

Environmental and Thermo-economic Study of the Impact of Using Air-Cooled Condensers in the Kalina Cycle for Power Generation in Hot and Dry Regions

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The Kalina cycle utilizes low-temperature heat sources to generate high-pressure vapor for running a turbine to produce power. Since the vapor at the turbine exit is relatively low temperature, a cool medium is required to liquefy the vapor at the condenser. This requirement imposes a practical limitation to the Kalina cycle for application in hot and dry regions. This paper studies the environmental and economic impact of using air-cooled condensers in the Kalina cycle. A dual Kalina cycle (KSC-D), the hybrid dual Kalina cycle (KSC-Dh), and the basic Kalina cycle (KSC-1) have been compared, considering Tarasht Steam Power Plant, Tehran, as a case study. Subsequently, power output, water consumption, CO₂ emission, and IRR, NPV were investigated for each case. Results show the least power output (4346704kWh_{year}⁻¹) and the maximum power output (5008627kWh_{year}⁻¹) belong to the basic Kalina cycle with an air-cooled condenser (KSC-1a) and the KSC-Dh cycle, respectively. Moreover, using air-cooled condensers in the dual Kalina cycle (KSC-Da) saves about $425825 \times 10^3 m^3$ of water annually. KSC-Da is the most economical and has the shortest payback time of three years. Also, for KSC-Da, the natural gas saved is 0.7765 to 1.22 Mm³year⁻¹, and the reduction in CO₂ emission is about 4378 Tons year⁻¹. The overall results indicate that although the KSC-Da ranks fourth in terms of power output among the different cases (producing 4564262kWh_{year}⁻¹), it is still the most viable choice regarding the impact on the environment and reducing the amount of CO₂ emissions. © 2023 Journal of Energy Management and Technology

keywords: CO₂ emission, Dual Kalina cycle, Heat recovery, Low-temperature, Water consumption, Water-cooled condenser

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NOMENCLATURE

<i>a</i>	Air Cooled	<i>m</i> <i>F</i>	Mass flow rate
<i>A</i>	Area	<i>Mix</i>	Mixer
<i>ACC</i>	Air Cooled Condenser	<i>NPV</i>	Net Present Value
<i>Con</i>	Condenser	<i>P</i>	MPressure
<i>C</i>	Cost	<i>T</i>	Temperature
<i>C_{LO}</i>	Loss Cost Flow	<i>TCI</i>	The total cost of investment
<i>C_P</i>	Product Cost Flow	<i>Tur</i>	Turbine
<i>C_F</i>	Fuel Cost Flow	<i>U</i>	Heat transfer coefficient
<i>C_{in}</i>	Yearly income	<i>Val</i>	Valve
<i>CRF</i>	Capital Recovery Factor	<i>W</i>	Water Cooled
<i>Ė</i>	Exergy rate	<i>X</i>	Ammonia-water mass fraction
<i>Eva</i>	Evaporator	<i>z_{CI}</i>	Capital Investment Rate
<i>HEX</i>	Heat exchanger	<i>z_{O&M,j}</i>	Operation and Maintenance Investment Rate
<i>IRR</i>	Internal Rate of Return	<i>B</i>	Bottom Cycle
		<i>Ex</i>	Exchanger

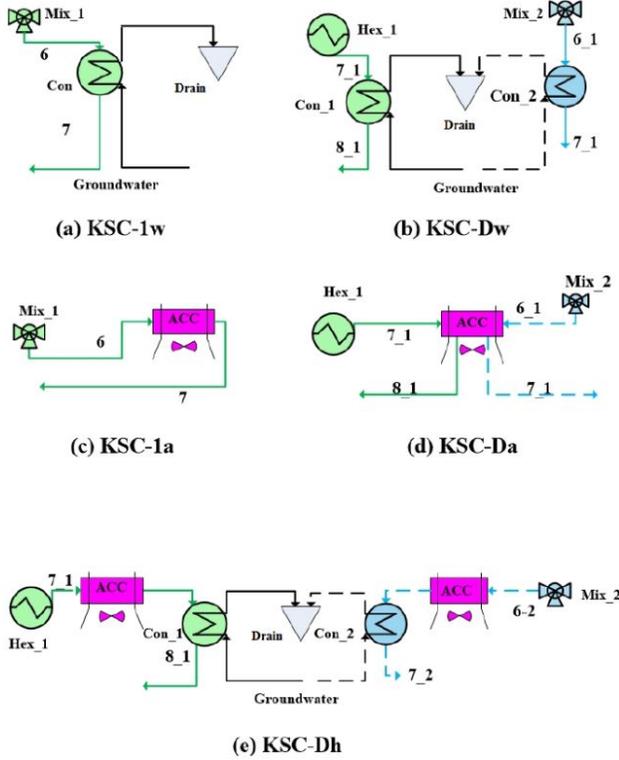


Fig. 3. The five different cases (KSC-1w, KSC-Dw, KSC-1a, KSC-Da, KSC-Dh) for the two considered configurations

Net electricity sales revenue is obtained from Eq. (3), in which $C_{E,Tur}$ is the cost rate balance of the turbine and is obtained from Eq. (4) [21].

$$C_{el} = C_{E,Tur} \times (Power_{Out})^n \quad (3)$$

$$C_{E,Tur} = (C_{F,j}\dot{E}x_{F,j} - C_{LO,j}\dot{E}x_{LO,j} + \dot{z}_{CI,j} + \dot{z}_{O\&M,j}) / \dot{E}x_{P,j} \quad (4)$$

For the economic analysis of the five cases, the parameters NPV, CRF, IRR, and yret are used, which are obtained from Eqs. (5) to (8) [22–24].

$$NPV = -TCI + C_{in}/CRF \quad (5)$$

$$CRF = (i_{eff}(1 + i_{eff})^{n_y} / ((1 + i_{eff})^{n_y} - 1)) \quad (6)$$

$$TCI = C_{in} / (IRR(1 + IRR)^{n_y} / ((1 + IRR)^{n_y} - 1)) \quad (7)$$

$$y_{ret} = TCI / C_{in} \quad (8)$$

where the effective rate of return, $i_{eff} = 0.1$, and the operation period of the power plant, $n_y = 20$ years.



Fig. 4. Stacks of Tarasht Steam Power Plant

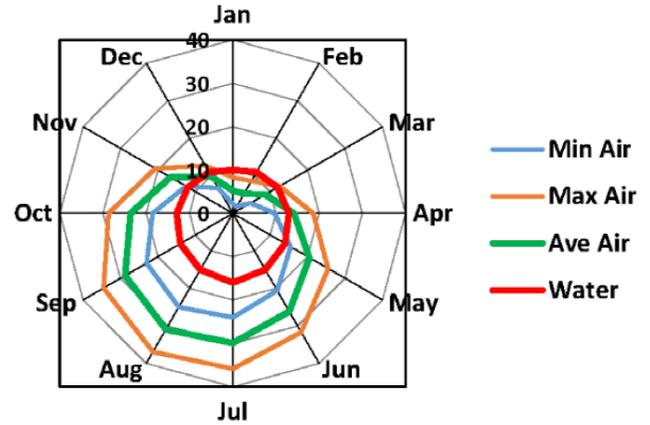


Fig. 5. Annual ambient air and groundwater temperature variations (°C) in Tehran

D. The case study

In this case study, the flue gas from the steam boiler’s stacks in Tarasht Steam Power Plant (Tehran-Iran), shown in Fig. 4, was used as the driving heat source for the Kalina cycle. The minimum temperature difference in the pinch point for all the heat exchangers is 3°C.

According to their material, the heat transfer coefficient for evaporators, heat exchangers, and condensers are considered to be 0.9, 1, and 1.1 $kWm^{-2}K^{-1}$, respectively [25]. Also, the isentropic efficiency for turbines and pumps is $\eta_{Tur} = 0.88\%$ and 0.75%, respectively.

The temperature of the heat source from the steam boiler’s stacks is about 175 °C. The power plant’s average steam cycle efficiency is about 21%, and the average net heat value of the consumed fuel during this period was $49.675 MJkg^{-1}$. Since the power plant under consideration is located in Tehran, the annual variations of the ambient air and groundwater temperatures in Tehran are as depicted in Fig. 5.

3. RESULTS

A determining factor for increasing the consumed recycled heat in the Kalina cycle and, therefore, the power generation

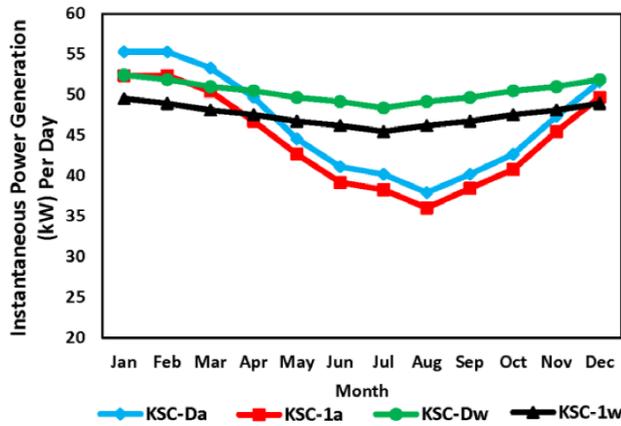


Fig. 6. The daily power generation for KSC-1a, KSC-1w, KSC-Da, and KSC-Dw, based on monthly variations of ambient air and groundwater temperatures

capacity of the cycle is the ammonia-water mass fraction, X . The desired mass fraction was determined by considering the changes in the ammonia-water mass fraction at 175°C using the laws of thermodynamics and mass and energy balance for both configurations.

The thermodynamic properties at different points, and power generation for all the cases (refer to Figs. 2 and 3) at a heat source temperature of 175°C, were obtained by energy and mass balances and using the library database in EES software.

Accordingly, the maximum electrical power generation capacity for the basic Kalina cycle (KSC-1) is obtained at the mass fraction of $X = 0.95$. Similarly, the maximum power output for the bottom cycle (KSC-DB) in the dual Kalina cycle configuration is obtained at the mass fraction of $X = 0.44$.

Due to the effect of coolant temperature in the condenser, the maximum power generation at a mass fraction of 0.95 for the dual Kalina cycle using ambient air as the coolant is obtained as 460,800 kWh in January. For the basic Kalina cycle, it is 436,392 kWh. While the corresponding values obtained when using groundwater resources are 437,040 kWh and 412,560 kWh, respectively.

Fig. 6 depicts the average daily instantaneous power output for both configurations based on annual ambient air and groundwater temperature variations (considered as the cooling fluids). The power generation for the KSC-1a and KSC-Da cases shows a sharp decrease due to a considerable increase in the ambient air temperatures during the warmer months, the reduction being most pronounced between April to August. However, because of less annual variation in the groundwater temperature, the average daily instantaneous power generation for the KSC-1w and KSC-Dw cases, which use water-cooled condensers, follows a uniform trend.

In the hybrid case of KSC-Dh, an air-cooled condenser is used in conjunction with a water-cooled condenser. Fig. 7 shows this case's power output curve for different months. Here, for the cold months of the year, when the ambient air is cooler than the groundwater temperature, an air-cooled condenser can be used for the condensation process. However, in the hot months, when the ambient temperature is warmer than the temperature of groundwater sources, a combination of air and water can be used for the steam condensation process. This protocol can

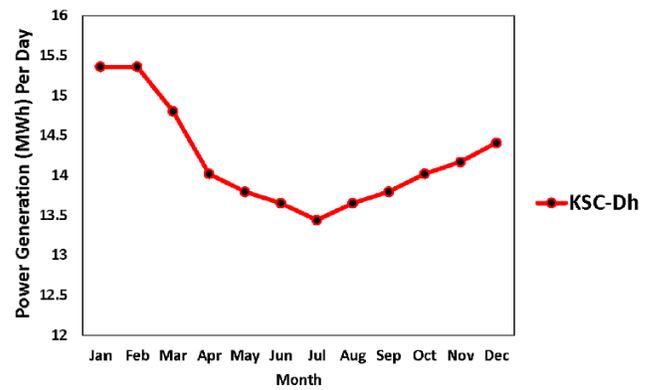


Fig. 7. The daily power generation for KSC-Dh, based on monthly variations of ambient air and groundwater temperatures

result in higher average daily instantaneous power output than other cases.

Fig. 8 compares daily power generation for the KSC-Da case with KSC-Dw, KSC-Dh, KSC-1w, and KSC-1a, based on annual ambient air and groundwater temperature variations.

As seen in Fig. 8(a), the total power generation for the KSC-Da case is 4,564,262 kWh, which is 379,961 kWh less than the total power generation for the KSC-Dw case, which is 4,944,223 kWh. In Fig. 8(b), the annual power generation for the KSC-1w is 4,656,599 kWh. Therefore, the power production for the KSC-Da case is 92,337 kWh less than KSC-1w. However, as shown in Fig. 8(c), from March to December, the power generation for the KSC-Da case is less than that of KSC-Dh (5,008,627 kWh) by an amount of 444,365 kWh, which is the most significant difference between the power generation for the KSC-Da case and other cases.

Fig. 8(d) compares the power generation for the KSC-Da and KSC-1a cases. As shown, the KSC-1a case is the only case that generates less power than the KSC-Da case on all days of the year, and the difference between the power generation of these two cases is 217,558 kWh. The higher power generation difference from January to April is due to the better performance of the intermediate heat exchanger HEX (see Fig. 2) in the year's cold months, which helps the condensation process in the top cycle.

Fig. 9 shows the monthly power generation diagram for the five analyzed cases. Variations of power generation in different months for these cases are due to the difference in the cooling fluids used for the condensation process and the number of days each month. As shown in Fig. 9, the highest power generation for all cases occurs in the cold months of the year, namely December and January.

Heat recovery efficiency is equal to the ratio of power generation to input heat. Considering that the amount of heat input is constant and equal to 5943 kW, the changes in heat recovery efficiency for all 5 cases are shown in Fig. 10.

The natural gas saved is 1.22 Mm³year⁻¹, and the reduction in CO₂ emission for the proposed configuration (KSC-Da) is about 4378 Tonsyear⁻¹.

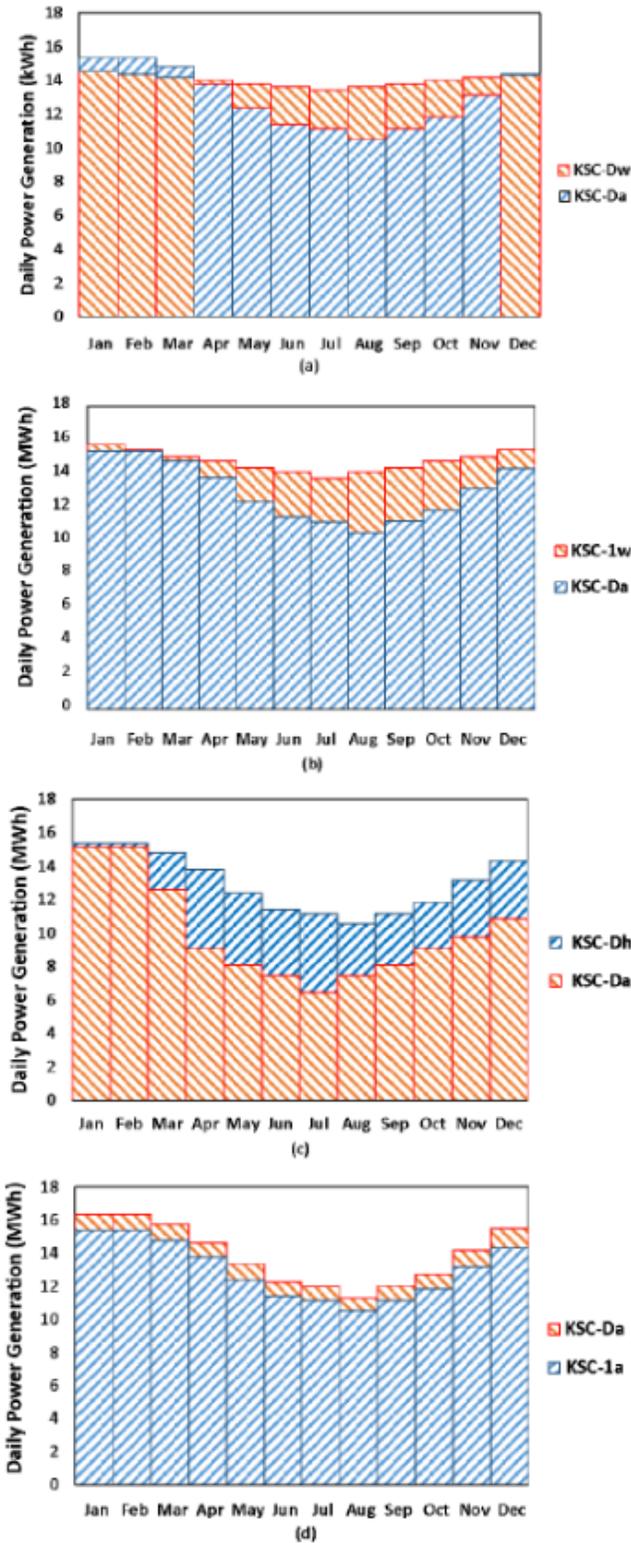


Fig. 8. Comparison of daily power generation for the KSC-Da case with other cases

Considering that the efficiency of the upstream steam cycle is 21%, the amount of CO₂ emission reduction for each of the five cases is as depicted in Fig. 11. As shown, case KSC-Dh has

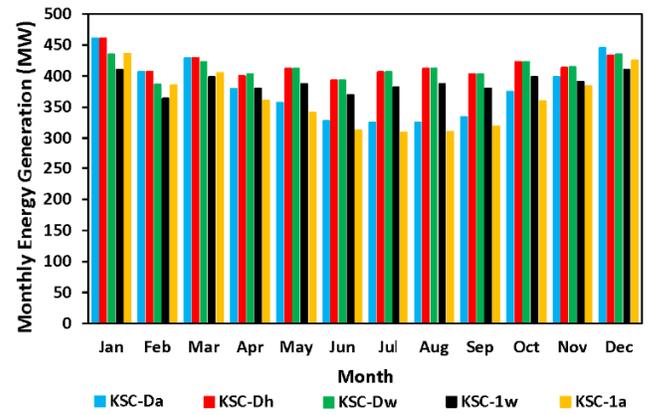


Fig. 9. Monthly power production considering the monthly variations of ambient air and groundwater temperatures

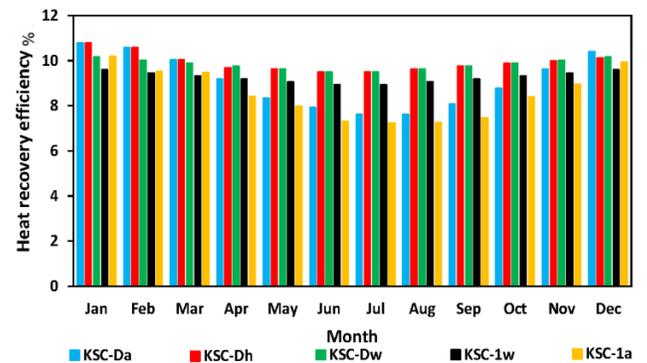


Fig. 10. Monthly changes in heat recovery efficiency

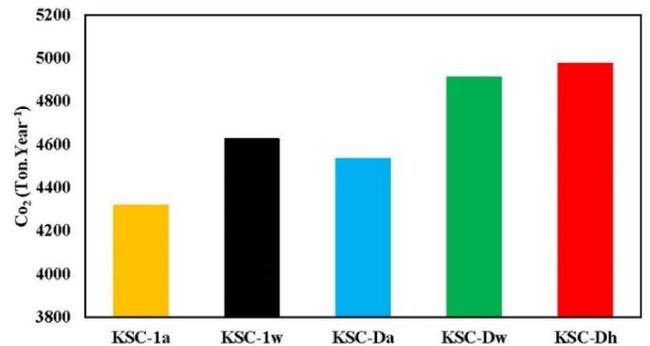


Fig. 11. The annual reduction in CO₂ emission for the five cases

the highest annual decrease in CO₂ emissions, and the KSC-1a case has the lowest CO₂ emissions among the five studied cases. Moreover, the KSC-Da case is also in fourth place regarding the reduction of CO₂ emission.

Fig. 12 shows the monthly water consumption for the three cases, KSC-Dw, KSC-1w, and KSC-Dh. The area under the curve is equal to the annual water consumption for each case, amounting to 425825×10^3 , 191514×10^3 , and $71921 \times 10^3 m^3$ for KSC-Dw, KSC-1w, and KSC-Dh, respectively. Therefore, it may be concluded that by changing the cooling fluid in the condenser

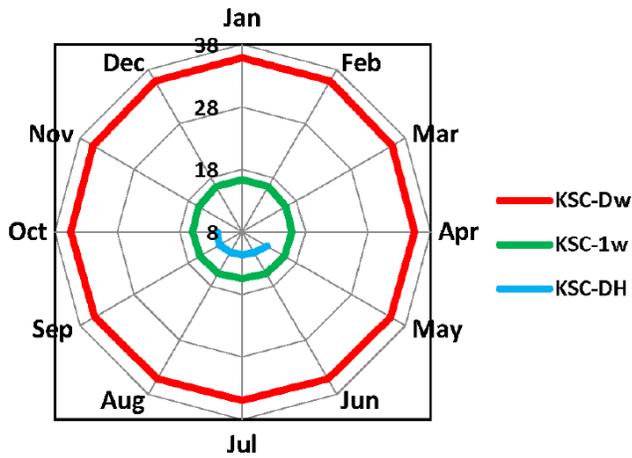


Fig.12. Monthly water consumption ($10^6 m^3$) for KSC-Dw, KSC-1w, and KSC-DH cases

Fig. 12. Monthly water consumption ($10^6 m^3$) for KSC-Dw, KSC-1w, and KSC-DH cases

Table 1. Mass flow rate for cooling fluid

Case	Water($kg s^{-1}$)	Air($kg s^{-1}$)
KSC-1w	189.2	—
KSC-1a	—	463.54
KSC-Da	—	596.28
KSC-Dw	243.38	—
KSC-Dh	92.48	369.7

from water to air for the dual Kalina cycle (KSC-D), the water consumption can be reduced by an amount of $425825 \times 10^3 m^3$.

Also, the water and air flow rates used in the wet and dry cooling systems are determined in Table 1. As shown, the highest water consumption is for cycle KSC-Dw ($243.38 kg s^{-1}$), and the highest amount of air required is for cycle KSC-1a ($596.28 kg s^{-1}$).

The total monthly electricity generation in Fig.9 equals each case's annual electricity production values. Therefore, the annual sales income for each case can be calculated by taking into account the rate of $0.12 USD \$ kWh^{-1}$ of electricity sales [26]. Also, considering that the cost of water consumption from groundwater sources for condensation for KSC-Dw, KSC-1w, and KSC-Dh cases is $0.009 USD \$ m^{-3}$ [27] and using equations (5), (6), the TCI, IRR, and NPV values for each item in Table 1 have been calculated. These values are calculated based on the maximum power generation for all cases in January. However, as shown in Table 2, the Total Cost of Investment (TCI) has increased due to increased costs of condenser construction and operating costs resulting from groundwater use in the KSC-Dh case. Therefore, the payback period for the KSC-Da case is three years, 0.7 years less than the KSC-Dh case.

These results show that considering Tehran's climatic conditions, using an air-cooled condenser instead of a wet cooling tower is more economically justified. Also, due to limited

Table 2. Economic parameters for 5 cases

Parameter	IRR (%)	NPV (1000 USD\$)	TCI (1000 USD\$)	C_m (1000 USD\$)	Y_{ret}	$A_{Con} (m^2)$
case		USD\$)	USD\$)	USD\$)		
KSC-1w	24.2	1013	520.3	126.9	4.1	443.3
KSC-1a	17.08	469.6	677.3	120.95	5.6	1081.6
KSC-Da	33.4	1773	806.8	268.93	3	1150.5
KSC-Dw	27.04	1230	623.2	168.43	3.7	469.6
KSC-Dh	22.09	855.3	916.9	208.39	4.4	891.8

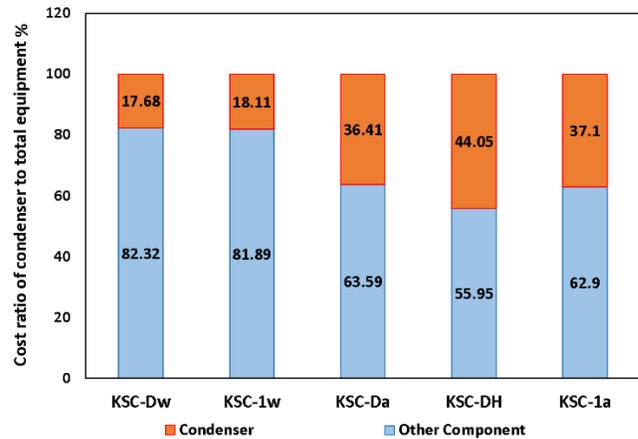


Fig. 13. Cost ratio of the condenser to the total equipment cost for the five cases

groundwater resources and the problem of land subsidence in this city, the adverse effects on the environment will be reduced. Fig. 13 shows each part's cost percentage in the total equipment costs for the five cases. As shown, the ratio of condenser cost in the KSC-Dh case is higher than in other cases. However, the payback time for the KSC-Da case is shorter than the other cases. The highest cost ratio for the condenser to the total equipment cost is related to the KSC-Dh case, which is about 44.1%.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This paper presents the environmental and economic impact of replacing water-cooled condensers with air-cooled ones in the Kalina cycle for use in hot and arid areas. The results can be summarized as follows:

- KSC-1a cycle has the least power output ($4,346,704 kWh year^{-1}$), while the maximum power output ($5,008,627 kWh year^{-1}$) belongs to the KSC-Dh cycle.
- Changing the condenser cooling fluid from water to air in the KSC-Da cycle can save about $425825 \times 10^3 m^3$ of water annually compared to the KSC-Dw cycle.
- KSC-Da cycle is the most desirable option in terms of cost, and with an NPV of 1773,000 USD\$, it has the shortest payback time of 3 years.
- The parameter IRR is 33.04% for KSC-Da, 6% higher than the KSC-Dh case, which is in second place.

- The overall results indicate that although the KSC-Da ranks fourth in terms of power output among the different cases (producing $4564262kWh/year^{-1}$), it is still the most viable choice regarding the impact on the environment and reduces the amount of CO₂ emissions significantly. It also impacts water consumption (saving about $425825 \times 10^3 m^3$ of water annually). Therefore, considering the problems caused by climate change, which have led to the reduction of freshwater resources, and the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, the dual Kalina cycle with air-cooled condensers (KSC-Da) is recommended to improve these conditions.
- The results have significant environmental implications for applying the Kalina cycle in areas with little or no groundwater resources or hot and dry regions of the country to generate power from low-temperature heat sources.

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