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for the Air Dehumidification Applications

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The main disadvantage of the air dehumidification with conventional technologies is high energy consumption. In particular, additional energy is required for reheating of the air from dew point temperature to the desired dry-bulb temperature in case of the dehumidifier with cooling coil and the regeneration of the desiccant in case of dehumidifier with desiccant cycle. Since regeneration of the solid desiccants requires higher temperatures (160-200 °C) when compared to that (73 °C) of the liquid desiccant system, the gas dehydration process with liquid desiccants is less expensive. However, one of the drawbacks of the liquid desiccant system is the carryover of desiccant solution droplets into the air stream, which can have a negative impact on the health of occupants. To avoid such consequence, researchers proposed to immobilize desiccant solution into polymers, however this led to the reduction of desiccant's water sorption capacity. Another way to limit carryover of desiccant droplets can be done by droplet filters, but at the expense of additional pressure drop, which will affect the water removal efficiency of the dehumidifier. Therefore, modification of the existed dehumidifiers or development of a new dehumidification system is essential to overcome high power consumption and safety/environmental risks in the air dehumidification process.

This thesis investigates the potential of membranes for the effective dehumidification of air. The work focuses on preparation of membranes from various hygroscopic materials and its composites for the dehumidification of room air. The efficiency of the membrane-based dehumidifier was evaluated in terms of the condensed water recovery, water permeability and membrane selectivity of water vapor over the air.

The overall aim of this research is to develop a membrane-based air dehumidification system, which has potential to be more effective from economic and technical point of view when compared to the conventional dehumidification technologies. The ways to improve the process is to study the effect of the membrane material on the air dehumidification performance. These can be realized through the following objectives:

- to obtain and apply highly hygroscopic materials in membranes, and test it in the dehumidification of air;
- to successfully synthesize composite membranes and evaluate their water sorption ability;
- to investigate the effect of the membrane's supporting material nature on the membrane

performance;

- to successfully fabricate membranes with the reduced thickness to achieve higher permeation rates;
- investigate the liquid membrane long term performance and stability;
- to analyze membrane's solubility and water diffusivity across the membrane;
- to fundamentally understand the mass transport mechanism through the liquid membranes;
- to analyze the effect of operating conditions on the membrane dehumidification performance;
- to analyze coefficient of efficiency of the developed membrane-based dehumidifier;
- to conduct quality analysis of the recovered water extracted from the air with dehumidification membrane.