considering the physical characteristics. To model the proposed system, the governing relations were derived by considering the desired variables. Then to use the modeling, the validation of the code was done with a valid source, for which the variables of cell surface temperature, a bottom surface, and output fluid were used. After validation, it was observed that the proposed model has good accuracy to achieve the desired goals. To achieve maximum output power by the cell, open circuit voltage and short circuit current for this system was calculated for one day that has the highest radiation intensity, for which the highest voltage and current are 9.3 V and 6.7 A, respectively. Then, after extraction of voltage and short circuit current for the studied cell, the amount of thermal and electrical efficiencies was determined to be 40% and 10%, respectively. In the next step of this research, optimization is performed to achieve the highest efficiency, which is 67% for this system.

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#### **1. Introduction**

Due to the importance of using renewable energy sources in the energy supply, the use of these resources is increasing rapidly [1-3]. Also due to the emission of pollutants from combustion, increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, rising temperatures, climate change, rising sea levels, and a sharp decline in fuels such as oil, coal, and nonrenewable existence of these fuels [4, 5], the production of renewable energy such as wind and solar has become very important and the use of this type of energy to provide the necessary power to produce electrical and thermal power has been studied [6, 7]. One of the renewable energies is solar energy, which is widely available to everyone [8, 9]. The most common technology for using solar energy is the use of photovoltaic cells [10-12]. In a standard module, most of the radiation from the sun is converted into heat by photovoltaic cells, which is lost in exchange with the environment, and a small part of the radiation reaching the cells is converted into electrical energy and this heat production increases the temperature of the cell surface and thus reduces the efficiency of the cell [13, 14]. The output power is inversely proportional to the cell surface temperature. In other words, with increasing temperature, the output voltage decreases. As a result, increasing the temperature reduces the open circuit voltage and output power of the cell. In most silicon cells, the output power decreases by about 0.5% per degree of temperature rise [15, 16]. Therefore, for the electrical efficiency of the cell to remain constant, the heat generated on the cell surface must be expelled. Fluid flow around the photovoltaic panels can be used to dissipate the heat generated during the photon collision with the cell surface [17-19]. By moving the fluid through the panel, a large part of this heat can be absorbed from the panel, which reduces the surface temperature and thus increases the electrical efficiency [20, 21]. The PVT systems can collect solar energy at

different wavelengths, thus increasing energy efficiency and exergy [22, 23]. It is a combination of photovoltaics and solar heating and some of the studies that have been done in this regard are discussed below.

On the other hand, Fayaz et al. [11] have done research entitled Numerical and outdoor real-time experimental investigation of the performance of PCM-based PVT system, the purpose of this study is to the effect of radiation intensity on the heat produced. In 2019, Fudholi et al. A theoretical and laboratory study of thermal photovoltaics has been performed. After modeling, exergy analysis has been performed to achieve high thermal efficiency.

In this study, the air is assumed for cell cooling [12]. In the same year, Herrando et al. have done research entitled Solar combined cooling, heating, and power systems based on hybrid PVT, PV, or solar-thermal collectors for building applications [29].

In this research, an attempt has been made to determine the variables such as the response rate of the system to the electric load, the amount of electrical energy produced, the amount of investment cost, and the rate of return on investment from many variables that can be in this project. By specifying the above variables, the system can be compared with common systems used in industry, and important results can be achieved.





# **2. Materials and methods**

#### *A) Modeling PVT system*

The system studied in this research is a PVT collector consisting of two layers: a glazed or nonfreezing PV layer above and below it, and an absorption layer that absorbs heat from the PV layer. The absorption layer has inlets and outlets for fluid circulation. Liquid, which may be liquid (such as a mixture of water or water of ethylene glycol) or air, passes through the adsorbed substance to extract heat. The following is the working mechanism of a sample PV/T collector:

As shown in Figure 1, when solar radiation hits the cell surface, electrical energy is generated, and accordingly, the temperature of the cell surface increases, which is absorbed by the fluid with the flow of fluid in the underlying layers of the cell, and thermal energy is produced. Using a water-ethyleneglycol mixture instead of water can prevent the liquid from freezing at cold temperatures and thus protect the collector from deformation problems due to freezing.

## *B) Thermal analysis*

For the sake of brevity, the proof of the relations governing thermal performance is avoided. In these equations, most of the parameters that PV/T can be changed are assumed to be variables. Figure 2 shows the equivalent thermal resistance circuit and PV/T schematic cross-section of the flow duct.



Fig. 1. The PVT schematic [12]

By applying the energy balance for the various components of the PVT system, its thermal efficiency is obtained. The energy balance for the cell modulus can be expressed according to Equation 1 [28, 29].

$$
\tau_G[\alpha_c \beta_c G + \alpha_T (1 - \beta_c) G] b dx
$$
  
=  $\tau_G \beta_c \eta_{el} G b dx$   
+  $[U_t (T_{cell} - T_{amb})$   
+  $U_T (T_{cell} - T_{bs})] b dx$  (1)

The heat transfer coefficient from the photovoltaic cell to the fluid flow through the Tedlar  $(U<sub>T</sub>)$  can be calculated as Equation 2 [28, 29]:

$$
U_T = [L_T/K_T + L_i/K_i]^{-1}
$$
 (2)

The total heat transfer coefficient of the solar cell to the environment through PV/T glass coating  $(U_t)$  can be calculated as Equation 3 [24, 25]:  $U_t = [L_G/K_G + 1/h_{conv.t} + 1/h_{rad}]^{-1}$ (3)

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Fig. 2. Equivalent thermal resistance circuit and cross-section of the flow duct of PVT

The heat transfer coefficient of displacement from the upper surface of PV/T to the environment for surfaces in a horizontal position can be calculated by Equation 4.

$$
h_{conv.t} = 2.8 + 3V_w \tag{4}
$$

The radiation heat transfer coefficient from the upper surface of PV/T to the sky can be calculated using Equation 5 [28].

 $h_{rad} = \varepsilon_G \sigma (T_{sky} + T_{cell}) (T_{sky}^2 + T_{cell}^2)$  $(5)$ Sky temperature is calculated using Equation 6 [30].

$$
T_{sky} = 0.0552 \times T_{amb}^{1.5} + 2.625 \times N \tag{6}
$$

Also, the thermal capacity of Tedlar film is ignored. The energy balance for the bottom layer of Tedlar can be calculated from Equation 7 [25, 28].  $U_T(T_{cell} - T_{bs})bdx = h_f(T_{bs} - T_f)bdx$  (7)

 $h_f$  is convection heat transfer in the flow duct, it is calculated according to the flow regime and the Nusselt number of the flow (Equation 8).

$$
h_f(T_{bs} - T_f)bdx = m \cdot C_p(dT_f/dx)dx + U_b(T_f - T_{amb})bdx
$$
\n(8)

The fluid flow rate can be calculated using Equation 9 [26, 28].

$$
m \tcdot Cp = \rho V_{in}(b\delta) \t\t(9)
$$

The overall heat transfer coefficient from the bottom of the PV/T to the environment through the underlying insulation  $(U_b)$  is calculated using Equation 10.

$$
U_b = [L_i/K_i + 1/h_{conv.b}]^{-1}
$$
 (10)

The surface temperature of the solar photovoltaic module and the temperature of the subsurface layer are obtained as Equations 11 and 12, respectively [26, 28].

$$
T_{cell} = \frac{(\alpha \tau)_{eff} G + U_t T_{amb} + U_T T_{bs}}{U_t + U_T}
$$
\n(11)

$$
T_{bs} = \frac{h_{p1}(\alpha \tau)G + U_{tr}T_{amb} + h_f T_f}{U_{tr} + h_f} \tag{12}
$$

Which in these equations:  
\n
$$
(\alpha \tau)_{eff} = \tau_G [\alpha_c \beta_c + \alpha_T (1 - \beta_c) - \beta_c \eta_{e1}]
$$
\n(13)

$$
h_{p1} = U_T / (U_T + U_t)
$$
\n(14)

$$
U_{tT} = [1/U_t + 1/U_T]^{-1} = U_t U_T / (U_T + U_t)
$$
 (15)  
By placing Equation (12) in Equation (8)

By placing Equation (12) in Equation (8), a typical differential equation for fluid temperature in the flow duct is obtained with Equation 16:  $\boldsymbol{d}$ 

$$
\frac{dT_f}{dx} + \left(\frac{bU_L}{m\&C_p}\right) \left(T_f - T_{amb}\right) = \frac{bh_{p1}h_{p2}(\alpha\tau)_{eff}G}{m\&C_p} \tag{16}
$$

In these equations [1, 28]:

$$
h_{p2} = h_f/(U_{tT} + h_f)
$$
 (17)

$$
U_{tf} = [1/h_f + 1/U_{tT}]^{-1} = U_{tT}h_f/(U_{tT} + h_f)
$$
(18)  

$$
U_L = U_b + U_{tf}
$$
(19)

The overall heat dissipation coefficient has been considered constant in previous research; however, it is not constant and is obtained by modeling the heat and radiative transfer between PV/T surfaces and the environment. The temperature distribution of the fluid according to the length of the flow duct is obtained as Equation 20 [1, 2]:

$$
T_f(x) = \left(T_{amb} + \frac{h_{p1}h_{p2}(\alpha\tau)_{eff}G}{U_L}\right)\left(1 - exp\left(\frac{-bU_L}{m\&C_p}\right)\right)
$$

$$
+ T_{f,in}exp\left(\frac{-bU_Lx}{m\&C_p}\right)
$$
(20)

Applying equation 20 to x=L we obtain the temperature of the fluid leaving the PV/T device; therefore, the temperature of the fluid leaving PV/T as Equations 21:

$$
T_{f,out} = \left(T_{amb} + \frac{h_{p1}h_{p2}(\alpha\tau)_{eff}G}{U_L}\right)\left(1 - exp\left(\frac{-bU_LL}{m\&G_p}\right)\right)
$$

$$
+ T_{f,in}exp\left(\frac{-bU_LL}{m\&G_p}\right)
$$
(21)

The average temperature of the operating fluid in the flow channel is calculated as Equation 22:

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$$
\overline{T}_f = \frac{1}{L} \int_{x=0}^{L} T_f(x) dx = \left[ T_{amb} + \frac{h_{p1} h_{p2}(\alpha \tau)_{eff} G}{U_L} \right]
$$
  
\n
$$
+ \left[ 1 \qquad (22)
$$
  
\n
$$
- \frac{\left( 1 - exp\left( \frac{-bU_L L}{m \cdot C_p} \right) \right)}{\left( \frac{bU_L L}{m \cdot C_p} \right)} \right]
$$
  
\n
$$
+ \left[ 1 - exp\left( \frac{-bU_L L}{m \cdot C_p} \right) \right]
$$

The useful heat rate absorbed in PV/T is calculated from Equations 23 and 24:

$$
Qu = \frac{m \cdot Cp}{Ul} [h_{p1}h_{p2}(\alpha \tau)_{eff}G
$$
  
-  $Ul(T_{f.in} - T_{amb})]$   
\*  $\left[1 - exp\left(\frac{-bU_L L}{m \cdot C_p}\right)\right]$  (23)

PV/T thermal efficiency is defined as follows:  $\eta_{th} = \frac{Qu}{bL G} =$  $m$ .  $\mathcal{C}_p$  $\frac{p}{bL U_L}$   $\left[ h_{p1} h_{p2} (\alpha \tau)_{eff} \right]$ 

$$
-\frac{U_L(T_{f,in}T_{amb})}{G}\bigg|\ast\left[1-\exp\left(\frac{-bU_LL}{m.\,C_P}\right)\right]
$$
\n(24)

## *C) Electrical analysis*

The appearance of the electrical efficiency parameter  $(\eta_{el})$  in Equation (25) makes PV/T thermal analysis dependent on the electrical analysis of the photovoltaic module. In previous research, the electrical efficiency has been calculated from Equation 25 [14]:

 $\eta_{el} = \eta_{el,ref} [1 - 0.0045(T_{cell} - T_{amb,ref})]$  (25)

Equation (25) is a linear function of the surface temperature of the solar photovoltaic module and does not detail the changes in electrical parameters such as open circuit voltage, short circuit current, voltage and current at the maximum power point, and so on. However, in this study, the electrical efficiency is calculated from the simulation of a solar photovoltaic module, which can predict changes in electrical parameters relative to changes in functional, environmental, and design parameters. The following transfer Equations 26-34 are used to obtain voltage and current at temperature and other radiation intensities [21-24]:

$$
T_{cell} = T_{amb} + G(NOCT - 293.15)/800
$$
  
\n
$$
a/a_{ref} = T_{cell}/T_{cell,ref}
$$
 (27)

$$
\frac{I_o}{I_{o,ref}} = \left(\frac{T_{cell}}{T_{cell,ref}}\right)^3 exp\left(\frac{\varepsilon N_c}{a_{ref}}\right) \left(1 - \frac{T_{cell,ref}}{T_{cell}}\right) I_L
$$
\n
$$
= G/G_{ref}[I_{L,ref}] \tag{28}
$$

$$
+ \alpha (T_{cell} - T_{cell,ref})]
$$
  
\n
$$
= \alpha [I_{rel} + \alpha (T_{rel} - T_{rel}) \qquad (29)
$$

$$
I_L = G/G_{ref}[I_{L,ref} + \alpha (T_{cell} - T_{cell,ref})]
$$
\n
$$
\Delta T = T_{cell} - T_{cell,ref}
$$
\n(30)

$$
\Delta I = \alpha \left( \frac{G}{G_{ref}} \right) \Delta T + \left( \frac{G}{G_{ref}} - 1 \right) I_{se,ref}
$$
(31)

$$
\Delta V = \beta \Delta T - R_s - R_s \Delta I
$$
\n
$$
I_{new} = I_{ref} + \Delta I
$$
\n(32)

$$
V_{new} = V_{ref} + \Delta V
$$
\n(34)

Silicon has a band gap of 1.12 eV (electron volt). Values of  $N_c$ , NOCT,  $\beta$ , and  $\alpha$  are given by the manufacturers of solar modules. The new values of voltage and current at the maximum power point are obtained from the maximum area of the rectangle below the characteristic curve under the new conditions. The electrical efficiency of a solar photovoltaic array can be calculated by Equations 35 and 36 [14, 17].

$$
\eta_{el} = V_{mp} I_{mp} / S_{eff} \tag{35}
$$
\n
$$
S = (N N A)^2 (S - A) \tag{36}
$$

$$
S_{eff} = (N_s N_m A_{mod})G = A_{arr}G
$$
 (36)  
The overall efficiency of the PV/T system is

defined as Equation 37 [17, 18]:

$$
\eta_{ov} = \frac{\eta_{el}}{0.36} + \eta_{th} \tag{37}
$$

# *D) Optimization study*

The first step in the optimization problem is the definition of the objective function proportional to the specific objectives, in other words, the objective function is the design criterion. Sometimes there are several goals in optimization instead of one goal, such issues are called multi-objective optimization. Since single-objective problem optimization has a higher accuracy and is much simpler than multiobjective problems if possible, the one-objective method is used in optimizations. In this research, due to the importance of high accuracy, a singlepurpose method has been used. In this research, the objective function includes electrical and thermal efficiencies that the geometric constraints of the studied system are considered as constraints of the objective function. The objective function of the research can be considered as maximizing efficiency or minimizing costs.

#### **3. Results**

Figures 3 to 7 show the values of the modelling results for the study area. Figure 3 shows the temperature of the output fluid from the PVT system, according to which the highest output temperature is related to midnight with a value of 61.5 °C and the lowest temperature is related to the

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initial hour with a value of 40 °C. According to the outlet temperatures of the fluid, it can be said that these values are suitable for water heating and this system can also be used for water heating of the building.



Fig. 3. Temperature values of the output fluid from the PVT system for different hours with an inlet temperature of 25 °C



Fig. 4. Photovoltaic cell temperature values for different hours  $(1000 W/m<sup>2</sup>)$ 

Figure 4 shows the temperature of the photovoltaic cell (with a standard temperature of 25 °C), according to which the highest temperature of the cell surface is related to midnight with a value of 72 °C and the lowest temperature is related to the initial hour with a value of 50 °C. According to the extraction temperature, it can be seen that to prevent the decrease in efficiency due to the increase in temperature of the cell surface, a cooling system should be used so that the efficiency of the system works in an acceptable range.

According to Figure 5, it can be seen that the maximum voltage and current are related to 8 and 12 hours, respectively, for which the amount of voltage is 20 V and the amount of current is 7.5 A. According to previous findings, the amount of electrical and thermal efficiency for the PVT system for different radiation intensities can be seen in Figure 6.



Fig. 5. Simulation results for voltage and current at different times



Fig. 6. Changes in thermal and electrical efficiency in terms of solar radiation intensity

As shown in Figure 6, as the intensity of the sun's rays increases, the overall and electrical efficiencies first increase and then decrease, but the thermal efficiencies decrease, although this decrease is not as severe. On the other hand, to have the minimum general, thermal and electrical efficiencies for the PV/T system, there must be a minimum intensity of solar radiation. The maximum intensity of solar radiation due to the increase of pollutants in the atmosphere reaches about 1000 W/m<sup>2</sup> . However, determining the intensity of solar radiation is not in our hands and is related to the geographical location and radiation data of that geographical location, but what is clear is that the design of the PV/T system should be based on the average daily or monthly average solar intensity. As can be seen in Figure 6, it shows the electrical and thermal efficiency for different raditional, which with the increase solar raditional, the electrical efficiency is constant and 10% around but the thermal efficiency has a constant value of 40% up to 800W/m<sup>2</sup> radiation, and after that the thermal efficiency decreases with the increase of radiation intensity, so that for  $1000 \text{ W/m}^2$  radiation, the thermal efficiency is 39%. Accordingly, the amount of electrical and thermal efficiencies for the study area will be according to Figure 7.



Fig. 7. Electrical and thermal efficiencies for the PVT system per hour

As can be seen in Figure 7, it shows the electrical and thermal efficiency for 24 hours, which with the passage of time, the electrical efficiency is constant and around 9%, and the thermal efficiency decreases with the passage of time, so that the maximum efficiency is equal to 54%. Two independent parameters for optimized inlet flow velocity and PV/T surface area to maximize the overall efficiency equation are found in Table 2:

Table.2. Optimal values of optimization parameters and objective function

$_{\text{out}} = 10 \, \text{m/s}$	
$\eta_{ov,max} = 67$ $A_{\text{cont}} = 2.5294$ $-702$	

# **4. Conclusion**

In this research, comprehensive mathematical modelling of PV/T thermal and electrical operating conditions was performed. Then, the overall efficiency of PV/T was obtained and a comparison was made with the previous works. Finally, by MATLAB software optimization functions, the overall efficiency of PV/T in a set of certain environmental conditions was optimized for some functional and design parameters such as fluid inlet temperature, PV/T surface area, etc., and the optimal values of these parameters and related parameters were obtained. The effect of other parameters that were assumed to be constant during optimization on overall thermal and electrical efficiencies was also investigated. In addition to increasing the accuracy of the results, the optimal operation mode of PV/T has been achieved, and also the results show that the effect of design parameters such as PV/T surface area on overall efficiency is less than functional parameters such as inlet fluid velocity, inlet fluid temperature and so on. Research that can be done in the future:

Numerical and experimental investigation combined heat and power with PVT system.

- Exergo-economic analysis of PVT system.

## **Nomenclature**



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