A Theoretical Detailed Analysis for a Proposed 5kW PV Grid-Connected System Installed in Iraq Using PVsyst Tool

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**ABSTRACT**

In this study, PVsyst simulation software is used to analyze a PV grid tied system in a typical primary school in Iraq. The proposed system is 5kW which is affordable and applicable from the cost and required area points respectively. The monthly averaged electrical load for a typical school is approximately calculated. The system simulation has been done for thirteen Iraqi provinces while it is described and its performance is analyzed in details for Baghdad city as an example. The performance ratio for the system in Baghdad is 0.825 and about 9.82MWh is generated by the system per year, 62.7% is consumed by the load and the remaining is injected to the national grid. The results showed that the initial capital cost is $5,442 which is returned after five and a half years. The cost of 1 kWh if the system operates for 10 years is $0.058. This study clearly demonstrates that photovoltaic power system can effectively assist the peak load on the grid. In addition, these systems are very economical/no maintenance project and can be hooked to any the peak time load.

**INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, among different renewable energy technologies, photovoltaic (PV) technologies have grown faster and getting more attention in research, development. PV industry has shown rapid growth [1,2]. PV power has a wide capacity range and various applications from powering a small calculator to a mega scale power plant [3]. Prices of PV system components are decreasing with a fast rate as the production increases. New technologies comes on the market. This explains the impressive R&D and application of PVs worldwide.

Photovoltaic power systems are classified mainly into three types of systems: Grid connected also called on-grid or grid-tied systems, Stand-alone (or off-grid) systems and Water pumping systems. This study focuses on photovoltaic grid-tied systems (shortly GTS) which consist of Photovoltaic panels, MPPT, solar inverters, power conditioning units and grid connection equipment. PV GTS feed the excess power, beyond consumption by the grid. The connected load to the utility grid. Small scale GTS are simple to install and operate, less components, more effective solar power utilization, longer term life than off grid/stand-alone systems [4-7].

The energy yield of a grid-connected PV system depends on various factors. PV system components, installation configuration, location and meteorological characteristics, operation defects [8, 9]. Many studies can be found in the literature which investigate the energy performance, cost assessments and environmental impact of different PV grid connected systems. Studies may be found in literature for countries with climate near to climate of Iraq like in Kuwait [9, 10], Jordan [11], Egypt [12], Saudi Arabia [13], Turkey [14], Oman [15] and United of Arabian Emirates [16]. A detailed summary for the recent studies involving grid tied PV system with or without battery storage are reported in literature [15].

Since the last decade, Iraq went through a series of failed attempts to solve problems not only in the electrical energy production but also in the transmission and distribution of electricity. Iraq’s electricity infrastructure was severely damaged during the Gulf War and further in the following war in 2003. In 2008, the Ministry of Electricity reported that the peak demand was 12 GW of power; however, only 6 GW was supplied [17]. Iraq’s demand-supply gap is 133.33% on average, and progressive provinces have experienced a gap in excess of 150%. The average energy usage per capita is expected to increase because Iraq has a growing economy [18].

In Iraq, electricity is almost completely generated using fossil fuels ignoring few small hydro-electric stations. As has been seen in the pioneer countries in solar power generation sector, there is an impetus to
explore as much as possible of buildings roofs and even
facades to install small to relatively PV arrays. This
eliminates the cost of land from the capital initial cost. In
this study, the suggestion is to install small GTS for
governmental primary schools which are featured with
the following points:
1. In Iraq, governmental schools usually have large
unexploited space areas roof, grounds etc., as shown in
Fig. 1.

Figure 1. Satellite image for typical schools in Iraq

2. Daily load coincides with the peak load on the grid [19,
20].
3. The project can be funded by local or international
"environment or climate changes organizations".
4. Rising children in a building with new, clean and
promising energy source like solar energy.

The number of primary schools in Iraq was
14,048 in 2010/2011 while the number had reached about
15,807 in 2013/2014 about 12.5% increase. Governmental
schools are 97% and 3% are private schools [21]. The
Iraqi ministry of education stated that in 2012/2013 there
were 14,830 primary schools, number of pupils
5,288,845, while the school buildings were 10,873. So
we can consider about 500 pupils per school [22].
Electrical energy demand of the schools on the national
grid may be reduced even can be eliminated by installing
a PV GTS with appropriate size of GTS on each school.

PV simulation tools (such as PVsyst) are useful
to perform preliminary detailed analysis of systems
performance under various operating conditions. Some
tools do shading analysis on the PV array, investigate
different load profiles, verify systemizing for optimal
performance and evaluate the viability of a PV system in
terms of energy productionand life cycle cost of the
system. Some studies used the benefits of quick process
of simulation using PVsyst to compare different options
provided by the software [23-27]. Some studies worked
on tilt angle adjustments like fixed tilt angle on annual or
monthly basis or using of tracking adjustments. Some
authors worked on different components like varying the
PV modules types like mono-crystalline, poly-crystalline
or amorphous silicon. Other studies compared different
brands or manufacturers of PV modules and inverters and
so on.

In this study, a Five KW Photovoltaic grid tied
(connected) system is proposed to cover the electrical
demand of a typical primary school in Iraq. The system
contributes a reduction in the peak load demand on the
national grid. PVsyst (V 6.6.8) simulation software is
selected to perform the analysis of the system.

SIMULATION METHODOLOGY
The first step in sizing any PV GTS for a building is to
know the annual or monthly accumulated energy (kWh)
from electricity bills or meters. In this study, this type
information is not available so instead we considered a
nominal 5kW GTS. This system size has been selected
mainly based on the installing area and the initial cost
which can be considered acceptable for a building such
as school. The simulation steps using PVsyst software are
as follows:
1. Specifying location and importing the meteorological
data (global solar irradiance on horizontal plane, diffuse
component of solar irradiance and ambient temperature)
from satellite data sources. In this study, Metronome 7.1
with data range 1985-2002 was selected [28].
2. Defining the orientation of PV modules (tilt angle and
azimuth angle).
3. Identifying system components such that PV modules
and inverters.
4. Optional USER’NEEDS requirements for grid tied
system.
5. Optional choice to adjust the losses types values.

PV Panel orientation
All solar energy collectors (PV panels, thermal) are
installed to face the sun as possible increase the amount
of radiation intercepted and reduce reflection and cosine
losses [29]. This is done by calculating optimum azimuth
angle and tilt angle. Fixed PV array due to the south
without any tracking has been selected to minimize
capital cost, less maintenance and limited land area of
school buildings [30,31]. PVsyst gives in the orientation
step, the optimum tilt angles values for annual and
seasonal adjustment. For Baghdad, 30° is the optimum
tilt angle while winter is 50°. In this study, 40°tilt angle
was considered because of schools’ load is expected to
hardly decrease in summer. Where the larger tilt angle,
the more irradiance gets captured in winter. In addition to
that larger tilt angle means less soiling, dust accumulation
and better natural cooling [32].

System Description
Selecting the system components in this project study
take into consideration high efficiency, reliability, brand
reputation (share in the market and number of sold items
recently) and it should have affordable cost to make the
system economically feasible [33].
For this system, the PV grid-tied inverter is a 5kW string inverter which is from SUNGROW (see Table 1 for inverter specification). SUNGROW is a Chinese leading inverter solution supplier for renewables with over 49GW installed worldwide as of June 2017 and was in top five inverter suppliers in the world [34].

**TABLE 1.** Specifications of SUNGROW (SG5KTL-D) inverter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input PV DC</th>
<th>Nominal AC</th>
<th>5.000 kW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum PV input power</td>
<td>6500W</td>
<td>Grid voltage 230V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum MPP voltage</td>
<td>125V</td>
<td>Frequency/Phase 50Hz/monophased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal MPP voltage</td>
<td>345V</td>
<td>Maximum Efficiency 97.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum MPP voltage</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>Operating ambient temperature -25 - 60°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of MPPs 2</td>
<td>Protection IP65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The required ground/roof area for the array depends on modules layout, the projection of single module is about 1.27m² considering modules dimensions and the cosine of the tilt angle. For 40° tilt angle, it is recommended to avoid shading to have about 3m spacing between every two consecutive rows based on literature [35].

**Approximated monthly averaged load profile**

Despite Iraq characterized with very hot summer which implies intensive cooling loads. But according to the annual statistical report from Iraqi Ministry of Electricity for 2010, the peak load varies and it not always occurs in summer [36]. For example, the peak load was in January for Karbala, Al-Anbar, Diyala, Wasit, Maysan and while for Nenavah, Kirkuk and Saladin the peak was in December. Other provinces the peak was in summer between July and August. In 2016, the peak was in November and December in Karbala, Al-Najaf, Al-Qadisiyya and Al-Anbar, for the rest of provinces the peak was in mostly in July [37].

USER’S NEED option in PVsyst allows to do a calculation for wide choices of load requirement with hourly distribution. Table 3 list out the important electrical loads those are usually found in most of primary schools in Iraq.

**TABLE 2.** Specifications of SUNTECH (STP270-20/WFW) PV module at STC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Power at STC (Pmax)</th>
<th>Solar Cell</th>
<th>Polycrystalline silicon 6 inches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>270W</td>
<td>8.69 A</td>
<td>1650 × 992 × 35mm (1.637m²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimum Operating Voltage (Vmp)</td>
<td>31.1 V</td>
<td>Dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimum Operating Current (Imp)</td>
<td>60 (6 × 10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Circuit Voltage (VOC)</td>
<td>8.07 V</td>
<td>Frame Anodized aluminum alloy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Circuit Current (Isc)</td>
<td>9.15 A</td>
<td>Junction Box IP68 rated (3 bypass diodes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Efficiency</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>Front Glass 3.2 mm tempered glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Module Temperature</td>
<td>-40 °C +85°C</td>
<td>Weight 18.3 kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Tolerance</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>Nominal Operating Cell Temperature (NOCT) 45±2°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature Coefficient</td>
<td>Pmax 0.41 %/°C</td>
<td>Voc -0.33 %/°C Isc 0.067 %/°C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hourly load distributions are specified in PVsyst considering the load starts when the school opens from

![Figure 2. System connection diagram](image-url)
7AM to 3PM for five days per week. Also, heating or cooling load time are assumed based on average room temperature. The load profile is presented in Fig. 3.

Months like March, October and November were the load is minimum, means neither heating nor cooling are used. Considering summer vacation, months from June to August the overall load is low but still cooling load works at its peak. May and September months where the end/start of the school, the load is high as long as the weather considered hot comparing to winter months.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
This section presents the simulation report detailed tables and plots as presented by PVsyst. The case of Baghdad city is considered in this study while the summary for thirteen provinces is tabulated at the end of the section.

PV module temperature
The thermal behavior of PV modules strongly influences their electrical performance where the output voltage decreases drastically and slight increase in the output current. The resultant is a decrease in PV power. PVsyst determines the cell temperature based on very simplified energy balance as shown in Equation 1 [38]. Part of the amount of the absorbed irradiance by the PV is converted to electrical power and the remaining power heats up the cell itself. This heat eventually transferred to the ambient:

\[ T_c = T_a + \frac{\alpha G_{eff} A_m (1 - \eta)}{U} \]

where, \( T_a \) is the ambient temperature, from the meteorological data. \( G_{eff} \) is the effective irradiance absorbed by the PV cell. \( \alpha \) is absorption coefficient (assumed 0.9). \( \eta \) is the module efficiency and \( U \) is Thermal Loss factor \( U_c \) assumed constant 20.0 W/m²K.

PVsyst provides a plot of the number of hours at which the PV module reached a specific temperature (see Fig. 4). Simulation results shows that about 3081 hours/year is the array running/operation time. About 71% of the time the module temperature reaches more than 45°C which is the nominal operating cell temperature and it is higher than STC temperature with 20°C. Notice that According to PV module data sheet, the power drops from 270 W at STC to 198 W at Nominal Operating Cell Temperature conditions (NOCT conditions: Irradiance 800 W/m², ambient temperature 20°C, air mass 1.5, wind speed 1 m/s).

In practice, for Baghdad city, the module temperature rarely found to be less 10°C only for the time right after the sunrise unfortunately the irradiance is not high enough. To sum up, the results shows that high solar irradiance and low operating module temperature hard to meet together.

Irradiance analysis
PVsyst calls the horizontal global irradiation, horizontal diffuse irradiation and ambient temperature from Meteorological data either from NASA or Metoenerm. Next, it performs the transposition (global, diffuse, albedo irradiances) from horizontal to the tilted the collector plane, using solar angles calculation and Perez model [39].

PVsyst applies corrections for the beam component such that the horizon correction, shading effect (if near shading is defined), Air Mass factor. If soiling loss is defined, PVsyst applied the soiling factor correction to all components (global, diffuse, Albedo). This leads to “Geff”, the irradiance effectively and successfully reaching the PV cell surface after optical corrections.

From Fig. 5, it can be seen that the monthly averaged daily horizontal solar radiation varies from 2.7 kWh/m² in December to 7.65 kWh/m² in September. In January About 60% is the enhancement in capturing solar radiation due to the 40° tilt angle. In April and August, both tilt and horizontal nearly coincides only three months the horizontal is greater than tilt reaching about 18% in June.

Fig. 6 shows the cumulative effective irradiance in kWh/m² for every 1 W/m² insolation in one year. This figure shows that it is not about how high irradiance the array can capture but the important is the period in which the energy is collected. For example, the module will produce very much similar energy whether the insolation...
The DC energy produced by the array of modules in kWh is given by:

$$E_{array} = N G_{eff} A_m \eta$$  \hspace{1cm} (2)

where $N$ is the number of modules, $A_m$ the total area of the modules about (32.5 m² for this system). Then this energy encounters a series of losses as provided by PVsyst in the simulation report (Fig. 7) reaching the grid as AC energy $E_{grid}$.

To describe the system performance two terms usually used the overall system efficiency (OSE) and the performance ratio (PR). OSE is the ratio of the useful output energy from the inverter which is either consumed by a local load or injected to the national grid to the input energy:

$$OSE = \frac{E_{grid}}{E_{tilt} A_m}$$  \hspace{1cm} (3)

Performance ratio (PR) is the ratio of the produced energy by the system to the energy which would be produced by a "perfect" system continuously operating at STC [40].

$$PR = \frac{E_{grid}}{E_{grid}^{STC}}$$

Monthly Overall system efficiency and performance ratio for Baghdad city is presented in Fig. 8. OSE and PR have the same behavior, both drastically decrease in summer as the loss due to high cell temperature is greater, OSE and PR decreased from 14.95% and 90.1% in January to 12.74% and 76.7% in August, respectively. Annual averaged values for OSE and PR are 13.79% and 83.03%, respectively; which is quite acceptable compared with other system found in literature [23-25, 40-43].
\[ Y_f = \frac{E_{\text{grid}}}{PV_{\text{rated}}|STC} \]

Fig. 9 shows the monthly final yield for the first year of operation in Baghdad city. The system produced maximum energy 177 kWh for each 1 kWp while the lowest is in December \( Y_f \) is about 25% less because the low global irradiance as shown in Fig. 5. Annual average \( Y_f \) is 163 kWh/kWp/year.

Very important plot that PVsyst provides is Fig. 10a which clears how the output of a PV system has large fluctuations and instability in winter months. Notice that the peak daily yield was 33.13 kWh in March 10th in which the high irradiance and low temperature may have occurred [44].

During May and June, the energy production is lower as it is expected due to high ambient temperature (cell temperature may reach over 65°C) and the slightly large tilt angle compared to optimum summer tilt angles (around 10° to 15° for Baghdad city). Fig. 10b is extracted from Fig. 10a where the number of days that the system generated a specific energy per day. About 17% of the days the system generated 25 kWh. Only 27 days (7.4%) the system generates equal or less than 20 kWh which shows how effective the system performs. Due to aging and material degradation especially in hot climate regions [45,46], module’s nominal power output decreases SUNTECH warranty for their PV modules to provide the nominal power is 97.5% for the first year and about 0.7% per year, ending with the 80.7% in the 25th year. Therefore, equation 6 can determine the energy produced by the life time \( E_{LT} \) of the system as:

\[
E_{LT} = E_{\text{grid}} \sum_{i=0}^{n} (0.975 - 0.007i)\]  

Fig. 11. Annual degradation in PV modules yield

At the end, same analysis procedure using PVsyst is repeated for twelve other provinces in Iraq. Table 4 summarizes the results and Al-Anbar in the west of Iraq has the highest energy generated 9.977MWh since it has the highest monthly averaged global horizontal irradiance. The lowest is Nenevah (in the north of Iraq) with 8.843 MWh. We can say that if the system installed on the roof of 25% of 10,873 number of school buildings, the project will generate about 25.85 GWh/year, 35.2% is excess energy and fed to the national grid and the remaining can supply the schools load requirement.

**ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM**

In order to assess the benefits of investment in PV power systems, the economic aspects should also be taken into account. Among different measures of the economic value of an investment, an appropriate economic analysis such as life-cycle cost (LCC), levelized cost of energy (LCOE) and payback period can guarantee the profitability of the investment in the PV systems.
The life-cycle cost (LCC) of a solar PV system is the sum of initial capital cost, operation & maintenance cost and replacement cost [15].

Table 5 lists the prices of the system components and the cost of structure and hand work and the total capital cost is about $4,865. Such small system for a specific building requires very little maintenance and the cost for this purpose like periodic cleaning of the PV array or replacing some cables or connectors can be ignored. While Operation and maintenance cannot be ignored for single large mega scale PV power plant.

The inverter is the component of second highest cost after the PV modules and it is may be damage especially with working at high ambient temperature [49]. According to Reference [11] replacement cost of the inverter will be 577 $. Therefore, LCC is 5,442 $. Levelized cost of energy (LCOE) is the ratio of the total life cycle cost to the life time energy produced in $/kWh [48]. If the system works for 10 years, $E_{LT}$ will be 92.63MWh, LCOE is 0.058$/kWh while when the system works for 25 years, $E_{LT}$ will be 218.6MWh, LCOE is 0.025$/kWh. The payback period is the time (usually in years) for the investor to recover the initial cost or what is called breakeven point. If the cost of electricity $0.1/kWh and 9,817 kWh/y and LCC is $5,442 then the payback period will be 5.5 years.
Meeting the electrical energy demand has now become a major challenge for a country like Iraq with the growth in population and same old thermal/gas power plants which already have their operational problems. Electricity generation using solar PV systems is a potential solution to support the national grid. In this study, PVSYST software has been used to analyze a proposed 5 kW PV system, output electricity and system losses installed in a typical governmental primary school. It is found that 5 kW system covers the schools load completely and exports the excess to the national grid. The project has tempting advantages economically and environmentally which may encourage the government and the investors for similar projects in the future.

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