

# SIMULATION OF SOLAR LITHIUM BROMIDE–WATER ABSORPTION COOLING SYSTEM WITH DOUBLE GLAZED FLAT PLATE COLLECTOR FOR ADRAR

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## Abstract

Adrar is a city in the Sahara desert, in southern Algeria known for its hot and dry climate, where a huge amount of energy is used for air conditioning. The aim of this research is to simulate a single effect lithium bromide–water absorption chiller coupled to a double-glazed flat plate collector to supply the cooling loads for a house of 200m<sup>2</sup> in Adrar. The thermal energy is stored in an insulated thermal storage tank. The system was designed to cover a cooling load of 10.39KW for design day of July. Thermodynamic model was established to simulate the absorption cycle. The results have shown that the collector mass flow rate has a negligible effect on the minimum required collector area, but it has a significant effect on the optimum capacity of the storage tank. The minimum required collector area was about 65.3 m<sup>2</sup>, which could supply the cooling loads for the sunshine hours of the design day for July. The operation of the system has also been considered after sunset by saving solar energy.

**Keywords:** solar, cooling, absorption, double-glazed flat plate, lithium bromide-water, energy, Adrar.

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## I. INTRODUCTION :

The use of absorption cooling systems is becoming increasingly important, with the environmental problems caused by a mechanical compression systems (use of CFC and HCFC), and the soaring energy prices; absorption solar systems seems to be an alternative to conventional cooling systems, notably with their possibility to use renewable energy and reduce fuel consumption. Solar cooling systems consist of a solar collector and a storage system for absorption. The main components of an absorption chiller include four heat exchangers; generator, condenser, evaporator and absorber. The LiBr–H<sub>2</sub>O system operates at a generator temperature in the range of 63–95°C with water used as a coolant in the absorber and condenser. The COP of this system is between 0.6 and 0.8, which is higher than that for NH<sub>3</sub>–H<sub>2</sub>O systems [1]. Tsilingiris [2] presented a theoretical microcomputer model to investigate the operational behavior of a simple design solar LiBr–H<sub>2</sub>O absorption cooling system with 7 kW cooling load capacity for small residential applications in Greece. Ghaddar et al. [3] modelled and simulated a solar absorption system for a typical house in Beirut. The absorption cycle was simulated by a thermodynamic model, and the storage tank was assumed to be well mixed. Hourly values of the direct and diffuse components of solar radiation incident on the collectors and the values of ambient temperature, wind speed and direction were derived directly from actual hourly measured weather data files. The cooling power at the evaporator was modeled as a variable load with an average capacity of 10.5 kW. The delivery water temperature to the generator was above 65 °C and the temperature in the storage tank was not allowed to exceed 95 °C to prevent change of phase occurrence. Florides et al. [4] modeled a complete system that was comprised of a solar collector, a storage tank, a boiler for auxiliary energy and a LiBr–water absorption

system, the system was modeled with the TRANSYS simulation program and the typical meteorological data file of Nicosia, Cyprus. Assilzadeh et al. [5] simulated and optimized a solar LiBr–water absorption cooling system with an evacuated tube collector by the TRANSYS program for Malaysia's climate. They proposed that, to achieve continuous operation and increase the reliability of the system, a 0.8 m<sup>3</sup> hot water storage tank is essential, and the system needs a collector area of 35 m<sup>2</sup> sloped at 20°C for a 3.5 kW cooling load. Adrar is one of the hottest cities in Algeria in the latitude of 27.82° N and longitude of 0.18°W. In this region an enormous amounts of energy is used for cooling residential places in a year, which is costly and harmful to the environment. The daily average of global solar radiation of Adrar is about 2.456 MJ for the summer months, and its ambient temperature sometimes reaches above 45 °C; therefore, solar absorption cooling chillers are suitable in this area, so the solar cooling system has been simulated with typical weather data of solar radiation, ambient temperatures of Adrar. The given solar cooling system consists of a double glazed flat plate collector, an insulated hot water storage tank and a single effect lithium bromide–water absorption chiller. For this research, a typical house (area about 200 m<sup>2</sup>) has been selected, which has its maximum cooling load of 10.39 kW for July. A computer program has been written in FORTRAN to simulate and design the solar cooling system to supply the cooling demand of this house from when the cooling loads are more considerable. Although stationary collectors, like the flat plate and evacuated tube, have been the most conventional collectors used in simulation of solar absorption systems [2–6]. A thermodynamic model is suitable to simulate the absorption cycle, but the basic assumptions and input parameters must be considered [3,7,8 ,9]; so, some typical and applied input values, such as the solution pump flow rate, the efficiency of solution heat exchanger and variable temperatures of the generator and

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condenser, have been used to model the absorption cycle. The cooling load of residential places is fairly high even after sunset that is why the operation of the solar system not only has been simulated during sunshine hours but also after sunset by storage of solar energy as well. The minimum required collector area and optimum storage tank capacity have been obtained for various water mass flow rates of the collector.

### II. SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

The water heated by the solar collector is stored in the storage tank and pumped to the generator to separate the refrigerant from the absorbent, then the superheated refrigerant is condensed in the condenser by the cold water of the cooling tower, water follows through the expansion valve and arrived to the evaporator to produce cold required. The vapor is lead to the absorber where it is absorbed by the rich solution coming from the generator; finally the rich solution is pumped to the generator via a heat exchanger. This cycle operates at low pressure to evaporate water at low temperatures. Figure 1 shows the schematic diagram of the solar lithium bromide–water absorption cooling system.

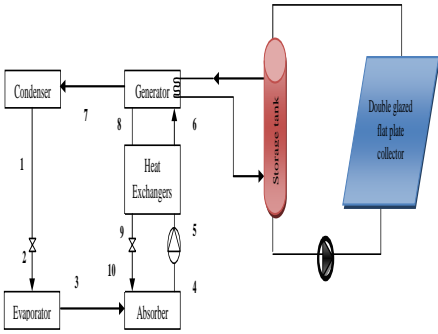


Fig. 1, Schematic diagram of solar absorption cooling system

#### A. absorption cycle

The performance of an absorption cycle can be simulated well by a thermodynamic model [3, 7, 8].

At the absorber, two mass balances can be made:

$$m_f + m_g - m_a = 0 \quad (1)$$

$$m_g X_c - m_a X_d = 0 \quad (2)$$

We derive an expression  $m_g$  and  $m_a$  as a function of  $m_f$  and refrigerant concentrations.

$$m_a = m_f \frac{X_c}{X_c - X_d} \quad (3)$$

$$m_g = m_f \frac{X_d}{X_c - X_d} \quad (4)$$

The enthalpy balance for each component exchanging heat or work with the external environment is as follows:

$$Q_g = m_7 h_7 + m_8 h_8 - m_6 h_6 \quad (5)$$

$$Q_c = m_1 (h_1 - h_7) \quad (6)$$

$$Q_e = m_1 (h_3 - h_2) \quad (7)$$

$$Q_a = m_4 h_4 - m_3 h_3 - m_{10} h_{10} \quad (8)$$

$$W_p = m_6 (h_5 - h_4) \quad (9)$$

The specific flow solution ( $FR$ ) [2] can be written:

$$FR = \frac{m_a}{m_f} = \frac{X_c}{X_c - X_d} \quad (10)$$

The coefficient of performance ( $COP$ ) is:

$$COP = \frac{Q_e}{Q_g + W_p} = \frac{(h_3 - h_2)}{h_7 + (FR - 1)h_8 - FR(h_6 + h_4 - h_5)} \quad (11)$$

The equations necessary for the calculation of thermodynamic and physical properties of the binary solution (LiBr /H<sub>2</sub>O) are given by ASHRAE [10]

#### B. Solar collector :

The role of double glazed flat plate collector is to convert solar radiation into heat energy through a heat transfer fluid (water). The output power of the double glazed flat plate is given by the formula:

$$Q_u = A_c \times Fr \times [(\tau \times \alpha) \times I_G - U_L \times (T_{fi} - T_a)] \quad (12)$$

The thermal efficiency of the solar collectors is the ratio of useful energy obtained in collector to solar radiation incoming to collector. It can be formulated as:

$$\eta = \frac{Q_u}{I_g \times A_c} \quad (13)$$

#### C. Thermal storage tank

In this type of installation in which a storage unit is placed in series with the solar collector, the temperature of the fluid entered  $T_{fe}$  in the collector is equal at each moment to the fluid temperature  $T_{stock}$  in the storage volume. Fig 2 We can make the simplifying assumption that the variation of  $T_{stock}$  between two instants  $t$  and  $t + dt$  has a negligible influence on the value of the useful flux  $Q_u$ . We can then calculate the useful flux between  $t$  and  $t + dt$   $T_{fe}$  assuming constant and equal to  $T_{stock}(t)$ . Then we have:

$$T_{stock(t+dt)} = T_{stock}(t) + \frac{Q_u \times dt}{m_{stock} \times cp_{stock}} \quad (14)$$

### III. PARAMETERS OF CALCULATION

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the double glazed flat plate collector

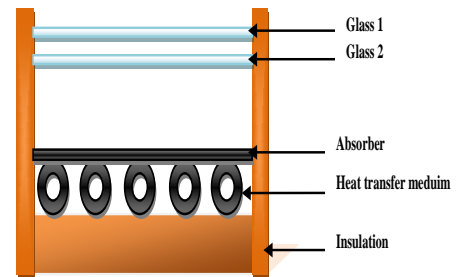


Fig. 2, Schematic diagram of double glazed flat plate collector

TABLE I. CHARACTERISTIC OF THE DOUBLE GLAZED FLAT PLATE COLLECTO

COMPONENT	DIMENSION
thickness glass1	0.002m
thickness glass2	0.002m
space between glass	0.007m
Emissivity of the glass	0.88
Emissivity of the absorber	0.7
Inside diameter of tube	0.035 m
absorption coefficient	0.88

IV. RESULTS AND DISSCUTION

The system performance depends on the weather data; therefore, the variations of direct solar radiations, ambient and wind velocity have been used to simulate the solar absorption cooling system. The cooling load variations during the design days are presented in Figure 3; the cooling loads varied from 3.1 KW to a peak of 10.39 KW at 13h. Figure 4 shows the instantaneous solar radiation incident on a horizontal surface for the design day of July; the value of  $I_g$  in Adrar is about 200W/m<sup>2</sup> in the morning and it arrived to 1100 W/m<sup>2</sup> at 13h. Figure 5 shows the temperature distribution of the storage tank for the design day of July; the temperature of the storage tank varies from the temperature of 49°C to a maximum of 80°C at 15h, then it decrease to 67°C at the end of the day.

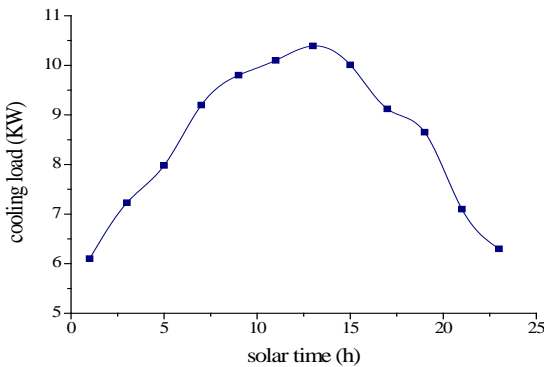


Fig. 3. cooling load variations for design day of July

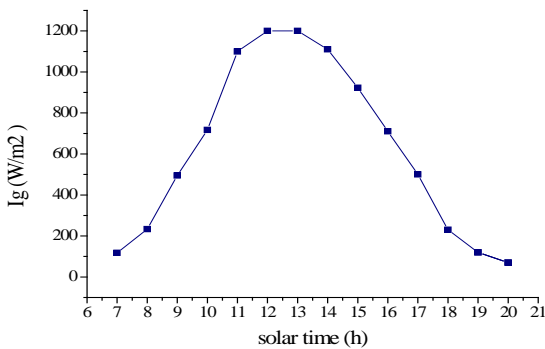


Fig. 4. Instantaneous solar radiation incident for design day of July

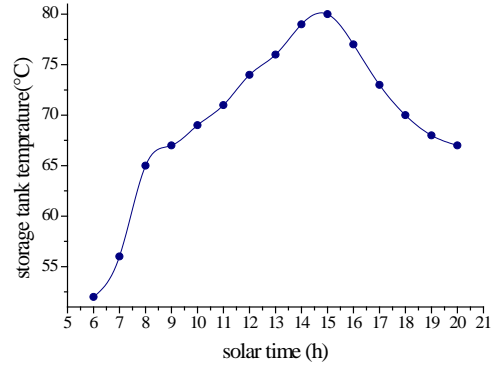
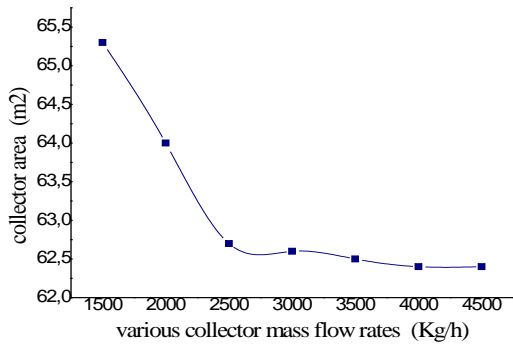


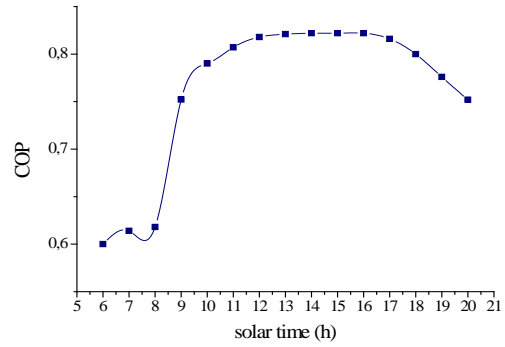
Fig. 5. Temperature distribution of storage tank for design day of July

Figures 6 and 7, respectively, present the minimum required collector area and the optimal capacity of the storage tank for the design day of July. It may be noted that the effect of the collector mass flow rate on the minimum required collector area is negligible because the heat loss at the double glazed flat plate collector are relatively low especially when we work with low temperatures. Against the optimal capacity of the storage tank is influenced by the change of the collector mass flow rate. Reducing the collector mass flow rate lowers the collector heat removal factor but also tends to increase the thermal capacity of the storage tank, which may improve the overall system performance [11]. At the beginning of the day the collector efficiency is low (about 0.45), it begins to increase with increasing of the solar direct radiation and the temperatures of the ambient to a value of 0.77. The use of a storage tank increases the operation time of the absorption cycle, the simulation was made for a high flow, and therefore. The effect of the collector mass flow rate and tank volume on the thermal capacity of the storage tank has been considered. Figure 7 shows that the obtained storage tank capacity is between 0.68 and 1.23m<sup>3</sup> for 10.39 kW of cooling loads, which is in good agreement with other researches with various weather conditions and residential cooling load capacities [2–5]. The storage water temperature is about 67°C at the end of each day of operation, and the heat losses of the insulated storage tank are very low. Thus, the results showed that it is possible to assume the minimum initial temperature of the storage tank and inlet water temperature to the collector are about 56°C at the beginning of collector operation. Figure 8 shows that the collector efficiency during the design day of July. The result shows that the variation in collector efficiency is low; it stabilizes for most of the day at the value of 0.77; at the end of the day it decreased with the decrease of the solar direct irradiation to 0.45, this result is similar to the results of other researches. Figure 9 shows the evolution of the COP during the design day for July the COP values are between 0.27 and 0.85 for generator temperatures between 56 and 80 °C, the COP value is maximum when cooling loads are important; absorber and the condenser is cooled by a cooling tower in series. The same result was obtained by Wijeysondera [12] for COP amounts similar to the given values in this research. Figure 10 present the minimum required collector area for operation over the sunshine hours for the design day of July.

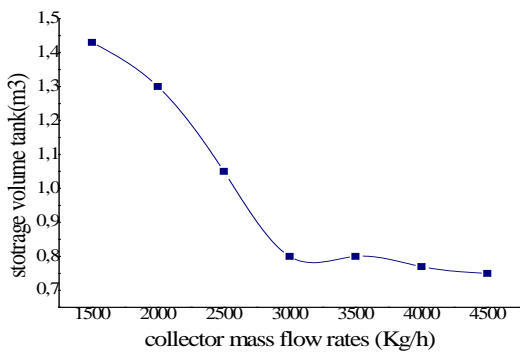
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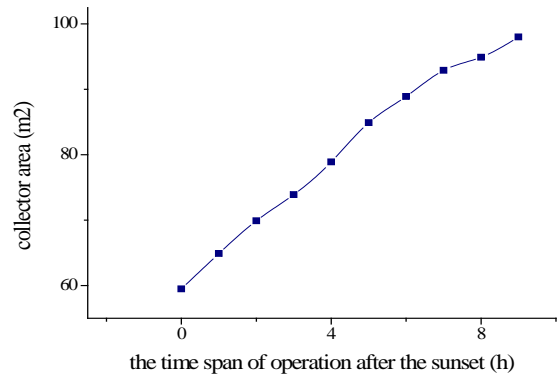
**Fig. 6** Minimum required collector area at various collector mass flow rates for design day of July



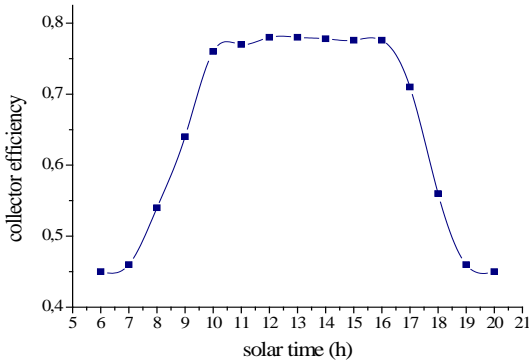
**Fig. 9**, Variations of COP during design days for July



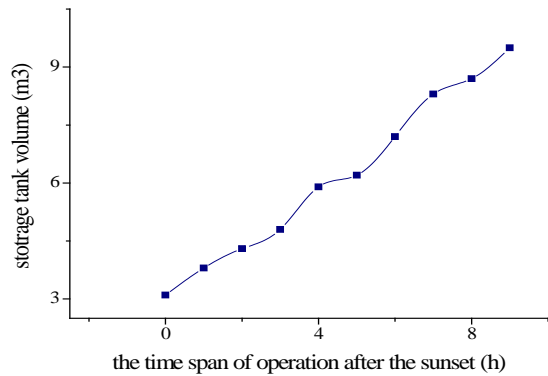
**Fig. 7**, optimal capacity of storage tank at various collector mass flow rates for design day of July



**Fig. 10**, Minimum required collector area for operation over sunshine hours for design day of July



**Fig. 8**, Variations of collector efficiency during design day for July



**Fig. 11**, optimal capacity of storage tank for operation over sunshine hours for design day of July

The results show that the minimum required collector area of the storage tank increases extremely when the operation of the absorption cooling system continues after sunset. Figure 11 shows that the optimal capacity of the storage tank has been increased after the sunset in comparison with the given value for operation during sunshine hours. A large storage volume is requested to cover cooling loads with the given value of operation. The auxiliary energy can also be used to supply the required heat of the generator of the absorption cycle instead of saving more solar energy in the tank after sunshine hours when the cooling load decreases considerably.

**V. CONCLUSION**

The use of solar double glazed flat plate collector and insulated thermal storage tank with a single effect lithium bromide–water absorption cooling system is an effective solution to Adrar compared to other types of solar collectors such as flat plate collector. For a cooling load of 10.39 KW a large collector area and storage tank capacity are required for the design day of July are needed to cover the cooling loads during the day and after the sunset. For a house in Adrar of 200m<sup>2</sup>, the minimum required collector area was about 62.7m<sup>2</sup> minimum for the collector mass flow rate of 2500 kg/h. The results showed that the collector mass flow rate did

not affect the surface but it has a significant effect on the optimal capacity of the storage tank. The optimal capacity of the storage tank decreases when cooling loads increase. High values of (COP) of the system are related to increase cooling loads. For the operation of the system during the night, and the results are shown that the optimal capacity of the optimal capacity of the storage tank increases significantly.

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