



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***BIODIESEL SYNTHESIS FROM PFAD USING HETEROGENEOUS
SULFONATED-GLUCOSE CATALYSTS***

KEFAS HARUNA MAVAKUMBA

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By

KEFAS HARUNA MAVAKUMBA

**Thesis Submitted To the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

November 2018

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the following persons:

My beloved parent;

My dearest wife and children



Abstract of thesis presented to the senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

BIODIESEL SYNTHESIS FROM PFAD USING HETEROGENEOUS SULFONATED-GLUCOSE CATALYSTS

By

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November 2018

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The use of heterogeneous catalysts for biodiesel production is known to mitigate technical issues associated with the use of homogeneous catalysts which are contributed mainly by costly separations and purification steps. However, the limitation in catalytic active sites and stability are issues that deter the effectiveness of the heterogeneous system. In principle, the sugar carbon based catalysts can address these problems. In this study, sulfonated carbonized glucose catalyst was synthesized and utilized for biodiesel synthesis through a single step esterification of non-edible palm fatty acid distillate (PFAD) in an oscillatory flow reactor (OFR). The optimum sulfonation conditions obtained from the use of RSM-CCRD in the catalyst synthesis were 11.25 % of $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$ concentration, 5.34 hr of time, 25.16 ml of concentrated H_2SO_4 and 151.15 °C of temperature which achieved 93.30 % free fatty acid (FFA) conversion and 91.87 % FAME yield.

The optimized sulfonated catalyst underwent detailed characterization utilizing FTIR, XRD, TGA, TPD- NH_3 , FESEM, EDX and BET. Results showed it had a stable amorphous polycyclic aromatic structure with BET surface area of 4.47 m^2/g and 5.92 mmol/g acid sites density thereby exhibiting high catalytic activity in the esterification reaction. The optimization of process conditions in the batch reactor achieved 93.23 % FFA conversion at optimized conditions of 4 wt.% of sulfonated catalyst, 65 °C reaction temperature, 10:1 methanol to PFAD molar ratio and 4 h of reaction time. The catalyst was active up to five cycles re-uses without reactivation.

The kinetics study of the esterification of PFAD and methanol using the sulfonated glucose acid catalyst performed in the batch reflux reactor proved that it was an

irreversible reaction due to the use of excess methanol. The experimental data was best interpreted with bimolecular (equimolar) second order model. The rate constant of the reaction (k) from the kinetics study determined at various temperatures ranged from 0.0002 to 0.00053 and the activation energy was calculated to be 55.08 kJmol⁻¹. The developed kinetics model and the experimental data are in good agreement.

The biodiesel production with optimized solid acid catalyst in OFR was successfully performed. The OFR achieved maximum of 97.1 % FFA conversion to FAME and >94 % yield. The optimum operating conditions at optimum conversion were 2.5 wt.% of sulfonated catalyst, 60 °C temperature, 9:1 methanol to PFAD molar ratio, 6 Hz oscillation frequency, and 50 min reaction time. The sulfonated catalyst showed reasonable catalytic activity for up to four cycle's reuse in the OFR achieving about 80 % conversion at the fourth cycle. The performance of OFR was better than the reflux batch reactor in terms of conversion and operating conditions due to the efficient fluid mixing mechanism which resulted in reaction time reduction as well as enhancing heat and mass transfer.

In addition, the properties of the PFAD FAME produced from the OFR showed a pour point and cloud point of 12 °C and 15 °C, respectively. The low temperature characteristics of the biodiesel were slightly above the ASTM standard due to high FFA constituent of the PFAD. Most of the other properties are within standard specifications for ASTM D6751 and EN 14214. The biodiesel produced is not suitable for winter grade biodiesel due to its high pour point.

In conclusion, the synthesized modified sulfonated glucose catalyst has proven to be a catalytically active and stable heterogeneous acid catalyst for biodiesel synthesis from high FFA PFAD feedstock especially in the OFR system.

Abstrak tesis yang disampaikan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

SINTESIS BIODIESEL DARIPADA PFAD DENGAN MENGGUNAKAN PEMANGKIN GLUKOSA SULFONAT HETEROGEN

Oleh

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Penggunaan pemangkin heterogen adalah untuk mengurangkan isu-isu teknikal yang berkaitan dengan penggunaan pemangkin homogen dalam sintesis biodiesel disebabkan oleh langkah pemisahan dan pembersihan yang agak mahal. Walaupun penggunaan pemangkin heterogen mungkin telah mengurangkan masalah ini, keterbatasan pada tapak aktif dan kestabilan aktif disebabkan oleh pendedahan kepada medium persekitaran mungkin tidak sesuai untuk industri. Secara dasarnya, pemangkin berasaskan glukosa berkarbonasi dapat mengatasi permasalahan ini. Dalam kajian ini, pemangkin sulfonat asid pepejal glukosa berkarbonasi telah disintesis melalui satu langkah tindak balas esterifikasi distilat asid lemak sawit tidak boleh dimakan (PFAD) dengan metanol dalam reaktor aliran ayunan (OFR). Keadaan sulfonasi yang optimum diperolehi dengan menggunakan kaedah permukaan gerak balas dengan reka bentuk putaran komposit pusat (RSM-CCRD), dengan kepekatan $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$ sebanyak 11.25 %, masa selama 5.34 jam, isipadu H_2SO_4 sebanyak 25.16 ml dan suhu 151.15 °C yang mana telah mencapai 93.30 % penukaran asid lemak bebas (FFA) dan 91.87 % penghasilan FAME.

Pemangkin sulfonat yang telah optimum dicirikan dengan menggunakan FTIR, XRD, TGA, TPD- NH_3 , FESEM, EDX dan BET. Pemangkin yang dioptimumkan mempunyai struktur aromatik polietiklik amorf yang stabil dengan luas permukaan BET sebanyak 4.47 m^2/g dan ketumpatan tapak asid sebanyak 5.92 mmol/g dengan itu mempamerkan aktiviti pemangkin yang tinggi dalam reaksi esterifikasi. 93.23% asid lemak terbebas (FFA) berjaya diperolehi melalui parameter proses yang optimum pada suhu tindak balas 65 °C, 10:1 nisbah metanol kepada PFAD selama 4 jam masa tindak balas dengan kehadiran 4 % pemangkin sulfonat. Pemangkin masih boleh digunakan sebanyak lima kitaran tanpa perlu diaktifkan.

Kajian kinetik bagi esterifikasi PFAD menggunakan pemangkin asid pepejal glukosa karbonil sulfonat yang dijalankan di dalam reaktor refluks menunjukkan tindak balas tidak berbalik kerana penggunaan metanol yang berlebihan. Data kajian diinterpretasi dengan baik menggunakan model order kedua bimolekular (equimolar). Pemalar kadar tindak balas (k) dari kajian kinetik yang diperolehi pada pelbagai suhu adalah dari 0.0002 sehingga 0.00053 dan tenaga pengaktifan sebanyak 55.08 kJmol^{-1} berjaya dikira. Model kinetik yang dihasilkan adalah bertepatan dengan data yang diperolehi daripada eksperimen.

Penghasilan biodiesel dengan pemangkin asid pepejal yang optimum menggunakan OFR berjaya dilaksanakan. OFR mencapai penukaran maksimum FFA kepada FAME sebanyak 97.1% dan hasil melebihi 94 %. Keadaan operasi yang optimum ialah 2.5 % berat pemangkin sulfonat, suhu 60°C , 9: 1 nisbah molar metanol kepada PFAD, frekuensi ayunan 6 Hz, dan masa reaksi 50 min pada penukaran optimum. Ujian keupayaan penggunaan semula pemangkin dalam OFR menunjukkan aktiviti pemangkin yang tinggi sehingga empat kitaran penggunaan dan berjaya mencapai 80% penukaran pada kitaran keempat. Prestasi OFR adalah lebih baik daripada reaktor kelompok refluks dari segi penukaran dan keadaan operasi disebabkan oleh kejayaan mencapai pencampuran bendalir yang seragam dan efisien melalui gerak cairan berayun yang berinteraksi di plat orifis di dalam tiub pantas mengurangkan masa untuk melengkapkan tindak balas serta pemindahan haba dan pemindahan jisim dipertingkatkan.

Sebagai tambahan, ciri-ciri PFAD FAME yang dihasilkan dari OFR menunjukkan keputusan titik tuang dan titik awan masing-masing 12°C dan 15°C . Ciri-ciri ini telah melepasi sedikit standard ASTM kerana kandungan FFA tinggi di dalam PFAD manakala kebanyakan ciri-ciri lain telah menepati spesifikasi standard untuk ASTM D6751 dan EN 14214. Biodiesel yang dihasilkan adalah tidak sesuai untuk gred biodiesel musim sejuk kerana titik tuang yang tinggi.

Kesimpulannya, penggunaan pemangkin asid pepejal glukosa sulfonat yang diubahsuai telah terbukti sebagai pemangkin aktif dan asid pemangkin heterogen yang stabil bagi sintesis biodiesel dari FFA PFAD terutamanya bagi sistem OFR.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	i
ABSTRAK	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
APPROVAL	vi
DECLARATION	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xviii
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem statements	3
1.3 Objectives of the study	5
1.4 Scope of the study	5
1.5 Thesis outline	6
 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	 7
2.1 Background and historical development of biodiesel	7
2.2 Biodiesel development in Malaysia	9
2.3 Biodiesel feedstocks	10
2.4 Palm fatty acid distillate as biodiesel feedstock	10
2.5 Common techniques in biodiesel production	12
2.5.1 Transesterification	13
2.5.2 Esterification	15
2.6 Homogeneous catalysis in biodiesel production	16
2.7 Heterogeneous catalysis in biodiesel production	19
2.8 Heterogeneous carbon-based acid catalyst	22
2.9 Carbohydrate based solid acid catalyst synthesis	22
2.10 Different sulfonation methods for converting carbon materials	24
2.10.1 Sulfonation methods for converting MWCNTs	24
2.10.2 Sulfonation of sugar carbon material into acid catalyst	25
2.11 Effect of reaction parameters for biodiesel production	26
2.11.1 Temperature of reaction	26
2.11.2 Methanol to oil molar ratio	27
2.11.3 Catalyst amount	27
2.11.4 Reaction time	28
2.11.5 Mixing rate	28
2.12 Application of oscillatory flow reactor in biodiesel synthesis	31
2.12.1 Mixing mechanism of fluid in OFRs	33
2.12.2 Suspension of solid particles	34
2.13 Processing and product analysis	35

2.14	Properties of biodiesel fuel	36
2.15	Optimization method: Response Surface methodology (RSM)	39
2.16	Reaction kinetics	40
2.16.1	Kinetics of esterification	42
2.16.2	Arrhenius equation and activation energy	44
3	MATERIALS AND METHODS	45
3.1	Introduction	45
3.2	Materials and equipment	47
3.3	Catalysts preparation by calcination and sulfonation of glucose material	48
3.3.1	Calcination of raw glucose material	48
3.3.2	Sulfonation of incomplete carbonized glucose	49
3.4	Design of experiments: sulfonation of incomplete carbonized glucose by RSM	49
3.4.1	Statistical Analysis	50
3.4.2	Numerical optimization of sulfonation variables	51
3.5	Characterization of incomplete carbonized glucose and optimized sulfonated glucose solid acid catalyst	51
3.5.1	X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis	51
3.5.2	Fourier transform-infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy	51
3.5.3	Thermogravimetric analyser (TGA)	52
3.5.4	Ammonia-temperature programmed desorption (TPD-NH ₃) analysis	52
3.5.5	Field emission scanning electron microscope and energy dispersive x-ray microanalyzer (FESEM-EDX)	52
3.5.6	Brunauer Emmett Teller (BET) surface area analysis	53
3.6	Palm fatty acid distillate (PFAD) feedstock analysis	53
3.6.1	Fatty acid profile	53
3.6.2	Saponification value	53
3.6.3	Moisture content	54
3.6.4	Iodine value	54
3.6.5	Free fatty acid value	55
3.7	Esterification of PFAD with sulfonated glucose catalyst in batch reactor	55
3.7.1	Catalyst reusability analysis and leaching test in batch reactor	57
3.7.2	Analysis of synthesized fatty acid methyl ester (FAME)	57
3.8	Sampling method for kinetic model study in batch reactor	58
3.8.1	Determination of kinetics model and reaction rate constant	58
3.8.2	Determination of activation energy	59
3.9	Esterification reaction of PFAD with sulfonated glucose catalyst in OFR	59
3.9.1	Catalyst reusability analysis and leaching test in OFR	60
3.9.2	Analysis of synthesized fatty acid methyl ester (FAME) from OFR	61

3.10	OFR methyl ester (fuel) properties testing	61
3.10.1	Density	61
3.10.2	Kinematic viscosity	61
3.10.3	Flash point	62
3.10.4	Cloud point	62
3.10.5	Pour point	62
3.10.6	Acid number	63
3.10.7	Copper strip corrosion test	63
3.10.8	Calorific value test (heat of combustion)	64
3.10.9	Water content test by Coulometric Karl Fischer titration	64
3.10.10	Cetane index	65
3.10.11	Carbon residue	65
3.10.12	Sulphated ash	66
3.10.13	Phosphorus	66
3.10.14	Boiling point (distillation)	66
3.10.15	Oxidation stability	67
4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	68
4.1	Introduction	68
4.2	Characterization analysis of PFAD feedstock	68
4.3	Optimization of sulfonation process of carbonized glucose by RSM	69
4.4	Biodiesel conversion at numerically optimized conditions	76
4.5	Characterization of incomplete carbonized glucose and optimized sulfonated glucose solid acid catalyst	77
4.5.1	X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis	78
4.5.2	Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometer	79
4.5.3	Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA)	80
4.5.4	Temperature programmed ammonia desorption (TPD-NH ₃) analysis	81
4.5.5	Field emission scanning electron microscope and energy dispersive x-ray microanalyzer (FESEM-EDX)	83
4.5.6	Brunauer Emmett Teller (BET) surface area analysis	84
4.6	Optimization of the esterification of PFAD in batch reflux reactor	85
4.6.1	Effect of catalyst loading	85
4.6.2	Effect of methanol to PFAD molar ratio	86
4.6.3	Effect of reaction temperature	86
4.6.4	Effect of reaction time	87
4.7	Optimized sul-ICG catalyst reusability and deactivation test	88
4.8	Kinetics study of PFAD esterification batch reflux reactor	90
4.8.1	Determination of kinetics models and rate constants	90
4.8.2	Determination of activation energy	96
4.9	Optimization of esterification of PFAD in OFR	97
4.9.1	Effect of catalyst loading	97
4.9.2	Effect of oscillation frequency	98
4.9.3	Effect of methanol to PFAD molar ratio	99

4.9.4	Effect of reaction temperature	100
4.9.5	Effect of residence time (reaction time)	101
4.9.6	Biodiesel analysis at optimized conditions in OFR	102
4.10	Optimized sul-ICG catalyst reusability and deactivation test in OFR	103
4.11	Fuel (biodiesel) properties test from OFR	105
5	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	111
5.1	Conclusion	111
5.2	Recommendations	112
	REFERENCES	114
	APPENDICES	135
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	140
	LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	141

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Key milestone of the biodiesel industrial development	8
2.2 General properties of PFAD feedstock	12
2.3 Sulfonation methods for converting MWCNTs	25
2.4 Summary of reported biodiesel production	30
2.5 Biodiesel fuel properties standards requirement and test methods	39
3.1 Sulfonation factors and their levels used in the optimization of sulfonation method	50
3.2 Copper strip classifications	64
4.1 Characteristic analysis of PFAD feedstock	69
4.2 Experimental runs with output response variables based on the central composite design	71
4.3 Sequential model sum of squares	72
4.4 ANOVA analysis results for response surface quadratic model	73
4.5 FTIR spectrum results of ICG and optimized sul-ICG	79
4.6 Elemental, BET surface area and acid site density analysis of ICG and optimized sul-ICG	83
4.7 Elemental analysis, BET surface area and acid density of reused optimized sul-ICG catalyst in batch reactor	89
4.8 Reaction rate constant at different temperature for the FFA esterification	96
4.9 Elemental analysis, BET surface area and acid density of reused optimized sul-ICG catalyst in OFR	104
4.10 Physical and chemical properties of biodiesel	106

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Prices of PFAD, CPO and RBD palm oil	11
2.2 Overall reaction transesterification reactions of triglycerides with methanol	14
2.3 Esterification of fatty acids	15
2.4 Feasible reaction mechanism for homogeneous base-catalyzed transesterification reaction	17
2.5 Feasible reaction mechanism of homogeneous acid catalyzed transesterification reaction	19
2.6 Feasible Reaction mechanism for heterogeneous acid catalyzed reaction	21
2.7 Schematic structure of sulfonated D-glucose carbon materials	23
2.8 Preparation step of sulfonated carbon-based material, (A) Pyrolysis, (B) carbonization, and (C) sulfonation	24
2.9 The oscillatory flow reactor (a) and the flow-pattern corresponding to a upstroke or down stroke current (b)	32
2.10 Stepwise reaction mechanism involving acidic sites catalysed esterification of carbon based catalyst and PFAD	42
2.11 Esterification reaction between free fatty acid and methanol	43
3.1 Flow chart of overall research framework	46
3.2 Schematic diagram of the oscillatory flow reactor system set up used for esterification reaction	48
3.3 Schematic diagram of batch reflux reactor for the synthesis of PFAD biodiesel	56
3.4 OFR experimental set up for the synthesis of PFAD biodiesel	60
4.1 GC-MS chromatogram analysis of PFAD feedstock	69
4.2 Response surface combined effect plots of the sulfonation variables	75

4.3	GC-FID chromatogram of methyl ester reference standard (above) and PFAD methyl ester produced using optimized sul-ICG at optimized predicted reaction conditions (below)	77
4.4	.XRD pattern of incomplete carbonized glucose (a) ICG and optimized sulfonated incomplete carbonized glucose catalyst (b) sul-ICG	78
4.5	FT-IR spectrum of the incomplete carbonized glucose (ICG) and optimized sulfonated incomplete carbonized glucose (sul-ICG) catalyst	80
4.6	TGA analysis of incomplete carbonized glucose (ICG) and optimized sulfonated incomplete carbonized glucose catalyst (sul-ICG)	80
4.7	TPD-NH ₃ analysis graph of incomplete carbonized glucose ICG above and optimized sulfonated incomplete carbonized glucose catalyst below	82
4.8	FESEM images of (a) incomplete carbonized glucose (ICG) before sulfonation and (b) optimized sulfonated incomplete carbonized glucose (sul--ICG)	83
4.9	EDX spectra of (a) incomplete carbonized glucose (ICG) before sulfonation and (b) optimized sulfonated incomplete carbonized glucose (sul--ICG)	84
4.10	Influence of catalyst loading on conversion (Esterification conditions: methanol to PFAD ratio 10:1, reaction temperature of 65 °C and reaction time of 4 h)	85
4.11	Influence of methanol to PFAD molar ratio on conversion (Esterification conditions: 4 wt.% catalyst loading, reaction temperature of 65 °C and reaction time of 4 h)	86
4.12	Influence of reaction temperature on conversion (Esterification conditions: methanol to PFAD ratio 10:1, 4 wt.% catalyst loading and reaction time of 4 h)	87
4.13	Influence of reaction time on conversion (Esterification conditions: methanol to PFAD ratio 10:1, reaction temperature of 65 °C and 4 wt.% catalyst loading)	88
4.14	Reusability of the optimized sul-ICG catalyst in the esterification of PFAD feedstock (esterification conditions: reaction temperature of 65°C; methanol to PFAD ratio of 10:1; catalyst loading of 4 wt.%; reaction time of 4 h)	89
4.15	Esterification of FFA to FAME	90

4.16	Effect of reaction temperature on conversion of fatty acid methyl ester	91
4.17	Graphs of 1CA versus time for pseudo first order at temperatures of 50, 55, 60 and 65 °C	93
4.18	Graphs of 1CA versus time for second order at temperatures of 50, 55, 60 and 65 °C	95
4.19	Graph of $\ln k$ vs $1/T$	96
4.20	Influence of catalyst loading on conversion in OFR (Esterification conditions: methanol to PFAD ratio 10:1, 5 Hz oscillation frequency, reaction temperature of 65 °C and reaction time of 60 min)	98
4.21	Influence of oscillation frequency on conversion in OFR (Esterification conditions: methanol to PFAD ratio 10:1, 2.5 wt.% catalyst loading, reaction temperature of 65 °C and reaction time of 60 min)	99
4.22	Influence of methanol to PFAD molar ratio on conversion in OFR (Esterification conditions: 6 Hz oscillation frequency, 2.5 wt.% catalyst loading, reaction temperature of 65 °C and reaction time of 60 min)	100
4.23	Influence of reaction temperature on conversion in OFR (Esterification conditions: 6 Hz oscillation frequency, 2.5 wt.% catalyst loading, 9:1 methanol to PFAD ratio and reaction time of 60 min)	101
4.24	Influence of residence time on conversion in OFR (Esterification conditions: 6 Hz oscillation frequency, 2.5 wt.% catalyst loading, 9:1 methanol to PFAD ratio and 60 °C reaction temperature)	102
4.25	GC-FID chromatogram of methyl ester reference standard (above) and PFAD methyl ester produced using optimized sul-ICG at optimized operating conditions in OFR (below)	103
4.26	Reusability of the optimized sulfonated catalyst in the esterification of PFAD feedstock in OFR (methanol to PFAD ratio of 9:1; 6 Hz oscillation frequency, reaction temperature of 60°C; catalyst load of 2.5 wt.%; reaction time of 50 min)	105

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis Of Variance
AOCS	American Oil Chemist's Society
ASTM	American Standard Testing Method
BET	Brunauer Emmett Teller
CCD	Central Composite Design
CCR	Canradson Carbon Residue
CCRD	Central Composite Rotatable Design
CFPP	Cold Filter Plugging Point
CHNS	Carbon Hydrogen Nitrogen Sulfur
CPO	Crude Palm Oil
DF	Diesel Fuel
DIN	Deutsches Institut für Normung (The German Institute for Standardization)
EDX	Energy Dispersive X-ray
EN	Euro Norm
ER	Eley-Rideal
FAEE	Fatty Acid Ethyl Ester
FAME	Fatty Acid Methyl Ester
FESEM	Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscope
FFA	Free Fatty Acid
FTIR	Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy
GC-FID	Gas Chromatography-Flame Ionization Detector
GC-MS	Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometer
ICG	Incomplete Carbonized Glucose

ITMA	Institute of Advance Technology
JME	Jatropha Methyl Ester
LH	Langmuir–Hinshelwood
MPOB	Malaysian Palm Oil Board
MWCNTs	Multi-Walled Carbon Nanotubes
OFR	Oscillation Flow Reactor
PFAD	Palm Fatty Acid Distillate
PFADME	Palm Fatty Acid Distillate Methyl Ester/Biodiesel
PME	Palm Methyl Ester
PH	Pseudo-Homogeneous
PP	Popken
RDB	Refined, Bleached Deodorized
Ren	Reynolds Number
Reo	Oscillatory Reynolds Number
RSM-CCRD	Response Surface Methodology- Central Composite Rotatable Design
St	Strouhal Number
TAG	Triglycerides
TGA	Thermogravimetric Analyzer
TPD-NH ₃	Temperature Programmed Desorption-Ammonia
USA	United States of America
XRD	X-ray diffraction

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Currently, the energy requirement of the world is mainly generated from non-renewable resources known as fossil fuels and the depletion of this sources is anticipated to occur in the near future (Borges and Díaz, 2012). For many decades, because of the excessive usage of the depleting oil reserves of the world by the ever-growing human population, energy crises have been confronting the world (Agarwal, 2007). It is known that the world economy is to a great extent contributed by the transportation of goods and services (Jothiramalingam and Wang, 2009; Sarkar *et al.*, 2012) and in related view, transportation is majorly dependant on energy coming from petroleum resources. In fact, 96 % of fossil fuels are used by the transportation sector with a yearly fuel consumption of 62 % world wide (Piriou *et al.*, 2013). This is also similar with other energy sources like natural gas, coal, nuclear energy and hydroelectricity (Sani *et al.*, 2014). Besides the rise in prices of fossil fuels, another disturbing issue is the environmental effect of fuels combustion emission on human life and the ecosystem. The use of petroleum products as fuels emits carbon dioxide gas (CO₂) into the atmosphere which contributes to an increase in earth's surface temperature due to increase in green house gas leading to serious climate change (Fauzi and Amin, 2013). These issues have necessitated the search to establish the renewable prominence which will supplement or replace fossil fuel. Biofuels have gained attention as an alternative to fossil fuel derivative which are sourced from different biomass. Nevertheless, it is required that biofuel should be economically benign, technically viable and readily accessible (Avhad and Marchetti, 2016).

Biodiesel, a promising substitute to petroleum diesel has received wide consideration in the last two decades because of its biodegradability, non toxic and renewable nature (Li *et al.*, 2010; Marchetti, 2013). In addition, biodiesel does not add to the total atmospheric CO₂ as CO₂ emitted from biodiesel combustion could be recycled by the process known as photosynthesis of the plant where the biodiesel is derived from. The influence of emissions from biodiesel combustion on the green house are therefore minimized (Peterson and Hustrulid, 1998). Moreover, biodiesel is known to contains 10 % oxygen, and its presence in the fuel accelerates combustion rate and reduces pollutants production such as carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matters and polycyclic aromatic compounds (Agarwal, 2007). Other advantageous benefits obtainable from the proper usage of biodiesel compared to the use of petroleum diesel includes ultra-low sulfur concentration, higher flash point, superior cetane number and better lubricating efficiency (Knothe, 2009; Marchetti, 2012). The characteristics mentioned above possessed by biodiesel makes it a proper substitute to petroleum diesel and presently the biodiesel blends are being utilized in many countries around the world in diesel engines.

Biodiesel is defined as the monoalkyl esters of long chain fatty acids obtained from renewable lipids such as vegetable oils and animal fats (Math *et al.*, 2010). The most commonly used method among the various routes for biodiesel production is the catalyst aided alcoholysis of lipid feedstock, which is the transesterification of triacylglycerol (TAGs) also known as triglycerides and esterification of free fatty acids (FFA). Various alcohol types utilized for biodiesel production include methanol, ethanol, propanol and butanol. Although, the most broadly used are methanol and ethanol. However, methanol is the frequently used alcohol for biodiesel synthesis because of its low cost and industrial availability (Lam *et al.*, 2010). The use of methanol in alcoholysis reaction of lipid, results in the formation of product known as fatty acid methyl esters (FAME) where as ethanol forms fatty acid ethyl esters (FAEE).

The choice of feedstock used for biodiesel synthesis especially for large scale production depends on its availability and geographical location. For instance, in the United States soybean oil is widely utilized (with feedstock up to 9431 million pounds in 2015), while in Europe rapeseed oil is frequently used (with 6.17 million tonnes making 55% of total production in 2014) and in Asia palm oil (Malaysia and Indonesia produced 17.5 and 20.9 million metric tonnes of crude palm oil, respectively in 2009) (Kapor *et al.*, 2017). Biodiesel is also produced from alternative feedstocks like refined, crude, waste, and non edible oils using various types of catalysts. Different properties of biodiesel emanate from different feedstock used and the commonly affected properties are viscosity, heating value, oxidation stability, density, low temperature properties and cetane number (Ferrero *et al.*, 2016; Ruhul *et al.*, 2016). Many vegetable oil types have been involved in the production of biodiesel such as palm kernel, sunflower, coconut, canola and sunflower oil (Demirbas, 2007). However, the main drawback of utilizing vegetable oil is food versus fuel issue and the high price of vegetable oil diesel (biodiesel) against petroleum diesel (Choudhury *et al.*, 2013; Talebian-Kiakalaieh *et al.*, 2013a). To counter these issues, research into the use of non edible or waste oils like palm fatty acid distillate (PFAD), rubber seed, jatropha and waste cooking oils have been intensified. In recent times, researches have been performed using PFAD feedstock as a starting material to synthesize biodiesel (Al-Jaberi *et al.*, 2017; Cho *et al.*, 2012; Chongkhong *et al.*, 2007; Lokman *et al.*, 2016; Yujaroen *et al.*, 2009). PFAD, a promising non edible feedstock with very large amount of free fatty acid for biodiesel production, is a by product obtained from palm oil refinery having a production capacity of about 649,459 tonnes which is equivalent to 3.25 % PFAD produced per one tonne of crude palm oil being processed in Malaysia (Kapor *et al.*, 2017).

The actual function of the catalyst in biodiesel production reaction is to accelerate the rate of reaction and the methyl esters yield. Generally, catalysts utilized in biodiesel production are categorized into three namely acids, alkalis and enzymes (Nelson *et al.*, 1996; Shimada *et al.*, 1999). The alkali and acid catalysts are either homogeneous or heterogeneous by nature. Based on their chemical presence in reaction, homogeneous catalysts are in liquid phase while heterogeneous catalysts are in solid phase, in a dissimilar phase from the reaction mixture (Borges and Díaz,

2012; Phan *et al.*, 2006). Homogenous catalysts either alkali or acids present a few disadvantages such as require washing of biodiesel with large amount of water to separate the catalyst resulting in waste water generation and biodiesel loss as well as equipment corrosion. To address these issues, the use of heterogeneous catalyst for the synthesis of biodiesel has been recently pursued. Heterogeneous catalysts have the advantages of easy removal from product and reusability (Sharma *et al.*, 2011). Heterogeneous base catalysts have been successful providing high yield of biodiesel. Nevertheless, their performance is affected when feedstock with high free fatty acids (FFA) content is utilized like the non-edible oils and PFAD. Thus solid acid catalysts are preferred as they are insensitive to water and FFA content of feedstock as well as can simultaneously catalyse esterification and transesterification reactions (Sani *et al.*, 2014). In addition to their reusability and easy separation, heterogeneous acid catalysts have minimal corrosion effect of process equipment as found with some homogeneous acid catalysts like sulphuric acid.

In the past years, studies have been done on the utilization of heterogeneous acid catalysts for the production of biodiesel and few examples are sulphated zirconium oxide ($\text{SO}_4^{2-}\text{-ZrO}_2$) (Park *et al.*, 2008), sulphated tin oxide ($\text{SO}_4^{2-}\text{-SnO}_2$) (Furuta *et al.*, 2004), heteropoly acids (Zhang *et al.*, 2009), and sulfonated carbonized catalyst (Deshmane *et al.*, 2013). Although, these heterogeneous catalysts have some few disadvantages such as high temperature of reaction, costly materials, long reaction time and leaching, this can be minimized depending on catalyst preparation. Lately, carbon based solid acid catalyst has gain research attention with reported advantages including high thermal stability, ability to be reused, uniform distribution of active sites, inexpensive and simple preparation (Konwar *et al.*, 2014). This catalyst comprises of small polycyclic aromatic sheets attached to $\text{-SO}_3\text{H}$ have shown greater potential to high FFA feedstocks (Nakajima and Hara, 2012). Therefore, based on the advantages of the carbon based catalyst, this study investigated the potential of sugar based catalyst prepared by modified sulfonation method using response surface methodology (RSM) approach. A commercial d-glucose was used as catalyst for the synthesis of biodiesel from palm fatty acid distillate feedstock.

1.2 Problem statements

Elevating issues hindering the wide spread usage and commercialization of biodiesel is connected to its higher cost of production compared to diesel fuel from petroleum which comes majorly from feedstock (vegetable oils) in addition to other cost issues emanating from using expensive catalytic system (heterogeneous) and multiple-step processing technology. Hence the use of alternative approaches and technologies that make use of non-refined vegetable oil and waste oils are being considered and studied (Haas *et al.*, 2002; Marchetti, 2013; Phan and Phan, 2008). In a standpoint to reduce cost of biodiesel, palm fatty acid distillate (PFAD) a low cost feedstock has been utilized for biodiesel production and no longer contributes towards food vs fuel issue. Besides, it helps in improving environmental problems resulting from waste management issues in the palm oil industry.

Technical issues associated with the utilization of homogeneous catalysts to some extent would be reduced by the heterogeneous catalytic system. The key benefit of heterogeneous catalyst is that it does not dissolve or consume in the reaction, hence can be separated easily from the reaction products. However, heterogeneous catalysts also have disadvantages (drawbacks). Among others are the limitations of their catalytic active sites or centres and more severe reaction conditions are required to achieve similar reaction conversion as in homogeneous catalysed process. Also, the issue of slower rate of reaction of heterogeneous catalyzed process which could be connected to mass transfer resistance as a result of the presence of three phases of oil, alcohol and catalyst (Puna *et al.*, 2010). In addition, the poisoning of the catalyst active centres due to the exposure to the surrounding atmospheric medium could also influence the activity and stability of the catalysts.

Thus, these issues associated with heterogeneous catalysts entail detail investigation into physical and chemical properties of the solid catalysts. Furthermore, the high cost of materials used to synthesize the catalyst, and the long time synthesis and complicated procedure could also contribute to the total cost of production (Avhad and Marchetti, 2016). Therefore, to overcome these issues, the polycyclic aromatic carbon based acid catalyst which has proven to be stable and catalytically active is introduced in this research. An example of carbon-based acid catalyst having the polycyclic aromatic carbon structure is the carbohydrate carbon-based heterogeneous acid catalyst (sugar catalyst) (Alves *et al.*, 2013) and is capable of converting high FFA feedstock.

Previously, reports have shown that the synthesis of carbonized glucose material by sulfonation with sulfuric takes a long time of 15 h to perform which implies being energy intensive. However, in this study, in a quest to reduce the long sulfonation time, a modified (new) sulfonation method to activate carbonized glucose material into acid catalyst with two sulfonating agents (ammonium sulphate and concentrated sulfuric acid) via RSM tool has been proposed. Four sulfonation variables were optimized with the design expert software and the procedure has been discussed in the thesis.

The alcoholysis of different natural oils to produce biodiesel is commonly carried out in stirred batch reactor. Batch modes are faced with limitations such as larger reactor volume required leading to higher capital investment and inconsistency in product quality due to difficulty in process control, mass and heat transfer problems amidst methanol and oil, and extreme conditions of operation, most especially long reaction time associated with the use heterogeneous catalyst (Fauzi and Amin, 2013). Changing to continuous process with the use of oscillatory flow technique induces the mixing between oil, methanol and catalyst and enables the process to be conducted continuously, which enhances yield, reduce residence time and improve the economics of the process. Also the short length to diameter of the reactor reduces capital cost and makes it to be scalable (Qiu *et al.*, 2010).

OFR is suitable for both batch and continuous modes of operation and recommended for biodiesel production (Ramning Amol *et al.*, 2013). It is also worth noting that the use of heterogeneous solid acid catalyst has yet to be explored in OFR. It is envisaged that the longer reaction time associated with solid acid catalyst will be improved with OFR and synthesized sulfonated catalyst.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The purpose of this research work is to synthesize sulfonated glucose catalyst by modifying the sulfonation method and assess its catalytic activity in biodiesel synthesis from PFAD. The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To synthesize sulfonated incomplete carbonized glucose catalyst for the esterification of PFAD.
2. To evaluate the effects of process conditions on esterification of PFAD in batch reflux reactor.
3. To perform kinetics study of esterification of PFAD catalysed by the synthesized catalyst in batch reflux reactor.
4. To assess the catalytic activity of synthesized sulfonated glucose catalyst in the esterification of PFAD in oscillatory flow reactor (OFR).

1.4 Scope of the study

The research work covers the preparation of sulfonated glucose carbon solid acid catalyst by modification of the sulfonation method. The sulfonated variables were optimized using the RSM-CCRD for the esterification of PFAD to fatty acid methyl ester. The sulfonation variables considered are time, ammonium sulphate, temperature and sulfuric acid whereas the response factor used to monitor each synthesis runs was percentage free fatty acid (FFA) conversion. All range for sulfonation parameters were chosen after some preliminary work. The optimum sulfonated catalyst obtained from the RSM after validation was subjected to detailed characterization to establish its properties in order to understand its behaviour during esterification reaction to produce biodiesel.

Meanwhile, the PFAD feedstock used for the study was also characterized. In addition, the optimized sulfonated catalyst was first used for esterification to optimize the process operating conditions in the batch reactor. The process parameters namely reaction temperature, molar ratio of methanol to PFAD, reaction time and catalyst loading were optimized. Kinetics of esterification process under optimized operating conditions using the sulfonated glucose catalyst in the batch reactor was carried out to determine the order and rate of reaction. The effect of temperature from Arrhenius equation was also investigated. Thereafter, the solid acid catalyst was introduced into the OFR system and the process parameters were optimized. This was done in order to understand how the heterogeneous catalyst works in the OFR and to assess the benefits that the system offers in biodiesel

production. The esterification reaction was performed under atmospheric condition. Lastly, the fuel quality tests of the PFAD methyl ester synthesized from OFR were carried out including; kinematic viscosity, acid number, density, pour point, cloud point, flash point, water content, carbon residue, cetane number, calorific value, distillation temperature, sulphated ash, phosphorus and oxidation stability.

1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter which provides the background of the problem statement focusing on the significance of the biodiesel production and also highlights the objectives of the study. Chapter 2 presents the literature review of the various subjects pertinent to the research work. It covers a wide process overview, synthesis and analysis as accounted by previous authors. Biodiesel feedstocks, production methods, catalysts, processing technology for biodiesel production are discussed. Literatures on solid acid catalysts, parameters affecting biodiesel process, biodiesel properties and chemical kinetics of esterification reaction were also reviewed. Chapter 3 covers the materials and methods for synthesis and characterization of the solid acid catalyst, reaction process, product analysis, and kinetics study and fuel properties. Chapter 4 presents the experimental results and detailed discussions and analysis of the results. Finally, chapter 5 stands for conclusion of the research and recommendation for future research work.

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