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## Robotics & Nano-Tech

Obstacle Avoiding Robot

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} Highlights {

Efficient Plasmonic Solar

Statics Including Cable Sag

Discovering Thoughts, Inventing Future

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VOLUME 17 ISSUE 1 (VER. 1.0)

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## CONTENTS OF THE ISSUE

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- i. Copyright Notice
- ii. Editorial Board Members
- iii. Chief Author and Dean
- iv. Contents of the Issue
  1. Kinematics and Statics Including Cable Sag for Large Cable-Suspended Robots. *1-18*
  2. Obstacle Avoiding Robot. *19-23*
  3. PLC based Robot Manipulator Control using Position based and Image based Algorithm. *25-33*
  4. Progressing Highlights Towards Efficient Plasmonic Solar Cells. *35-40*
- v. Fellows
- vi. Auxiliary Memberships
- vii. Process of Submission of Research Paper
- viii. Preferred Author Guidelines
- ix. Index



# Kinematics and Statics Including Cable Sag for Large CableSuspended Robots

By Dheerendra Sridhar & Robert L. Williams II

*Ohio University*

**Abstract-** Cable sag can have significant effects on the cable length computation in a cable suspended robot and this is more pronounced in largescale outdoor systems. This requires modeling the cable as a catenary instead of an approximated straight-tline model. Furthermore, when there is actuation redundancy involved, the modeling and simulation of the system becomes much more complex, requiring optimizing routines to solve the problem.

A cable-sag-compensated (catenary) model was implemented in simulation for an example large outdoor cable-suspended robot system to solve the coupled kinematics and statics problems. This involved optimization of cable tensions and finding the errors involved in the cable length. A comparative analysis between the straight-line and cable sag model is presented, the main contribution of this paper. Based on the qualitative and quantitative results obtained, recommendations were made on the choice of model and solution methodologies.

**Keywords:** *cable-suspended robot, cable sag, non-negligible cable mass, catenary model, forward and inverse position kinematics, pseudostatics.*

**GJRE-H Classification:** FOR Code: 091007



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# Kinematics and Statics Including Cable Sag for Large Cable-Suspended Robots

Dheerendra Sridhar <sup>α</sup> & Robert L. Williams II <sup>σ</sup>

**Abstract-** Cable sag can have significant effects on the cable length computation in a cable suspended robot and this is more pronounced in large-scale outdoor systems. This requires modeling the cable as a catenary instead of an approximated straight-line model. Furthermore, when there is actuation redundancy involved, the modeling and simulation of the system becomes much more complex, requiring optimizing routines to solve the problem.

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**Keywords:** cable-suspended robot, cable sag, non-negligible cable mass, catenary model, forward and inverse position kinematics, pseudostatics.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A distinct attribute of cable-suspended robots is the possibility of achieving very large workspaces which is difficult or impossible to achieve using rigid link manipulators. In the past two decades major progress has been made in the design and implementation of large scale robots throughout the world. The Five hundred meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope (FAST) is large scale cable-suspended robot under development in China for astronomical study [1]. Another example is the Skycam [2], which is an aerial camera system that is widely used in sporting arenas. Other examples include CoGiRo (Control of Giant Robots) used for industrial purposes [3] and the Large Cable Mechanism (LCM) used for Radio Telescope Application [4].

Kozak et al. [5] addressed the issue of cable sag by studying the effects of considering mass in the statics and stiffness analysis of the FAST robot. This research used the “elastic catenary” discussed by Irvine [6], to model the cable lengths and subsequently address the inverse pose kinematics problem. Kozak et al. [5] also provided experimental validation and showed that the equations of the elastic catenary are in good

agreement with experimental results. Additionally, Russell and Lardner [7] provided experimental validation of the elastic catenary model and quantified the difference between theoretical and experimental cable tensions.

An accuracy and error compensation study of the 6-dof FAST robot was presented by Yao et al. [8] and force distribution in the cables by Li et al. [9]. These results showed that cable sag has a considerable effect on the overall accuracy and control of the robot.

Research on the effects of sag on the workspace and cable characteristics was performed by Riehl et al. [10]. The findings, based on simulations for a 3-cable, 3-dof robot, showed that the workspace and the cable tension distribution for straight-line and elastic catenary (cable sag) models differ. Cable tension under cable sag, unlike the cable tension for the straight-line model, is not constant throughout the cable.

Irvine [6] presented a simplified model for cable sag based on perturbation analysis. This was used by Gouttefarde et al. [11] to model and simulate a 6-cable, 6-dof robot. Although this model is still nonlinear and does not give an analytical solution, it is simpler compared to the elastic catenary. Also, the relationship between the components of the cable tension is linear in this model. This model was further researched by Nguyen et al. [12] to find the limitation of the simplified model, which is that the straight-line model is not necessarily applicable throughout the workspace of the robot, unlike the catenary model. This model also lacks sufficient experimental validation, whereas the catenary model has been experimentally verified.

Another noteworthy work was by Dallej et al. [13], which was vision-based control of a cable-suspended robot. This method used cameras in 3D space to instantaneously compute inverse kinematics, thereby attempting to compensate for cable sag. But this approach is expensive and requires further research to make it viable for field operations and also to mitigate the iterative steps involved.

The mathematical modeling of kinematics and pseudostatics for small scale cable suspended robots generally works well with the assumption of ideal massless cables (straight-line model). However, for large-scale cable-suspended robots, significant errors may arise when assuming the straight-line model for all cables. The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the differences in cable length errors and computation,

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comparing the straight-line cables assumption vs. a cable-sag model. dit Sandretto et al. [14] test the hypothesis that ignoring cable mass and cable sag is sufficient, with regard to their CoGiRo project. This hypothesis was confirmed for their current prototype hardware, but it was rejected for a planned larger robot. Riehl et al. [10] simply conclude that the cable catenaries must be accounted for, in large workspace cable robots, "in order to achieve good positioning and accuracy." Yaun et al. [15] develop static and dynamic stiffness models for large cable-suspended robots; they conclude that the cable catenary is "important" for stiffness studies.

This paper first presents the methods, followed by results and discussion.

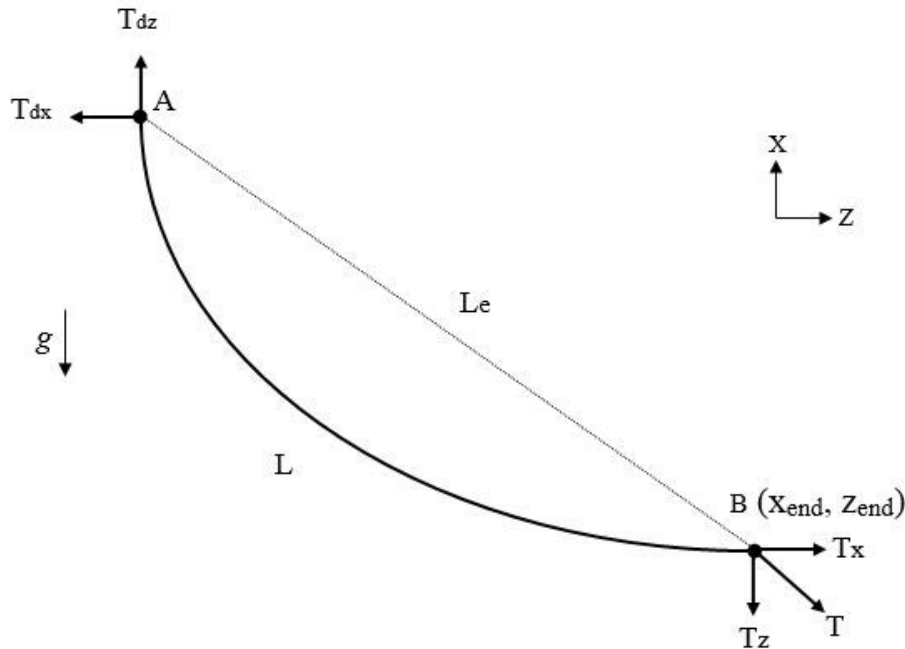


Figure 1: Cable suspended between two points

Where A is the cable drawing point, B is the end-effector attachment point,  $L_e$  is the straight-line (Euclidean norm) distance between A and B,  $L$  is the catenary (actual) length between A and B,  $g$  is the acceleration due to gravity,  $T$  is the cable tension with X and Z components  $T_x$  and  $T_z$  at the end effector side,  $T_{dx}$  and  $T_{dz}$  are the X and Z components of the cable tension at the cable drawing point, and  $(x_{end}, z_{end})$  are the coordinates of the cable at the end-effect or attachment point. For this cable, the static catenary displacement equations for the inextensible case after simplification are (we ignore the axial elasticity since the cable mass dominates the sag):

$$x_{end} = \frac{|T_x|}{\rho_L g} \left[ \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{T_z}{T_x} \right) - \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{T_z - \rho_L g L}{T_x} \right) \right] \quad (1)$$

Where  $\rho_L$  is the linear density of the cable material.

## II. METHODS

The methods used by Kozak et al. [5] and subsequently used in [10-12] will be followed in this research.

### a) Cable Sag Catenary

The equations of the cable catenary have been known for more than 80 years and they have been applied in various contexts of engineering, and their derivations are not presented (see [5, 6]). Consider a cable suspended between two points A and B as in Figure 1.

$$z_{end} = \frac{1}{\rho_L g} \left[ \sqrt{T_x^2 + T_z^2} - \sqrt{T_x^2 + (T_z - \rho_L g L)^2} \right] \quad (2)$$

### b) Cable-suspended Robot Model

The kinematic diagram of the cable-suspended robot considered is shown in Figure 2. The base frame  $\{A\}$  is fixed to the center of the robot footprint. The end-effector control point is point P, with  $h_i$  being the height of the towers. Points  $B_i$  and  $P_i$  are the base and top points of the towers / poles respectively and points  $A_i$  are the points where winches / motors are located on the ground.  $L_i$  (or  $L_{ei}$  according to the notation in Figure 1 and used later in this paper) are the Euclidean norm (straight-line) cable lengths. In all cases  $i = 1, 2, 3, 4$ . The length and width of the cable-suspended robot footprint are  $L$  and  $W$ , respectively.

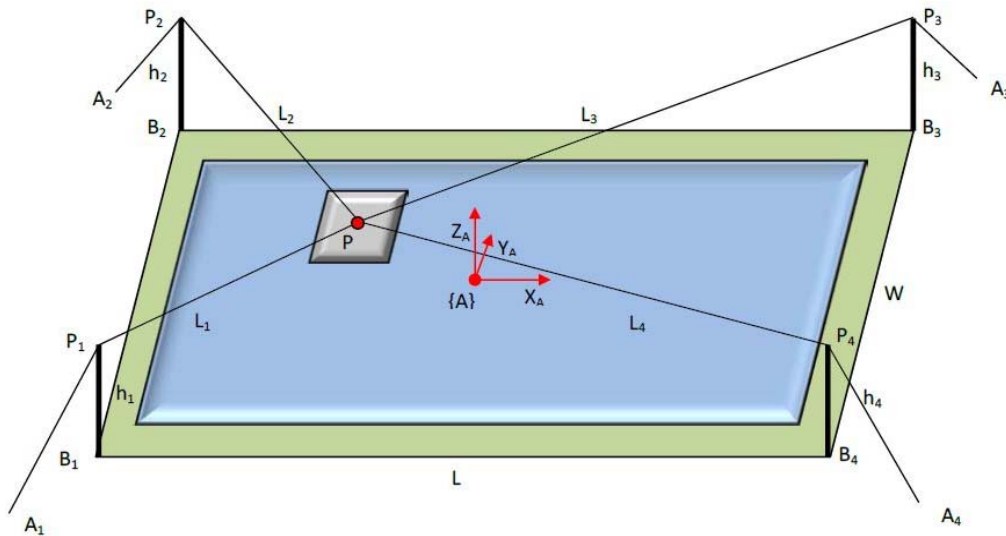


Figure 2: Kinematic diagram of the cable-suspended robot (1 acre footprint, 4047 m<sup>2</sup>) 1 acre is about the size of an American Football Field

c) Inverse Position Kinematics (IPK) and Statics

The IPK problem consists of finding the active cable lengths for a given position. When considering the effects of cable sag (i.e., the mass of the cables) in modeling, cable tension is involved in finding the cable length, unlike the traditional straight-line IPK problem. Hence, the kinematics and pseudostatics problems are coupled and have to be solved simultaneously, as evident from equations (1) and (2). This is a system of nonlinear implicit equations, hence there are no analytical solutions, thus forcing the use of numerical methods.

As shown in [5] and [10], for a minimally or perfectly constrained case, the catenary equations (1) and (2) are solved along with the static equilibrium equations (3).

$$\begin{aligned} \sum F_x &= 0 \\ \sum F_y &= 0 \\ \sum F_z &= 0 \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

For a redundant or overconstrained case, an additional impediment is that the static problem does not have a unique solution. Since the number of variables outnumbers the equations available, there are infinite valid solutions. Consider a 4-cable 3-dof (XYZ translation) cable-suspended robot as shown in Figures 2 and 3.

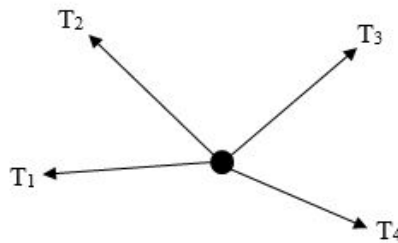


Figure 3: Free-Body Diagram of a four-cable robot

Solving only the static equations, for a given valid position, can have infinite solutions i.e. infinite valid combinations for  $T = [T_1 \ T_2 \ T_3 \ T_4]^T$ . The physical interpretation of this scenario is that at a given position there are multiple valid ways of tensing the cables to maintain static equilibrium. To get one desired solution out of the many feasible solutions, techniques of mathematical optimization are used.

There are various methods available for mathematical optimization based on the nature of the problem. One popular approach used in field of robotics is that of the Moore–Penrose pseudoinverse of the statics Jacobian matrix, which minimizes the Euclidean norm of the cable tensions. Another useful technique is Linear Programming, which helps to find a solution to the above problem, provided the objective function and constraints are linear.

As pointed out in [5], when using the catenary equations for finding the cable lengths of a redundant cable-suspended robot, one feasible approach is to solve it as constrained optimization problem or specify the (m-n) number of forces prior to solving.

The methodology adapted here to address the Inverse Position Kinematics and Statics problem is as described in [5,8,9,12]. The details of the method adapted and coded in MATLAB are shown in Figure 4 and described below.

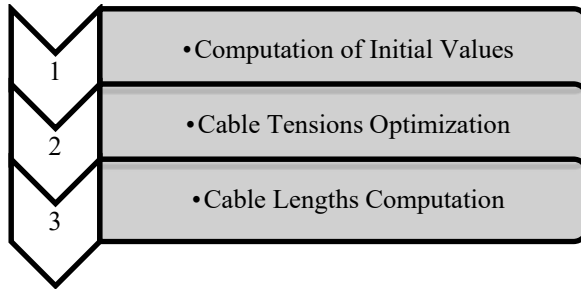


Figure 4: Steps involved in the solution of the inverse position problem

Step 1 - Computation of Initial Values

In this step, all the required inputs are entered for solving the IPK problem, along with necessary parameters such dimensional details of the robot footprint, robot variables, and properties of the cable. Then necessary coordinate transformations are made,

which includes transforming global coordinates to local cable coordinates and vice versa. Subsequently, the Euclidean norm lengths of the cable and statics Jacobian matrix are calculated. Table 1 shows the input variables required.

Table 1: Input variables

Input Variable	Symbol	Unit
Length	L	m
Width	W	m
Pole Height	h	m
End-effector mass	m	kg
Cable Diameter	d	mm
Density of the Cable	ρ	kg/m <sup>3</sup>
End-effector location	(x,y,z)	m

The Euclidean norm length of the straight-line cable is calculated using:

$$L_{ei} = \sqrt{(P_{xi} - x)^2 + (P_{yi} - y)^2 + (P_{zi} - z)^2} \quad (4)$$

The straight-line static Jacobian matrix expressed in {A} coordinates is given by:

$${}^A A = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{P_{x1} - x}{L_{e1}} & \frac{P_{x2} - x}{L_{e2}} & \frac{P_{x3} - x}{L_{e3}} & \frac{P_{x4} - x}{L_{e4}} \\ \frac{P_{y1} - y}{L_{e1}} & \frac{P_{y2} - y}{L_{e2}} & \frac{P_{y3} - y}{L_{e3}} & \frac{P_{y4} - y}{L_{e4}} \\ \frac{P_{z1} - z}{L_{e1}} & \frac{P_{z2} - z}{L_{e2}} & \frac{P_{z3} - z}{L_{e3}} & \frac{P_{z4} - z}{L_{e4}} \end{bmatrix} \quad (5)$$

Step 2 – Cable Tensions Optimization

In this step, the cable tensions for a given position are calculated. As mentioned previously, this is a case with multiple valid solutions. To find a unique solution, this problem is solved as a constrained minimization problem. So, the statics problem is treated as a linear programming problem with an aim of minimizing the cable tensions. The problem is formulated as shown below:

Objective function: Minimize  $(T_1 + T_2 + T_3 + T_4)$

Subject to Constraints:  ${}^A A \{T\} + \{{}^A F\} + m^A g = \{0\}$

$$T_{\min} \leq T_i \leq T_{\max}$$

Where the cable tensions are  $T = [T_1 \ T_2 \ T_3 \ T_4]^T$ ,  $\{{}^A F\}$  is the external force,  $m^A g$  is the end-effector weight (both expressed in {A} coordinates), and  $T_{\min}$  and  $T_{\max}$  are the minimum and maximum allowable cable tensions.



This problem is a standard linear programming problem in four variables, with the static equilibrium equations used as constraints and bounds on the cable tensions based on necessary conditions ( $T_i > 0$ ). Bounds not only help in obtaining non-negative solutions (a negative solution for cable tension means a cable must push, which is unacceptable), but also restrict the solution to be within practical limitations, avoiding extremely high cable tensions, which might break the cable or which cannot be supported by the winch / motor. This problem is solved using the linear

programming solver **linprog( )** in MATLAB. Additionally, the pseudoinverse method was also implemented using the **pinv( )** command in MATLAB for comparison purposes.

*Step 3 – Cable Lengths Computation*

In this final step, cable lengths are computed using the catenary equations, by numerically solving a system of equations. This system of equations is shown below:

$$x_{iend} = \frac{|T_{xi}|}{\rho_L g} \left[ \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{T_{zi}}{T_{xi}} \right) - \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{T_{zi} - \rho_L g L_i}{T_{xi}} \right) \right] \tag{6}$$

$$z_{iend} = \frac{1}{\rho_L g} \left[ \sqrt{T_{xi}^2 + T_{zi}^2} - \sqrt{T_{xi}^2 + (T_{zi} - \rho_L g L_i)^2} \right] \tag{7}$$

$$T_i = \sqrt{T_{xi}^2 + T_{zi}^2} \tag{8}$$

where  $i = 1,2,3,4$ . For each cable this a system of three equations with three variables ( $T_{xi}$ ,  $T_{zi}$  and  $L_i$ ). To solve this system of equations the **fsolve()** command in MATLAB is used, which is an iterative solver used to solve a system of nonlinear equations with real variables. Also, the number of iterations is recorded. Finally, this solver returns the components of the cable tensions along with the cable lengths.

To summarize, the methodology consists of finding the initial variables and subsequent coordinate transformation. An optimization routine is then performed to get a valid set of cable tensions  $\{T\}$ , such that the sum of cable tensions ( $\sum T_i$ ) is minimized.

Finally, these cable tensions are used in the catenary equations to obtain the cable lengths. The code combines all the three steps to solve the Inverse Position Kinematics and Statics Problem

comprehensively, such that when the user enters a valid position, the program returns the cable tensions and lengths.

*d) Forward Position Kinematics (FPK) And Statics*

The FPK problem consists of finding the position of the robot when the cable lengths are given. There are analytical methods to solve this problem such as the 3-sphere intersection algorithm presented in [14], which is valid only for the straight-line model. When cable sag is considered, FPK suffers the same hindrances that the IPK problem faces, i.e. the kinematics and statics problems are coupled, highly nonlinear, and have to be solved iteratively. The methodology here involves finding components of cable tensions using cable lengths and tensions and subsequently finding the position of the robot.

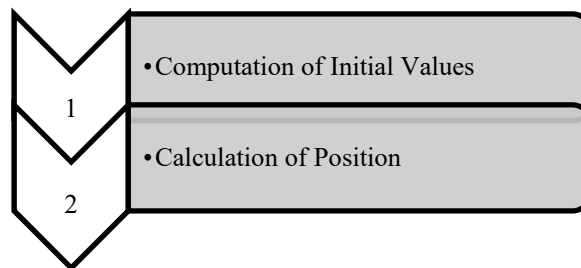


Figure 5: Steps involved in the solution of the forward position problem

*Step 1 – Computation of Initial Values*

Similar to the IPK problem, in this step all the necessary input values and coordinate transformations are entered. The active cable lengths and their respective tensions, dimensional details of the robot footprint, and the geometrical and material properties of the cables are entered.

*Step 2 – Calculation of Position*

In this step, the static displacement equations of the catenary (6-8) along with the static equilibrium equations (3) are solved numerically along with necessary transformations of coordinate system. This system of equations is also solved using the **fsolve()** command in MATLAB and its solution yields the XYZ position of the robot. In summary, the method consists of finding the initial values and necessary transformations. This is followed by solving a system of

nonlinear equations whose solution gives the position. A major difference in this FPK problem, when compared to the inverse position problem, is the absence of optimization step, thus making it considerably faster to solve. However, both problems must be solved numerically (i.e. iteratively), when the effect of cable sag has to be considered.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the methods described in the previous section, simulations were performed. This included simulating snapshot examples, a trajectory, and parameter variations. The results obtained and their interpretations are discussed in this section. The simulation results presented here use the values in Table 2.

*Table 2:* Values of the variables used for simulation

Variable	Value	Notes
Length (L)	50 m	1 acre footprint
Width (W)	80.9 m	
Pole Height (h)	7.6 m	All poles are same height
End-effector mass ( $m$ )	258.6 kg	-
Cable Diameter (d)	20 mm	-
Density of the Cable ( $\rho$ )	7860 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	Density of a steel cable
External Force ( $^A F$ )	{0}	0 xyz vector
Tension Lower Limit ( $T_{min}$ )	2537 N	-
Tension Higher Limit ( $T_{max}$ )	$+\infty$	To find the maximum force

*a) Snapshot Example*

Both the Inverse and Forward Position Problems were solved for four random positions and a nominal position  $\{0 \ 0 \ 0\}^T$ . The five positions are graphically shown in Figure 6 and stated numerically in Table 3.



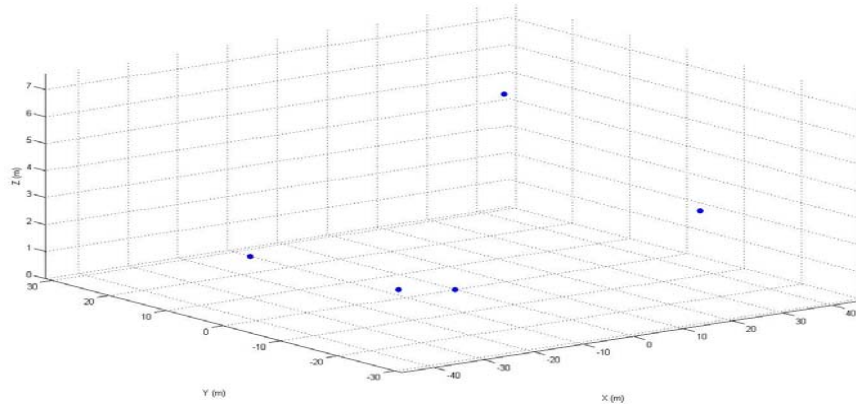


Figure 6: Snapshot points

When the code for the inverse problem is executed with these snapshot points as inputs, the program calculates the cable lengths and tensions.

Table 3: Cartesian coordinates of snapshot points

Point No.	End-effector position (m)		
	X	Y	Z
1	0	0	0
2	-29.4	10.2	1.5
3	-33.0	-18.8	2.0
4	28.5	-18.0	3.1
5	35.0	22.0	5.0

First, the circular check is performed to verify and partly validate the results obtained. To serve this purpose, both the inverse and forward problems were solved for all the five snapshot points. The results are

summarized in Table 4 and the circular check is verified (the highlighted columns have equal corresponding values).

Table 4: Circular check for snapshot points

No.	Inverse Position Solution					Forward Position Solution				
	Input	Output				Input				Output
	Point	L <sub>1</sub>	L <sub>2</sub>	L <sub>3</sub>	L <sub>4</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	L <sub>2</sub>	L <sub>3</sub>	L <sub>4</sub>	Point
1	0, 0, 0	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	0, 0, 0
2	-29.4, 10.2, 1.5	45.25	27.72	81.38	87.87	45.25	27.72	81.38	87.87	-29.4, 10.2, 1.5
3	-33, -18.8, 2	19.14	52.46	96.41	83.22	19.14	52.46	96.41	83.22	-33, -18.8, 2
4	28.5, -18, 3.1	77.75	90.26	53.11	22.75	77.75	90.26	53.11	22.75	28.5, -18, 3.1
5	35, 22, 5	97.64	84.7	14.93	54.92	97.64	84.7	14.93	54.92	35, 22, 5

The cable length difference between the cable sag and straight model is calculated, followed by cable length error computation:

$$D_i = L_i - L_{ei} \tag{9}$$

$$ER_i = \frac{L_i - L_{ei}}{L_i} \times 100\% \tag{10}$$

The results of difference in cable lengths and their percentage error are plotted in Figure 7 and 8.

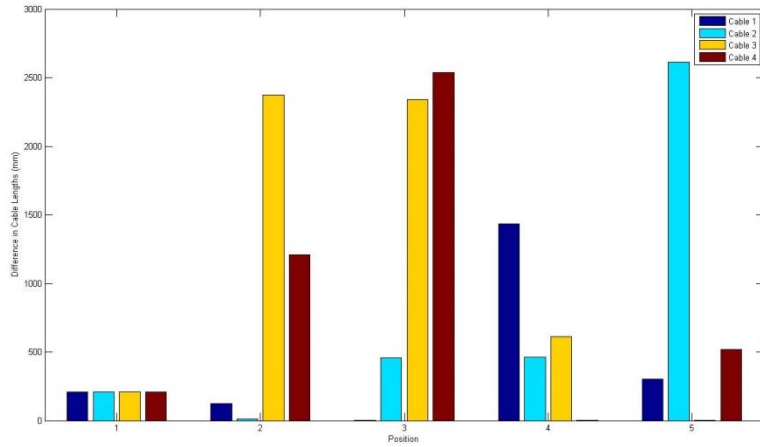


Figure 7: Difference in cable lengths vs. position

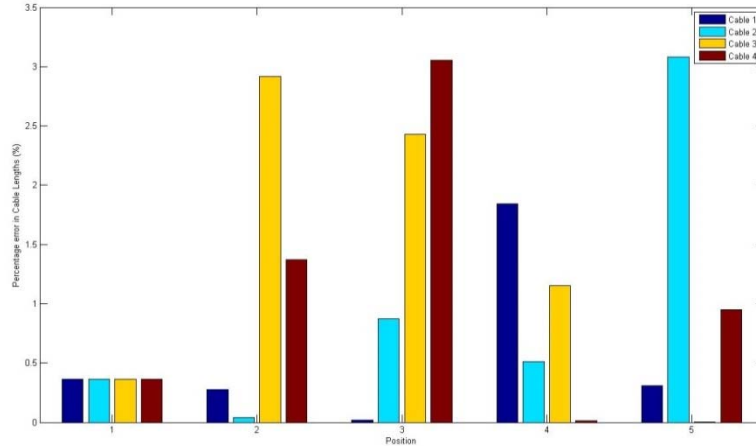


Figure 8: Percentage error in cable lengths vs. position

Along with computation of cable lengths, the cable tensions were also calculated using two methods; Linear Programming (LP) and Pseudoinverse Method (PI). These two methods give different values for cable tensions as the objective functions in both cases are different. The resulting graph is shown in Figure 9.

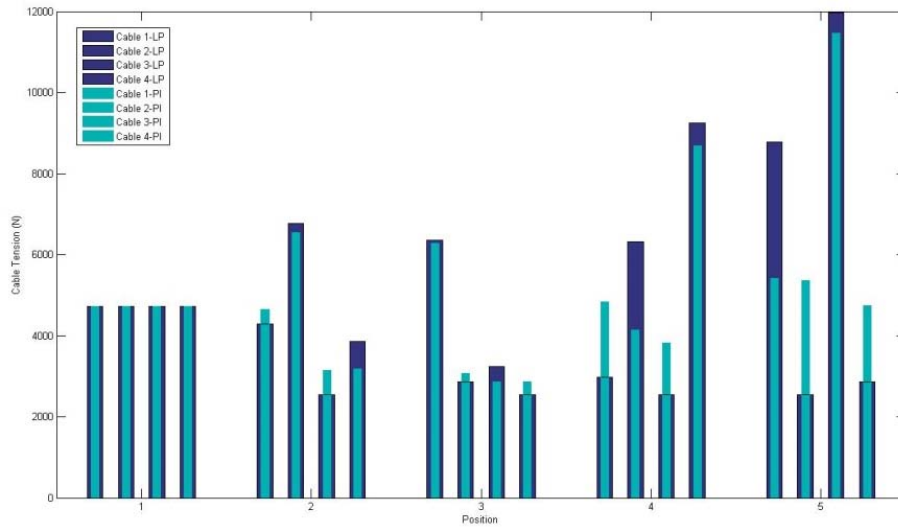


Figure 9: LP and PI Cable tensions vs. position

From the graphs, it can be observed that the difference in cable lengths obtained from the straight-line model and cable sag model ranges from 0 – 2600 mm, which appears to be significantly high. However, when the relative error is computed, the range is 0-3 %. The current cable-suspended Robot System, unlike the FAST [1] or LCM [4], is not meant for accurate positioning of the end-effector, hence from the snapshot examples the effects of cable sag appears to be tolerable. But the five examples are a small sample size

of random points; this necessitates running the program to simulate a trajectory.

b) Trajectory Example

A pick-and-place robot trajectory was simulated with a step size of 0.5 m as shown in Figure 10. The ideal Cartesian coordinates and straight-line cable lengths for this trajectory are shown in Figures 11 and 12.

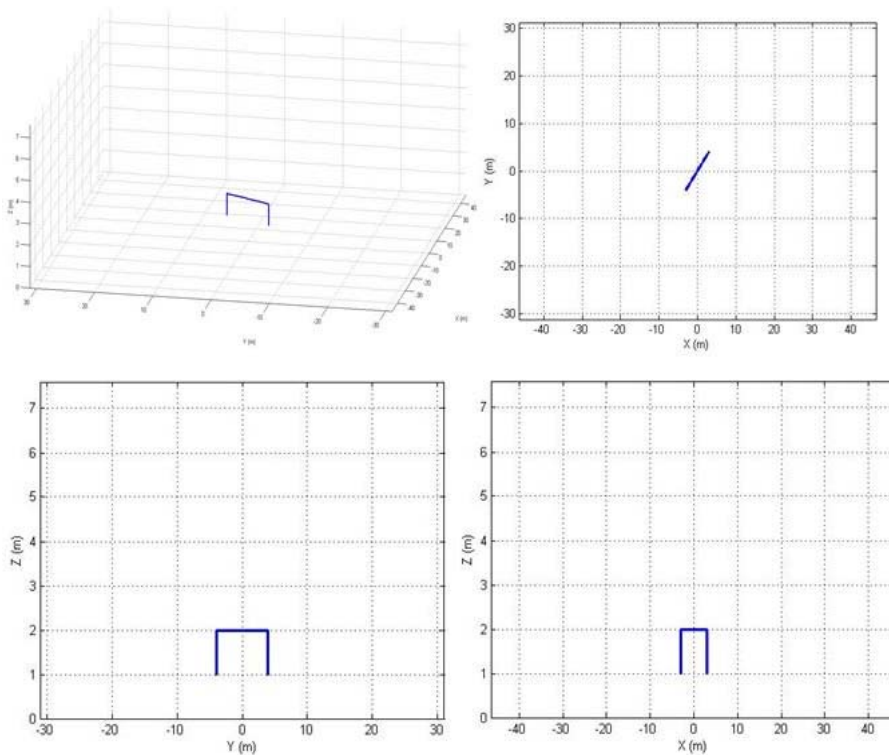


Figure 10: Pick-and-Place Trajectory Example

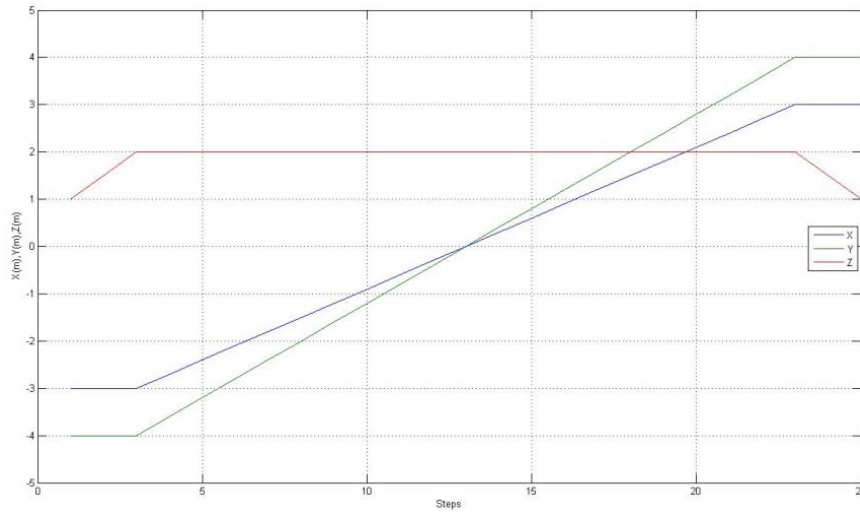


Figure 11: Cartesian coordinates vs. steps

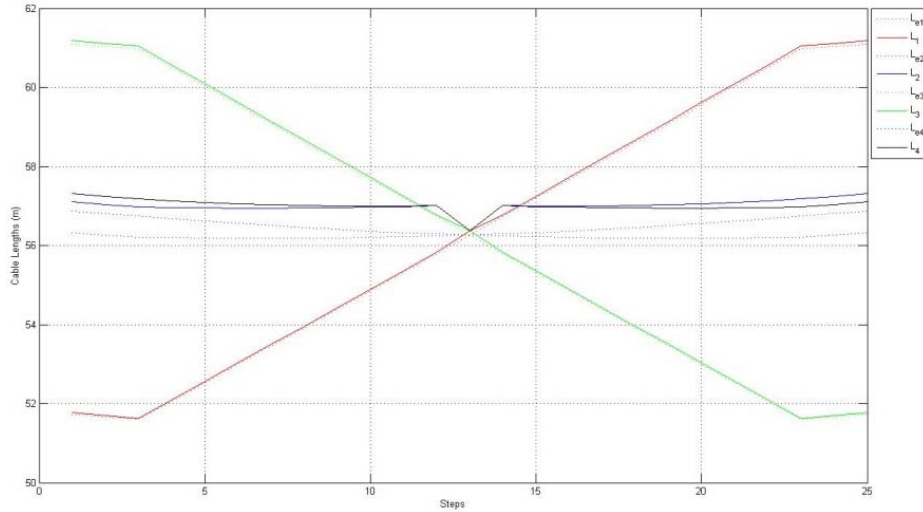


Figure 12: Straight-line cable lengths vs. steps

Similar to the snapshot example, the cable length differences between the cable sag and straight-line models are calculated, followed by cable length error computation. This is shown in Figure 13 and 14. As observed from the graphs, the difference in cable lengths obtained from the straight-line model and cable sag model ranges from 0-800 mm and the relative error ranges from 0-1.4%. These values further indicate that, although cable sag contributes to erroneous cable length computation, the error is low enough for purposes where high accuracy is not a prime requirement.

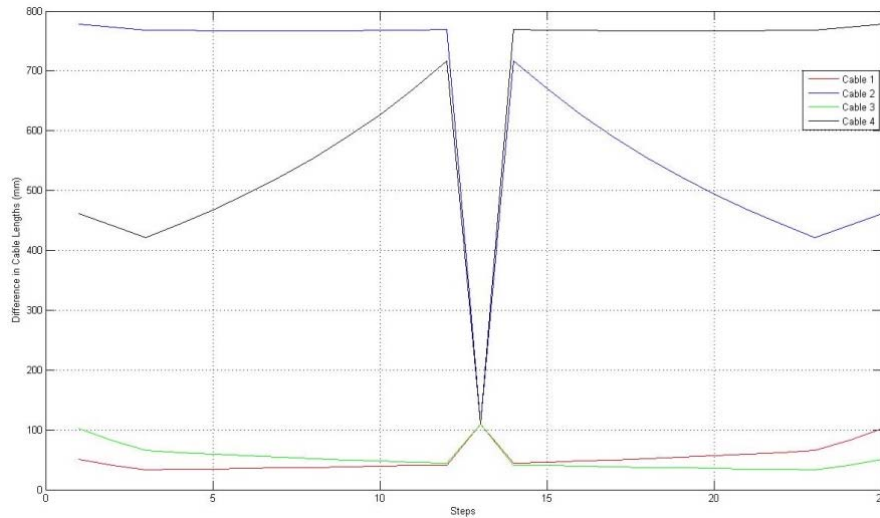


Figure 13: Difference in cable lengths vs. steps

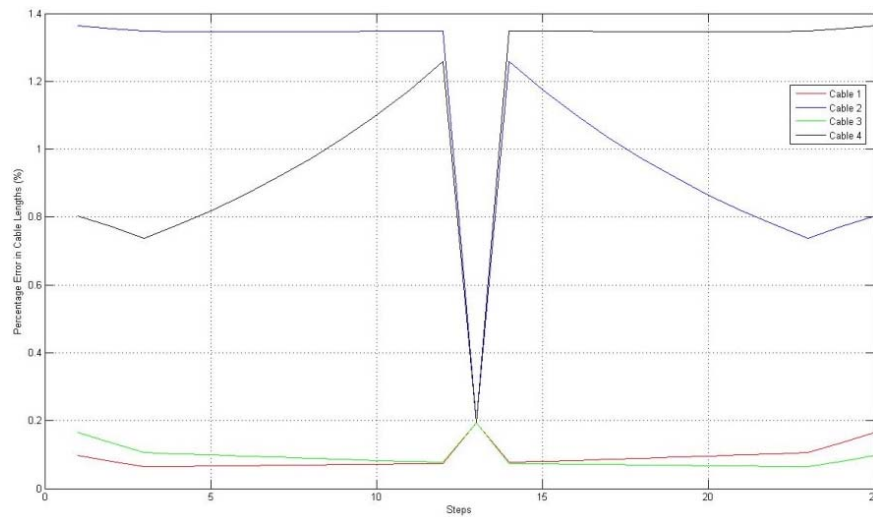


Figure 14: Percentage error in cable lengths vs. steps

The cable tensions were calculated for all the steps in the trajectory by both methods. This was followed by finding the difference between the summation of cable tensions obtained from linear programming (LP) and pseudoinverse (PI) methods

$\sum T_{LPi} - \sum T_{Pi}$ . The results are presented in Figures 15 and 16.

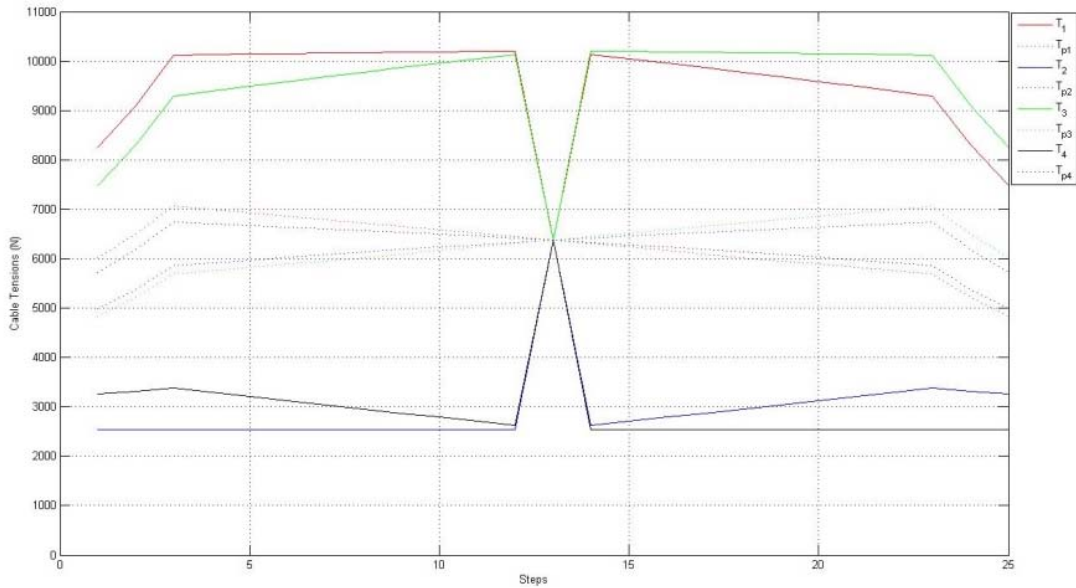


Figure 15: LP and PI Cable tensions vs. steps

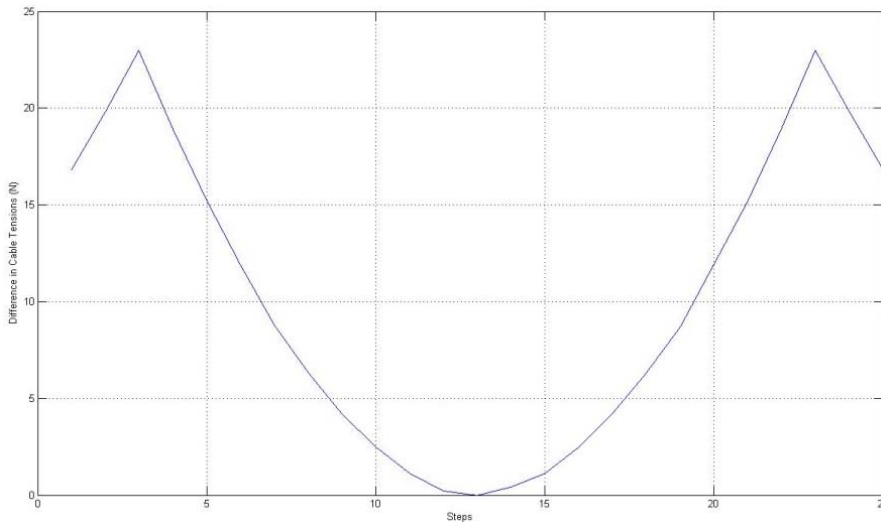


Figure 16: Difference in cable tensions between LP and PI vs. steps

From Figures 9, 15, and 16, a straightforward observation is that the two methods (LP and PI) give different solutions for cable tensions except when the cable lengths are equal. Except for this case, the linear programming method gives a solution such that the overall cable tensions are less, when compared to the corresponding pseudoinverse solution.

Another major advantage of using linear programming is that we can restrict the solution space by using the bounds ( $T_{min}$  and  $T_{max}$ ). For example, in this simulation  $T_{min}$  was set to be equal to the weight of end-effector, which can be increased if the cable tensions are found to be insufficient to keep it taut and decreased if feasible. A similar argument can be made for  $T_{max}$ . In this simulation,  $T_{max}$  was set to be  $+\infty$  to

get an idea of the maximum tension that a particular configuration reaches.

The pseudoinverse method on the other hand does not give this flexibility. But a major merit of the pseudoinverse approach is that it has a closed-form analytical solution, unlike the iterative linear programming method.

There are a few issues associated with the use of the LP method that require attention. The LP approach at times gives an abrupt increase or decrease in the tension solutions, thus not resulting in smooth curves for trajectories (see Figure 15). Another issue is that the LP solution at times tends to give a solution that is the lower bounds or upper bounds ( $T_{min}$  or  $T_{max}$ ) for one of the cables. Regardless, a valid solution can be



obtained by this method and research is being done in this field to get smoother results with less iterations. Borgstrom et al. [15] show that linear programming can be suitably modified and, with the assistance of suitable control systems, make it more efficient and

computationally less expensive. Considering all of these factors, use of linear programming for cable tension calculation is advisable. A summary of this discussion is provided in the form of a comparison chart in Table 5.

Table 5: Comparison between linear programming and pseudoinverse methods

Linear Programming (LP)	Moore Penrose Pseudoinverse (PI)
Minimize the sum of the cable tensions; Min $(T_1 + T_2 + T_3 + T_4)$	Minimizes the second norm of the cable tensions; Min $(\sqrt{T_1^2 + T_2^2 + T_3^2 + T_4^2})$
Can be applied for other objective functions.	Only one objective function possible
Iterative method	Closed form analytical solution possible
The overall cable tensions are relatively small	Cable tensions at the least can be equal to the LP solution
More flexible method	Less flexible method
Multiple solutions possible	Single solution results
MATLAB command – <b>linprog( )</b>	MATLAB command – <b>pinv( )</b>

c) Variation of Parameters

Effects of Cable Parameters and End-Effector Mass

The input parameters of the cable are diameter (geometric property) and density (material property). For a nominal position  $\{0 \ 0 \ 0\}^T$  and an arbitrary position

$\{8 \ -5 \ 2\}^T$ , these parameters were varied independently and the results are graphically presented in Figures 17 and 18; all results compare the straight-line to the sag cable models.

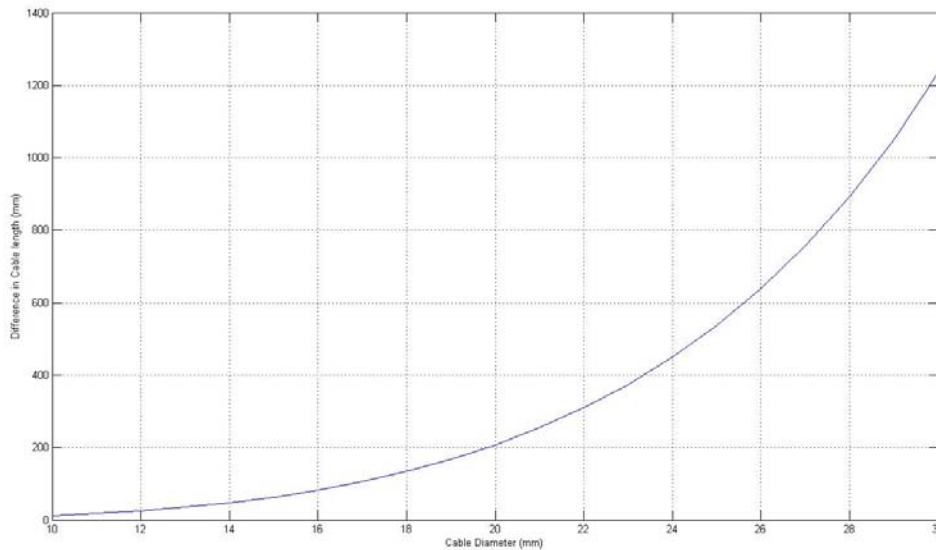


Figure 17: Difference in cable length vs. cable diameter for nominal position

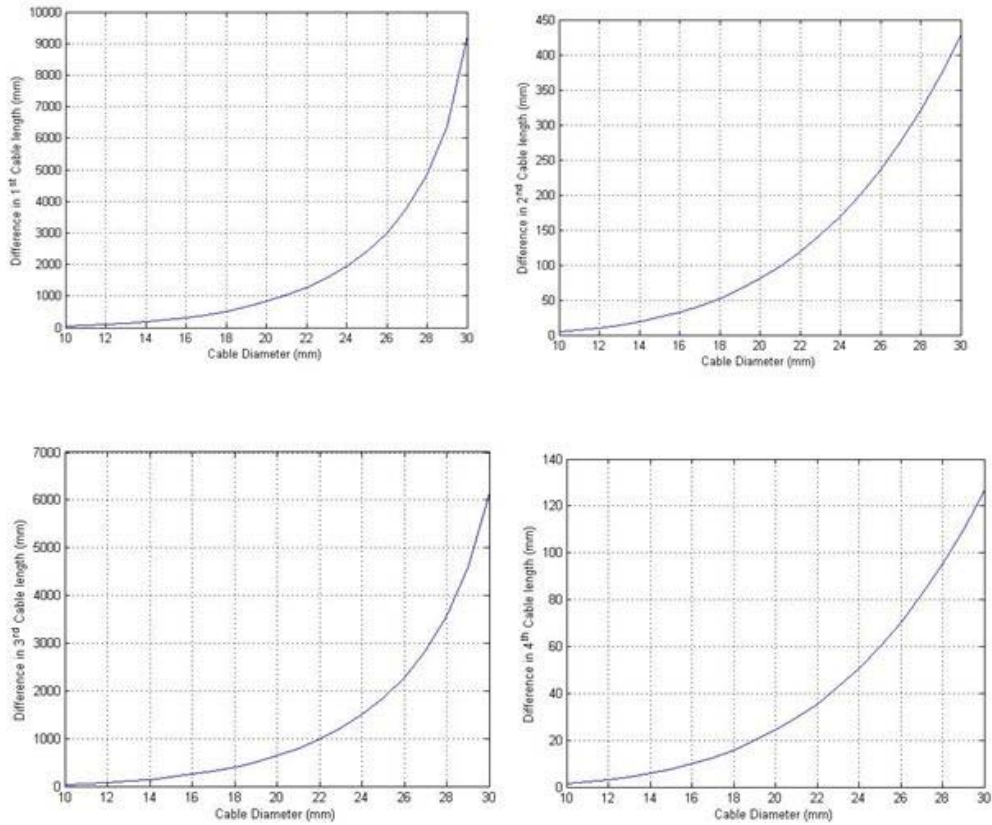


Figure 18: Difference in cable length vs. cable diameter for arbitrary position

From the effects of cable sag, it is evident that if the cable weight increases, then cable sag increases, which in turn increases the error or cable length difference between the cable sag and straight-line models. Increasing cable diameter and / or cable material density increases cable weight. Based on the nature of the catenary equations, we expect a nonlinear increase in the difference in cable lengths when cable diameter and density is increased, as verified by the

simulations of Figures 17 and 18. The trends for increasing cable density are very similar to increasing cable diameter and hence are not shown [16].

Another important parameter is the end-effector mass. This is of special importance since it may vary during the operation of a cable-suspended robot. The variation of difference in cable length between the cable sag and straight-line models with an increase in end-effector mass is shown in Figures 19 and 20.

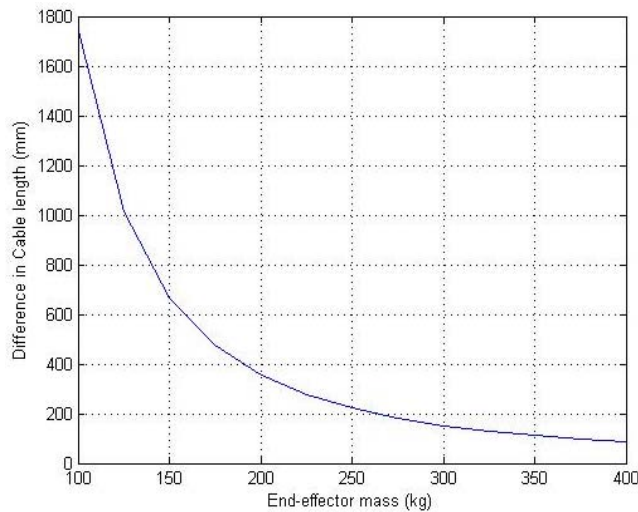


Figure 19: Difference in cable length vs. end-effector mass for nominal position

For this case there is an inverse relationship, i.e. the cable lengths differences decrease as the end-effector mass increases. This makes sense since, for a given cable size, larger end-effector mass will

dominate more and more relative to the cable mass, meaning the straight-line model becomes more and more accurate.

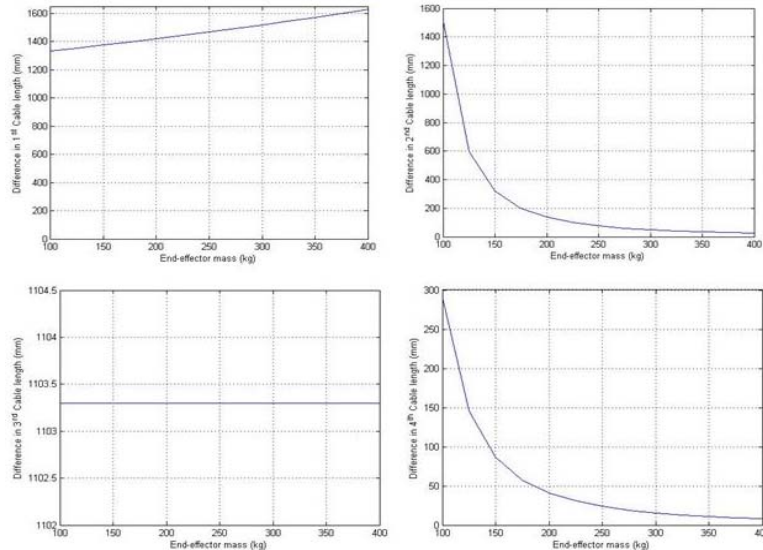


Figure 20: Difference in cable length vs. end-effector mass for arbitrary position

An increase in end-effector mass has different effects on different cables for the arbitrary position. The reason for this is one of the limitations of the LP method: solutions tend to fall on the tension bounds. In case of the arbitrary position (Figure 20), the third cable solution falls on the lower bound, hence the variation in cable length 3 is constant. Cables 2 and 4 follow the same inverse trend of Figure 19, and the cable 1 length difference actually increases with increasing end-effector mass.

d) Effects of Footprint Dimensions

As the size of the robot footprint increases, the cable length and its overall weight increases, thus increasing the cable sag and increasing the difference in cable length. Keeping the ratio of footprint length to width constant ( $L/W = \text{constant}$ ), the area was increased in steps from 1 to 6 acres and the difference in cable lengths was computed. As expected, the cable length difference increases with an increase in area as shown in Figure 21.

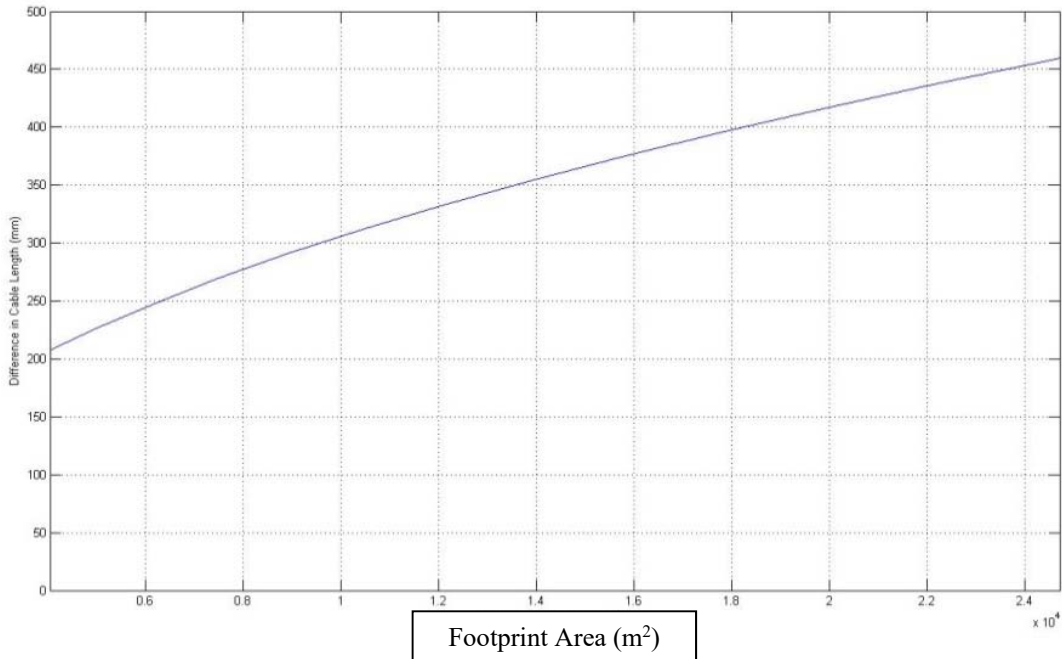


Figure 21: Difference in cable length vs. footprint area

Complimentary to the previous case, we next study the effects of variation of length to width (L/W) ratio, keeping the area constant. For the nominal position, at a constant tower height, the variation of the Euclidean norm length depends on the footprint length L and width W. By the Pythagorean Theorem, this is

dependent on the term  $\sqrt{L^2 + W^2}$ . Also, the point where the length and width interchange their values, we expect the difference in cable lengths to remain the same. All these facts are verified by simulation results as shown in Figure 22.

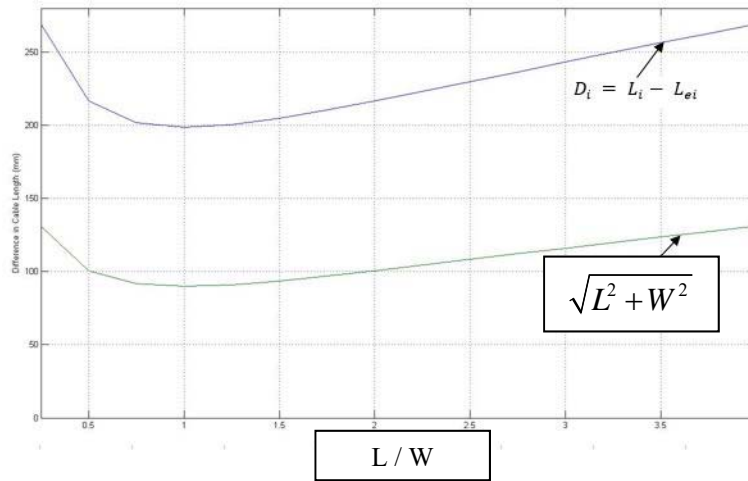


Figure 22: Difference in length (mm) vs. L/W (unitless)

e) Computational Considerations

The straight-line model has been used in most cable-suspended robot systems when compared to the cable sag model. One of the main reasons for this is its simplicity and an analytical model which is easy to use, manipulate, and implement in control systems.

The cable sag model which uses the catenary equations describes the profile of the cable more accurately when compared to the straight-line model. However, the methods required to handle this are highly complicated. Ultimately, any model has to be implemented in a real-time control system to manipulate the cable-suspended robot system. Hence, understanding the computational complexities involved is important.

The catenary equations by themselves are highly nonlinear and are implicit. These equations have to be solved simultaneously with other equations by numerical methods iteratively, which is not only time

consuming, but may also involve iteration errors. This is a major drawback to the cable sag model.

Another major impediment in using iterative methods is the truncation errors involved. These are especially dominant when exponential and hyperbolic terms are approximated using truncated infinite series, thus reducing the accuracy of the solution. To improve the accuracy of the solution, such approximations have to be made with more terms in a series expansion, hence requiring more data storage and ultimately increasing the computational cost.

To investigate this issue, during the computation of cable lengths the number of iterations for both snapshot points and trajectory was recorded for the cable sag model. This information is presented in Figures 23 and 24. For comparison, the straight-line model requires no iteration, so the number of iterations for that case is always 1.

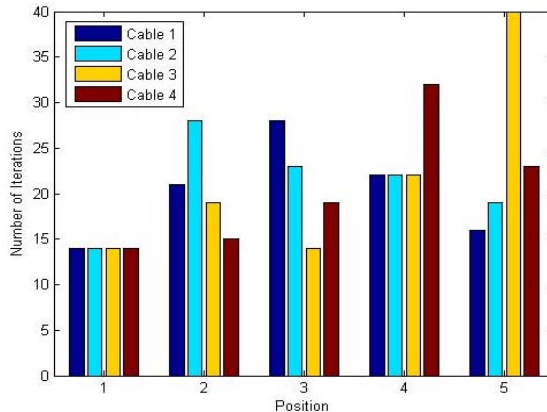


Figure 23: Number of iterations vs. position, snapshots

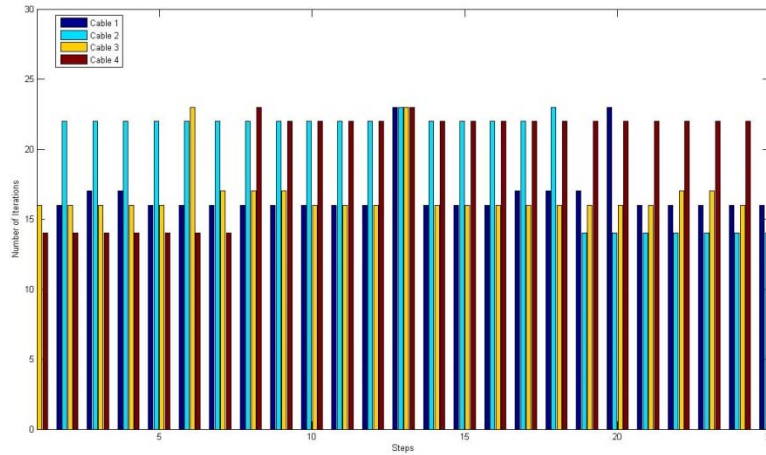


Figure 24: Number of iterations vs. steps, trajectory

There is no definitive prediction that can be made on the number of iterations for a different trajectory or snapshot example, but the examples shown above are representative. They show that even for the simplest trajectories or snapshot points, each cable length computation requires a considerable number of

iterations, ranging from 10- 40. Thus, the cable sag model, despite being an accurate model, suffers from increased computational requirement. A relative comparison between the straight-line model and cable sag model is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Comparison between straight-line and cable sag model.

Criteria	Straight-line model	Cable sag model
Governing equations	Euclidean norm between two points	Catenary equations
Type of model	Approximate model	Accurate model
Kinematics and Statics	Analytical solution for both; problems solved independently.	Both problems are coupled and there is no analytical solution.
Nature of solutions	Analytical	Numerical
Mass of the cable	Neglected	Included
Areas of application	Small scale robots and where accuracy is not a prime concern.	Any cable-suspended robot system, especially large outdoor systems.
Errors involved	Cable length computation errors	Iterative errors, truncation errors
Control system application	Straight-forward	Difficult

Solving the cable tension and length problems independently in separate steps (i.e. using the straight-line model) offers significant practical benefits. Firstly, it offers easy control system implementation, since ensuring positive cable tension is a necessary condition and cable sag computation can be circumvented if the corresponding error is within limits. Secondly, solving the steps separately greatly reduces the computational time. Additionally, if the steps are combined (i.e. using the cable- sag model) the problem becomes a constrained non-linear optimization problem (instead of a robust linear programming problem) which

needs more sophisticated optimization routines and is not practical to implement in simple, cost-effective, real-time control system architectures.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current research was conducted primarily with an intention of studying and understanding the qualitative and quantitative effects of cable sag on the calculation of cable lengths in cable-suspended robots. The research also involved studying the effects of cable density, cable diameter, robot footprint size, and computational requirements.

Based on the results of the snapshot and trajectory examples (for a 1-acre footprint robot), the relative error in cable lengths does not exceed 3%. The cable sag model suffers from computational complexities. On the other hand, the straight-line model is simple to manipulate, control, and implement practically. Considering all these factors and quantitative comparison results presented earlier, the straight-line model is preferred over the cable sag model at this particular scale (1-acre footprint, 4047 m<sup>2</sup>). In cases where the cable sag and errors are greater, the use of a Cartesian servo controller based on GPS sensing of the end-effector location is recommended.

Cable tension distribution is an important aspect of cable-suspended robots and, based on the results of this research, linear programming serves as an efficient tool for computing and ensuring appropriate cable tensions in cables (the pseudoinverse-based method is much more common). An additional benefit of the LP method is to help in finding if a given cable tension range is acceptable for motion control of a cable-suspended robot system and is within the torque limitations of a winch / motor. Conversely, the simulation results could be used for appropriate choices in winch / motor design.

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GLOBAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCHES IN ENGINEERING: H  
ROBOTICS & NANO-TECH

Volume 17 Issue 1 Version 1.0 Year 2017

Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal

Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)

Online ISSN:2249-4596 Print ISSN:0975-5861

## Obstacle Avoiding Robot

By Faiza Tabassum, Susmita Lopa, Muhammad Masud Tarek  
& Dr. Bilkis Jamal Ferdosi

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**Abstract-** Obstacle detection and avoidance can be considered as the central issue in designing mobile robots. This technology provides the robots with senses which it can use to traverse in unfamiliar environments without damaging itself. In this paper an Obstacle Avoiding Robot is designed which can detect obstacles in its path and maneuver around them without making any collision. It is a robot vehicle that works on Arduino Microcontroller and employs three ultrasonic distance sensors to detect obstacles. The Arduino board was selected as the microcontroller platform and its software counterpart, Arduino Software, was used to carry out the programming. The integration of three ultrasonic distance sensors provides higher accuracy in detecting surrounding obstacles. Being a fully autonomous robot, it successfully maneuvered in unknown environments without any collision. The hardware used in this project is widely available and inexpensive which makes the robot easily replicable.

**Keywords:** *obstacle avoidance, ultrasonic sensor, arduino microcontroller, autonomous robot, arduino software.*

**GJRE-H Classification:** *FOR Code: 090602*



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# Obstacle Avoiding Robot

Faiza Tabassum<sup>α</sup>, Susmita Lopa<sup>σ</sup>, Muhammad Masud Tarek<sup>ρ</sup> & Dr. Bilkis Jamal Ferdosi<sup>GD</sup>

**Abstract-** Obstacle detection and avoidance can be considered as the central issue in designing mobile robots. This technology provides the robots with senses which it can use to traverse in unfamiliar environments without damaging itself. In this paper an Obstacle Avoiding Robot is designed which can detect obstacles in its path and maneuver around them without making any collision. It is a robot vehicle that works on Arduino Microcontroller and employs three ultrasonic distance sensors to detect obstacles. The Arduino board was selected as the microcontroller platform and its software counterpart, Arduino Software, was used to carry out the programming. The integration of three ultrasonic distance sensors provides higher accuracy in detecting surrounding obstacles. Being a fully autonomous robot, it successfully maneuvered in unknown environments without any collision. The hardware used in this project is widely available and inexpensive which makes the robot easily replicable.

**Keywords:** obstacle avoidance, ultrasonic sensor, arduino microcontroller, autonomous robot, arduino software.

## I. INTRODUCTION

From its initiation in the 1950s, modern robots have come a long way and rooted itself as an immutable aid in the advancement of humankind. In the course of time, robots took many forms, based on its application, and its size varied from a giant 51 feet to microscopic level. In the course of technological developments of robots, one aspect remained instrumental to their function, and that is mobility. The term “obstacle avoidance” is now used in modern robotics to denote the capability of robot to navigate over an unknown environment without having any collision with surrounding objects (Duino-Robotics, 2013). Obstacle avoidance in robots can bring more flexibility in maneuvering in varying environments and would be much more efficient as continuous human monitoring is not required.

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This project developed an obstacle avoiding robot which can move without any collision by sensing obstacles on its course with the help of three ultrasonic distance sensors. Robots guided with this technology can be put into diversified uses, e.g., surveying landscapes, driverless vehicles, autonomous cleaning, automated lawn mower and supervising robot in industries. The robot developed in this project is expected to fulfill the following objectives:

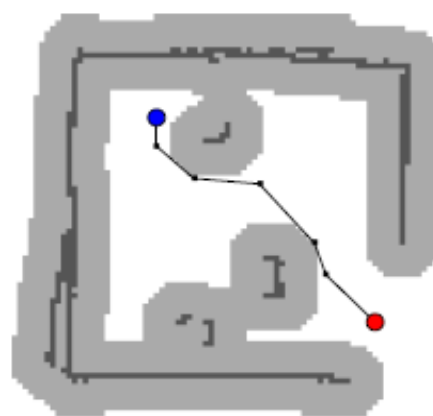
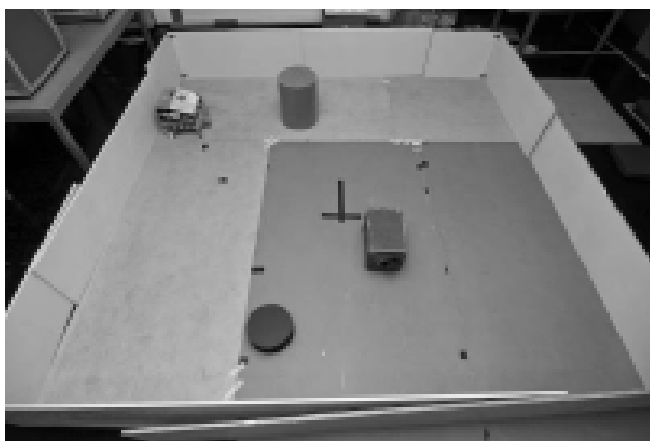
- The robot would have the capacity to detect obstacles in its path based on a predetermined threshold distance.
- After obstacle detection, the robot would change its course to a relatively open path by making autonomous decision.
- It would require no external control during its operation.
- It can measure the distance between itself and the surrounding objects in real-time.
- It would be able to operate effectively in unknown environment.

## II. RELEVANT WORKS IN OBSTACLE DETECTION AND AVOIDANCE

To date, there have been a number of successful attempts in designing obstacle avoiding robots. These works differ by selection of sensors, path mapping process and the algorithms applied to set the operational parameters. There have been numerous projects in this arena using laser scanner, infrared sensor, GPS and multiple sensors to accomplish obstacle detection and avoidance (Ryther & Madsen, 2009; Ahasan, Hossain, Siddiquee, & Rahman, 2012; Shahdib, Ullah, Hasan, & Mahmud, 2013; Gray, 2000)

Researchers are persistently trying to find more precise ways to develop autonomous robot or vehicle movement technology. In obstacle detection, the selection of sensor is vital for the required application of the robot, otherwise it might fail to operate even though all hardware and software are working properly. For example, a robot with optical sensors in a room with glass walls might create more collisions than avoidance. Hence sensors should be selected in accordance with the characteristics of the obstacles. Ryther and Madsen (2009) used 240° laser scanner as a sensor to build a robot based on Small Mobile Robot (SMR) platform. The robot generates a collision free path from a grid map using wavefront algorithm (Fig. 1).





Source: Ryther & Madsen (2009)

*Fig.1:* Obstacle Avoidance Setup and the Resultant Grid Map with the Collision Free Path

The robot developed in this project uses ultrasonic sensors to detect obstacles in real time and requires no path planning. Its processing unit is based on the Arduino platform.

The Autonomous Surface Vehicle (ASV) developed by Heidarsson and Sukhatme (2011) employed a single-beam mechanically-scanning profiling sonar to detect obstacles under water. The profiling sonar has the ability to produce cone-shaped beam which is ideal for detecting near surface obstacles. One of the objectives of their work was to investigate the suitability of using sonar near the water-air boundary for which the study found promising results. Although similar detection technology is used, our robot is designed to work on the ground and detect obstacles above the surface. It uses the Arduino software which enables to upload a code written in C programming language.

There were other works using multiple sensors to make the robot more accustomed to its surroundings by employing both range and appearance based obstacle detection (Shahdib, Ullah, Hasan, & Mahmud, 2013; Gray, 2000). Their obstacle detection also includes a combination of global and local avoidance. In one of these projects, Shahdib, Ullah, Hasan and Mahmud (2013) fused the strengths of an image and an ultrasonic sensor to detect objects and measure its size. Detection of object was carried out by the ultrasonic sensor and its measurement required the help of a camera. The code was designed to receive the distance to object, its height and width.

Our project employs multiple sensors, but unlike the last example, we used the same sensors for enhancing the horizontal range of searching obstacles. These ultrasonic distance sensors work in combination to measure distance to the surrounding objects and detect the presence of obstacles if they are within the threshold distance. The inclusion of three sensors of the same kind provides more accuracy in obstacle detection as it widens the field of searching.

### III. WORKING PRINCIPLE

The robot in this project detects obstacles with the help of three ultrasonic distance sensors to measure the distance to surrounding objects. Although the project is started with a single ultrasonic sensor, two more sensors is added since the robot had blind spots in its right and left direction for which it was having collision while maneuvering. Unlike the projects discussed above, our project concentrates on coordinating multiple ultrasonic sensors for maneuvering without collision and also maintaining a minimum travel distance. *Fig.2* describes this algorithm in a flow chart.

The robot was designed to detect the presence of any object within the specified threshold distance. If any object is found within this distance, it is designated as an obstacle and the robot will turn away from it. The three ultrasonic sensors are placed in the frontal section of the robot at the right, middle and left position. The three sensors emit an ultrasonic pulse every 300 ms which echoes from the neighboring objects. Using time difference between the input and echo, the Arduino calculates the distance to the obstacle from which the echo is coming by using the constant speed of sound 340 m/s. When one of the sensors detects obstacle within the threshold distance, the robot changes its direction. Along with these basic movements, the robot is designed to handle a more complex situation when all three sensors have obstacles within the specified range. In this case, the robot will move backward for 10 ms and again check the distance to objects with the help of right and left sensors. The robot will then compare the two distances and move in the direction where the distance is larger.

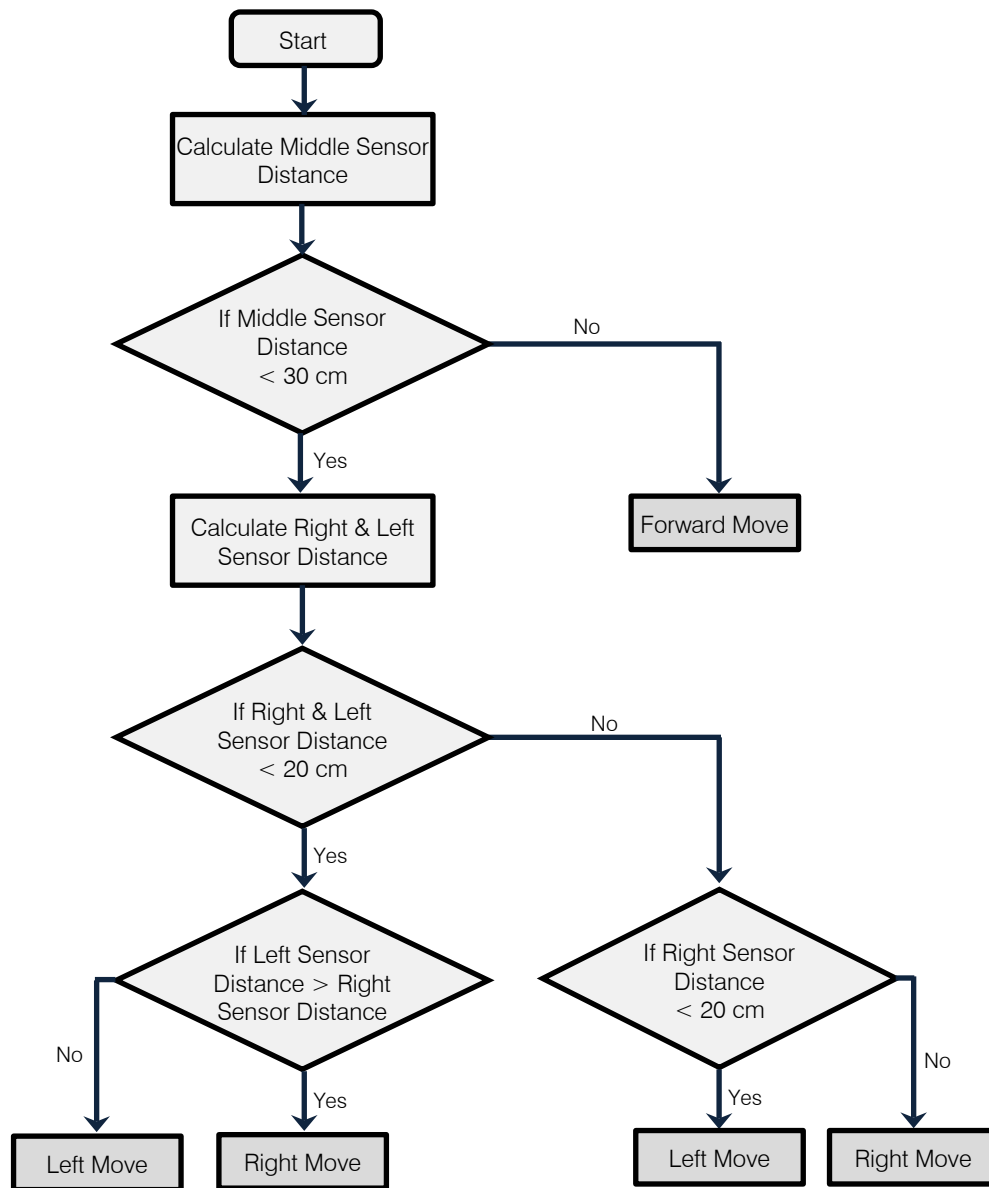


Fig. 2: Algorithm for Obstacle Avoiding Robot

#### IV. ROBOT ARCHITECTURE AND PROGRAMMING

##### a) The Arduino Platform

There are numerous hardware platforms in use based on which obstacle avoiding robots or in general mobile robots are built. We have selected the Arduino board as the microcontroller platform and its software counterpart to carry out the programming. Arduino is an open-source platform which is an integration of hardware (microcontroller) and software components. The microcontroller can read input in the form of light or sound through a sensor and convert it into an output (e.g., driving a motor) according to the instruction given by the Arduino programming (Arduino, 2015).

The Arduino microcontroller can only be functional with the help of a code. To write this code,

Arduino Integrated Development Environment or Arduino Software (IDE) is used which is also open-source like the Arduino Uno board (Arduino, 2015). It is much popular software used by many for its simplicity and the ability to communicate with all Arduino boards. Arduino Software version 1.6.5 is used to write the code in C programming language which is then uploaded to the Arduino microcontroller through an USB cable. The software saves the code in a file with .ino extension. While there are many other microcontroller platforms available, Arduino gained much popularity which attributed to its distinctive features such as:

- Economical
- It can run in various platforms like Windows, Linux and Macintosh
- Programming environment is easy to comprehend
- Both software and hardware are open source and can be customized to meet specific needs.

In this project, the Arduino board will take input from ultrasonic sensor, calculate the distance to the obstacle and control rotation of the servo motor as an output response.

b) *Hardware Components and Assembly*

The following flowchart in Fig.3 shows the hardware used to build the robot and explains relationship (input and output) among them.

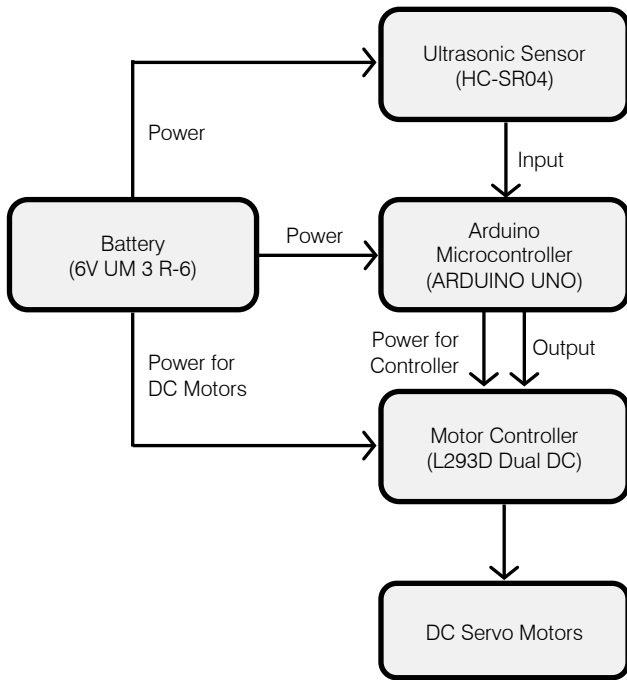


Fig.3: Algorithm for Obstacle Avoiding Robot

The hardware were assembled to form the obstacle avoiding robot in Fig.4 with the help of a chassis, wheels and connecting cables.

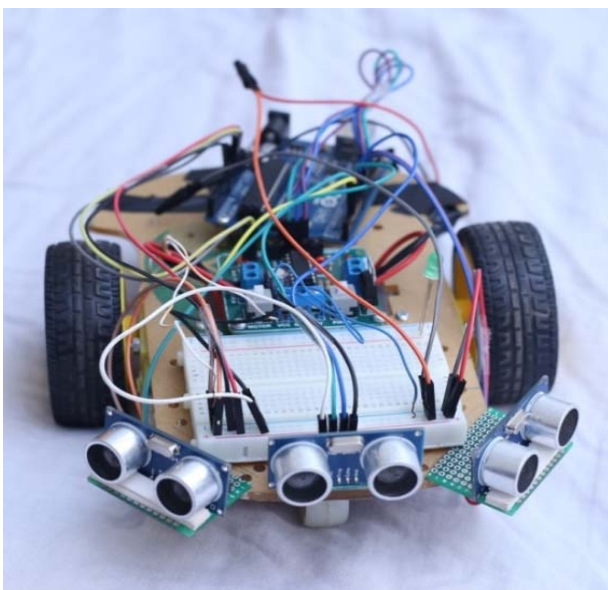


Fig. 4: Front View of the Robot

V. CONCLUSION

This project developed an obstacle avoiding robot to detect and avoid obstacles in its path. The robot is built on the Arduino platform for data processing and its software counterpart helped to communicate with the robot to send parameters for guiding movement. For obstacle detection, three ultrasonic distance sensors were used that provided a wider field of detection. The robot is fully autonomous and after the initial loading of the code, it requires no user intervention during its operation. When placed in unknown environment with obstacles, it moved while avoiding all obstacles with considerable accuracy.

The work done in this project can act as a base for further improvements to increase accuracy and adaptability of obstacle detection in diverse environments. In future, the authors of this project intend to test the feasibility of integrating different types of sensors to complement each other's disadvantages. For instance, imaging sensor can be beneficial when ultrasonic sensor may not correctly identify obstacles in environment subjected to ambient noise and varying temperature or air pressure. The accuracy of determining the distance to the obstacles can be increased by the inclusion of an electronic barometer for automatic adjustment of the speed of sound in air. Also the addition of a Bluetooth device can offer the flexibility of remotely changing control parameters in the code.

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GLOBAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCHES IN ENGINEERING: H  
ROBOTICS & NANO-TECH

Volume 17 Issue 1 Version 1.0 Year 2017

Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal

Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)

Online ISSN:2249-4596 Print ISSN:0975-5861

## PLC based Robot Manipulator Control using Position based and Image based Algorithm

By Harshavardhan Reddy Kunchala & Jack Toporovsky

*University of Bridgeport*

**Abstract-** Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) is making big role in the field of automation and robotics. This paper described the design and implementation of Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) based robot manipulator control using two different artificial intelligence algorithms - Position Based and Imaged Based algorithm. The controlled robot is 5 degrees of freedom (DOF) manipulator with a closed kinematic chain, designed for high-performance pick and place applications. The control software is fully developed on a commercial PLC system, using its standard programming tools and the multi-tasking features of its operating system.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, vision system, programmable logic controller, robot manipulator, industrial automation, design, hardware.

**GJRE-H Classification:** FOR Code: 090602



*Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:*



# PLC based Robot Manipulator Control using Position based and Image based Algorithm

Harshavardhan Reddy Kunchala<sup>a</sup> & Jack Toporovsky<sup>a</sup>

**Abstract-** Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) is making big role in the field of automation and robotics. This paper described the design and implementation of Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) based robot manipulator control using two different artificial intelligence algorithms - Position Based and Imaged Based algorithm. The controlled robot is 5 degrees of freedom (DOF) manipulator with a closed kinematic chain, designed for high-performance pick and place applications. The control software is fully developed on a commercial PLC system, using its standard programming tools and the multi-tasking features of its operating system. In particular, this paper analyze in detail the drawbacks and the advantages related to the choice of standard PLCs in this kind of applications, compared to the much common choice of specialized hardware or industrial personal computers, with particular emphasis on the computational performances obtained with the proposed control architecture.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, vision system, programmable logic controller, robot manipulator, industrial automation, design, hardware.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Robot manipulators are largely used in packaging industry, especially for pick and place operations and box filling. In particular, packaging of small food products, like cookies or candies, requires high performance robots with short cycle times and precise motion control, even if their workspace is relatively small [1]. Such performances can be obtained by means of lightweight parallel-driven or delta-like kinematics, whose advantages in terms of reduced moving masses and inertias are well-known. These robots include a vision system to identify and localize large and unordered products on the conveyors. Typically robot controller is proprietary and limits its access for customers to extend its usage without support from the manufacturer. Since the integration of a robotic system with additional application-specific tools and features often requires the development of software or hardware that closely matches with the basic robot motion control system. In general, customers search for openness of robot controllers for addition or modification of its functionalities. In literature, several open architectures for robot controls has been developed by academic research that limits its application to a smaller scale [2], [3], [4]. In most cases, these architectures take

advantage of hardware platforms based on Personal Computers (PC). On one hand, the use of PCs for robot control reduces software development costs that use high level languages and well-designed Integrated Development Environments (IDE). On the other hand, standard PCs doesn't meet the reliability required by complex industrial environments. In summary, the use of more protective enclosures and usage of robust electronic components increase the cost of PC based robot controllers.

Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs) is a typically a control device playing a dominant role in industrial automation. PLCs provides higher degree of robustness, cheaper than alternative options and ease of use[1]. Electronic components in PLCs are benchmarked for their reliability and robustness ultimately guaranteeing high performance. For this reasons, PLCs are commonly considered as low-level systems, whose main purpose is to control using simple Boolean signals (i.e. discrete control and sequencing) and to supervise the safety and integrity of plants and operators. However, modern PLCs have sufficient computational power to perform complex mathematical calculations using various programming languages (i.e. IEC 61131-3 [5]). This allows developers to implement various algorithms for robot control on PLCs.

Typically, most PLCs support only their proprietary IDE. The respective IDE provides an option for users to custom build/modify their applications which is a limiting factor in PC-based approaches [3]. Therefore, PLC programs can be updated and extended by end-users even without the original source code, which makes PLCs as "open" systems. Despite of these features, PLC-based control systems for robot manipulators are quite rare and, in general, limited to simple Cartesian or gantry-like structures[7].

A robot arm is the combination of links and joints in the form of a chain with one end isfixed while the other end can be moved with certain degree of freedom in native axis of the arm and is termed as end effector. The joints are either prismatic or revolute, driven by actuators. In order to move the end effector along a certain path, the respective joints should be moved appropriately [8]. In this process, it is necessary to perform inverse kinematics equation. In case of redundant manipulator, inverse kinematics is more challenging when compared to a non-redundant manipulator whose kinematics is not so complicated[7].

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There are traditional methods such as algebraic solutions, geometric solutions and iterative solutions in order to solve the inverse kinematics problem [5]. However, these methods are computationally complex and exhibits higher execution times. Recently, the particle swarm optimization (PSO) has been successfully applied to various optimization problems. This new optimization algorithm combines social psychology principles in socio-cognition human agents and evolutionary computations[9].

In this paper, authors discusses about the capabilities of a commercial PLCs and its multi-tasking operating system to implement a robot control system including inverse kinematics for on-line trajectory planning. Our design is an integration of vision systems with Robot manipulator and PLC used for implementing Imaged Based Intelligence algorithm. This system design provides location information of object using Position Based algorithm. The particle swarm optimization is used for Position based algorithm as it is characterized as a simple concept. This methodology is easy to implement and computationally efficient [9, 10]. The robotic platform described in the paper is designed and developed in Programmable Logic Controller laboratory at University of Bridgeport, CT, USA[1]. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Sec. II describes the problem definition; Sec. III provides details about the solution, add Sec. IV describes the hardware setup. Sec. V describes about the result and Sec VI describes the conclusion and the future works.

## II. PROBLEM DEFINITION

Increase in automation needs with revolutionary advancement in technology motivates the researchers to develop next generation automation applications [11]. Typically industrial processes uses manipulator arms for picking and placing the objects in close proximity. This involves robot arms to repeatedly perform movements with high accuracy and with precise joint angles[12]. The common industrial manipulator is often referred as robot arm with joints and angles as shown in Figure 1. The robot arm used in our application is an articulated arm consists of all revolute joints. The articulated robot arm has maximum flexibility and can reach over and under the objects. As all joints are revolute these robots can cover large workspace and are easy to seal. The robot manipulators are assigned to accomplish the specific task in unstructured environment with minimal joint movements and with best shortest path.

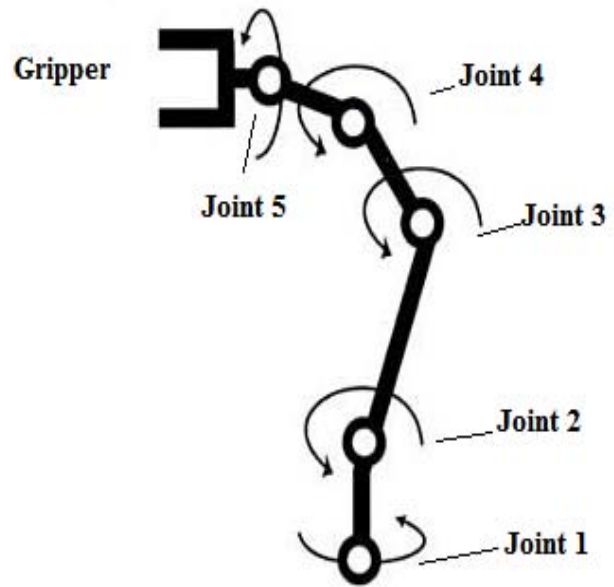


Figure 1: Robot Arm with Joint Angle

The robot motion path planning has been studied more than two decades [13]. Deriving the best possible inverse kinematic solution for end effector is challenging and difficult. Some of the challenging aspects in designing reverse kinematic solution are:

### a) State Space

As the manipulator is designed for pick and place application, the manipulator picks up the object and places it in relative positions such and are termed as good position or bad position or rejection area according to the sensory data. So finding the states for the robot manipulator is finite. The arm has its work space and can reach to those positions by various paths.

### b) Initial State

The initial state for the robot manipulator could be any state depends on the signal send by the sensors to the arm. But at the start of the operations the manipulator always go to the home or nesting position.

### c) Action

The manipulator action depend on the perceived signal from the sensors (camera, part detect sensor, etc.). The manipulator takes action based on the sensor data to the controller and controller performs the movement of arm. So manipulator moves toward the destination area by avoiding the obstacles in the path in a given time limit with respective speed. To reach the object, the manipulator has to find out the best possible path with minimal joint angle movement within its work space. The end effector will try to reach the object as soon as position coordinates are calculated. There are also other actions performed such as for open and close the gripper, take snap shot of parts, start/stop the conveyor, start/stop the motor etc.



d) *Transition Model*

The transition model for the manipulator depends on the action taken. In the start, the manipulator returns to the homing position. So we consider the initial state as the homing position, but not all the time. The camera mounted on the end effector will continuously feed the current position coordinates of the robot manipulator to the controller and the algorithm controls the motion of robot arm. The complete transition model is shown in Figure 2.

e) *Goal test*

The goal test of this model is to pick and place the objects/parts with respective area for further processing by detecting metal and nonmetallic parts and avoiding the obstacle or collision of the robot arm with any other part of the system.

f) *Path Cost*

The path cost of this application varies according to the product cost, i.e. parts used for the system assembling, and other factors.

The complete flow chart of the application designed and implemented as given in Figure 3.

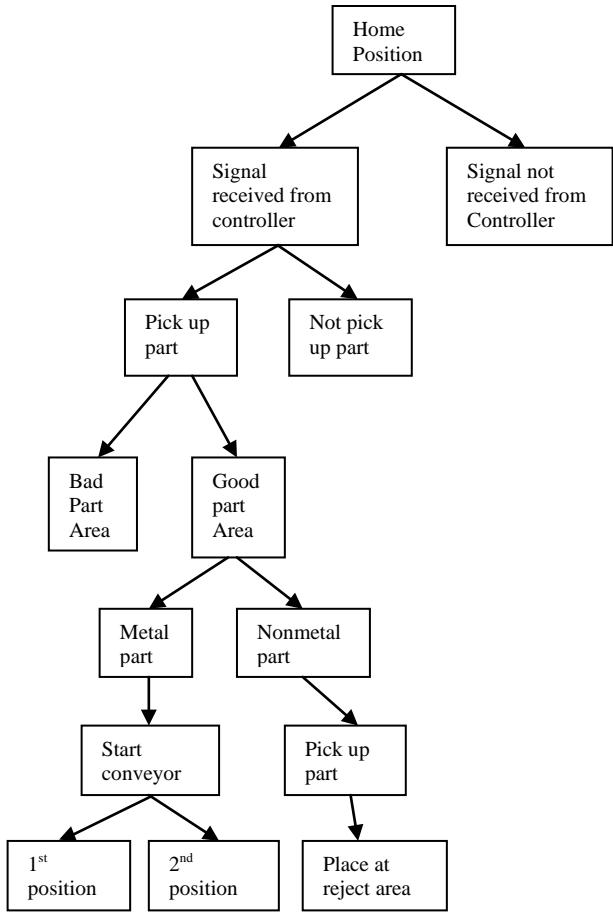
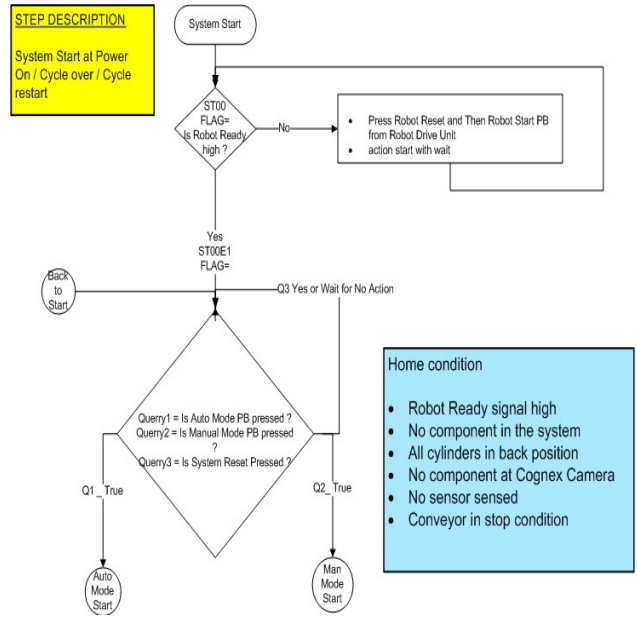


Figure 2: Transition Model of the system

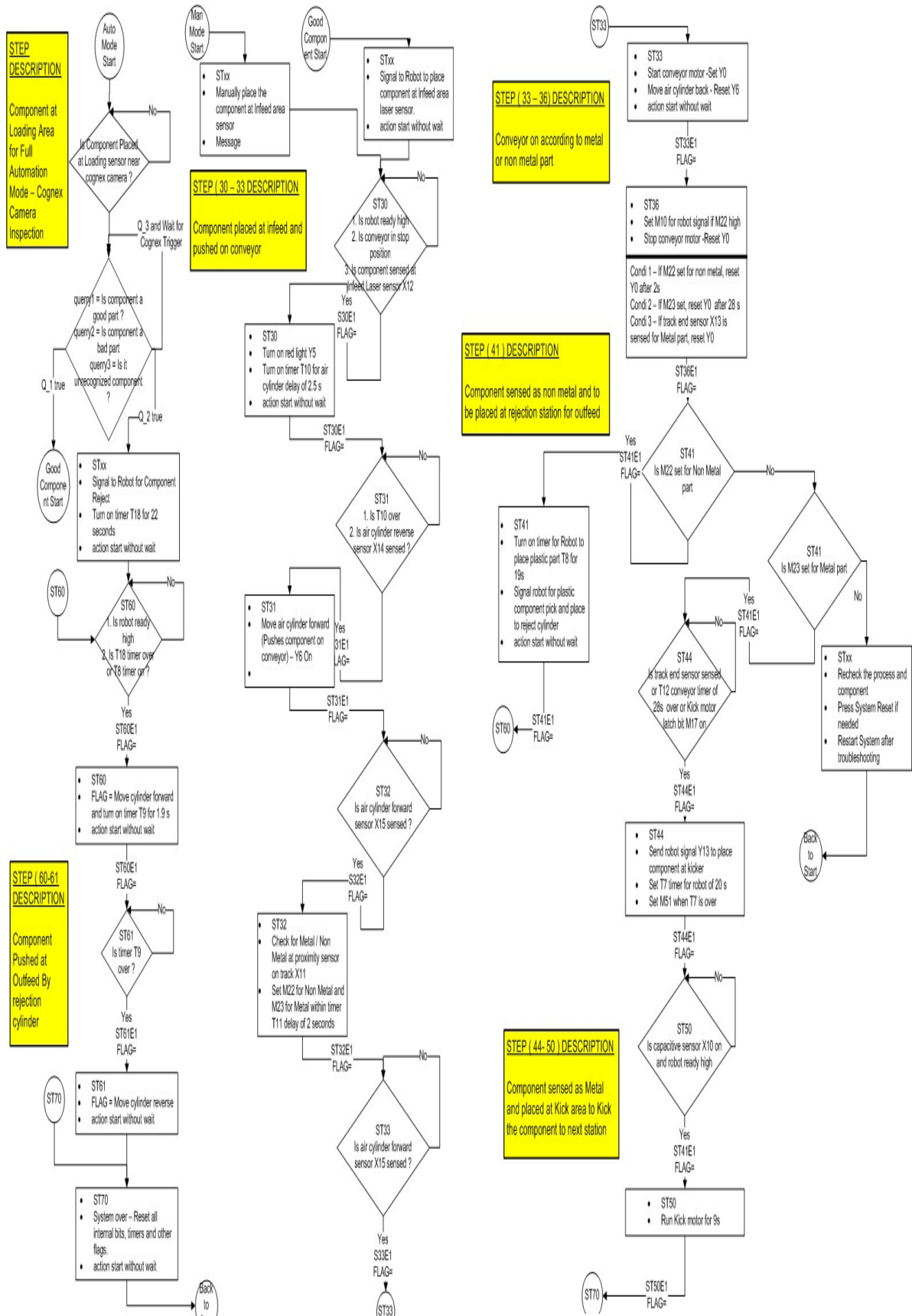


Figure 3: Flow Chart of the complete process

To achieve the goal in this study, the position trajectory calculation of the robot manipulator is the most challenging task, as it has to avoid the obstacle and reach the product for picking[14]. As stated in above problem transition state for the robot manipulator has various possible paths to reach object. Among those paths, the best path will have the minimal joint movements and shortest distance within its workspace. Many techniques have been developed for finding the inverse kinematics of the manipulator. The complexity of finding the kinematics solution increases with number of joints or Degree Of Freedom (DOF). The robot manipulator position, path planning and motion control in 3 dimensional workspace become a key factor for control system design engineers and robot manufacturers. To achieve this functionality, the robot arm should be self-proficient, flexible, low power consumptions, fully efficient. One of the challenging task for robot arm in industry is to move its end effector from initial position to desired position in working environment with least residual vibration, minimal torque, obstacle avoidance and collision free kinematics, shortest time interval and/or distance in a desired path[15].

### III. SOLUTION METHODOLOGY

Dealing with complex, higher level control system with continuous interactive subsystem in dynamic environment is difficult and requires sophisticated and intellectual controllers with continuous process optimization. In this study, we proposed the solution for path planning as stated in the previous section. The proposed solution has been applied and tested on robot manipulator with 5 DOF. The experimental set up is explained in Section IV. In this experiment we are using position based algorithm in combination with Image based algorithm to finding the best possible solution for path planning. In this study, we are implementing Artificial Intelligence in the robot arm control system using PLC as shown in Figure 4. The system is completely knowledge based as it uses information from the sensors and performs the action using robot arm and actuators. The position based search algorithm uses the visual data provided by the imaged based algorithm and calculates the joint velocity and angles to form the inverse kinematic solution in 3 dimensional workspace[16]. By adding vision or imaged based algorithm, the robotic control system is more flexible, adaptable and increases the accuracy in the joints movement.

The principal advantage of using position-based control is the chance of defining tasks in a standard Cartesian frame. On the contrary, the image-based control is less sensitive to calibration errors; however, it requires online calculation of the image Jacobean that is a quantity depending on the distance between the target and the camera which is difficult to

evaluate. A control of a manipulator in the image plane when mapped with the joint space is strongly nonlinear and may cause problems when crossing those points which are singular for the kinematics of the manipulator.

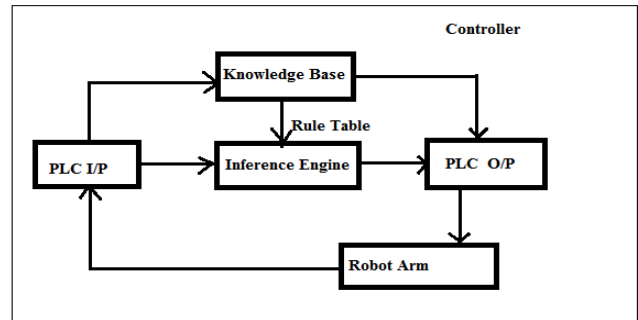


Figure 4: Block diagram of PLC based robot arm control system

The pseudo code for the position based algorithm is as given below,

```

For each position
{
    Initialize position
}
Do until maximum iterations or minimum error criteria
{
    For_each position
    {
        Calculate joint angle kinematics
        If_Joint1 better than Joint2
        {
            Set pBest = current Joint angle
        }
        If pBest is better than gBest
        {
            Set gBest = pBest
        }
    }
}
For each position
{
    Calculate joint Velocity
    Use gBest and Velocity to update position Data
}
    
```

The main purpose or goal of this study is to use the visual feedback from images captured by the camera and the Cartesian space co-ordinates of the target object which ultimately controls the motion of the robot to perform a task. The starting position and coordinate frame boundary is taught to the robot arm. From the calculated co-ordinates of the target object, the surface model in 3 dimensional co-ordinate systems will be constructed for robot manipulator. The sensor data will be used for knowledge base and will be used to avoid collision as well as can be used to find optimal

shortest possible path or trajectory by checking each point in its workspace. The sensors can give a signal when contact is made with obstacles, detect metal or nonmetal objects, or measure a force being applied. Due to this knowledge provided by sensory units to the system, robot path can be planned before its execution to the target position.

Firstly, a camera is mounted on a manipulator end effector and it catches a 2-D image, a true potential can be exactly calculated. We assign the two dimensional coordinate system with the x-axis and y-axis forming a basis for the image plane and the z-axis perpendicular to the image plane. The origin located at distance  $\lambda$  behind the image plane as shown in Figure 5.

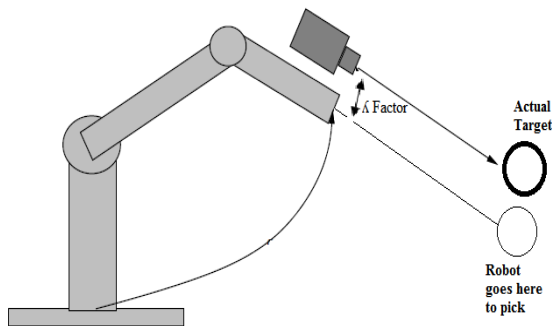


Figure 5: Camera Mount Position

In order to determine the position of the target object in the image plane, camera will capture the images and through which only the central point (only a single pixel) have to be identified, without knowing this point's co-ordinates in the attached Cartesian reference system. This coordinates will be feed to the Position Based Algorithm for calculating the joints angle and trajectory. The position finding algorithm outputs the x-coordinate and y-coordinate in the image frame along with a scaling factor ( $\lambda$ ). The scaling factor is related to the dimensions of the gripper and is used to get an idea of the elevation of the gripper. This helps in making the gripper co-planar with the target object.

#### IV. HARDWARE SETUP

We implemented our proposed algorithms and optimal path planning schemes on a PLC based Robot arm control system for sorting, pick and place application as shown in Figure 6.

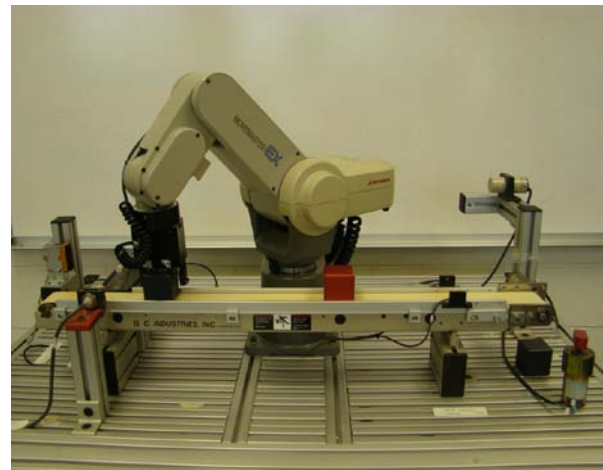


Figure 6: PLC System Setup

Following are the main components of the project,

1. Mitsubishi Fx3G Programmable Logic Controller.
2. Mitsubishi RV-M1 Mitsubishi Robot along with Movemaster Drive Unit.
3. Mitsubishi touch screen E-1061 HMI (Human Machine Interface).
4. VGA Camera.
5. Cognex Vision Camera unit.
6. A servomotor for controlling belt conveyor and another servomotor for displacing a component as a kicker
7. Sensor system comprising of laser sensors, capacitive sensor, track sensor and proximity.
8. Two pneumatic cylinders which act as component pusher.

The Mitsubishi RV-M1 robot is driven with robot drive unit Movemaster EX from which it interfaces with Mitsubishi PLC with help of 50 pin connector and to an another interface for robot teach pendant. This drive unit stores the code in the robot. The nomenclature of the robot arm is shown in Figure 7.

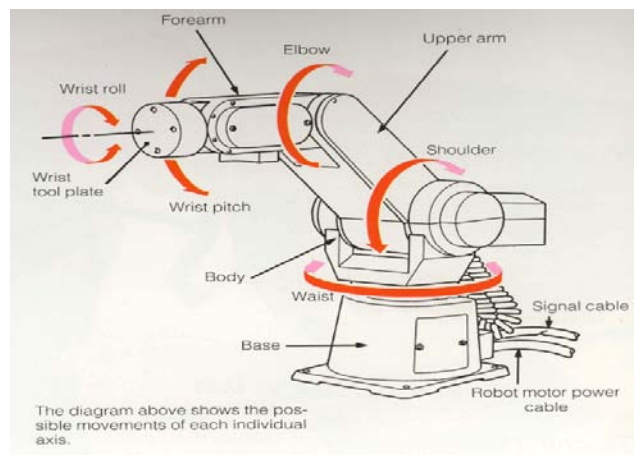


Figure 7: Nomenclature of Robot Arm

The specification of Movemaster robot arm is as given in Figure 8.

MOVEMASTER RV-M1		
Construction	Vertical, articulated	
Degrees of freedom	5 (not including hand)	
Electrical drive system	DC servo motors	
Reach	250 + 160 mm	
Operation range	Waist rotation	300° (max. 120°/s)
	Shoulder rotation	130° (max. 72°/s)
	Elbow rotation	110° (max. 109°/s)
	Wrist pitch	± 90° (max. 100°/s)
	Wrist roll	± 180° (max. 163°/s)
Maximum path velocity	1,000 mm/s (PTP at wrist tool plate)	
Lifting capacity	1.2 kg incl. hand	
Position repeatability	± 0.3 mm at wrist tool plate	
Position direction	Limit switches and encoders	
Installation position	Horizontal	
Ambient temperature	5° C - 40° C	
Weight	19 kg	

Figure 8: Specification of Robot Arm

The Programmable Logic Controller used in this experimental set up is Mitsubishi Fx3G and its basic specification are given below,

*Power Supply:* 100-240 V AC/ 12-24 V DC, 50/60 Hz  
*No. of Outputs:* 16.  
*No. of Inputs:* 24.  
*Input form:* sink / source with photocoupler isolation  
 Input / Output response: Approx 10 ms  
 Digital Output: Relay Transistor.  
 Program Cycle Period: 0.55-1 us  
 Memory: 32K steps EEPROM.  
 Software: GX Developer.  
 USB Port, Profibus or Ethernet Connection

## V. RESULTS

The application we used for testing these two algorithm with PLC is Pick and Place application with Quality Inspection. As an initial step we localize the object using a traditional Haar classifier. We trained multiple models for recognition various objects in the scene. At time of training process each Haar object detection model will be fed with respective positive samples or in class samples and out of class samples. We then evaluate the performance of the trained model using test data. The processing is performed on a windows machine using Matlab Software. We chose this method (Haar classifier) as it is one of the successful and simple object detection method used widely in machine vision technologies. Some of the sample training images are shown in below Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11, and Figure 12.

The pseudo code for Experimental Setup is as given bellow.

1. Initialize:

Start node Stack = empty

End node Stack = empty

All other variables initialized.

Load the mode into Start node Stack equivalent to sNODE out degree each time incrementing the start index. Start index to point to sNODE the Root, on top of stack. Now pop the top of stack and assign to the Depth First Search (DFS) proceed to 2

2. **begin** (At start node Get the unvisited adjacent )

**while** (there are bNODEs proceed with PBA and IBA algorithm and generate Step code for the branch till you reach a tNODE or xNODE)

**if** ( xNODE proceed to 3)

**else if** ( tNODE go to 7)

**else** go to 10

3. At xNODE check node status;

**if** (we are meeting this xNODE for the first time) go to 4

**else** (top of end index points to this xNODE pop End node Stack and go to 5)

4. Make this xNODE as an end node, if bad part is detected on Cognex vision system Stack equivalent to its in degree each time incrementing the end index. Then go to 5

5. Process this xNODE and increment the in degree processing count for this node.

**If** (the in degree processing count equal to the xNODE in degree) go to 6

**else if** (Start node Stack not empty) get the start node ID from stack by popping Start node Stack assign ID to DFS then go to 2

**else** go to 10.

6. Make this node a start node, put its ID on Start node Stack equivalent to its out degree

**if** (Start node Stack not empty,) pop the Start node Stack assign ID to DFS and then go to 2

**else** go to 10.

7. Process this tNODE then

**if** (Start node Stack is empty ) proceed to 8

**else** pop the Start node Stack assign to DFS and then go to 2

8. **if** (End node Stack empty and statistic check correct) proceed to 9

**else** go to 10

9. good metal product successfully processed to packaging/loading area

**exit** (Normal)

10. bad non metal product. Encountered an error, **send to rejection area.**

**Exit**

Following are the test images that were used as a target image to evaluate proposed methodology. We assigned 4 different jobs. Each job has different

products with unique features to distinguish whether it is good or bad product.

**JOB 1**

We used relay for job 1, it will check whether screw in the socket is present or not. If cognex checker detects screw on the right position then it will consider it as good part and send it to accept position else it will send it to reject position.

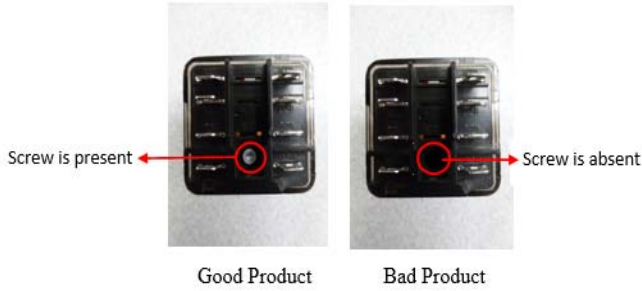


Figure 9: Job 1 Test Product Images

**JOB 2**

We used holder for job 2, checker will check whether holding pins are assembled in holder during manufacturing process or not. If all holding pins are present in holder then checker will consider it as good product else it will consider it as bad product and send the good product to accept position and bad product to reject position.

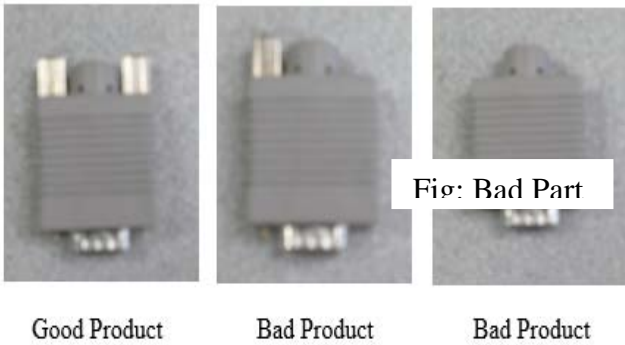


Figure 10: Job 2 Test Product Images

**JOB 3**

Purell hand sanitizer is used in job 3. In this job we check the label of Purell brand name in the hand sanitizer container. Container with Purell brand name is considered as a good product and without Purell brand name is considered as a bad product.



Figure 11: Job 3 Test Product Images

**JOB 4**

We used nut for job 4. Nut with two marks is considered as good product and nut without marks will be considered as a bad part.

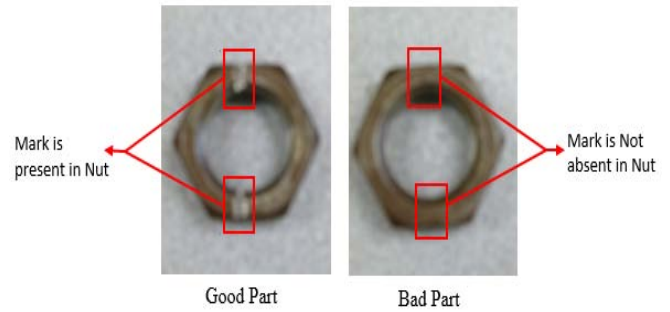


Figure 12: Job 4 Test Product Images

**VI. CONCLUSION**

In this paper we proposed an algorithms and implementation method for calculating the inverse kinematic solution and trajectory planning for industrial robot manipulator using the Position based algorithm in combination with Image based algorithm. The implementation is carried out on Movemaster Robot Arm with PLC for sorting metal and nonmetal objects, pick and place application. The proposed combination algorithm reduces the computation time and positioning error for finding the target in real time.

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# Progressing Highlights Towards Efficient Plasmonic Solar Cells

By Gurjit Singh & SS Verma

*Abstract-* Solar cells as a light-electricity conversion device, light absorption plays crucial role towards their high performance conversion. Incorporation of plasmonic nanostructures with semiconductor materials offer great potential to improve the conversion efficiency of solar cells with much reduced material usage. So, developing low-cost and large-scale plasmonic nanostructures integratable with solar cells promises new solutions for high efficiency and low cost solar energy. Metal nanoparticles can improve the performance of solar cells by plasmonic scattering enhancement and plasmonic near field enhancement. Further, the localized absorption of metal nanoparticles via surface plasmon resonance has attracted great attention because of large electromagnetic field enhancement, the wavelength selective photon absorption and the adjustable resonance wavelength with the changing material, size, period and dielectric environment of metallic nanoparticles. This work highlight the progress made towards efficient plasmionic solar cells.

*Keywords:* plasmonic solar cells, absorption, conversion efficiency enhancement.

*GJRE-H Classification:* FOR Code: 090608



*Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:*



RESEARCH | DIVERSITY | ETHICS

# Progressing Highlights Towards Efficient Plasmonic Solar Cells

Gurjit Singh<sup>α</sup> & SS Verma<sup>σ</sup>

**Abstract-** Solar cells as a light-electricity conversion device, light absorption plays crucial role towards their high performance conversion. Incorporation of plasmonic nanostructures with semiconductor materials offer great potential to improve the conversion efficiency of solar cells with much reduced material usage. So, developing low-cost and large-scale plasmonic nanostructures integratable with solar cells promises new solutions for high efficiency and low cost solar energy. Metal nanoparticles can improve the performance of solar cells by plasmonic scattering enhancement and plasmonic near field enhancement. Further, the localized absorption of metal nanoparticles via surface plasmon resonance has attracted great attention because of large electromagnetic field enhancement, the wavelength selective photon absorption and the adjustable resonance wavelength with the changing material, size, period and dielectric environment of metallic nanoparticles. This work highlight the progress made towards efficient plasmonic solar cells.

**Keywords:** plasmonic solar cells, absorption, conversion efficiency enhancement.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Global climate change and rising prices of fossil fuels have derived us to use clean and environment friendly solar energy. Solar cell is most important renewable energy source which can convert incoming sunlight directly into usable electrical energy (Green, 1998). But cost always remains an important factor in the success of solar cells. So, the key aim of photovoltaics in the manufacturing of solar cells is to reduce production costs in order to compete with other fossil fuel technologies. With solar cell thickness of several micron or less (Luque and Hegedus, 2011), we can significantly decrease the amount of semiconductor material used and thus, production costs are reduced (Green, 2003). Hence, thin film solar cells promise a viable solution to these challenges (Chu and Majumdar, 2012). But thin film solar cells have limitation of poor absorption of sunlight as compared to wafer based solar cells. So, efficient light absorption mechanisms should be adopted for better performance of thin film solar cells. The surface texturing mechanism used in wafer based solar cells for light trapping (Green, 1998; Mullar et.al., 2004) cannot apply to thin film cells because of the surface recombination losses. To date, various light absorption mechanisms have been examined but promising mechanism for the light

absorption enhancement was developed by the metal nanoparticle plasmons (<sup>a</sup>Cathpole and Polman, 2008). The metal nanoparticle plasmons are the collective oscillations of the free electrons in response to the irradiated light (Maier, 2007). The basic mechanism behind the functioning of plasmonic solar cells is the scattering and absorption of solar light by depositing metal nanoparticles across the surface of solar cell. As thin sheet of substrate does not absorb much light coming from sun, for this reason, more light needs to be scattered across the surface in order to increase the absorption of solar cell and convert it into the useful electricity. It has been found that metal nanoparticles help to scatter the incoming light across the surface of the substrate at resonance wavelengths. The scattering and absorption cross-sections are given by (<sup>a</sup>Bohren et. al., 1983):

$$C_{\text{scat}} = \frac{1}{6\pi} \left(\frac{2\pi}{\lambda}\right)^4 |\alpha|^2 \quad ; \quad C_{\text{abs}} = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda} \text{Im}|\alpha| \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Where } \alpha = 3V \frac{\omega_p^2}{\omega_p^2 - 3\omega^2 - i\omega\gamma} = 3V \left[ \frac{\epsilon_p/\epsilon_m - 1}{\epsilon_p/\epsilon_m + 2} \right] \quad (2)$$

Where  $\alpha$  is the polarizability of the particle,  $V$  is the particle volume,  $\epsilon_p$  is the dielectric function of the particle and  $\epsilon_m$  is the dielectric function of the embedding medium. If  $\epsilon_p = -2\epsilon_m$ , the particle polarizability will become very large. This occurs when the frequency is close to the surface plasmon resonance  $\omega_{\text{sp}}$ , allowing the light to interact over an area larger than the geometric cross section of the particle (<sup>b</sup>Bohren et. al., 1983). In the case of a spherical structure the surface plasmon resonance occurs at  $\omega_{\text{sp}} = \sqrt{3} \omega_p$ .

The metal nanoparticles can enhance the performance of solar cells by: (a) plasmonic scattering enhancement and (b) plasmonic near field enhancement. In plasmonic scattering enhancement, when sun light hits the solar cell a surface plasmon is excited on the metal nanoparticle, which then re-radiates most of its energy into the semiconductor material so that the light is trapped inside the cell. In the plasmonic near field enhancement, the electric field around the particles is enhanced due to strong interaction between sun light and metal nanoparticles. The particles concentrate the light into small regions more effectively. If these particles are placed across the semiconductor then more light will be absorbed by the semiconductor in that region.

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As metal nanoparticles support localized surface plasmons in both visible and near-infrared regions, can be used to enhance the optical path length inside the solar cell (Sun et.al., 2012) which strongly increases the light absorption inside the thin film solar cell. The plasmonic resonance peak can be easily tuned by particle size, shape, material and dielectric environment (Sekhon and Verma, 2012; Muhammad et.al., 2015; Noguez, 2007; Akimov, et.al. 2010). Metal nanoparticles used at the front side as scatterers in solar cells can be used to qualitatively reduce the reflection and increase the short circuit current density (Schaadt et.al., 2005; Nakayama et.al., 2008; Sharma et.al., 2014, Pudasaini and Ayon, 2012).

## II. METHODOLOGY

Numerical electromagnetic models for the scattering analysis of general structures have been developed using differential, integral, variational, and hybrid-based approaches. Differential-based approaches include the finite-difference frequency-domain (FD) and finite-difference time-domain (FDTD) methods. Integral-based approaches include both volume integral methods (VIMs) and boundary integral methods (BIMs). A variational-based approach is the finite element method (FEM). Hybrid-based approaches are models that incorporate combinations of the above methods. Because numerical techniques must be used in the application of these techniques they may be broadly referred to as computational electromagnetic methods (CEM). FDTD is most widely used among the available techniques. FDTD formulations find a number of applications in the area of electromagnetic radiation, scattering, and coupling as they provide for simulating the behavior of electromagnetic fields (John and Daniel, 1973). Further, FDTD method gives the direct solution to Maxwell's equations without converting the problem into another form. FDTD approach uses the formulation which was initially purposed by Kane S. Yee (Yee, 1966). Many researchers have contributed immensely to extend the method to many areas of science and engineering (Sadiku, 1992; Kunz and Lubbers, 1993; Taflove, 1998). The Finite-Difference Time-Domain (FDTD) method (www.lumerical.com, Sullivan 2000; Taflove 2005;

Stephen, 2011) is a state-of-the-art method for solving Maxwell's curl equations in non-magnetic materials:

$$\frac{\partial \vec{D}}{\partial t} = \vec{\nabla} \times \vec{H} \tag{3}$$

$$\vec{D}(\omega) = \epsilon_0 \epsilon_r(\omega) \vec{E}(\omega) \tag{4}$$

$$\frac{\partial \vec{H}}{\partial t} = -\frac{1}{\mu_0} \vec{\nabla} \times \vec{E} \tag{5}$$

where  $\vec{H}$ ,  $\vec{E}$  and  $\vec{D}$  are the magnetic, electric and displacement fields respectively, while  $\epsilon_r(\omega)$  is the complex relative dielectric constant. In three dimensions, Maxwell equations have six electromagnetic field components. The components in TE (Transverse electric) are  $E_x$ ,  $E_y$ ,  $E_z$  and in TM (Transverse Magnetic) are  $H_x$ ,  $H_y$ ,  $H_z$ .

Further, Maxwell's equations reduce to ( in TM mode):

$$\frac{\partial D_z}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial H_y}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial H_x}{\partial y} \tag{6}$$

$$\vec{D}_z(\omega) = \epsilon_0 \epsilon_r(\omega) \vec{E}_z(\omega) \tag{7}$$

$$\frac{\partial H_x}{\partial t} = -\frac{1}{\mu_0} \frac{\partial E_z}{\partial y} \tag{8}$$

$$\frac{\partial H_y}{\partial t} = \frac{1}{\mu_0} \frac{\partial E_z}{\partial x} \tag{9}$$

The solar surface was illuminated under a plane wave source of wavelength ranging from 400-1100nm weighted against the 1.5AM solar spectrum (<http://rredc.nrel.gov/solar/spectra/am1.5/>). To account for multiple scattering caused by nanoparticle-nanoparticle, nanoparticle – substrate and nanoparticle-substrate - nanoparticle interactions, perfect matched layers (PML) are put on the top and bottom boundaries of computation area and periodic boundary conditions (PBC) are set along the periodic direction. Thus, the performed simulations will take into account all major effects of metal nanoparticles decorated on the top of photoactive layer.

The absorption per unit volume can be calculated from the divergence of the Poynting vector

$$P_{abs} = -0.5 Re(\vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{S}) = -0.5 \omega |E(\omega)|^2 Im(\epsilon(\omega)), \tag{10}$$

Where  $|E(\omega)|^2$  is electric field intensity squared and  $\epsilon(\omega)$  the corresponding material dielectric function. To see how the efficiency of solar cell with metallic nanoparticles is improved comparing with bare solar cell, we define the following quantities, absorption enhancement  $g(\lambda)$  and conversion efficiency enhancement (G),

$$g(\lambda) = \frac{QE_{particle}(\lambda)}{QE_{bare}(\lambda)} \tag{11}$$

and

$$G = \frac{IQE_{particle}}{IQE_{bare}} \tag{12}$$

where  $QE(\lambda)$  and  $IQE$  are quantum efficiency and integrated quantum efficiency respectively.

$P_{abs,t}$  basically evaluates what fraction of input optical power gets absorbed by the solar cell at each wavelength. Mathematically, it is given by

$$P_{abs,t} = \frac{P_{abs}(\lambda)}{P_{in}(\lambda)} \tag{13}$$

Finally, in order to quantify the absorption enhancements of nanoparticle deposited thin film solar cell across the solar spectrum, the short circuit current density ( $J_{sc}$ ) is calculated by

$$J_{sc} = e \int \frac{\lambda}{hc} QE(\lambda) I_{AM1.5}(\lambda) d\lambda \quad (14)$$

where  $e$  is charge on electron,  $\lambda$  is wavelength,  $h$  is Planck's constant,  $c$  is speed of light in the free space and  $I_{AM1.5}(\lambda)$  is spectral irradiance (power density) of the ASTM AM 1.5G solar spectrum.

The strengths of FDTD modeling can be summarized as:

- FDTD is a versatile modeling technique used to solve Maxwell's equations.
- FDTD is a time-domain technique, and when a broadband pulse (such as a Gaussian pulse) is used as the source, then the response of the system over a wide range of frequencies can be obtained with a single simulation. This is useful in applications where resonant frequencies are not exactly known, or anytime that a broadband result is desired.
- Since FDTD calculates the E and H fields everywhere in the computational domain as they evolve in time, it lends itself to providing animated displays of the electromagnetic field movement through the model. This type of display is useful in understanding what is going on in the model, and to help ensure that the model is working correctly.
- The FDTD technique allows the user to specify the material at all points within the computational domain. A wide variety of linear and nonlinear dielectric and magnetic materials can be naturally and easily modeled.
- FDTD uses the E and H fields directly. Since most EMI/EMC modeling applications are interested in the E and H fields, it is convenient that no conversions must be made after the simulation has run to get these values.

### III. PROGRESS MADE SO FAR

Incorporation of plasmonic nanostructures into thin-film solar cells has been extensively discussed in recent years. Pillai *et.al* (2007) investigated that absorption of thin film c-Si solar cells can be enhanced by silver nanoparticles of small diameters less than 30 nm. They showed smaller silver metal nanoparticles can provide the maximum overall enhancement in visible and the near- infrared region and larger metal nanoparticles can be used for light emission from both thin and thick silicon light emitting diodes. The scattering of light from a single silver or gold nanoparticle with different material of nanoparticles, shape, size, and dielectric environment was theoretically studied (<sup>b</sup>Catchpole and polman, 2008) and showed

that path length enhancements in cylindrical and hemispherical nanoparticles is higher than spherical nanoparticles. Further, path length enhancements for silver nanoparticles are much higher than gold nanoparticles. For absorption enhancement the distance of nanoparticles from the substrate is an important factor which is related to the excitation of gap modes (<sup>a</sup>Akimov *et.al.*, 2009, Sreekanth *et.al.*, 2011, Xu, R. *et.al.*, 2012).

To study the effect of higher-order modes on plasmonic enhancement of thin film amorphous silicon solar cell, 3D modeling was used (<sup>b</sup>Akimov *et. al.*, 2009). They used silver nanoparticles for both size and coverage optimization and given two optimal configurations of silver nanoparticles with diameters of 30 nm and 80 nm and showed that optimal coverage was 33% for 30nm and 11% for 80nm for silver nanoparticles respectively. Ferry *et.al.* (2010) report on the design, fabrication, and measurement of ultrathin film a-Si:H solar cell with nanostructured plasmonic back contacts, which demonstrate enhanced short circuit current densities compared to cells having flat or randomly textured back contacts. The primary photocurrent enhancement occurs in the spectral range from 550 nm to 800 nm. They use angle-resolved photocurrent spectroscopy to confirm that the enhanced absorption is due to coupling to guided modes supported by the cell.

Spinelli *et al.* (2011) used silver nanoparticle array geometries to study the coupling of light into a crystalline silicon substrate by scattering light. After simulation and optimization, the best impedance matching for a spectral distribution was observed with spheroidal silver nanoparticles 200 nm wide and 125 nm high in a square array with 450 nm pitch on top of a 50-nm-thick Si<sub>3</sub>N<sub>4</sub> layer corresponding to the A. M. 1.5 solar spectrum. Byun *et al.* (2014) used silver nanoparticles of parabolic antenna-type and showed that the field intensity of the absorbing layer in a visible wavelength range (over 650 nm) is enhanced due to its simplified shape. Marco Notarianni *et.al.* (2014) showed that power conversion efficiency of a bulk heterojunction solar cell can be increased up to 10% by embedded gold nanoparticles by depositing and annealing a gold film on transparent electrode which can generate a plasmonic effect.

Mohammad Sabaeian *et.al.* (2015) investigated by putting the nano-strips of different cross sections (triangle, rectangular and trapezoidal) as a grating structure on the top of the solar cells. The waveguide, surface plasmon polariton (SPP), and localized surface plasmon (LSP) modes were evaluated in Transverse Electric (TE) and Transverse Magnetic (TM) polarizations by exciting them with the help of nano-strips. TM modes are more effective than TE modes in optical and electrical properties enhancement of solar cell. The optical absorption, generation rate and short-circuit

current density enhancement for trapezoidal nano-strips showed noticeable impact than triangle and rectangular ones. Keya Zhou et.al. (2015) used different kinds of solar cells, such as amorphous silicon (a-Si) thin film solar cells, crystalline silicon (c-Si), organic solar cells, single nanowire solar cells and nanowire array solar cells and reviewed various current approaches. An experimental work by Varlamov et.al (2012) and Park et al. (2013) used optimized plasmonic silver nanoparticles and polycrystalline silicon thin film solar cells showed increased photocurrent of ~45%. Without a back reflector their absolute efficiency was 5.32% and with the back reflector was 5.95%.

Besides metallic nanoparticles, two-dimensional metallic nanostructures have also been used. Ferry et al. (2008) used thin film Si and GaAs solar cells using a back interface coated with a corrugated metal film and reported their findings that sub-wavelength scatterers can couple sunlight into guided modes. Pala et al. (2009) optimized the Ag strip geometries and reported that they could simultaneously take advantage of both effective coupling to waveguide modes of the semiconductors and high near-field concentration close to their SPs resonance frequency. Munday et al. (2011) showed that optimized integrated structure can result in a 1.8-fold total integrated current improvement by combining plasmonic gratings with traditional antireflection coatings together under AM 1.5G solar illumination.

Muhammad et. al. (2015) studies the effects of the structure geometrical parameters on the absorption and showed that 35% absorption improvement is achieved over the conventional thin film solar cell without metallic nanoparticles. Zhang et.al. (2012) simulated aluminium (Al) nanoparticles and shows 28.7% photon absorption enhancement as compared to noble metals. Further, combining with  $\text{SiN}_x$  ARC, particles can produce 42.5% enhancement which is 4.3% more than Standard  $\text{SiN}_x$  ARC in both blue and near-infrared region. Hong et.al. (2012) and Hylton et.al. (2013) simulated Al nanoparticles over GaAs solar cell and showed enhanced photocurrent and integrated efficiency at optimal structural parameters. Li et.al. (2015) purposed a plasmon enhanced solar cell structure based on GaAs nanowire array decorated with metal nanoparticles. The results show a large absorption enhancement of 50% at 760nm and a high conversion efficiency of 14.5% can be obtained at D/P ratio of 0.3.

Tanabe (2016) developed a simple model for photocurrent enhancement by plasmonic metal nanoparticles atop solar cell which can be used as powerful tool for investigations of surface plasmon enhanced thin film solar cells to provide design principle for improvement of device performance. Liu et.al. (2011) performed a systematic study of SPR on GaAs thin film solar cell with different sizes of Ag nanoparticles on the surface and found that SPR wavelength does not

undergo red shift with increasing metal thickness but depends upon shape of nanoparticles and period. Further, observed that the short circuit current density of solar cell with 6nm Ag film after annealing was increased by 14.2% over that of untreated solar cell. Singh et.al (2013) study the absorption enhancement using a periodic array of cylindrical silver nanowire placed on thin silicon substrate. Studies show an absorption enhancement of 1.32 for nanoparticles of diameter of 140nm and period of 360nm.

#### IV. FUTURE SCOPE OF WORK

For large scale implementation of solar light conversion to electricity through solar cells, the cost of manufacturing of solar cells needs to be reduced. Thin film solar cells reduce the materials consumption but have poor light absorption as compared to conventional solar cells. The localized absorption of metal nanoparticles via surface plasmon resonance has attracted attention because of large electromagnetic field enhancement, the wavelength selective photon absorption and the adjustable resonance wavelength by changing material, size, period and dielectric environment of metallic nanoparticles (Catchpole et.al. 2008). Hence, plasmonic nanostructures can enhance light trapping in solar cells which can be used in various photo detectors (Stuart et.al. 1996), photodiodes (Sachaadt et.al. 2005) and solar cell applications (Mullar et.al. 2004, Byun et.al. 2011).

There is no systematic study had been reported on GaAs thin film solar cells using plasmon enhanced light absorption. Hence, a systematic study on the optimization of the various parameters (like material, size and period) of metal nanoparticles for various optical properties is critically required for efficiency enhancement of GaAs thin film solar cells. The objective is to enhance the efficiency of solar cells by using different plasmonic nanostructures by optimizing the different materials as well as size and period for their use towards solar cell efficiency enhancement.

Study of various optical properties given below for plasmonic nanostructures by using FDTD simulations over the solar spectrum would be useful for strengthening the existing data base towards making efficient plasmonic solar cells.

- To investigate the absorption of solar cell for different materials, size and period of nanoparticles
- To investigate absorption enhancement for different material and size
- To investigate total power absorbed for different material and size
- To investigate enhanced conversion efficiency
  - a) With period of nanoparticles at different sizes
  - b) With different sizes at fixed period

- To investigate current density for different sizes at fixed period
- To investigate integrated current density for various sizes at fixed period

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**Papers:** These are reports of significant research (typically less than 7000 words equivalent, including tables, figures, references), and comprise:

- (a) Title should be relevant and commensurate with the theme of the paper.
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- (h) Brief Acknowledgements.
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#### References

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- Never confuse figures with tables - there is a difference.

### Approach

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- Make a decision if each premise is supported, discarded, or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."
- Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work
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- Give details all of your remarks as much as possible, focus on mechanisms.
- Make a decision if the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory, and whether or not it was correctly restricted.
- Try to present substitute explanations if sensible alternatives be present.
- One research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind, where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

### Approach:

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<i>References</i>	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring



# INDEX

---

---

## **A**

Ambient · 26  
Arduino · 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26

---

## **C**

Cartesian · 7, 9, 10, 18, 19, 28, 33, 34, 35  
Catenary · 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14, 16, 19  
Collisions · 20

---

## **E**

Echoes · 22  
Euclidean · 2, 4, 16

---

## **M**

Maneuvering · 20, 22

---

## **N**

Nanostructures · 41, II, III

---

## **P**

Plasmonic · 41, 42  
Positioning · 2, 9, 39  
Pseudostatics · 1, 2, 3

---

## **R**

Redundant · 3, 4, 28





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ISSN 9755861

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