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Reply to the 'Comment on "Improving the efficiency of a CIGS solar cell to above 31% with Sb₂S₃ as a new BSF: a numerical simulation approach by SCAPS-1D"' by A. Kirk, *RSC Adv.*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1039/D4RA03002H>

 Md. Ferdous Rahman,^a Mithun Chowdhury,^a Latha Marasamy,^b Mustafa K. A. Mohammed,^c Md. Dulal Haque,^d Sheikh Rashel Al Ahmed,^e Ahmad Irfan,^f Aijaz Rasool Chaudhry^g and Souraya Goumri-Said^h

Our Reply for Alexander P. Kirk comment

We sincerely appreciate the thoughtful feedback on our manuscript (<https://doi.org/10.1039/D3RA07893K>). In the comment, Alexander P. Kirk has referenced a reported efficiency of 40.70% for our solar cell design. However, we would like to clarify that the actual efficiency of our CIGS solar cell (Copper Indium Gallium Selenide) with the addition of a new BSF (back surface field) layer made from Sb₂S₃ (Antimony Sulfide) is 31.15%. When the BSF layer is not used, the efficiency is 22.14%.¹ To ensure transparency and accuracy, these efficiency values have been clearly stated at multiple points throughout our manuscript. Specifically, the efficiency data is provided in the following sections: (i) Title, (ii) Abstract, (iii) Introduction, (iv) Results and discussion, (v) *J-V* parts, Table 1, and Table 2, and (vi) Conclusions in the reputed manuscript.¹ By mentioning the efficiency values in

multiple sections, we have taken steps to avoid any confusion and ensure clarity regarding the performance of our solar cell both with and without the BSF layer. In Fig. 1, we have shown the proposed CIGS solar cell with Sb₂S₃ BSF layer.

In contrast to the comment, I have utilized all the optimized parameters listed in Tables 3 and 4 for our proposed solar cell structure (FTO/SnS₂/CIGS/Sb₂S₃/Ni) in the SCAPS-1D simulation. To determine the optimal absorber thickness, we conducted an extensive analysis, varying the thickness from 250 nm to 3000 nm. Across this range, the power conversion efficiency of our proposed structure varied from 19.80% to a maximum of 40.70%. It is important to note that the 40.70% efficiency does not represent the optimized efficiency for the solar cell. After a thorough investigation, we identified that an absorber thickness of 1 μm (1000 nm) is optimal. This specific thickness, as

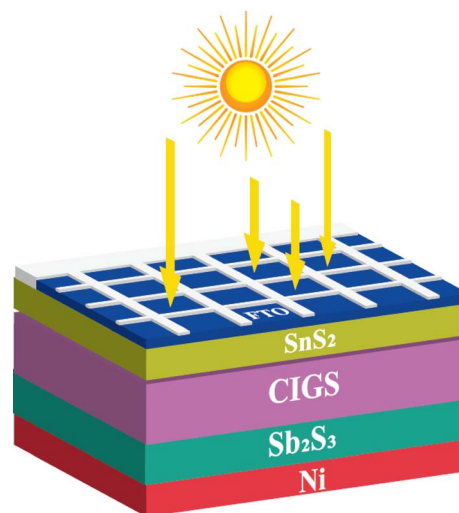


Fig. 1 Proposed CIGS solar cell with Sb₂S₃ BSF layer.

^aAdvanced Energy Materials and Solar Cell Research Laboratory, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur 5400, Bangladesh. E-mail: ferdousapee@gmail.com

^bFacultad de Química, Materiales-Energía, Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro (UAQ), Santiago de Querétaro, Querétaro, C.P. 76010, Mexico

^cCollege of Remote Sensing and Geophysics, Al-Karkh University of Science, Al-Karkh Side, Haifa St. Hamada Palace, Baghdad 10011, Iraq

^dDepartment of Electronics and Communication Engineering, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, Dinajpur 5200, Bangladesh

^eDepartment of Electrical, Electronic and Communication Engineering, Pabna University of Science and Technology, Pabna 6600, Bangladesh

^fDepartment of Chemistry, College of Science, King Khalid University, P.O. Box 9004, Abha 61413, Saudi Arabia

^gDepartment of Physics, College of Science, University of Bisha, P.O. Box 551, Bisha 61922, Saudi Arabia

^hPhysics Department, Colleges of Science and General Studies, Alfaisal University, P.O. Box 50927, Riyadh 11533, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: sosaid@alfaisal.edu



Comment

Table 1 PV performance of suggested cell compared to other reported CIGS solar cell without BSF

| Types of research | CIGS layer thickness (μm) | V_{oc} (V) | J_{sc} (mA cm^{-2}) | FF (%) | η (%) | Ref. |
|--------------------|--|---------------------|---|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Experimental | 2.0 | 0.671 | 34.90 | 77.60 | 18.10 | 2 |
| Experimental | 1.0 | 0.689 | 35.71 | 78.12 | 19.20 | 3 |
| Experimental | 2.2 | 0.690 | 35.50 | 81.20 | 19.90 | 4 |
| Experimental | — | 0.741 | 37.80 | 80.60 | 22.60 | 5 |
| Theoretical | 1.0 | 0.743 | 34.47 | 83.09 | 21.30 | 6 |
| Theoretical | 1.0 | 0.91 | 28.21 | 86.31 | 22.14* (without BSF) | *This work |

Table 2 Impact of BSF layer in comparison with related research

| Types of research | Absorber | BSF | η without BSF (%) | η with BSF (%) | Ref. |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Experimental | Si | ZnS | 6.40 | 11.02 | 7 |
| Experimental | Si | Al | 12.96 | 13.75 | 8 |
| Experimental | CIGS | MoSe ₂ | 9 | 14 | 9 |
| Theoretical | CdTe | V ₂ O ₅ | 19.58 | 23.50 | 10 |
| Theoretical | CZTS | CZTS | 12.05 | 14.11 | 11 |
| Theoretical | ZnTe | Sb ₂ Te ₃ | 7.14 | 18.33 | 12 |
| Theoretical | CZTSSe | SnS | 12.30 | 17.25 | 13 |
| Theoretical | CIGS | Si | 16.39 | 21.30 | 6 |
| Theoretical | CIGS | $\mu\text{c-Si:H}$ | 19.80 | 23.42 | 14 |
| Theoretical | CIGS | SnS | 17.99 | 25.29 | 15 |
| Theoretical | CIGS | PbS | 22.67 | 24.22 | 16 |
| Theoretical | CIGS | Sb₂S₃ | 22.14* | 31.15* | *This work |

Table 3 Layer properties used in Al/FTO/SnS₂/CIGS/Sb₂S₃/Ni solar cell^{a17–20}

| Parameters (unit) | FTO | SnS ₂ | CIGS | Sb ₂ S ₃ |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Layer type | Window | ETL | Absorber | BSF |
| Conductivity type | n ⁺ | n | p | P ⁺ |
| Thickness (μm) | 0.05 | 0.05 | 1.0* | 0.2 |
| Bandgap (eV) | 3.6 | 2.24 | 1.1 | 1.62 |
| Electron affinity (eV) | 4 | 4.24 | 4.2 | 3.70 |
| Dielectric permittivity (relative) | 9 | 10 | 13.6 | 7.08 |
| CB effective DOS (cm^{-3}) | 2.2×10^{18} | 2.2×10^{18} | 2.2×10^{18} | 2.0×10^{19} |
| VB effective DOS (cm^{-3}) | 1.8×10^{19} | 1.8×10^{19} | 1.8×10^{19} | 1.0×10^{19} |
| Electron thermal velocity (cm s^{-1}) | 1×10^7 | 1×10^7 | 1×10^7 | 1×10^7 |
| Hole thermal velocity (cm s^{-1}) | 1×10^7 | 1×10^7 | 1×10^7 | 1×10^7 |
| Electron mobility ($\text{cm}^2 \text{V}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$) | 100 | 50 | 100 | 9.8 |
| Hole mobility ($\text{cm}^2 \text{V}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$) | 25 | 50 | 25 | 10 |
| Donor density, N_{D} (cm^{-3}) | 1×10^{18} | 1×10^{15} | 0 | 0 |
| Acceptor density, N_{A} (cm^{-3}) | 0 | 0 | $1 \times 10^{16*}$ | 1×10^{15} |
| Defect type | SA | SA | SD | SD |
| Defect density (cm^{-3}) | 1×10^{12} | 1×10^{12} | 1×10^{12} | 1×10^{12} |

^a SA single acceptor, SD single donor, (*) variable field.



Table 4 Interface factors used in Al/FTO/SnS₂/CIGS/Sb₂S₃/Ni solar cell

| Parameters (unit) | Sb ₂ S ₃ /CIGS interface | CIGS/SnS ₂ interface |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Defect type | Neutral | Neutral |
| Electron capture cross-section, σ_e (cm ²) | 1×10^{19} | 1×10^{19} |
| Hole capture cross-section, σ_p (cm ²) | 1×10^{19} | 1×10^{19} |
| Defect position above the highest E_v (eV) | 0.06 | 0.06 |
| Interface defect density (cm ⁻²) | 1×10^{12} | 1×10^{12} |

shown in Tables 3 and 4,¹ provided efficiencies of 31.15% when using the Sb₂S₃ BSF layer and 22.14% without it. Therefore, the optimized efficiency with the 1 μ m absorber is significantly lower than the 40.70% figure mentioned, which is the highest efficiency obtained during the range of testing but not the optimal one.

Additionally, Alexander P. Kirk raised concerns regarding our consideration of hot carrier collection in the manuscript. However, it is crucial to highlight that in Tables 3 and 4, we have presented all the optimized parameters used in our SCAPS-1D simulation, which includes all relevant factors for accurately simulating the performance of our solar cell structure. The results are reflective of the carefully optimized conditions, and hot carrier collection was not an assumed factor in our analysis. By clarifying the distinction between the highest and optimized efficiencies and addressing the concerns about parameter usage, we ensure that the results and methods presented are accurate and consistent with the scope of the study.

Ethical approval

The all authors declare that the manuscript does not have studies on human subjects, human data or tissue, or animals.

Data availability

Data will be available on request.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

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