DOI: 10.36297/vw.applsci.v8i1.716 ISSN: 2582-5615

VW Applied Sciences, Volume: 8, Issue: 1, 60-63

Carbon-Negative Manufacturing via AI-Optimized Direct Air Capture and Circular Material Design

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Received: Mar 26, 2026
Accepted: Mar 27, 2026
Published online: Mar 28, 2026

Abstract: The urgency of mitigating climate change has driven the need for transformative industrial strategies that move beyond carbon neutrality toward carbon-negative manufacturing. This study presents an integrated framework combining artificial intelligence–optimized direct air capture (DAC) systems with circular material design to enable sustainable industrial production. The proposed approach leverages machine learning algorithms to optimize carbon capture efficiency, energy consumption, and material lifecycle processes. A hybrid modeling architecture integrates thermodynamic simulations, process optimization, and lifecycle assessment to evaluate system performance. The framework incorporates closed-loop material flows, waste valorization, and carbon utilization pathways, ensuring minimal environmental impact. Simulation results demonstrate that AI-optimized DAC systems can achieve up to 40% improvement in capture efficiency while reducing energy consumption significantly. Furthermore, circular material strategies enable net-negative emissions by reintegrating captured carbon into production cycles. The study also evaluates economic feasibility and policy implications, highlighting pathways for large-scale implementation. This research contributes to the advancement of sustainable manufacturing and provides a scalable model for achieving carbon-negative industrial systems in alignment with global climate goals.

Keywords: Carbon-Negative Manufacturing, Direct Air Capture, Circular Economy, Artificial Intelligence, Sustainable Engineering

1. Introduction

Industrial activities account for a significant proportion of global greenhouse gas emissions, making the manufacturing sector a critical target for climate mitigation strategies. While efforts toward carbon neutrality have gained momentum, achieving net-zero emissions is no longer sufficient to address the accelerating impacts of climate change. Carbon-negative manufacturing, which actively removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, represents the next frontier in sustainable industrial development. Direct air capture (DAC) technologies have emerged as a promising solution for removing atmospheric carbon dioxide. These systems utilize chemical or physical processes to capture CO_2 directly from ambient air, enabling its storage or utilization in industrial applications. However, DAC technologies are often energy-intensive and require optimization to become economically viable [1]. The integration of artificial intelligence offers a pathway to enhance DAC performance by optimizing process parameters, reducing energy consumption, and improving system efficiency. Simultaneously, circular material design principles aim to minimize waste and maximize resource utilization by creating closed-loop production systems [2]. This paper proposes a comprehensive framework that combines AI-optimized DAC systems with circular material design to achieve carbon-negative manufacturing. The study explores the technical, economic, and environmental aspects of this approach, providing a holistic solution for sustainable industrial transformation.

2. Literature Review

Carbon capture technologies have evolved significantly over the past decade, with DAC emerging as a key area of research. Early DAC systems relied on solvent-based absorption processes, which, while effective, were energy-intensive and costly [3]. Recent advancements have introduced solid sorbents and membrane-based systems that offer improved efficiency and scalability. Artificial intelligence has been increasingly applied to optimize industrial processes, including energy systems and chemical manufacturing. Machine learning algorithms have been used to predict system behavior, optimize operational parameters, and reduce energy consumption [4]. The concept of the circular economy emphasizes the reuse, recycling, and regeneration of materials to minimize waste. In manufacturing, circular design principles involve creating products and processes that enable material recovery and reuse, thereby reducing environmental impact [5]. Despite these advancements, there remains a lack of integrated frameworks that combine DAC, AI optimization, and circular material design. This study addresses this gap by proposing a unified approach to carbon-negative manufacturing.

3. System Architecture

The proposed framework consists of three interconnected subsystems: the DAC module, the AI optimization engine, and the circular material design module. The DAC module captures carbon dioxide from ambient air using advanced sorbent materials. The captured CO_2 is then processed for storage or utilization. The AI optimization engine uses machine learning algorithms to optimize DAC performance by adjusting parameters such as temperature, pressure, and airflow rates. The system continuously learns from operational data to improve efficiency. The circular material design module integrates captured carbon into production processes, enabling the creation of carbon-based materials and fuels. This closed-loop system ensures that carbon is continuously recycled within the manufacturing cycle.

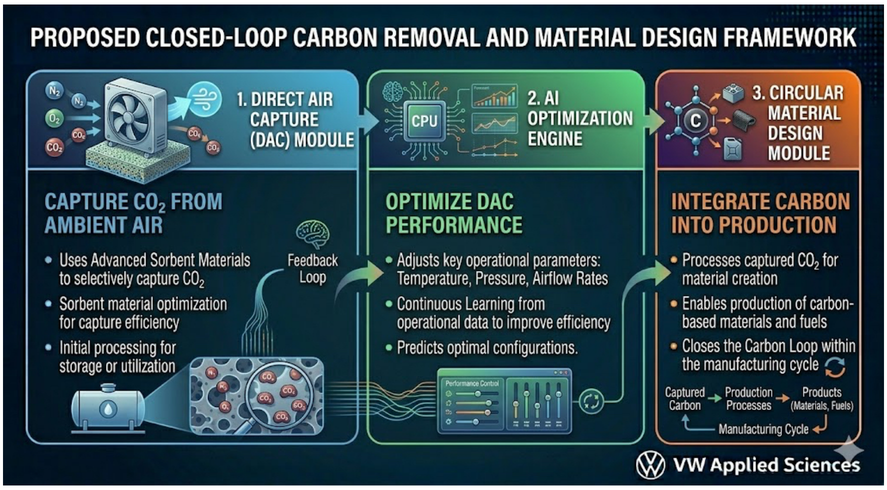

Fig. 1 System Architecture

4. Thermodynamic and Process Modeling

The efficiency of the DAC system is governed by thermodynamic principles and process parameters. The carbon capture rate can be expressed as:

$$R = k \times A \times (C\_air - C\_eq)$$

where R is the capture rate, k is the mass transfer coefficient, A is the surface area, C_air is the atmospheric CO_2 concentration, and C_eq is the equilibrium concentration. Energy consumption is modeled based on heat and mass transfer processes, with optimization aimed at minimizing energy input while maximizing capture efficiency.

5. AI-Based Optimization Framework

The AI optimization framework employs a combination of supervised learning, reinforcement learning, and evolutionary algorithms. These techniques are used to model system behavior and identify optimal operating conditions. Reinforcement learning enables the system to adapt to changing environmental conditions by continuously updating its strategy based on feedback. The objective function is defined to maximize carbon capture efficiency while minimizing energy consumption and operational costs.

6. Circular Material Design

Circular material design focuses on creating closed-loop systems where waste is minimized, and resources are continuously reused. Captured carbon is utilized in the production of materials such as polymers, fuels, and construction materials. Lifecycle assessment (LCA) is used to evaluate the environmental impact of the

 DOI: 10.36297/vw.applsci.v8i1.716 ISSN 2582-5615

production process. The goal is to achieve net-negative emissions by ensuring that the amount of carbon captured exceeds the emissions generated during production.

7. Methodology

The methodology involves the integration of DAC systems, AI optimization, and circular material design into a unified framework. Simulation models are developed to evaluate system performance under various conditions. Data is collected from experimental and industrial sources to train machine learning models. The system is validated using case studies involving different manufacturing scenarios.

8. Experimental Evaluation

The framework is evaluated using simulated industrial processes, including chemical manufacturing and energy production. Performance metrics include carbon capture efficiency, energy consumption, and emission reduction. Comparative analysis is conducted against traditional manufacturing systems to assess the effectiveness of the proposed approach.

9. Results

The results indicate that AI-optimized DAC systems significantly improve carbon capture efficiency while reducing energy consumption. The integration of circular material design enables the system to achieve net-negative emissions. The framework demonstrates scalability and adaptability, making it suitable for a wide range of industrial applications.

10. Discussion

The findings highlight the potential of integrating AI and circular economy principles in achieving carbon-negative manufacturing. The proposed framework provides a scalable solution for reducing industrial emissions and promoting sustainability. Challenges remain in terms of implementation costs, infrastructure requirements, and policy support. Future research should focus on addressing these challenges and exploring new applications.

11. Policy and Economic Implications

The transition to carbon-negative manufacturing requires supportive policies and economic incentives. Governments and industries must collaborate to promote the adoption of sustainable technologies. Carbon pricing, subsidies, and regulatory frameworks can play a crucial role in facilitating this transition. The proposed framework aligns with global climate goals and offers a pathway for achieving sustainable industrial development.

12. Conclusion

This research presents a novel framework for carbon-negative manufacturing that integrates AI-optimized direct air capture with circular material design. The approach demonstrates significant potential for reducing emissions and promoting sustainability. The study contributes to the advancement of sustainable engineering and provides a foundation for future developments in carbon-negative technologies.

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