Introduction

Photosynthetically Active Radiation (PAR) is defined as the electromagnetic radiation in the waveband between 400 and 700 nm, which can be used as the source of energy for photosynthesis by green plants [1-3]. PAR is a key variable in a wide range of ecophysiological models, both at leaf photosynthesis level [4] and crop production level [5]. Precise estimation of incident PAR is therefore essential in assessing and modelling plant growth and biological production management in different vegetative ecosystems. Monteith suggested that the net primary production under non-stressed conditions is linearly related to the amount of PAR that is absorbed by the green foliage [6,7].

The radiation incident on a plant canopy arrives as direct and diffuse fluxes. The direct flux is formed by photons having passed through the atmosphere unscattered, whereas the diffuse flux consists of photons scattered by air molecules, aerosols particles or clouds. Depending on aerosol load and solar elevation, the ratio of diffuse PAR to global PAR irradiance on a horizontal surface ranges between 20% and 40% [8]. Only photons absorbed by the canopy can be used for photosynthesis. A constant coefficient of absorbed to incident flux density of 0.85 has been proposed for radiation use efficiency calculations [6,9].

Even though PAR is extremely important, it is often not measured in most meteorological stations. Therefore, it has to be estimated from the commonly measured global solar radiation (G). It is expressed either in terms of Photosynthetic Photon Flux Density (PPFD, μmol m⁻² s⁻¹), since photosynthesis is a quantum process, or in terms of Photosynthetic Radiation Density (PAR irradiance, W m⁻²), which is more suitable for energy balance studies. It can be also expressed as (a) a fractional energy of PAR to global solar radiation (PAR) [10,11], (b) as a fraction of photon flux density of 0.85 has been proposed for radiation use efficiency calculations [6,9].

As a general trend, fFEC followed the order Clear<Partly cloudy<Cloudy. In all cases fFEC was decreased with elevation but with a different rate. Three linear or multilinear and three power law models were tested and validated under all sky conditions. All the models showed high coefficients of determination (R²) (close to 1), which indicates that the proposed models are suitable for predicting hourly PAR values. The linear and nonlinear models (models 1 to 3) have the same coefficient of determination (0.996). The relative error values for the first five models ranged between 3.3% and 4.5%, while the sixth model showed higher relative error (8.4%).

Abstract

Measurements of Photosynthetically Active Radiation (PAR) and global solar radiation at Larnaca (a coastal site in Cyprus) during the period 2013-2015 were used to investigate the seasonal characteristics of PAR and PAR/G ratio (PAR fraction or fFEC). PAR showed seasonal features with higher values in summer and lower values in winter. The annual mean values of PPFD and fFEC being 40.3 mol m⁻² d⁻¹ and 2.03 mol M J⁻¹, respectively. Monthly average daily PAR increased from 19.1 mol m⁻² d⁻¹ (in December) to 59.6 mol m⁻² d⁻¹ (in June). The monthly daily average of fFEC remained almost constant throughout the year at Larnaca. The spatial variability of PAR was also investigated using measurements from other four sites with different climate characteristics. The annual mean daily PAR fraction ranged between 31.7 to 40.0 mol m⁻² d⁻¹. The highest values are recorded in the coastal stations (Larnaca and Paralimini). The annual average value of fFEC at the five observation sites ranged from 1.82 mol MJ⁻¹ to 2.03 mol MJ⁻¹, in accordance to what is observed in most parts of the world. The highest appeared in the coastal sites of Larnaca and Paralimini due to the presence of high water vapour atmospheric concentrations. Elevation plays a significant role on the values of the above variables. As a general trend, fFEC followed the order Clear<Partly cloudy<Cloudy. In all cases fFEC was decreased with elevation but with a different rate. Three linear or multilinear and three power law models were tested and validated under all sky conditions. All the models showed high coefficients of determination (R²) (close to 1), which indicates that the proposed models are suitable for predicting hourly PAR values. The linear and multilinear models (models 1 to 3) have the same coefficient of determination (0.996). The relative error values for the first five models ranged between 3.3% and 4.5%, while the sixth model showed higher relative error (8.4%).

Keywords Photosynthetic active radiation; Temporal and spatial variation; Modelling PAR; Cyprus
was reported [8]. In the presence of clouds the factor increases with increasing cloud cover from 4.24 μmol J⁻¹ to the constant value for global radiation of 4.57 μmol J⁻¹ under overcast sky [17].

The ratio of PAR to shortwave irradiance at the top of the atmosphere equals 38.8% and is based on the solar constant of 1367 W m⁻² [18]. Using the value of PPFD₀ as 2443.3 μmol m⁻² s⁻¹ (i.e., the photosynthetic photon flux density solar constant at the top of the atmosphere on a surface perpendicular to sunrays), we obtain that the ratio of PAR to shortwave irradiance outside the atmosphere equals 4.57 μmol J⁻¹, exactly that proposed by McCree [1]. Spitters et al. [19] have proposed a higher solar constant for PAR which is equal to 2776.4 μmol m⁻² s⁻¹.

PAR is mainly estimated as a constant fraction of broadband solar irradiance. The fraction of PAR in global shortwave irradiation (fPAR) varies little and is usually between 40% and 50% [20,21]; values above 50% occur under very low sun, thick cloud cover or rain [22]. Some variation in fPAR with elevation above sea level is expected, but this variation is difficult to detect [8]. However, Wang et al. [23] noted an increasing trend with altitude, of about 3.6% per km for hourly values under clear skies, using measurements at 550, 900 and 1500 m above sea level. An inverse trend was found for hourly fPAR under cloudy weather conditions: fPAR decreased at a rate of 1.8% per km.

Several methods exist for modeling PAR and its components: (a) the radiative transfer method which takes into account several atmospheric processes such as Rayleigh scattering, water vapour, ozone absorption and aerosol load [8,18,24-29]; (b) a method of using artificial neural network [30]; (c) a method of estimation of PAR through satellite observations [31-35]; (d) statistical models which can be subdivided into four different groups depending on their complexity and the selected variables: (i) Semi-parametric partitioning diffuse models which are based on the relationship of the diffuse PAR fraction f_d (ratio of the diffuse-to-global PAR solar radiation) with the fractional transmission of global PAR f_FEC_d; (ii) Empirical models which are based on selected sky condition parameters which affect PAR such as the clearness of the sky (ε), the brightness of the skylight (Δ), the global solar radiation, the solar zenith angle, the optical air mass and the dew point temperature or vapour pressure. The sky clearness parameter, ε, depends on the cloud and aerosol amount. The skylight brightness parameter, Δ, depends on the aerosol burden and the cloud thickness [2,12,37,38]; (iii) PAR parameterization models based on the evaluation of the attenuation factors which affect the transmissivity of PAR through the atmosphere [39,40]; (iv) Simple linear or multilinear models based on parameters routinely measured in meteorological stations. The variables are chosen from their presumed influence on PAR radiation, such as global solar radiation, clearness index (k), Solar Zenith Angle (SZA), sunshine duration and vapour pressure [14,15,30].

Details about the levels of the shortwave radiation components at Athalassa (Cyprus) are given by Jacovides et al. [41]. Petaknis et al. [42] presented the ‘Typical Meteorological Year’ for Nicosia (Cyprus). An assessment of the solar radiation climate of the Cyprus environment was recently presented by Kalogirou et al. [43] using statistical analysis and inter-comparison of the solar global radiation at two sites in Cyprus, one at Athalassa-inland location and second one at Larnaca-coastal location, based on measurements of 21 months at both sites. Recently, Pashiardis et al. [44] have analysed the shortwave irradiation using 3 years of data based on the concept of clearness index. Furthermore, Jacovides et al. have studied various aspects of PAR radiation at Athalassa, Cyprus, including the implementation of different types of models [3,21,30,45]. Tymvios et al. [46] have also analysed the diurnal variation of direct and diffuse PAR radiation components at Athalassa, using relevant measurements during the period 2000-2002.

The present analysis aims to (a) quality control of the data; (b) investigate seasonal and diurnal patterns of PAR-related values (PPFD, PAR, fPAR, fFEC, LPR) throughout the year; (c) obtain statistical relationships between PAR and different radiation components; (d) estimate the frequency distributions of PAR irradiances; (e) compare the levels of PAR-related values with a number of stations operated in Cyprus and assess their variability with elevation; and (f) develop and testing empirical models to precisely estimate hourly and daily PAR values.

### Measurements and Methodology

Continuous measurements of G, PAR, air temperature (T) and Relative Humidity (RH) were taken from the meteorological station of Larnaca Airport which is near the coast. Data were collected from January 2013 to December 2015 (i.e., 3 years). The sensors readings were taken every 10 s, with the average and extreme values calculated every 10 min. A Campbell Scientific Instruments data-logger (Model CR10) monitors and stores the data at 10-min and hourly intervals. The stored data are downloaded to a desktop computer periodically. The data refer to the Local standard Time (LST=GMT+2).

Measurements of broadband solar irradiance were made with Kipp & Zonen pyranometer (CM11), while the Photosynthetic Flux Density (PPFD) was measured with the quantum sensor PQSI of Kipp & Zonen which outputs data in photobiological units of micromoles per square meter per second. All sensors are factory calibrated, in accordance with the World Radiometric Reference (WRR). Global radiation instruments are calibrated outdoors against standard references at irregular time intervals during the study period. The errors involved in the radiation measurements are found to be no less than ± 2% for the normal incidence beam irradiance and ± 3% for the global irradiance. The PAR sensor has an error of ± 3% under natural light. Due to cosine response issues of the instrumentation, this analysis is limited to cases with solar elevation angles α < 7°. The hourly and daily data were further checked for inconsistencies to eliminate problems associated with questionable measurements.

About 2% of the data values are missing because of some problems with the instruments and some defects and maintenance in the data acquisition systems. The validity of the individual measurements was checked in accordance with WMO recommendations (1987) [47] and other tests proposed by various authors [48-50]. Details about the quality control procedures for solar radiation measurements are given by Pashiardis and Kalogirou [51]. The theoretical basis of PAR data quality control is based on the following criteria [52]:

- Firstly, measured PAR values must be lower than the PAR flux at the top of the atmosphere, i.e. the extraterrestrial PAR flux (PARₑ<\text{PARₑ});
- Secondly, daily PAR/G values (fFEC₁) must fall between 1.3 and 2.8 mol MJ⁻¹.
All data that do not meet the conditions specified by the suggested tests are not used in the study. The data passed the above criteria. Finally, there were 22 missing days and therefore a total of 1073 days of data were used in analysis obtained from Larnaca station.

The values of global and photosynthetic active radiation were also compared with the relevant data of other four stations with hourly observations mainly during the period 2013-2016. Table 1 shows details about the geographical coordinates of the measuring stations. All stations are equipped with the same type of Quantum sensor PQS1 of Kipp & Zonen which outputs data in photobiological units. The data from Larnaca during the first two years will be used for the development of the models, while the data of the year 2015 will be used for validation purposes.

Methodology

The magnitudes of Photosynthetic Photon Flux Densities (PPFD) were processed at both the hourly and daily time scales. The hours and days of the studied period have been classified according to the sky conditions. Hourly, \( k_h \) and daily, \( K_t \) clearness indices were calculated for each hour and day, respectively, during the measurement period, using the following expressions [53]:

\[
 k_h = \frac{G}{G_0} \quad (1) \\
 K_t = \frac{G_d}{G_{0d}} \quad (2) 
\]

Where \( G \) is the hourly global solar irradiation; \( G_h \) is the daily global solar irradiation; \( G_0 \) and \( G_{0d} \) are the hourly and the daily extraterrestrial solar global irradiation on a horizontal surface, respectively, which are given by the following expressions [53]:

\[
 G_0 = G_{SC} \times L \times [\sin \phi \times \sin \delta + \cos \phi \times \cos \delta \times \cos \omega_h] \quad (3) \\
 G_{0d} = \left(\frac{24}{\pi}\right) \times G_{SC} \times L \times [\sin \phi \times \sin \delta + \cos \phi \times \cos \delta \times \cos \omega_d] \quad (4) 
\]

Where \( L \) is the eccentricity \((L = 1 - 0.033 \times \cos(360 \times \text{jd} / 365)) \), \( \text{jd} \) is the Julian day number, \( \phi \) is the latitude of the site, \( \delta \) is the solar declination angle \((\delta = 23.45 \times \sin(360 \times (284 + \text{jd}) / 365)) \), \( \omega_h \) is the sunset hour angle \((\omega_h = \cos^{-1}(-\tan \phi \times \tan \delta)) \), \( G_{SC} \) is the solar constant \((G_{SC} = 1367 \text{ W m}^{-2}) \), \( \omega_d \) are the hour angles at the centre of the hour interval. Equation (3) yields extraterrestrial irradiance for one hour centred on the given hour \( \omega_h \).

By analogy, the hourly \( k_{PAR} \) and daily \( K_{PAR} \), PAR clearness indices (or PAR transmissivities through the atmosphere) were calculated for each hour and day, respectively, during the measurement period, using the following expressions:

\[
k_{PAR} = \frac{\text{PAR}}{\text{PAR}_0} \quad (5) \\
K_{PAR} = \frac{\text{PAR}_d}{\text{PAR}_{0d}} \quad (6)
\]

The hourly and daily values of extraterrestrial PAR radiation can be estimated with the Eqs (3) and (4). The solar constant of photosynthetic active irradiance \( (\text{PAR}_0) \) is obtained from Gueymard [54] and is equal to 353.64 W m\(^{-2}\) which is equivalent to 2443.3 μmol m\(^{-2}\) s\(^{-1}\), using the McCree’s conversion factor of 4.57 μmol J\(^{-1}\) to convert hourly PAR photon flux into its energy alternative.

Combined with global solar radiation and simulated extraterrestrial solar radiation, seven PAR related values were developed, i.e., flux density-based PAR (PPFD), energy-based PAR (PARE), from-flux-to-energy conversion efficiency (PAR/G, \(f_{FEC}\)), the fraction of PAR energy in the global solar radiation (PAR), the lost PARE percentages (LPR) starting from the top of the atmosphere up to the ground level, and the two clearness indices as defined above (\( k_h \) and \( k_{PAR} \)). These clearness indices are used to assess the attenuation of global solar and PAR radiation in the atmosphere.

The hourly values of PPFD are given in μmol m\(^{-2}\) s\(^{-1}\), while daily PPFD values are the sum of the hourly values expressed in moles m\(^{-2}\) d\(^{-1}\). The \( f_{FEC} \) values are computed as fractions of PPFD to global solar radiation over the selected time scale. For the daily \( f_{FEC} \), the unit is given in moles per MJ, but for the hourly values it is expressed as μmol \(^{-1}\). The fraction of PAR to global solar radiation \( (\text{PAR}/\text{G}) \) at the top of the atmosphere is around 40% [55]. However, more recent measurements estimate this parameter at 39.1% [54]. The percentage of extraterrestrial PAR energy lost in the atmosphere \( (LPR) \) can be calculated from the following expression:

\[
 k_{PAR} = \frac{\text{PAR}}{\text{PAR}_0} \\
K_{PAR} = \frac{\text{PAR}_d}{\text{PAR}_{0d}}
\]
In this study the diurnal and seasonal patterns of the above PAR related parameters will be investigated. Furthermore, various models with different complexity will be developed and tested.

The time series plots of the daily global solar and photosynthetic active radiation are shown in Figure 1. The daily values of the respective extraterrestrial radiation for both variables are also shown for comparison. The figure indicates that the daily values of both variables follow the same pattern with the higher values during the summer season and the lower ones during the winter season. The annual mean daily global solar irradiation and PARE are 19.9 MJ m\(^{-2}\) and 8.8 MJ m\(^{-2}\), respectively. The maximum daily values reach 32.2 MJ m\(^{-2}\) and 14.4 MJ m\(^{-2}\), respectively, both occurring in July.

**Results and Discussion**

**Monthly mean hourly values**

The average monthly values and standard errors of global solar irradiance (\(G\)), global solar extraterrestrial irradiance (\(G_0\)), clearness index (\(k\)), photosynthetic photon flux density (PPFD), photosynthetic active irradiance (PARE), extraterrestrial photosynthetic active irradiance (PARE\(_0\)), PAR clearness index (\(k_{PAR}\)), fraction of PAR irradiance to global irradiance (\(f_{PAR}\)), flux to energy conversion efficiency (\(f_{FEC}\)) and lost PARE percentages (LPR) are shown in Table 2. The smaller values are occurred during the winter season, due to the presence of clouds. The monthly means of PARE irradiance range from 125 to 258 W m\(^{-2}\), while the mean hourly values of PPFD range from 573 to 1186 μmol m\(^{-2}\) s\(^{-1}\).

The fraction of PAR to global irradiance (\(f_{PAR}\)) is relatively constant ranging from 0.43 to 0.455, with the higher values occurring during the winter season. The monthly average of clearness index is higher than 0.65 during the summer months indicating that the atmosphere is mostly clear during this season. During the entire period of measurements the overall mean hourly value of \(f_{FEC}\) was found to be 2.029 μmol J\(^{-1}\), with the lower values during spring and summer. The percentages of lost PARE (LPR) are lower during the summer and autumn season.

**Diurnal patterns of monthly mean hourly PAR-related values**

The monthly averages of hourly PAR values exhibited strong diurnal patterns (Figure 2). Values of PPFD, PARE, \(f_{PAR}\), \(f_{FEC}\), \(k_{PAR}\) and \(G\) were typically low in the early morning, approaching their peaks around the noon hour, and then decreased toward the late afternoon hours. Although \(f_{PAR}\) and \(f_{FEC}\) had very conservative daily values when considered on a monthly basis, both exhibited some variability over the course of a day. The average hourly PPFD values (Figure 2a) recorded at solar noon varied from 3.27 in December to 7.33 mol m\(^{-2}\) h\(^{-1}\) in June. The respective values of PARE ranged from 191 to 442 W m\(^{-2}\) or from 0.69 to 1.59 MJ m\(^{-2}\) h\(^{-1}\) (Figure 2b). The average hourly global irradiance at solar noon ranged from 450 W m\(^{-2}\) in December to 991 W m\(^{-2}\) (1.62 MJ m\(^{-2}\) h\(^{-1}\)) (Figure 2b). Both PPFD and PARE exhibited diurnal trends that were similar to that of global solar radiation, suggesting that both variables are closely associated. Therefore, all PAR-related parameters are influenced by the solar elevation angles and are affected by meteorological parameters such as the turbidity of the atmosphere and clouds.

The means of \(f_{FEC}\) (Figure 2c) at solar noon ranged from 2.04 μmol J\(^{-1}\) in December to 2.06 μmol J\(^{-1}\) in June, with an overall mean hourly value of 2.03 μmol J\(^{-1}\). The indicator-lost PARE percentages (LPR) follow a different trend. It takes its lower values at the solar noon time and is much lower in the summer than in the winter months. The LPR values (Figure 2c) oscillated at solar noon between 32% in December to 14% in June.
Table 2: Monthly average values and standard errors of global solar irradiance (G), global solar extraterrestrial irradiance (G₀), clearness index (kₜ), Photosynthetic Photon Flux Density (PPFD), Photosynthetic Active Irradiance (PARE), extraterrestrial photosynthetic active irradiance (PARE₀), PAR clearness index (kPAR), fraction of PAR irradiance to global irradiance (fPAR), flux to energy conversion efficiency (fFEC) and lost PARE percentages (LPR) obtained from the hourly data set.

| Month | Gₘ (W m⁻²) | Gₜ SE (W m⁻²) | G₀ (W m⁻²) | G₀ SE (W m⁻²) | kₜ (μmol m⁻² s⁻¹) | kₜ SE (μmol m⁻² s⁻¹) | PPFD (W m⁻²) | PPFD SE (μmol m⁻² s⁻¹) |
|-------|-------------|----------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 1     | 285.8       | 5.97           | 474.6      | 8.24           | 0.508           | 0.00677              | 573.7         | 11.8                   |
| 2     | 397.0       | 8.48           | 537.2      | 9.91           | 0.576           | 0.00759              | 803.4         | 17.1                   |
| 3     | 435.8       | 8.23           | 654.2      | 10.50          | 0.570           | 0.00826              | 861.2         | 16.2                   |
| 4     | 528.8       | 9.01           | 713.7      | 11.40          | 0.621           | 0.00551              | 1047.9        | 18.1                   |
| 5     | 548.8       | 8.94           | 757.6      | 11.40          | 0.617           | 0.00504              | 1099.3        | 18.2                   |
| 6     | 585.9       | 9.03           | 721.4      | 11.80          | 0.658           | 0.00413              | 1185.0        | 18.6                   |
| 7     | 580.6       | 8.71           | 731.7      | 11.60          | 0.668           | 0.00351              | 1178.5        | 18.2                   |
| 8     | 556.5       | 8.70           | 741.3      | 11.10          | 0.644           | 0.00415              | 1132.5        | 18.0                   |
| 9     | 514.7       | 8.34           | 660.0      | 11.00          | 0.634           | 0.00464              | 1076.7        | 17.6                   |
| 10    | 422.3       | 7.40           | 580.8      | 9.60           | 0.605           | 0.00551              | 872.8         | 15.2                   |
| 11    | 335.9       | 6.22           | 476.8      | 8.75           | 0.553           | 0.00608              | 682.5         | 12.5                   |
| 12    | 291.3       | 5.80           | 468.6      | 7.45           | 0.535           | 0.00727              | 588.0         | 11.5                   |
| Year  | 473.3       | 2.59           | 641.1      | 3.23           | 0.606           | 0.00161              | 957.1         | 5.3                    |

| Month | PAREₘ (W m⁻²) | PARE SE (W m⁻²) | PAREₘ (W m⁻²) | PARE SE (W m⁻²) | kPAR (μmol J⁻¹) | kPAR SE (μmol J⁻¹) | fPAR (μmol J⁻¹) | fPAR SE (μmol J⁻¹) | fFEC (μmol J⁻¹) | fFEC SE (μmol J⁻¹) |
|-------|----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1     | 124.6          | 2.57            | 227.9      | 3.76            | 0.473          | 0.0061            | 0.443         | 0.0009            | 2.035          | 0.0040            |
| 2     | 174.7          | 3.72            | 254.1      | 4.64            | 0.541          | 0.0070            | 0.444         | 0.0009            | 2.036          | 0.0037            |
| 3     | 187.2          | 3.53            | 313.9      | 4.84            | 0.523          | 0.0056            | 0.436         | 0.0008            | 1.998          | 0.0037            |
| 4     | 227.8          | 3.93            | 336.7      | 5.34            | 0.569          | 0.0051            | 0.432         | 0.0007            | 1.981          | 0.0030            |
| 5     | 239.6          | 3.96            | 349.7      | 5.33            | 0.573          | 0.0047            | 0.437         | 0.0006            | 2.006          | 0.0027            |
| 6     | 257.7          | 4.05            | 359.7      | 5.34            | 0.617          | 0.0040            | 0.440         | 0.0006            | 2.021          | 0.0026            |
| 7     | 256.2          | 3.95            | 354.9      | 5.28            | 0.625          | 0.0036            | 0.437         | 0.0006            | 2.010          | 0.0028            |
| 8     | 246.2          | 3.91            | 347.5      | 5.19            | 0.607          | 0.0041            | 0.440         | 0.0006            | 2.023          | 0.0026            |
| 9     | 232.1          | 3.83            | 319.0      | 5.08            | 0.610          | 0.0046            | 0.450         | 0.0007            | 2.069          | 0.0032            |
| 10    | 189.7          | 3.31            | 276.7      | 4.57            | 0.582          | 0.0052            | 0.455         | 0.0009            | 2.088          | 0.0037            |
| 11    | 148.4          | 2.72            | 233.8      | 3.99            | 0.523          | 0.0056            | 0.448         | 0.0008            | 2.054          | 0.0036            |
| 12    | 127.8          | 2.50            | 204.8      | 3.64            | 0.502          | 0.0066            | 0.448         | 0.0011            | 2.054          | 0.0046            |
| Year  | 208.2          | 1.15            | 304.9      | 1.50            | 0.590          | 0.0015            | 0.442         | 0.0002            | 2.030          | 0.0010            |

The average hourly values of the PAR clearness index (kPAR) (Figure 2d) at solar noon ranged between 0.554 in January to 0.736 in June, with an overall mean hourly value of 0.567. Finally, the fraction of PAR to global energy (fPAR) (Figure 2d) varied from 0.438 in March to 0.448 in July, with an overall mean hourly value of 0.442.

Results of seasonal, annual and sky conditions groupings for different PAR related parameters are shown in Table 3. The characterization of sky conditions was obtained from the classification of the clearness index value, i.e., for kₜ > 0.65: clear, 0.35 < kₜ < 0.65: partly cloudy and kₜ < 0.35: overcast sky. PPFD, PARE and G irradiances show their lower values during overcast sky conditions. On the other hand, fFEC and fPAR have their higher values under overcast conditions. The hourly ratio of fFEC varies from 2.021 (clear days) to 2.179 μmol J⁻¹ (overcast days), indicating that this ratio on clear days is 7.9% lower than that on overcast days. Water vapour absorptions take place at longer wavelengths of the spectrum which affect more the broadband global irradiance rather than the PAR component, increasing therefore the fFEC values [3,10,12]. Almost similar results were obtained by Jacovides et al. [13] using data from
Athens, Greece. The ratio $f_{\text{PAR}}$ shows similar variation. It varies from 0.439 on clear days to 0.478 on overcast days, i.e., the ratio on clear days is 8.9% lower than that on overcast days. The indicator $LPR$ shows similar trend with the higher values during overcast conditions.

Regarding the seasonal variation, $PPFD$, $PARE$ and $G$ irradiances show their higher values in summer. The annual hourly average value of $PPFD$ is 3.428 mol m$^{-2}$ h$^{-1}$, while the respective value in summer is 4.197 mol m$^{-2}$ h$^{-1}$. $f\text{FEC}$ and $f_{\text{PAR}}$ show their lower values in spring (1.996 μmol J$^{-1}$ and 0.435, respectively).

The dependence of the hourly $PPFD$ values with global solar irradiance for the three sky conditions is also shown in Figure 3. The simple regression line $Y = a \cdot X$ is applied without intercept. The slopes of the fitted lines are shown in the graph. They range from 2.003 μmol J$^{-1}$ (clear days) to 2.113 μmol J$^{-1}$ (overcast days). The slope on clear days is 4.2% lower than that in overcast days. Jacovides et al. [3], found for the inland location of Athalassa, slightly lower values than those obtained at Larnaca (coastal location). Similar relationships were established between the hourly PAR irradiance and global solar irradiance. The slopes of the linear fits have the following values: for clear day’s $f_{\text{PAR}}$=0.441, for partly cloudy day’s $f_{\text{PAR}}$=0.437 and for overcast day’s $f_{\text{PAR}}$=0.459. The coefficients of determination are close to 1. The influence of cloudiness through the clearness index on the ratios $f\text{FEC}$ and $f_{\text{PAR}}$ is shown in figure 4. The equations

### Table 3: Photosynthetic active and solar irradiances, and different ratios for seasonal, annual and different sky conditions groupings.

| Sky conditions     | $PPFD$ (mol m$^{-2}$ h$^{-1}$) | Global (W m$^{-2}$) | $PARE$ (W m$^{-2}$) | $f\text{FEC}$ (μmol J$^{-1}$) | $f_{\text{PAR}}$ (%) | $K_{\text{PAR}}$ & $LPR$ |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Clear              | 4.934                         | 676.8               | 297.9              | 2.021                          | 0.439                | 0.692             |
| Partly cloudy      | 2.200                         | 304.8               | 132.8              | 2.003                          | 0.437                | 0.500             |
| Overcast           | 0.979                         | 127.4               | 59.1               | 2.179                          | 0.478                | 0.222             |
| Winter             | 2.351                         | 323.3               | 141.8              | 2.043                          | 0.445                | 0.521             |
| Spring             | 3.614                         | 504.4               | 218.2              | 1.996                          | 0.435                | 0.575             |
| Summer             | 4.197                         | 574.3               | 253.4              | 2.018                          | 0.439                | 0.601             |
| Autumn             | 3.088                         | 416.2               | 186.5              | 2.072                          | 0.452                | 0.586             |
| Annual             | 3.428                         | 470.3               | 206.9              | 2.030                          | 0.442                | 0.587             |

Figure 2d: Monthly mean hourly values for PAR clearness index ($k_{\text{PAR}}$) and the fraction of PAR energy to global solar radiation.

Figure 3: Hourly correlations between spectral ($PPFD$) and broadband irradiance components under clear, partly cloudy and overcast skies at Larnaca.

Figure 4: The relationship between the hourly ratios of (a) $f\text{FEC}$ and (b) $f_{\text{PAR}}$ vs. clearness index $k_t$ at Larnaca.

Accumulated hourly PAR radiation

In the studies of the biological effects of PAR radiation, we require the accumulated PAR solar irradiation through a period of time. The accumulated hourly values of $PARE$ and global solar radiation for an
average day of each month are shown in figure 5a and 5b, respectively. It can be seen that the highest value for PAR irradiation was produced in July, with a daily average of about 13 MJ m⁻². On the other hand, in January and December the average irradiation received was a minimal of about 4.4 MJ m⁻². The accumulated PAR irradiation received in an average year is 3222 MJ m⁻². The respective accumulated global solar irradiation received in an average year is 7324 MJ m⁻² (Figure 5b).

**Frequency distribution of PAR irradiances**

The cumulative density functions (CDF) of the hourly PAR and G irradiances as well as the PPFD for the whole period of measurements are shown in figure 6. Figure 6a indicates that in 60% of the hourly values the PPFD are lower than 4 mol m⁻² h⁻¹. Regarding Figure 6b, for the same probability level, the hourly PARE irradiances are lower than 245 W m⁻² while the hourly G irradiances are lower than 560 W m⁻².

The variation of the hourly PPFD values on a monthly basis is shown with the graph of boxplots (Figure 7). The box plot gives information about the mean of each month as well as the 1st (25%), 2nd (medians) (50%), 3rd (75%) quartiles and the extreme values of the given variable. The means and the medians are very close.

**Distribution of monthly mean daily PAR-related parameters**

The time series plots of the daily global solar and photosynthetic active radiation including their respective extraterrestrial daily radiations are shown in figure 1. The time series plots of the daily ratios of fPAR and the relevant clearness indices of solar (K_T) and PAR radiation (K_PAR) are shown in Figure 8a. The fPAR ratio is relatively constant with occasional variations throughout the year. In contrast, the clearness indices show high variability at the beginning and end of the year. Daily trends of fFEC are shown in Figure 8b. The variability of this ratio is again small. Its mean annual value is 2.029 mol MJ⁻¹. Some outliers are observed in the years 2014 and 2015.

Daily averages for each Julian day and monthly averages have been calculated. Figure 9 shows the results of these calculations. The greatest fluctuations occur in spring and winter seasons. It can be
seen that the variation of the monthly values (continuous smooth curves) are quite regular, with maximum taking place in June and the minimum in December.

The average annual daily values (mean ± SE) over the study period of \( PPFD_d, \) \( PAR_d, \) \( G_d, \) \( fPAR_d, \) \( fFEC_d, \) \( LPR_d, K_{PAR}, \) and \( K_T \) were 40.26 ± 0.48 mol m\(^{-2}\) d\(^{-1}\), 8.75 ± 0.11 MJ m\(^{-2}\) d\(^{-1}\), 19.93 ± 0.24 MJ m\(^{-2}\) d\(^{-1}\), 0.441 ± 0.0004, 0.643 ± 0.004, and 0.722 ± 0.004, respectively. The monthly means of the daily values of all \( PAR \) related variables including their variability are shown in Figure 10a. The asterisks on the graphs indicate outliers of the given variables (observations that are beyond the upper or lower whisker). The monthly mean daily values of the variables \( fPAR \) and \( fFEC \) are relatively constant throughout the year.

The monthly mean daily values of \( G_d, \) \( PAR_d, \) \( fPAR_d, \) \( PPFD_d, \) and \( fFEC_d \) for each month, season and different sky conditions for the period of measurements are presented in Table 4. The results of the monthly and seasonal variations were discussed in previous paragraphs. Regarding the sky conditions, it is evident from the table that \( fPAR \) and \( fFEC \) are higher in overcast sky conditions (0.465 and 2.140 mol MJ\(^{-1}\), respectively), while they obtain their lower values on clear days (0.439 and 2.020 mol MJ\(^{-1}\), respectively). This result can be attributed to the fact that water vapour values during overcast conditions are affecting more the longer wavelengths through the absorption process, leaving the spectral \( PAR \) portion unaltered, thus, decreasing broadband solar radiation to a much greater extent than the spectral \( PAR \); therefore, the ratios are increased with the increase of water vapour content [3, 12]. Figure 11 confirms the results of Table 4, i.e., for high \( K_T \) we expect lower \( fFEC \) and \( fPAR \) ratio. The relationship is in the form of \( Y = aX^b \). The coefficients \( a \) and \( b \) have the following values: \( a = 1.983 \) and \( b = 0.048 \). The relationship of \( PAR \) and global solar radiation for the three different sky conditions is shown in Figure 12. The average daily \( PPFD \) decreases from 47.5 mol m\(^{-2}\) d\(^{-1}\) on clear days to 11.7 mol m\(^{-2}\) d\(^{-1}\) on overcast days.
Finally, the cumulative density functions (CDF) of the daily PAR$_{Ed}$, G$_d$, and PPFD$_d$ are presented in Figure 13. The figure indicates that in 60% of the days PAR$_{Ed}$ is lower than 10.4 MJ m$^{-2}$ and lower than 23.9 MJ m$^{-2}$ for the global solar radiation. For the same probability level (60%) PPFD$_d$ is lower than 47.8 mol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$.

Statistical relationships with sunshine duration

The Angstrom-Prescott model [56] is the most widely used method for global radiation predictions. It is given as,

$$ G_d = [a + b(n/N)]G_{0d} $$

(8)

$G_d$ is the daily horizontal global solar irradiation on the ground surface, $G_{0d}$ is the daily extraterrestrial solar irradiation on a horizontal surface at the top of the atmosphere, $n/N$ is the relative sunshine duration, whereas $a$ and $b$ is regression constants. Using daily data for Larnaca Eq. (8) takes the form:

$$ G_d = [0.261 + 0.528*(n/N)]G_{0d} \quad R^2 = 0.909 $$

(9)
As in the case of solar global irradiation, the PAR component is modelled by means of the Angstrom’s type equation:

\[ PPFD_d = [0.271 + 0.518 \times (n/N)] \times PPFD_{0d} \]  

Where \( PPFD_d \) is the daily PPFD value in photobiology units (mol m\(^{-2}\)), \( n/N \) is the sunshine fraction and \( PPFD_{0d} \) is the daily extraterrestrial value at the top of the atmosphere. Almost similar regression constants were obtained by Jacovides et al. [30] for Athalassa, Cyprus.

**Comparison of PAR measured at other locations in Cyprus**

The daily values of global and photosynthetic active radiation were compared with the respective values of the other four stations. Figure 14 shows the monthly mean daily values of \( G \), \( PAR_d \), \( PPFD_d \) and \( fFEC_d \). The similarities between the stations are evident. Elevation plays a significant role on the values of the above variables. Generally, stations at higher elevation have lower values.

Linear relationships were fitted between the daily \( PPFD \) (mol m\(^{-2}\) d\(^{-1}\)) of Larnaca and the same variable of the above four stations:

\[ PPFD_d - Lca = 2.469 + 1.045 \times PPFD_d - Par \]  
\[ PPFD_d - Lca = 6.476 + 0.939 \times PPFD_d - Cho \]  
\[ PPFD_d - Lca = 7.749 + 0.981 \times PPFD_d - Kal \]  
\[ PPFD_d - Lca = 8.695 + 0.998 \times PPFD_d - Far \]  

(11)  
(12)  
(13)  
(14)

The two coastal stations (Larnaca and Paralimni) show higher coefficient of determination (Eq. 11).

**Relationship of PAR-related parameters with elevation:** The relationship between the PAR-related parameters and elevation was examined for both hourly and daily data sets. The conventional way to analyse \( fFEC \) is to group them into different weather categories, e.g. clear, partly cloudy and cloudy. The criterion to select the given category is the clearness index, i.e., \( k_t > 0.65 \): clear, \( 0.35 < k_t < 0.65 \): partly cloudy and \( k_t < 0.35 \): cloudy. Then, the mean values of the hourly PAR-related parameters for the whole period were calculated for each station and their values were plotted as a function of the elevation. Figure 15 shows the relationship of the means of \( PPFD \),

**Figure 13:** Cumulative Density Function (CDF) of the daily \( PARE_d, G_d \), and \( PPFD_d \) at Larnaca.

**Figure 14:** Monthly mean daily values of a) \( G \) and \( PARE_d \) and b) \( PPFD_d \) and \( fFEC_d \) at different locations in Cyprus.

**Figure 15:** Relationships of the monthly mean hourly of a) \( PPFD \) and \( G \) and b) \( fFEC \) with elevation.
G and fFEC with the elevation. PPDF is decreased with elevation for all the categories with almost a similar slope. A negative slope with elevation is also observed for G during cloudy conditions. However, G is increased with elevation in clear and partly cloudy conditions (Figure 15a). As a general trend, fFEC followed the order Clear<Partly cloud<Cloudy (Figure 15b). In all cases fFEC was decreased with elevation but with a different rate. Similar results were obtained by Wang et al. [23] in Naeba Mountain in Japan.

Figure 16 shows the relationships of the monthly mean values of a) G and PPDF and b) fFEC with elevation in different months.

Figure 16: Relationships of the monthly mean values of a) G and PPDF and b) fFEC with elevation in different months.

Modelling photosynthetic active radiation

Previous research results show that parameterization models that use atmospheric parameters measured at meteorological stations can generate accurate PAR estimates [3,12,14,57]. Six models obtained from the literature will be developed and tested under Cyprus conditions. The first three are linear or multilinear models, and the rest three have a power form.

Aguiar et al. [14] have proposed three multilinear regression models to estimate PAR based on parameters routinely measured in meteorological stations. These variables were chosen due to their presumed influence on PAR as it was demonstrated by [11-13]. The chosen variables are the global solar irradiance (model 1), global solar irradiance and clearness index (model 2), and global irradiance, clearness index and water vapour pressure (model 3). The models differ in their complexity by adding additional variables. The clearness index can represent the combined attenuation effects of aerosols, gases and cloud cover on solar radiation transfer through the atmosphere. The regression equations of the three models have the following form:

\[
PARE = a \cdot G
\]

\[
PARE = a \cdot G + b \cdot k_i + c
\]

\[
PARE = a \cdot G + b \cdot k_i + c \cdot e + d
\]

Where, \(G\) is the hourly broadband solar irradiance (W m\(^{-2}\)), \(k_i\) is the clearness index (ratio of global to extraterrestrial solar irradiance) and \(e\) is the water vapour pressure (hPa). The regression parameters \(a\), \(b\), \(c\) and \(d\) were determined using multiple linear regressions for the period 2013-2014, while the year 2015 was used as a testing data set for the validation of the models. Daily and hourly extraterrestrial radiation was estimated by the earth-sun geometric relationships (Equation 3 and 4). The saturation water vapour pressure (\(e_c\), hPa) was calculated from the Tetens equation [58] and the water vapour pressure was calculated using \(e\) and air relative humidity (RH, %).

Research findings show that PAR transmissivity \(k_{PAR}\), \(k_i\), and the solar zenith angle (through the relative optical air mass (m)) can be used to accurately estimate PAR values [57]. Non-dimensional parameters in the equation eliminate local feature effects. The parameterization model for estimating PAR (model 4) takes the following form:

\[
k_{PAR} = a \cdot k_i^b \cdot m^c
\]

The relative optical air mass (m) is defined as the direct optical path length through the Earth’s atmosphere. The formula obtained from Kasten and Young [59] is used to estimate m by using the solar zenith angle (\(\theta\)):

\[
m = \frac{1}{(\cos \theta_z + 0.050572(96.0795 - \theta_z))^{1.6364}}
\]

Therefore, model 4 takes the following form:

\[
PARE = (a \cdot k_i^b \cdot m^c) \cdot PARE_0
\]

Where \(PARE_0\) is the extraterrestrial PAR irradiance.

The next model (model 5) takes into account the effect of the comprehensive attenuation factors under clear skies (\(\rho_c\)) and the effect of clouds through the global clearness index and has the following form:

\[
k_{PAR} = a \cdot \rho_c^b \cdot k_i^c
\]

The index \(\rho_c\) is calculated using the following equation:

\[
\rho_c = \frac{PARE_c}{PARE_0}
\]

Where \(PARE_c\) represents the observed PAR under clear weather conditions. \(PARE_c\) can be estimated using any radiative transfer model or through empirical models. In this study \(PARE_c\) is estimated from the relative optical air mass value as shown in Figure 17. A
small degree of dispersion is evident between PAR values under clear weather and m conditions. The equation which describes the relationship between $\text{PARE}_c$ and the relative optical air mass ($m$) under clear weather conditions, i.e., $k_t > 0.65$ has the following form:

$$PPFD_c = 2056.8 \times m^{-1.136} \text{ (μmol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1})$$

or

$$\text{PARE}_c = 446.99 \times m^{-1.136} \text{ (W m}^{-2})$$

(23a)

(23b)

Essentially, the final form of model (5) is shown below:

$$\text{PARE} = (a \times \rho^b \times k_t^c) \times \text{PARE}_0$$

(24)

The 6th model was proposed by Wang et al. [39] and expresses the relationship between hourly PAR and the cosine of solar zenith angle for a very narrow range of $k_t$ interval, and can be described as follows:

$$\text{PARE} = \text{PARE}_x \times (\cos(\theta_x))^a$$

(25)

Figure 18 shows the dependences of hourly PAR on $k_t$ and the cosine of solar zenith angle at Larnaca. PAR is increased almost exponentially with $\cos (SZA)$ for a given $k_t$ interval, which is described with a power law equation (Eq. 25). Firstly, the maximum value $\text{PARE}_x$ is estimated by binning $k_t$ in 0.02 increments. Then, the relationship between $\text{PARE}_x$ and $k_t$ is established using a cubic polynomial function as shown in figure 19. The equation has the following form:

$$PPFD_x = 137.6 + 1163 \times k_t + 3815 \times k_t^2 - 2646 \times k_t^3 \text{ (μmol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1})$$

(26a)

or

$$\text{PARE}_x = 30.12 + 254.4 \times k_t + 834.9 \times k_t^2 - 579 \times k_t^3 \text{ (W m}^{-2})$$

(26b)

$R^2 = 0.995$

In the second step, $b$ was obtained from analysing the relationship between hourly PAR and $\cos (SZA)$ using a non-linear statistical method.

Table 5 summarises the regression parameters ($a$, $b$, $c$, and $d$) of the six models which were used for the estimation of PAR. The linear and multilinear models show high coefficients of determination; the simple linear model showed the highest coefficient of determination amongst the first three models. Regarding the models which are based on the power law, model 4 showed the lowest $S$ which indicates that the given equation predicts better the response variable. $S$ is measured in the units of the response variable and represents the standard distance the data values fall from the regression line, or the standard deviation of the residuals. Furthermore, Table 5 shows the parameters of the equation which calculates the clear sky $\text{PARE}_c$ values and depends on the relative optical air mass ($m$) (Figure 17). $\text{PARE}_x$ is estimated using a cubic polynomial function of $k_t$ with a very high coefficient of determination ($R^2=0.995$).

Validation of the models: To evaluate the developed models, the models were validated using the last year’s PAR hourly data (2015) as an independent data set. Table 6 shows the results of the linear regression analysis between the estimated and measured PAR values for each model, including the slope $e$, intercept $f$, $R^2$, Mean Bias Error (MBE), Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) and Relative Error (RE). The statistical estimators $MBE$, $RMSE$ and $RE$ have the following form:

$$MBE = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} (E_i - M_i)$$

(27)

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} (E_i - M_i)^2}$$

(28)

$$RE(\%) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left( \frac{|E_i - M_i|}{M_i} \right) \times 100$$

(29)

Figure 17: The dependence of $\text{PARE}$ values on $m$ for clear weather conditions ($k_t > 0.65$) at Larnaca.

Figure 18: Hourly dependences of $\text{PAR}$ on $k_t$ and the cosine of solar zenith angle at Larnaca.

Figure 19: $\text{PARE}$ as a function of $k_{sy}$ at Larnaca (it can be expressed as a cubic polynomial equation (Equations. 26a and 26b)).
and indices.

operated in different climate conditions. Compares the PAR values and the above ratios with other stations daily/monthly PAR variations at this station. Furthermore, the study irradiance measured at Larnaca (coastal location) are used to examine PAR variability and the development of PAR estimation method are critical in climate research and ecological modeling. It is expressed as a fractional energy of PAR to global solar radiation (PAR), or in terms of photosynthetic photon flux density (PPFD, μmol m⁻²), since photosynthesis is a quantum process, or in terms of photosynthetic radiation flux density (PAR irradiance, W m⁻²), which indicates PAR is an essential parameter used in studies on radiation balance and agrometeorological modeling. It is expressed in W m⁻².

The first objective of this study is the quality control of PAR values at the measuring stations. The quality control process was based on physically possible limits, such as the measured PAR values must be lower than the PAR flux at the top of the atmosphere and the ratio PAR/G (fFEC) must fall between 1.3 and 2.8 mol MJ⁻¹[52]. All data that do not meet the conditions specified by the suggested tests are not used in the study.

The second objective of this study is the analysis of the statistical characteristics of both hourly and daily values of PAR related parameters including the statistical relationships between PAR and other radiation components. The annual mean daily PAR value for Larnaca is about 40 mol m⁻² d⁻¹, while in the rest observation sites it ranged between 31.7 to 36.9mol m⁻² d⁻¹. The highest values are recorded in the coastal stations (Larnaca and Paralimni). Monthly average daily PAR increased from 19.1 mol m⁻² d⁻¹ (in December) to 59.6 mol m⁻² d⁻¹ (in June). The annual average value of fFEC at the five observation sites ranges from 1.82 to 2.03 mol M J⁻¹, in accordance to what is observed in most parts of the world. The highest appeared in the coastal sites of Larnaca and Paralimni due to the presence of high water vapour atmospheric concentrations. The monthly daily average at Larnaca of fFEC remained almost constant throughout the year. It was also discovered that fFEC generally decreased with sky conditions changing from overcast skies to clear skies (Table 4 and Figure 11), which may due to the strong absorption and scattering effects of clouds on longer wavelengths.

Elevation plays a significant role on the values of the above variables. As a general trend, fFEC followed the order Clear<Partly cloudy<Cloudy (Figure 15b). In all cases fFEC was decreased with elevation but with a different rate. A slight negative slope is observed for global radiation in January, while in the other seasons the slope is zero or slightly positive. On the other hand, PPFD is decreased with elevation with almost similar slope in all the months (Figure 16a).

Where \( n \) is the number of data pairs, \( E_i \) is the ith estimated PAR irradiance with the given model, and \( M_i \) is the ith measured PAR irradiance value.

All the models underestimate slightly PAR hourly values as it is indicated by the negative values of MBE. All the models showed high coefficients of determination \( (R^2) \) (close to 1), which indicates that the proposed models are suitable for predicting hourly PAR values. The linear and multilinear models (models 1 to 3) have the same coefficient of determination. The relative error values for the first five models range between 3.3% and 4.5%, while the sixth model showed higher relative error (8.4%). In all cases the slopes of the linear regressions are close to 1. Therefore, the performances of the linear and multilinear models are superior with respect to their relative errors. The power law models (4 to 6) are mainly based on the estimation of \( k_e \) and \( k_{PAR} \) indices.

### Conclusion

PAR is a key parameter that controls many physical and ecological processes. PAR is an essential parameter used in studies on radiation balance and agrometeorological modelling. Therefore, the study of PAR variability and the development of PAR estimation method are critical in climate research and ecological modelling. It is expressed either in terms of photosynthetic photon flux density (PPFD, μmol m⁻² s⁻¹), since photosynthesis is a quantum process, or in terms of photosynthetic radiation flux density (PAR irradiance, W m⁻²), which is more suitable for energy balance studies. It can be also expressed as a fractional energy of PAR to global solar radiation (fPAR), or as a fraction of photon flux/energy conversion of PAR (fFEC, μmol J⁻¹ or mol MJ⁻¹). In this study, three years of hourly PAR and global irradiance measured at Larnaca (coastal location) are used to examine daily/monthly PAR variations at this station. Furthermore, the study compares the PAR values and the above ratios with other stations operated in different climate conditions.

### Table 5: Validations of estimated hourly PAR under all sky conditions using the validation data set of the year 2015 at Larnaca, where \( e \) and \( f \) is the slope and the intercept of linear regression of estimated vs measured PAR values. MBE and RMSE are expressed in W m⁻².

| Models | Equation | Parameters | Type   | a       | b       | c       | d       | R²/S   |
|--------|----------|------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| Model_1 | 15       | G          | Linear | 0.440   |         |         |         | 0.998  |
| Model_2 | 16       | G, k_e     | Multilinear | 0.451   | -17.760 | 5.434  |         | 0.993  |
| Model_3 | 17       | G, k_e, e  | Multilinear | 0.449   | -16.66  | 0.257  | 1.134  | 0.993  |
| Model_4 | 18       | k_e, m     | Power  | 0.934   | 0.962   | -0.021 |         | 0.0245 |
| Model_5 | 23b      | m          | Power  | 446.99  | -1.136  |         |         | 19.114 |
| Model_6 | 24       | p_e, k_e   | Power  | 0.985   | 0.178   | 0.942  |         | 10.435 |
| Model_7 | 26b      | k_e        | Cubic  | 30.12   | 254.4   | 834.9  | -579.0 | 0.995  |
| Model_8 | 25       | k_e, cos(SZA) | Power | 0.996   |         |         |         | 16.240 |

The second objective of this study is the analysis of the statistical characteristics of both hourly and daily values of PAR related parameters including the statistical relationships between PAR and other radiation components. The annual mean daily PAR value for Larnaca is about 40 mol m⁻² d⁻¹, while in the rest observation sites it ranged between 31.7 to 36.9mol m⁻² d⁻¹. The highest values are recorded in the coastal stations (Larnaca and Paralimni). Monthly average daily PAR increased from 19.1 mol m⁻² d⁻¹ (in December) to 59.6 mol m⁻² d⁻¹ (in June). The annual average value of fFEC at the five observation sites ranges from 1.82 to 2.03 mol M J⁻¹, in accordance to what is observed in most parts of the world. The highest appeared in the coastal sites of Larnaca and Paralimni due to the presence of high water vapour atmospheric concentrations. The monthly daily average at Larnaca of fFEC remained almost constant throughout the year. It was also discovered that fFEC generally decreased with sky conditions changing from overcast skies to clear skies (Table 4 and Figure 11), which may due to the strong absorption and scattering effects of clouds on longer wavelengths.

Elevation plays a significant role on the values of the above variables. As a general trend, fFEC followed the order Clear<Partly cloudy<Cloudy (Figure 15b). In all cases fFEC was decreased with elevation but with a different rate. A slight negative slope is observed for global radiation in January, while in the other seasons the slope is zero or slightly positive. On the other hand, PPFD is decreased with elevation with almost similar slope in all the months (Figure 16a).
The third objective was to evaluate the performance of various models in estimating PAR irradiances under all-sky conditions. For this purpose, the first two years of the data were used as a training data set to calibrate well known models and the last year’s data were used to evaluate the performance of the selected models to calculate PAR values. The parameterizing process for the hourly data set was implemented for the coastal station of Larnaca. For this purposes, one linear, two multilinear and three power low models were investigated. The linear model was based on the close relationship between PAR and global irradiance, while the multilinear models are based also on clearness index and water vapour pressure. On the other hand the power law models are mainly based on the clearness index, optical air mass and the cosine of the solar zenith angle, i.e., on factors which affect the transmissivity of the solar radiation through the atmosphere.

The performance of the models was based on the coefficient of determination ($R^2$), the Mean Bias Error (MBE), the Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) and the Relative Error (RE) between the estimated and measured hourly values. All the models showed high coefficients of determination ($R^2$) close to 1), which indicates that the proposed models are suitable for predicting hourly PAR values. The linear and multilinear models (models 1 to 3) have the same coefficient of determination (0.996). The relative error values for the first five models ranged between 3.3% and 4.5%, while the sixth model showed higher relative error (8.4%). In all cases the slopes of the linear regressions are close to 1. Therefore, the performances of the linear and multilinear models are superior with respect to their relative errors.

The analysis of this article improves our understanding of PAR variability and its relationship with $G$ under various sky conditions in Cyprus. The proposed models may play fundamental role in many fields such as terrestrial ecosystem processes, atmospheric environment and agricultural production. Moreover, the models should be tested with data from the rest observation sites which have different climate conditions. Since most meteorological stations are equipped with global solar radiation sensors, then the developed models can be used to estimate accurately PAR irradiances at various locations in Cyprus. Therefore, the productivity of the different regions of the island could be effectively assessed.

**Nomenclature:**

- $CDF$ = Cumulative density function
- $cf$ = Conversion factor (4.57 $\mu$mol J$^{-1}$)
- $e$ = Screen level water vapour pressure (hPa)
- $e_s$ = Saturated screen level water vapour pressure (hPa)
- $E_i$ = Estimated irradiance [W m$^{-2}$]
- $fFEC$ = Fraction of photon flux to energy conversion of PAR [mol J$^{-1}$] (PAR/G)
- $fFEC_d$ = Daily fraction of photon flux to energy conversion of PAR [molMJ$^{-1}$]
- $fPAR$ = Fractional energy of PAR to global solar radiation
- $fPAR_d$ = Daily fractional energy of PAR to global solar radiation
- $G$ = Global solar irradiance [W m$^{-2}$]
- $G_d$ = Daily global solar irradiance [MJ m$^{-2}$]
- $G_0$ = Extraterrestrial irradiance [W m$^{-2}$]
- $G_{ad}$ = Daily extraterrestrial irradiation (ETR) [MJ m$^{-2}$]
- $G_w$ = Solar constant [1367 W m$^{-2}$]
- $k_i$ = Hourly clearness index ($G/G_0$)
- $K_T$ = Daily clearness index ($G/G_{ad}$)
- $k_{PAR}$ = Hourly PAR clearness index (PAR/PAR$_0$)
- $K_{PAR}$ = Daily PAR clearness index (PAR$_d$/PAR$_{ad}$)
- $L$ = Eccentricity
- $LPR$ = Lost PAR radiation (%)
- $m$ = Optical air mass
- $M_i$ = Measured irradiance [W m$^{-2}$]
- $MBE$ = Mean Bias Error
- $n$ = Number of observations
- $N$ = Non missing observations
- $N'$ = Missing observations
- $n/N$ = Daily relative sunshine duration
- $PAR$ = Photosynthetic active duration
- $PAR_c$ = Clear sky photosynthetic active radiation
- $PAR_s$ = Maximum photosynthetic active radiation
- $PAR_E$ = Photosynthetic active radiation flux density [W m$^{-2}$]
- $PAR_{Ec}$ = Clear sky photosynthetic active radiation flux density [W m$^{-2}$]
- $PAR_{E_s}$ = Maximum photosynthetic active radiation flux density [W m$^{-2}$]
- $PAR_{E_a}$ = Photosynthetic active solar radiation constant (536.64 W m$^{-2}$)
- $PAR_{Ed}$ = Extraterrestrial photosynthetic active radiation flux density [W m$^{-2}$]
- $PAR_{E_s}$ = Daily photosynthetic active radiation [MJ m$^{-2}$]
- $PAR_{Ed}$ = Daily extraterrestrial photosynthetic active radiation [MJ m$^{-2}$]
- $PPFD$ = Photosynthetic photon flux density [$\mu$mol m$^{-2}$ s$^{-1}$] or [mol m$^{-2}$ h$^{-1}$]
- $PPFD_d$ = Daily photosynthetic photon flux density [mol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$]
- $PPFD_s$ = Photosynthetic active solar radiation constant [2443.3 $\mu$mol m$^{-2}$ s$^{-1}$]
- $Q_1$ = First Quartile
- $Q_3$ = Third Quartile
- $RMSE$ = Root mean square error
- $RE$ = Relative error (%)
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Citation: Pashiardis S, Kalogirou SA and Pelengaris A. Characteristics of Photosynthetic Active Radiation (PAR) Through Statistical Analysis at Larnaca, Cyprus. SM J Biometrics Biostat. 2017; 2(2): 1009.
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