

THE OPTIMAL SIZING OF MULTISTAGE
HEAT EXCHANGER SYSTEMS

by

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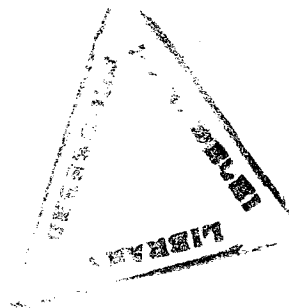
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ABSTRACT

The optimal sizing of heat exchanger systems consisting of one or two cold streams being heated by several hot streams is investigated in detail in the present work.

The technique employed for optimization is the Discrete Maximum Principle. The mathematical model used permits controlling the final temperature of cold stream as well as some or all the hot stream final temperatures, in case of single cold stream system. Auxiliary water coolers are included in the system in order to control the hot stream final temperatures. The model used allows the use of different cost coefficients (usually assumed invariant) and different heat transfer coefficients at different stages. The costs for the heat exchangers were ascertained through a market survey and empirically related to their heat transfer area through non-linear relationships.

Optimal recurrence relations relating the parameters of neighbouring heat exchanger stages are developed for a general heat exchanger type and a general class of cost functions. Several simplified solutions for specific heat exchanger type and cost functions are then obtained as special cases.

A numerical procedure is developed for carrying out the calculations on a digital computer. The speedy determination of the size of the first heat exchanger in the chain corresponding to the required solution (usually a problem in such techniques) is a part of the numerical procedure.

The methods developed in the present work are illustrated by optimizing a few petroleum refinery chains. The influence of various input parameters, particularly the cost exponent, on the optimal results is examined. The accuracy of the results is verified through a numerical perturbation test.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xv
 I. INTRODUCTION	 1
1.1 General	1
1.2 Review of Literature	3
1.3 Present Work	7
 II. PROBLEM STATEMENT	 11
2.1 General	11
2.2 Objective Function	14
2.3 Mathematical Formulation	22
 III. OPTIMIZATION OF SINGLE COLD STREAM HEAT EXCHANGER CHAINS	 26
3.1 General	26
3.2 Derivation of Optimal Recurrence Relations.....	26
3.3 A Single Term Water Cooler Cost Function	36
3.4 Linear Water Cooler Cost Function	37
3.5 Linear Heat Exchanger Cost Function	38
3.6 Linear Cost Functions for Both Heat Exchangers and Water Coolers	39
3.7 Heat Exchanger Chains with Water Coolers not Used in all the Stages	39
3.8 Heat Exchanger Chains with Linear Cost Function and no Water Coolers.....	41
3.9 The Restricted Counter Flow Heat Exchanger Chain of Fan and Wang	42

	Page
IV. OPTIMIZATION OF DOUBLE CHAIN HEAT EXCHANGER SYSTEMS	44
4.1 General	54
4.2 Derivation of Optimal Recurrence Relations	44
V. NUMERICAL SOLUTION PROCEDURE	56
5.1 General	56
5.2 Steps of Computation	56
5.3 Relation between OR and NTU	58
5.4 Determination of T_2^{n+1}	59
5.5 Estimating Initial Area	59
5.6 Numerical Procedure for the Double Chain Heat Exchanger Problem	60
VI. NUMERICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	64
6.1 General	64
6.2 Three Stage Heat Exchanger Chains	64
6.3 Shell and Tube Heat Exchangers	71
6.4 Effect of Variation of Heat Exchanger Cost Exponent 'a' ..	72
6.5 Six Stage Problem	83
6.6 Double Chain Heat Exchanger Problem	92
6.7 Concluding Remarks	96
VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	99
REFERENCES	101
APPENDIX A. Heat Exchanger Cost Relationships.....	105
APPENDIX B. Water Cooler Cost Relationships	116
APPENDIX C. E--NTU Relationships	123
APPENDIX D. NTU--OR Relationships	125

	Page
APPENDIX E. Industrial Configurations	133
APPENDIX F. Computer Programs	137
APPENDIX G. Listings of Computer Programs	143