

Applications Information

OPERATION

1.0 Ratiometric Conversion

The ADC0816, ADC0817 is designed as a complete Data Acquisition System (DAS) for ratiometric conversion systems. In ratiometric systems, the physical variable being measured is expressed as a percentage of full-scale which is not necessarily related to an absolute standard. The voltage input to the ADC0816 is expressed by the equation

$$\frac{V_{IN}}{V_{fs} - V_Z} = \frac{D_X}{D_{MAX} - D_{MIN}} \quad (1)$$

V_{IN} = Input voltage into the ADC0816

V_{fs} = Full-scale voltage

V_Z = Zero voltage

D_X = Data point being measured

D_{MAX} = Maximum data limit

D_{MIN} = Minimum data limit

A good example of a ratiometric transducer is a potentiometer used as a position sensor. The position of the wiper is directly proportional to the output voltage which is a ratio of the full-scale voltage across it. Since the data is represented as a proportion of full-scale, reference requirements are greatly reduced, eliminating a large source of error and cost for many applications. A major advantage of the ADC0816, ADC0817 is that the input voltage range is equal to the supply range so the transducers can be connected directly across the supply and their outputs connected directly into the multiplexer inputs, (Figure 9).

Ratiometric transducers such as potentiometers, strain gauges, thermistor bridges, pressure transducers, etc., are suitable for measuring proportional relationships; however, many types of measurements must be referred to an absolute standard such as voltage or current. This means a system reference must be used which relates the full-scale voltage to the standard volt. For example, if $V_{CC} = V_{REF} = 5.12V$, then the full-scale range is divided into 256 standard steps. The smallest standard step is 1 LSB which is then 20 mV.

2.0 Resistor Ladder Limitations

The voltages from the resistor ladder are compared to the selected input 8 times in a conversion. These voltages are coupled to the comparator via an analog switch tree which is referenced to the supply. The voltages at the top, center and bottom of the ladder must be controlled to maintain proper operation.

The top of the ladder, Ref(+), should not be more positive than the supply, and the bottom of the ladder, Ref(-), should not be more negative than ground. The center of the ladder voltage must also be near the center of the supply because the analog switch tree changes from N-channel switches to P-channel switches. These limitations are automatically satisfied in ratiometric systems and can be easily met in ground referenced systems.

Figure 10 shows a ground referenced system with a separate supply and reference. In this system, the supply must be trimmed to match the reference voltage. For instance, if a 5.12V reference is used, the supply should be adjusted to the same voltage within 0.1V.

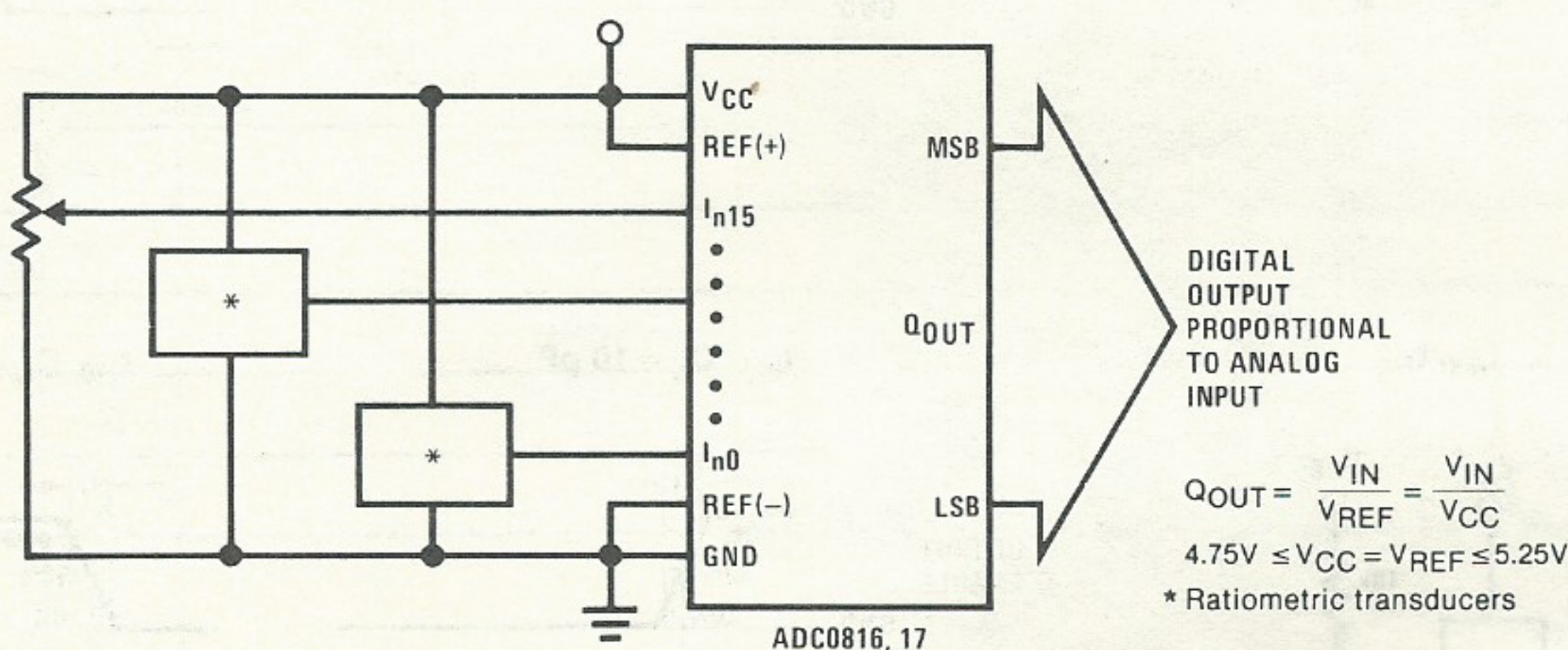


FIGURE 9. Ratiometric Conversion System