

**Evaluation of a Few Evapotranspiration Models
using Lysimetric Measurements in a Semi Arid
Climate Region**

ABSTRACT

The determination of reference evaporation method (ET_o) in a region with different simple or complex equations requires a wide range of meteorological data. It is difficult task particularly in regions with lacking data collection facilities. One of the common methods for this purpose is the use of lysimeters. In the present study, daily lysimetric data for two years (2012 to 2013) from months of April to July in each year were used to evaluate nine different grass evapotranspiration models including FAO-56 Penman–Monteith, Penman-Kimberly 1996, FAO-Penman equation, Blaney–Criddle, FAO-24 Radiation, Makkink, Turc, Priestley–Taylor, and Hargreaves in Kermanshah western part of Iran with semi-arid climate. Finally, the values of RMSE indicate that, the FAO -Penman-Monteith (PM), Makkink (MA) and Hargreaves and Samani (HG) were found to be the most appropriate models for the studied region. Penman-Kimberly (PK) and FAO-Penman (PF) methods had the worst results among the studied models. FAO -Penman-Monteith (PM), Makkink (MA) and Hargreaves-Samani methods recommended for ET_o estimation, irrigation planning and scheduling, dams reservoirs design and different surface or pressurized irrigation projects water requirement application under different crop patterns in Kermanshah region, while weather, radiation and temperature data have been available. Based on RMSE values, the FAO -Penman-Monteith (PM), Makkink (MA) and Hargreaves & Samani (HG) methods estimated the lysimeter ET_o values most closely and Penman-Kimberly (PK) and FAO-Penman (PF) methods had the worst results in the region.

Keywords: evapotranspiration, ET_o equations, Lysimeter, Semi-arid climate.

1. INTRODUCTION

Evapotranspiration (ET), a term to denote evaporation and transpiration together, is the most important component of environmental systems and accomplishes the energy (heat) and mass (water vapor) transfers between atmosphere and land surface (primarily including soils and vegetations) Chuanyan [6]. ET_o is defined in Allen [1] as the rate of evapotranspiration from hypothetical crop with

35 as assumed crop height (12cm), an albedo of 0.23, and a fixed canopy resistance (70 Sm^{-1}) which
36 would closely resemble evapotranspiration from an extensive surface of the green grass cover of
37 uniform height actively growing, completely shading the ground with no shortage of water. The plant
38 growth and productivity are directly related to the availability of water Rosenberg [30]. Potential or
39 reference evapotranspiration (ETo) can be measured directly by lysimeter. However, it is generally
40 estimated by theoretical or empirical equations, or derived simply by multiplying the standard pan
41 evaporation data by a pan coefficient Grismer [13]. Direct measurement of ETo can be difficult and
42 expensive both economically and in time investments while basic measurements of the atmosphere
43 are easy to collect and available at numerous locations. For this reason and to overcome inaccurate
44 ETo estimation, numerous methods have been developed for various types of climatic conditions over
45 the years.

46 FAO-56 Penman–Monteith (PM) equation is the most commonly used and accurate model to
47 determine the ETo by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and by the World
48 Meteorological Organization (WMO), Allen [1]. However, ranking and selecting of the best method to
49 estimate ETo to local conditions is required for water resources and irrigation management and
50 scheduling purposes.

51 Trajkovic [33] evaluated five ETo estimation methods by comparing the estimated with results
52 obtained from the PM56 equation under humid conditions. They showed that Turc's method gave the
53 best ETo estimates and ranking first, and the other equations ranking in a decreasing order were as
54 Priestley–Taylor, Jensen–Haise, Thornthwaite, and Hargreaves (HG). Mendonça [25] compared the
55 ETo measured in lysimeter in Campos dos Goytacazes with ETo estimated by PM method. The
56 researchers found that PM method satisfactorily estimated ETo.

57 Tabari [32] evaluated four simpler models based on monthly performance for various climates in Iran.
58 They reported that the Makkink (MK) and Priestley-Taylor (PT) models estimated ETo values less
59 accurately than Turc (TC) and Hargreaves and Samani (HG) models for all climates. Jensen [19]
60 analyzed the performance of 20 different methods against the lysimeter measuring ETo for 11
61 stations located under different climatic conditions around the world. The Penman-Monteith ranked
62 the best method for all climatic condition; however, ranking of the other methods varied depending on
63 their adoption to local calibrations and conditions. Douglas [11] compared the performance of Turk
64 (TC), Priestley–Taylor (PT) and the PM 56 methods to estimate potential evapotranspiration in humid

65 climates in Florida. They concluded that the PT performance appeared to be superior to the other two
66 methods for a variety of land covers in Florida.

67 Razzaghi [29] also evaluated nine different equation for ETo estimation by using lysimeter in a semi-
68 arid region in the south of Iran. They concluded that the FAO-Radiation was the most suitable method
69 to estimate ETo for irrigation planning and scheduling in regions where radiation and temperature
70 data are available.

71 Rashid [28] evaluated and compared the performance of nine ETo methods with FAO56-PM output
72 data. The best results after calibration were produced by Blaney-Criddle (BC) method while
73 Thornthwaite (TW) method had the worst results. Moreover, the determination of evaporation in a
74 region with different simple or complex equations required a wide range of meteorological data. This
75 again proved the difficulty of choosing the most appropriate method.

76 Moreover, the most common and widely used methods for reference evapotranspiration estimation by
77 local agricultural and water resources organizations and consulting engineers in the region based on
78 climatic availability data was the base reason for different selected method and comparison with
79 lysimetric reading data. Therefore, Daily lysimetric data for two years from April to July were used in
80 the present study to evaluate simple or complex nine reference evapotranspiration (ETo) models
81 including FAO-56 Penman–Monteith (PM), Penman-Kimberly 1996 (Pk), FAO-Penman equation
82 (PM), Blaney–Criddle (BC), FAO-24 Radiation (FR), Makkink (MA), Turc-radiation (TR), Priestley–
83 Taylor (PT), and Hargreaves and Samani (HG) in a region with semi-arid climate. Different methods
84 were compared with experimentally determined values and drainage lysimeters data to find the best
85 and the worst methods in the region for practical irrigation planning purposes.

86

87 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

88

89 2.1. EXPERIMENTAL SITE AND WEATHER STATION, SOIL, AND IRRIGATION WATER DETAILS

90 The Lysimetric experiments were carried out in two years from 2012 to 2013 from April to July at the
91 Irrigation and Water Resources Engineering Research Lysimetric Station No. 3 located at 47°9'E and
92 34°21'N, with an elevation of 1319m (asl), as part of the Campus of Agriculture and Natural
93 Resources of Razi University in Kermanshah, Iran. The region under study has a semi-arid climate.
94 The daily meteorological data were obtained from the regional meteorological station located 100 m
95 off the lysimetric station. (Table 1) shows the average monthly meteorological data during both years
96 of the study. The soil texture in the lysimeters was silty clay composed of different clay, silt, and sand

97 percentages. Tables (2) and (3) show the physical and chemical properties of the soil and the
 98 chemical properties of the irrigation water used in this study. The pressure plate and sampling
 99 methods were used to determine $\theta(fc)$, $\theta(pwp)$ and bulk density in different lysimeters soil depths,
 100 respectively.

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Table 1. Meteorological Data for growing period 2012-2013

Year	Month	Mean temperature (C)	Mean relative humidity (%)	Mean wind speed (m/s)	Mean monthly sunshine (h)	Total precipitation (mm)
2012	April	11.8	53.9	7.1	6.9	45.7
	May	18.4	36.5	7.7	8.3	0.0
	June	24.8	21.4	7.9	9.7	0.0
	July	28.1	19.6	7.6	10.2	0.0
2013	April	13.4	42.5	7.3	7.3	10.7
	May	15.1	54.2	8.4	5.3	63.3
	June	23.3	27.4	7.4	9.2	0.0
	July	29.1	14.7	7.4	11.6	0.0

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Table 2. Physical and Chemical Properties of Soil

Soil Texture	Sand (%)	Silt (%)	Clay (%)	Ec (ds/m)	$\Theta(Fc)$ (%)	$\Theta(PWP)$ (%)	pH	Bulk density (gr/cm ³)	Soil depth (cm)
Silty Clay				0.61			7.63	1.3	0-30
	54	42.3	3.7	0.61	27.6	17.2	7.61		30-60
				0.59			7.73		60-90
				0.58			7.73		90-120

108

Table 3. Physical and Chemical Properties of Irrigation Water

SO ₂ ⁻ (Meq/L)	CL ⁻ (Meq/L)	HCO ₃ ⁻ (Meq/L)	CO ₃ ²⁻ (Meq/L)	TDS (Meq/L)	pH	EC (dS/m)	Anions (Meq/L)	Mg ²⁺ (Meq/L)	Na ⁺ (Meq/L)	Ca ²⁺ (Meq/L)	Cations (Meq/L)
1.25	1.90	6.15	0	390	7.2	0.61	9.30	3.1	1.15	5.05	9.30

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113 2.2. DETAIL OF DRAINABLE LYSIMETERS

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115 In this study three drainable lysimeter with depth of 1.40 m and internal diameter of 1.20 m were
 116 used. The lysimeters were constructed with 3-mm-thick mild steel. To prevent rusting phenomenon
 117 both inside and outside parts of lysimeters were painted with epoxy material. By using tarry material
 118 all parts of lysimeters were also isolated carefully. For extra drainable water collection, the bottom of
 119 each lysimeter was inclined towards the center. In the bottom of each lysimeter an stainless steel
 120 screen was used with mesh size of 0.2 mm. In the above of stainless steel screen, 10-cm layer of
 121 gravel and a 10-cm layer of sand were used. In each lysimeter to measure of extra drained water
 122 collection by a graded container a steel pipe with diameter of 2.50 cm fixed with a control gate valve
 123 was used. In all lysimeters a silty clay soil consisting of 54, 42.3, and 3.7% clay, silt, and sand was
 124 used. All lysimeters were filled with air-dried soil and compacted manually to reach a bulk density of
 125 1.30 gcm⁻³ according to Oliviera [26]. Soil moisture characteristic curves was determined by using
 126 Klute's [20] method. Lawn grass with 12 cm height inside and also in an area of (50×50m) was
 127 planted around the lysimeters respectively.

128

129 2.3. SOIL MOISTURE MEASUREMENT

130

131 A TDR system (Trime-Fm with P2G probes) was used to measure soil moisture. TDR probes were
 132 0.60 cm in diameter and 16 cm long and were installed in all lysimeters at 6 different depths of 20, 40,
 133 60, 80, 100, and 120 cm. The irrigation was carried out in all lysimeters after 20% depletion of
 134 available soil moisture in order to avoid any water stress during grass growing period.

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136 2.4. LYSIMETER MEASUREMENT

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138 Three lysimeters were used to estimate grass evapotranspiration; also, potential evapotranspiration
 139 (ET_p) was calculated using Equation (1) as follows:

140 $ET_o = P + I - D - R + \Delta s$ (1)

141 Where, ET_o = reference evapotranspiration (mm); P = precipitation (mm); I = irrigation (mm); D =
 142 amount of drained water (mm); R = runoff (mm); and Δs = changes in soil water storage during the
 143 period for which ET_o was computed (mm). The precipitation was measured with a rain gauge in situ.
 144 The irrigation (I), D , and R for the lysimeters were measured with a precession graded container and
 145 rain gauge. The changes in soil moisture were obtained from soil moisture readings at different
 146 depths. Daily meteorological data including minimum and maximum temperatures, sunshine hours,
 147 wind speed, and average relative humidity were also collected from a regional meteorological station.
 148 Different equations for estimation of ET_o were as follows:

149

150 2.5. METHODS OF COMPUTING REFERENCE EVAPOTRANSPIRATION (ET_o)

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152 Different nine methods were chosen to estimate ET_o for the study area as follows:

153

154 2.5.1. FAO-PENMAN METHOD, Doorenboss [8,9, 10]

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$$ET_o = c \left[\left(\frac{\Delta}{\Delta + \gamma} \right) (R_n) + \left(\frac{\gamma}{\Delta + \gamma} \right) (2.7) (W_f) \left(e_z^{\frac{156}{157z}} - e_a \right) \right] \quad (2)$$

158

159 Where, ET_o , ($e_z^{\circ} - e_a$), γ , Δ , R_n , W_f and c are reference evapotranspiration (mm day^{-1}), vapor
 160 pressure deficit at height z (kPa), psychrometric constant ($\text{kPa } ^\circ\text{C}^{-1}$), slope vapor pressure curve (kPa
 161 $^\circ\text{C}^{-1}$), net radiation (MJ m^{-2} per day), the wind function and adjustment factor which is equal to 1
 162 respectively.

163

164 2.5.2. PENMAN-KIMBERLY METHOD , Wright [35]

165

$$ET_o = \frac{1}{\lambda} \left[\left(\frac{\Delta}{\Delta + \gamma} \right) (R_n - G) + \left(\frac{\gamma}{\Delta + \gamma} \right) (6.43) (W_f) \left(e_z^{\frac{166}{167z}} - e_a \right) \right] \quad (3)$$

168 where, G and λ are soil heat flux density ($\text{MJ m}^{-2} \text{day}^{-1}$) and latent heat of vaporization in (MJ kg^{-1}).

169

170 2.5.3. FAO-PENMAN-MONTEITH METHOD , Allen [1,2]

$$ET_o = \frac{0.408 \Delta (R_n - G) + \gamma \frac{900}{T + 273} u_2 (e_s - e_a)}{\Delta + \gamma (1 + .034 u_2)} \quad (4)$$

173

174 where, u_2 and $(e_s - e_a)$ are wind speed at 2 m height ($m s^{-1}$) and saturation vapor pressure deficit
 175 (kPa).

176

177 **2.5.4. TURC-RADIATION METHOD ,Turc [34]**

178

$$ET_o = a_T (0.013) \frac{T_{mean}}{T_{mean} + 15} \left(\frac{23.8856 R_s + 50}{\lambda} \right) \quad (5)$$

180

181 where, T_{mean} and R_s are mean daily air temperature ($^{\circ}C$), and solar radiation ($MJ m^{-2} d^{-1}$), a_T is
 182 equal 1.0 for $RH_{mean} \geq 50\%$ and it is equal $1 + (50 - RH_{mean})/70$ for $RH_{mean} < 50\%$.

183

184 **2.5.5. HARGREAVES AND SAMANI METHOD, Hargreaves [14, 15]**

185

$$ET_o = \frac{1}{\lambda} (0.0023) R_A T D^{1/2} (T + 17.8) \quad (6)$$

187

188 Where, R_A , TD and T are extra terrestrial solar radiation received on earth's surface ($MJ m^{-2} d^{-1}$),
 189 difference of mean maximum and mean minimum air temperatures ($^{\circ}C$) and mean daily air
 190 temperature at 2 m height ($^{\circ}C$) respectively.

191

192 **2.5.6. MAKKINK METHOD [23]**

193

$$ET_o = 0.61 \frac{\Delta}{\Delta + \gamma} \frac{R_s}{2.45} - 0.12 \quad (7)$$

195

196 **2.5.7. FAO-RADIATION METHOD, Doorenboss [9, 10]**

$$ET_o = b \left[\frac{\Delta}{\Delta + \gamma} \frac{R_s}{\lambda} \right]^{197} - 0.3 \quad (8)$$

$$b = 1.066 - 0.13 \times 10^{-2} RH + 0.045 U_d - 0.2 \times 10^{-2} RH U_d - 0.315 \times 10^{-4} RH^2 - 0.11 \times 10^{-2} U_d^2 \quad (9)$$

200

201 where, RH is mean relative humidity (%).

202

203 **2.5.8. PRIESTLEY AND TAYLOR METHOD ,[27]**

$$ET_o = \frac{1}{\lambda} \alpha \frac{\Delta}{\Delta + \gamma} (R_n - G) \quad (10)$$

205

206 where, α is a constant ($\alpha = 1.26$).

207

208 **2.5.9. BLANEY-CRIDDLE METHOD , Blaney [4, 5], Doorenboss [9, 10]**

209 **1977a, b)**

210

$$ET_o = a + bf$$

211

(11)

$$a = 0.0043RH_{\min} - \frac{n}{N} \times 1.41$$

213

$$b = 0.82 - 0.41 \times 10^{-2} RH_{\min} + 1.07 \times \frac{n}{N} + 0.066U_d - 0.6 \times 10^{-2} RH_{\min} \times \frac{n}{N} - 0.60 \times 10^{-3} RH_{\min} \times U_d$$

214

$$f = p(0.46T + 8.13)$$

215

216 where, RH_{\min} , n , N , p and U_d are minimum relative humidity (%), actual daily sunshine hours (h),

217 maximum possible daily sunshine hours (h), monthly percentage of daytime hours and daytime wind

218 speed (ms^{-1}) respectively.

219

220 **2.6. DATA ANALYSES**

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222 The method suggested by Jacovides [17,18] were used for statistical analyses. The following

223 equations were used to compute the regression coefficients (r), root mean square error (RMSE),

224 mean bias error (MBE) and t-statistic test (t).

225

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (x - \bar{x})^2 \sum_{i=1}^n (y - \bar{y})^2}} \quad -1 \leq r \leq 1 \quad (12)$$

227

$$MBE = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n d_i}{n} \quad (13)$$

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n d_i^2}{n}} \quad (14)$$

$$t = \sqrt{\frac{(n-1) MBE^2}{RMSE^2 - MBE^2}} \quad (15)$$

233 where, x = the measurement value, \bar{x} = the mean measurement value, y = the predicted value, \bar{y} =

234 the mean predict value, d_i = difference between i^{th} predicted and i^{th} measured values, n = number of

235 data pairs i .

236 The regression equations computed from below formula:

$$237 Y = mX + C \quad (16)$$

238 where, Y represents the daily ETo measured; X is the daily ETo estimated from each of the other nine
239 methods; and m (slope) and C (intercept) are the regression constants.

240

241 **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

242

243 The daily evapotranspiration was computed based on water-balance data collected from lysimeters
244 using Equation (1) the computed ETo values from the lysimeter data for grass which was the
245 reference crop, from the months of April to July and were compared to the ETo values computed by
246 nine different methods. The average ETo values of lysimeter were obtained as 73,122,173 and 222
247 mm per month for the months of April, May, June and July during 2012 and 2013, respectively. The
248 values of monthly measured ETo, the total values of ETo for lysimeter data and the predicted values
249 from each of the nine methods are presented in (Table 4). As shown in (Figure 1), the ETo increased
250 from April to July for both lysimeters and other chosen methods.

251 The cross correlation (R^2), slope, intercept and RMSE, MBE and t-test statistical methods were used
252 to compare the lysimeter ETo values with the ETo values by nine other methods. According to the
253 Jacovides (1997), the performance of each method in the present study was based on t values. Lower
254 t-values showed a better performance of the method indicating that the differences between the
255 measure and the estimated values were lower. Also, the negative sign of the MBE indicates that the
256 computed ETo values were lower than ETo values measured by the lysimeter while positive MBE
257 shows overestimation of the lysimeter ETo values; the absolute value is also an indicator of method
258 performance. The slope near to unity indicates a parallelism of the measured and the calculated ETo
259 curves, while the lower intercept of the regression equation indicates proportionality between the two
260 methods. For statistical analysis, it was assumed that the best methods were those with the lowest
261 RMSE. The results of these comparisons for the above parameters are shown in (Table 5). The
262 methods in (Table 5) are ranked according to RMSE. The estimated ETo values by the PF, PK, PM,
263 TR, HG, MA, FR, PT and BC methods were evaluated with lysimeter ETo values having RMSE
264 values as 12.96, 8.74, 1.34, 2.67, 2.03, 1.48, 3.55, 2.34, 2.58 mm/day, respectively. Based on RMSE
265 and MBE values presented in (Table 4) and also as shown in figure 2, the FAO- Penman-Monteith
266 (PM), Makkink (MA) and Hargreaves & Samani (HG) methods estimated the lysimeter ETo values
267 most closely and Penman-Kimberly (PK) and FAO-Penman (PF) methods did not show any close

268 agreement with the lysimeter values and had the worst results. Other methods (including PT, BC, TR,
 269 and FR) showed reasonable agreement with the lysimeter values.

270 A comparison of the results show that the Penman-Kimberly (PK), FAO-Penman (PF) Hargreaves
 271 and FAO-Radiation (FR) methods overestimated while FAO-Penman-Monteith (PM), Turc-Radiation
 272 (TR) and Makkink (MA) equation underestimated potential evapotranspiration compared to lysimetric
 273 estimation method.

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275

276 **Table 4. Lysimetric and different estimating potential evapotranspiration methods**

Methods	ETo (mm)				
	Month				Total
	April	May	June	July	
Lysimetric measurement	73.0	122.1	173.4	222.7	591.2
FAO-Penman (PF)	365.8	469.3	583.4	669.1	2087.6
Penman-Kimberly(PK)	469.8	269.9	293.7	345.1	1378.6
FAO - Penman-Monteith(PM)	57.5	90.3	154.6	213.4	515.8
Turc-Radiation (TR)	40.0	53.2	89.6	115.7	298.5
Hargreaves & Samani (HG)	123.1	170.4	233.9	277.4	804.9
Makkink (MA)	87.1	107.1	143.6	170.4	508.2
FAO-Radiation (FR)	153.8	192.9	281.3	338.2	933.3
Priestley and Taylor (PT)	141.2	173.2	231.8	275.2	821.3
Blaney-Criddle (BC)	112.2	156.2	251.2	316.6	836.2

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Table 5. The comparing of different methods with Lysimetric measurement in daily scale

Methods	Lysimeter measurement							Ranking
	Performance Indicator							
	Slope of the regression line	Intercept of the regression line	R ²	RMSE (mm)	MBE	t	R/t	
Lysimetric measurement	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-
FAO - Penman-Monteith(PM)	1.045	-0.933	0.841	1.34	-0.66	6.27	0.14	1
Makkink (MA)	0.534	1.531	0.701	1.48	-0.74	6.42	0.12	2
Hargreaves & Samani (HG)	0.985	1.726	0.843	2.03	1.77	19.87	0.04	3
Priestley and Taylor (PT)	0.86	2.489	0.710	2.34	1.79	13.16	0.06	4
Blaney-Criddle (BC)	1.361	0.130	0.853	2.58	1.96	13.01	0.07	5
Turc-Radiation (TR)	0.504	-0.045	0.836	2.67	-2.42	23.85	0.04	6
FAO-Radiation (FR)	1.206	1.968	0.757	3.55	2.98	17.24	0.05	7
Penman-Kimberly(PK)	-0.607	14.27	0.080	8.74	6.57	12.67	-0.03	8
FAO-Penman (PF)	1.846	7.997	0.473	12.96	11.77	24.06	0.03	9

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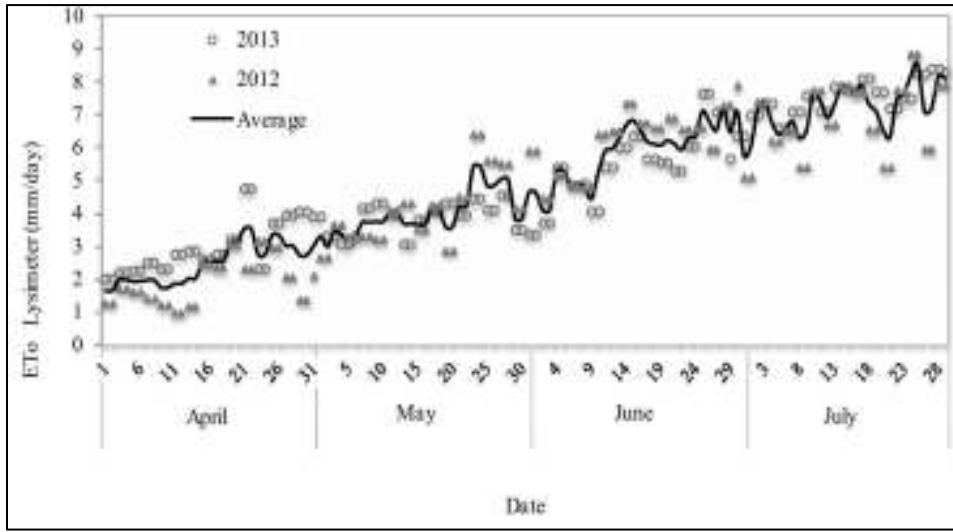


Figure 1. Daily ETo measurement values

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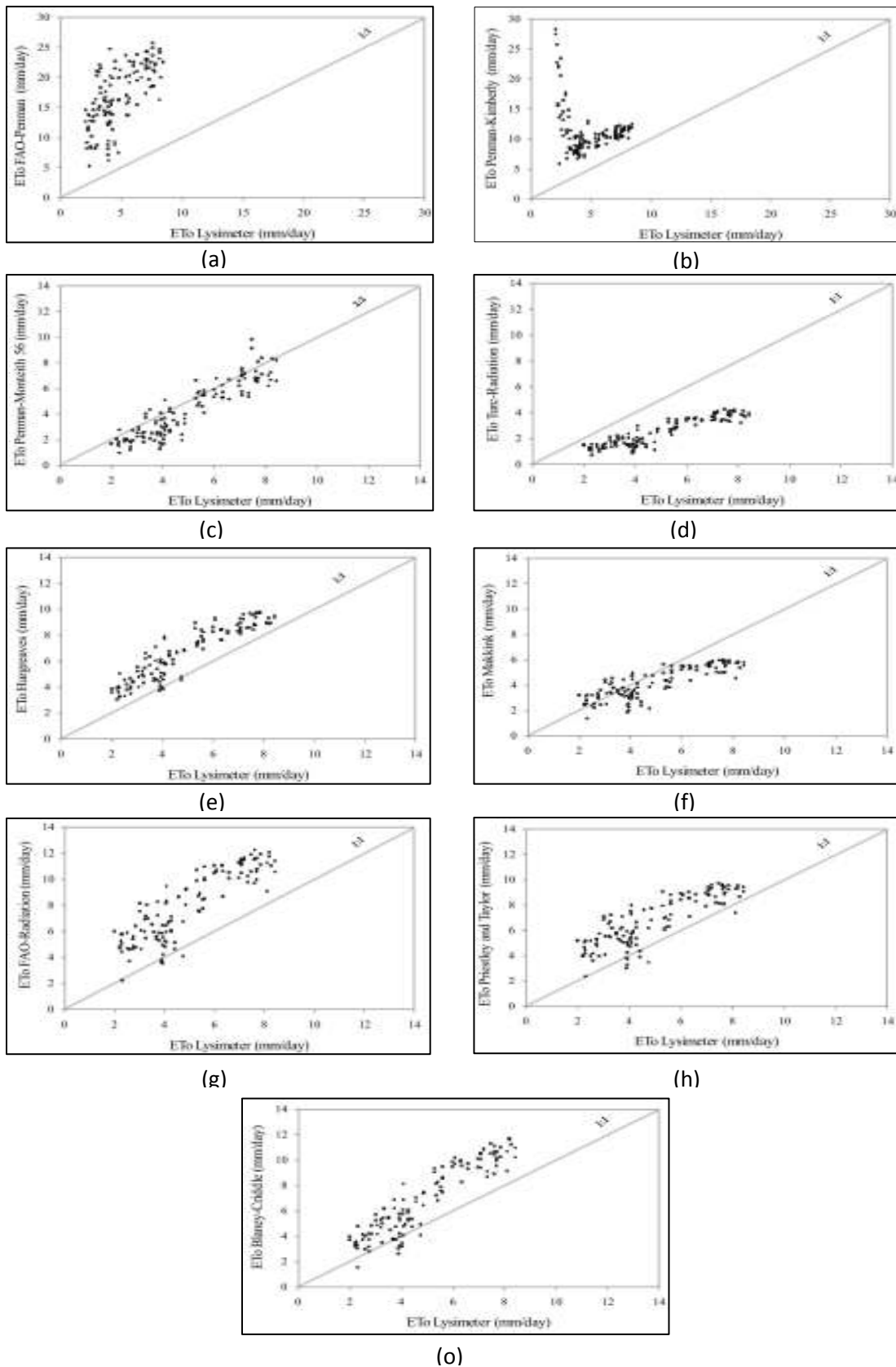


Figure 2. Comparison of ET0 measurement with different estimation methods

328 The capabilities of models found in this study, while reported by others, were different. Although,
329 Razzaghi [29] suggested that for daily, smoothed daily, mean 10-day and mean monthly ETo were
330 estimated by Penman-FAO, Penman-Monteith, Hargreaves-Samani, Jensen- Haise, Turc, Priestley-
331 Taylor, FAO-Blaney-Criddle, FAO-Radiation and Pan Evaporation equations and a linear regression
332 equation was obtained for the estimated and measured values. They compared the results of the
333 equations with ETo data from a weighing type lysimeter and ranked results of different methods
334 according to statistical and error analysis. The results indicated that the FAO-Radiation and
335 Hargreaves-Samani were the most appropriate methods while the Priestley-Taylor method was the
336 least appropriate. The Penman-Monteith ranked in third to fifth on the list according to the duration of
337 mean values.

338 Lecina [21] reported that the estimated ETo by the Hargreaves-Samani method was more appropriate
339 than those obtained by the Penman-Monteith method while the FAO-Radiation method showed the
340 best results. Hargreaves [16] showed that the slope of linear relationships between ETo estimated by
341 the Hargreaves-Samani and Penman- Monteith methods and measured ETo by lysimeter are close to
342 1.0.

343 Bakhtiari [3] compared hourly ETo estimations obtained by Penman-Monteith method (PM) under the
344 semiarid climate of Kerman, Iran. Hourly ETo estimations obtained from the proposed method were
345 compared with measured ETo values by using a large weighing electronic lysimeter during the
346 months of April to September, 2005. The results showed that FAO-56 Penman-Monteith
347 underestimated ETo values by 18.4, 19.3, 26.3, 20.4, 21.4 and 22.1% for the months of April to
348 September, respectively.

349 Lopez-Urrea [24] reported an evapotranspiration (ETo) calculation by seven different equations and
350 compared with lysimeter data in a semi-arid climate and suggested that the Penman-Monteith (PM)
351 obtained the best and most accurate equation. The same results also were reported by Allen [1];
352 Steiner [31] and DehghaniSanij [7]. They reported that the PM performed much better in humid
353 regions. Although, the PM has a weakness of meteorological data as compared to input demands
354 among the other models, particularly in the developing countries with the shortage of sufficient data.
355 The results of this study and their comparison with those of other researches showed that the perfect
356 selection of simple and complex methods in a region based on available meteorological data needs to
357 consider results and calibrations either by lysimetric or by Penman–Monteith method for precise
358 regional practical purposes because, as suggested by Lingling [22] human activity and natural factors

359 have a certain influence on the spatial variation of ETo, and a decisive role in the spatial variation
360 character of reference evapotranspiration in an investigated area.

361

362 **4. CONCLUSIONS**

363 The performance of nine ETo (reference evapotranspiration) methods were evaluated and compared
364 with Lysimeter measurement data to choose the appropriate methods with the best results to estimate
365 and project ETo in a semi-arid climate area. The Lysimetric experiments were carried out in two years
366 from 2012 to 2013 from months of April to July. The cross correlation (R^2), slope, intercept and
367 RMSE, MBE and t-test statistical methods were used to compare the lysimeter ETo values with the
368 ETo values computed by nine different methods. The methods were ranked according to RMSE.
369 Based on RMSE values, the FAO -Penman-Monteith (PM), Makkink (MA) and Hargreaves & Samani
370 (HG) methods estimated the lysimeter ETo values most closely and Penman-Kimberly (PK) and FAO-
371 Penman (PF) methods had the worst results. The use of FAO -Penman-Monteith (PM), Makkink (MA)
372 and Hargreaves-Samani methods for ETo estimation, irrigation planning and scheduling, dams
373 reservoirs design and different surface or pressurized irrigation can help project water requirement
374 application under different crop pattern conditions in the semi-arid region under study where
375 complete weather data and only radiation and temperature records are available.

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