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## EFFECT OF FLUIDIZATION RATIO ON THE PERFORMANCE OF AN INTERNALLY CIRCULATING AERATED FLUIDIZED BED GASIFIER WITH CONCENTRIC CYLINDERS

*Janter Pangaduan Simanjuntak*

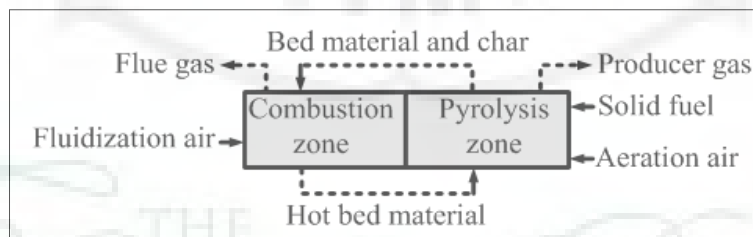
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**ABSTRACT :** Effects of fluidization ratio ( $R_Q$ ) on the bed temperature, composition and heating value (HV) of producer gas (PG) during gasification of sawdust in an internally circulating aerated fluidized bed gasifier (ICAFBG) based on the indirect heating principle with concentric cylinders were studied.  $R_Q$  which is the ratio of aeration rate in annulus ( $Q_{an}$ ) to the fluidization rate in the draft tube ( $Q_{dt}$ ) strongly affect the ICAFBG performance as it is a driving force to transport the char from gasification to the combustion zones. The char combustion in the combustor (draft tube) is the heat provider to the gasification process in the gasification zone (annulus). The results showed that by increasing  $R_Q$  resulting in increased bed material temperature, PG composition and HV. However, increase  $R_Q$  further caused temperature reduction as well as PG composition and HV. The HV could be increased from 4.52 to 6.98 MJ/m<sup>3</sup> in the  $R_Q$  ranges from 0.14 to 0.43. However, by increasing  $R_Q$  further to 0.57 caused reduction in HV to 5.61 MJ/m<sup>3</sup>. The highest bed temperature which can be achieved was 806 °C at 0.43 of  $R_Q$ .

**Keywords:** Sawdust gasification, Internally circulating aerated fluidized bed gasifier. Bed material circulation

### I. INTRODUCTION

An internally circulating aerated fluidized bed gasifier (ICAFBG) is an indirect heated gasification process, where the energy required is provided from a combustion zone through bed material circulation due to direct contact between the combustion and pyrolysis zones. The advantage of this reactor to ICFB is that the combustion zone operates in the vigorous bubbling regime with restricted aeration in the pyrolysis zone. Biomass is directly fed into the pyrolysis zone, whilst the char (pyrolysis product) moves into the combustion zone. The term aeration is used to describe the fluidization regime in the pyrolysis zone [26]. The basic principle of ICAFB is shown in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1.** Principle of ICAFB.

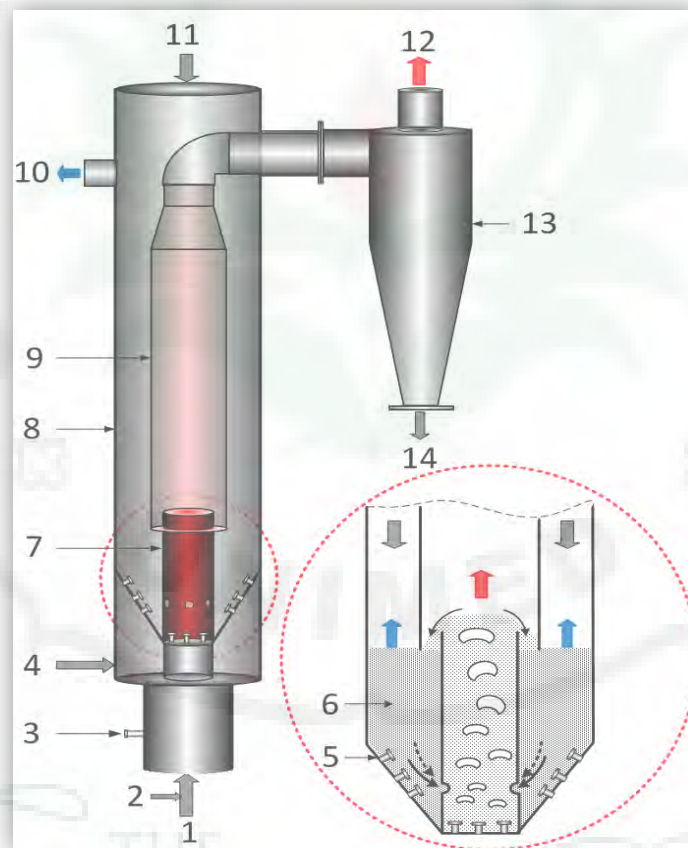
In this work the ICAFB pyrolyzer is constructed of two concentric cylinders. The inner cylinder (draft tube) acts as a combustion zone or heat generator providing heat to the annulus that acts as a pyrolysis zone. Aeration in the annulus is needed to ensure the circulation of the bed particles between the annulus and the draft tube and to purge the pyrolysis gaseous product from the annulus. Solid circulation rate ( $G_s$ ) between the annulus and the draft tube is an important parameter to determine the overall performance of the ICAFB system. The novelty is in using an ER far below common gasification and a possible increase in the heating value. Restricted aeration in the pyrolysis zone

causes a low ER. Therefore the main objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of ER on the operating temperature stabilization, composition and heating value of the producer gas.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. System Setup

The ICAFB pyrolyzer with a total height of 1.1m consists of two parts: an annulus (pyrolysis zone) with a diameter of 0.3 m and a draft tube (combustion zone) with a height of 0.32 m and diameter of 0.1m. The two zones are connected via orifices at the lower section of the draft tube to enable the solids to move from the annulus to the draft tube. Eight equally spaced 0.02m diameter holes were drilled in the wall of the draft tube, 0.08m above its base. The ICAFB system is shown in Fig. 2.



**Fig. 2.** Schematic diagram of the ICAFBG.

The biomass (sawdust) is fed directly to the annulus from the top of the reactor. Char, a byproduct of the pyrolysis process and the bed material moves toward the draft tube via the orifice. A dipleg is installed to separate the flue gas and the producer gas. The bed material overflows from the top of the draft tube to the annulus and the flue gas passes through the dipleg and enters the cyclone separator. The axial temperature in the bed was measured using three K-type thermocouples mounted along the bed height from the distributor. The air chamber comprises of two plenums to separately supply fluidization air into the draft tube ( $Q_{dt}$ ) and aeration air into the annulus ( $Q_{an}$ ). The draft tube air supply consists of a distributor plate with seven bubble caps, whilst the annulus has a 60° conical



base with 18 bubble caps.

Sawdust is fed from the top of the reactor through a screw feeder connected to a sawdust hopper. Since sawdust pyrolysis takes place in the annulus, sawdust is fed from the top of the reactor to provide a longer residence time before the sawdust becomes char and enters the combustor. A cyclone (0.20 m i.d. and 0.43 m high) is installed at the outlet of the draft tube. Since no solid elutriation occurs at the annulus, a cyclone separator is not installed at the exit. The effects of equivalence ratio (ER) on the temperature system stabilization, composition, and heating value of producer gas at constant fluidization ratio ( $R_Q = Q_{an}/Q_{dt}$ ) were studied. The ER was adjusted by controlling the feed rate of sawdust in the annulus ( $W_f$ ). The  $R_Q$  used according to the optimum value of  $G_s$ , obtained from experimental hydrodynamic test.

## 2.2. Material and preparations

### 2.2.1. Bed material

The bed material is sand, with a mean particle size of 425–600  $\mu\text{m}$  and a density of  $1520 \text{ kg/m}^3$ , belonging to Geldart Group B particles. The static bed height in the annulus and the draft tube were maintained at 0.28 m. The bed was fluidized with air provided from a blower. The pressure drop across the draft tube is measured by a digital manometer through two pressure tappings, one at the disengaging zone and the other before the air distribution plate. Different air flow rates were performed in the draft tube and the annulus to induce circulation of the bed material between the draft tube and the annulus.  $Q_{dt}$  is set 350 Lpm, which is about 2.33 times of the minimum fluidization flow rate ( $Q_{mf} = 150 \text{ Lpm}$ ), while the  $Q_{an}$  is set to 33%, 66%, 100% and 133% of the  $Q_{mf}$ .  $G_s$  is an important parameter for heat transfer and to control the pyrolysis zone temperature. Measurement of  $G_s$  was carried out experimentally using hydrodynamic studies. The solid circulation rate was determined by collecting solids emerging from the top of the draft tube for a known interval of time and weighing to obtain the circulation rate.

### 2.2.2. Biomass material

Biomass material is sawdust obtained from local Malaysian rubber wood furniture home industries. Size distribution, ultimate and proximate analysis of the sawdust are presented in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

**Table 1.** Size distribution of sawdust.

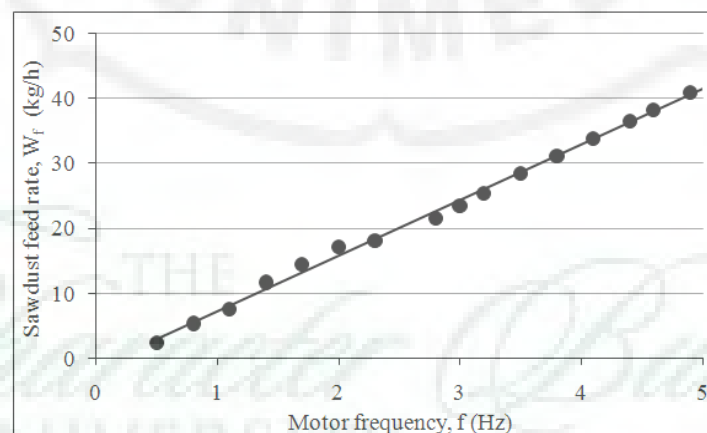
Size (mm)	Weight (%)
S>1.7-2.0	2.24
1.17-1.70	2.60
0.6-1.17	76.40
0.5-0.6	5.32
0.425-0.5	3.64
0.3-0.425	5.20

S<0.3	4.6
Sum	100.00

**Table 2.** Ultimate and proximate analysis of sawdust.

<i>Ultimate analysis, wt.% (air dry basis)</i>	
C	50.54
H	7.08
O	41.11
N	0.15
S	0.57
<i>Proximate analysis, wt.% (air dry basis)</i>	
Volatiles	82.29
Fixed carbon	17.16
Moisture	8.0
Ash	0.55
<i>Heating value (dry basis)</i>	
<i>Low heating value (MJ/kg)</i>	15.00

The sawdust feeding system consists of a hopper and a screw feeder with a variable speed drive (VSD). The screw feeder was calibrated to determine the sawdust load capacity or feed rate ( $W_f$ ) through the feeding system. The average sawdust flow rate is plotted against the screw feeder operating frequency as shown in Fig. 3.



**Fig. 3.** Screw feeder calibration.

### 2.3. Start-up method

An important aspect of the operation of ICAFB pyrolyzer is the start-up process. The combustor was initially heated, using liquid petroleum gas (LPG). At the start of the experiment, air was supplied to the draft tube at 200 Lpm with LPG at 20 Lpm. The air and LPG mixture was ignited using a spark plug. The hot gas fluidizes the sand and increases the bed temperature. Temperatures at





the annulus and the draft tube were recorded using type K thermocouples. A thermocouple was also installed at the air-LPG combustor chamber to detect combustion during start-up process.

The difference between the annulus and the draft tube air flow rates promotes solid circulation from the two zones through the connecting orifices. Circulation of the bed material from the draft tube to the annulus provides heat transfer from the combustion zone to the pyrolysis zone. When the bed temperature in the annulus reached  $400\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $T_{c-2}$ ), sawdust was fed into the annulus. The sawdust starts to pyrolyze and converts into volatiles and char. The char together with sand move under gravity, flow into the draft tube and are burnt to produce heat with excess air. When the temperature of draft tube reached  $650\text{--}700\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $T_{c-1}$ ), the LPG was switched-off and the experimental parameter was setup to the desired value based on  $R_Q$  and ER. The heat produced by the char combustion in the draft tube further increases the temperature to the desired level. After 40 minutes at which time the pyrolyzer operation reached a steady state, gas samples were collected. Temperatures at various points of the system, the aeration, and the fluidization air flow were recorded and controlled.

#### **2.4. Producer gas sampling and analysis**

The producer gas was collected using a gas sampling train that removes any moisture and particulates. The gas composition was determined using TCD gas chromatograph equipped with Carboxene 1000 (Supelco, USA) column (15 ft x 1/8 in, 80/100 mesh).

### **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **a. Effect of $R_Q$ on draft tube and annulus bed temperature**

Bed temperature affects the chemical reactions in the pyrolysis process. In this work, the operating temperature is controlled by adjusting the ER based on  $R_Q$  and  $W_f$ . The range of ER used in this work was 0.047 to 0.075 which considerably lower than the normal range of ER for fluidized bed gasifier (0.20–0.40). [11]. However, in the ICAFB a low ( $ER < 0.1$ ) could be used, because the most important parameter is  $G_s$ , which is highly dependent on  $Q_{an}$ . Fig. 6 illustrates the effect of ER on the operating temperatures of the draft tube ( $T_{c-1}$ ) and the annulus ( $T_{c-2}$ ). The increase in temperature with ER is well understood because ER increases with  $R_Q$ . By increasing  $R_Q$  at a constant  $W_f$ , ER increases as well as  $G_s$  and thus the amount of char released from the annulus to the draft tube also increases.

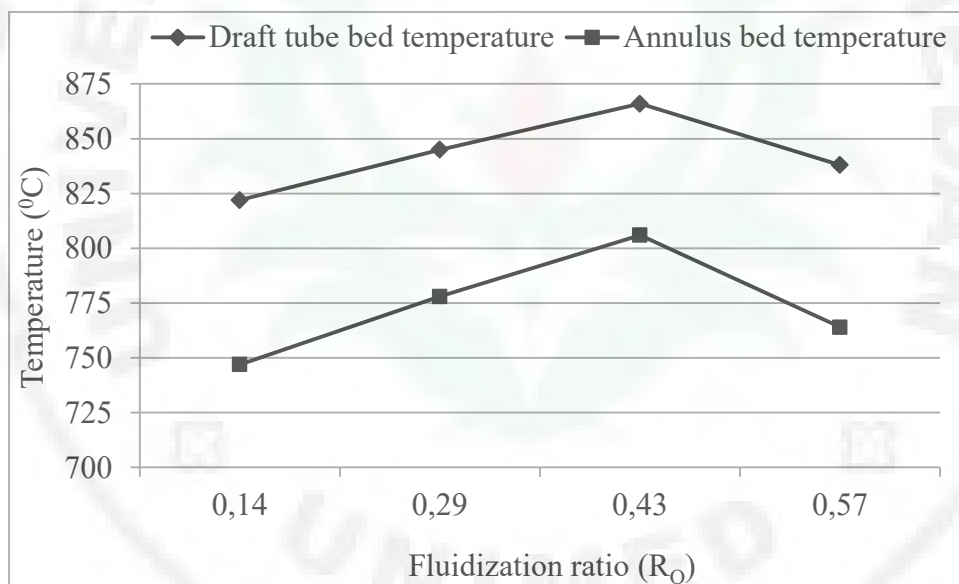
Increasing char formation in the annulus increases its flow into the draft tube resulting in higher heat production during the combustion process. But there is an optimum limit that should not be exceeded else it would lead to two effects: 1. The temperature inside the annulus becomes uncontrollable or overheats; 2. Char accumulates in the annulus because gas production is not balanced with feeding, resulting in an impaired pyrolysis process.

Increasing  $R_Q$  further leads to an increase in ER, but decrease in  $G_s$ . This causes the whole temperature to decrease. It was found that for  $Q_{dt}$  either below or above 350 Lpm, the temperature of the whole system gradually decreases. Below 350 Lpm,  $G_s$  is low and causes insufficient char transfer to the draft tube for heat generation. Above 350 Lpm however the fluidization regime becomes vigorous,

causing some of the char to elutriate from the draft tube, and thus reducing heat generation during combustion. Therefore  $Q_{dt}$  is maintained constant at 350 Lpm for all tests.

In this study, the pyrolysis operating temperatures that can be achieved were in the range 725–800 °C. This temperature range is categorized in the intermediate temperature pyrolysis where the major product is gas [27, 28]. This temperature is sufficient for char reaction with reactive gases such as  $O_2$ ,  $H_2$  and  $CO_2$ .

From Fig. 6, the highest combustion temperature was found to be approximately 866 °C. This is an important issue in the design of fluidized bed combustor, because typical fluidized bed furnaces operate at 800–900 °C to avoid fouling and  $NO_x$  [29]. However, high combustion temperature (900–1100 °C) contribute to better combustion efficiency where carbon fines are burnt completely before they escape from the combustor through the cyclone.



### 3.2. Effect of $R_Q$ on PG composition

ER has a strong effect on all chemical reactions in the pyrolysis process. Fig. 7 shows the variation in the producer gas composition from the annulus with respect to ER. Fig. 7 indicates the optimum operating condition at an ER of 0.051 producing gas compositions of 3.13%, 25.8%, 8.2%, 17.39% and 41.21% for  $H_2$ ,  $CO$ ,  $CH_4$ ,  $CO_2$  and  $N_2$  respectively. Carbon monoxide and methane are the largest constituents of the producer gas, and are much higher than typically found from air-blown gasification as described in Table 3.

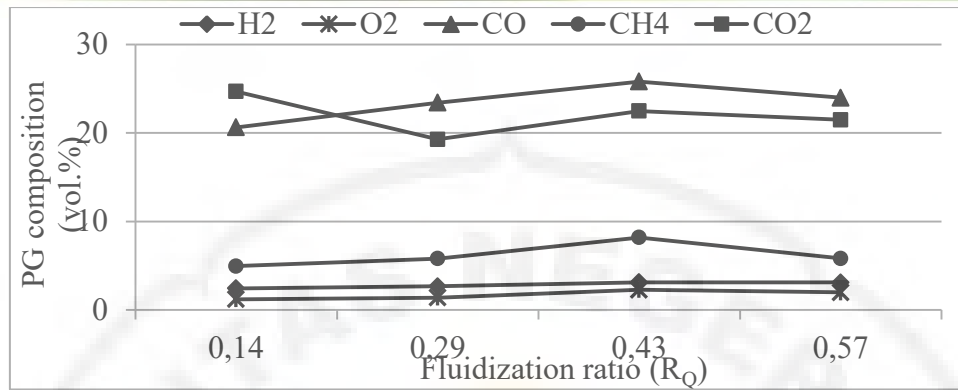


Fig. 7. Producer gas composition.

Table 3. Comparison of producer gas produced by air-blown ICAFB.

Ref	Fuel constituent (vol.%)					HV (MJ/m <sup>3</sup> )
	H <sub>2</sub>	CO	CH <sub>4</sub>	CO <sub>2</sub>	N <sub>2</sub>	
[4]	16	10	-	30	-	3.90
[5]	7.5	27	3.5	7.5	-	5.7
[6]	14.61	25.71	2.45	12	-	6.67
[7]	9.5	18	4.5	13.5	-	6.3
[8]	19.5	17.5	2.5	13.75	-	5.88
[9]	9.27	9.25	4.21	13.28	-	5
[10]	7	16	3	18	-	5
[*]	3.13	25.80	8.20	17.39	41.21	6.96

[\*] Current work

By increasing the ER the CO content increases, attributed to the Boudouard and water gas reactions where the CO<sub>2</sub> present in the methane reforming reactions reacts with char to produce CO, and the high temperature of the bed particles facilitates this reaction. The CO concentration of the producer gas markedly increases from 20.64% to 25.80% in the investigated ER range.

It was found that the highest concentration of H<sub>2</sub> was 3.13%. This is low compared to common air-blown sawdust gasification[4–10]. This is due to the effect of the pyrolysis reaction temperature. The composition of H<sub>2</sub> is very dependent on the reaction temperature. A high pyrolysis temperature (800–1000 °C) favors the thermal cracking of the hydrocarbons in the gaseous products and thus sharply increases the yield of H<sub>2</sub> through Boudouard, water gas, methanation, and water gas shift reactions[30, 31]. However, in this study the pyrolysis reaction temperature is limited to a maximum of 800°C resulting in low H<sub>2</sub> yield.

### 3.3 Effect of $R_Q$ on PG composition

Fig. 8 shows the heating value of the producer gas. The heating value increases with an increase in ER due to the increase in the percentages of CO and CH<sub>4</sub>. The highest heating value of the producer gas was an average of 6.96 MJ/m<sup>3</sup>.

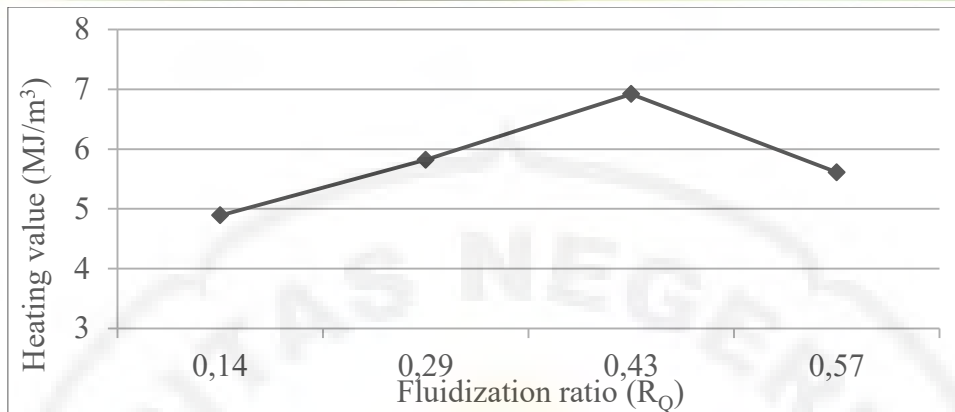


Fig. 8. Effect of equivalence ratio on heating value.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

A pilot-scale internally circulating aerated fluidized bed (ICAFB) pyrolyzer has been successfully developed. The most important parameters in the ICAFB are the fluidization ratio ( $R_Q$ ) that controls the solid circulation rate ( $G_s$ ) and the ER in the pyrolysis zone. Circulation of the bed material from annulus to draft tube is the most important parameter and determines the heat transfer from the combustion zone to the pyrolysis zone. Fluidization ratio,  $R_Q$  is the key in solid circulation.

This study indicates that under the optimum operating conditions at an ER of 0.051 and pyrolysis temperature of about  $800^\circ\text{C}$ , producer gas compositions of 3.13%, 25.8%, 8.2%, 17.39% and 41.21% for  $\text{H}_2$ ,  $\text{CO}$ ,  $\text{CH}_4$ ,  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $\text{N}_2$  respectively with a heating value of about  $6.96 \text{ MJ/m}^3$  was achieved. Significant amounts of carbon monoxide ( $\text{CO}$ ) and methane ( $\text{CH}_4$ ) were produced at an intermediate operating temperature of about  $800^\circ\text{C}$ , where the reactions favor the production of  $\text{CO}$  and  $\text{CH}_4$ .

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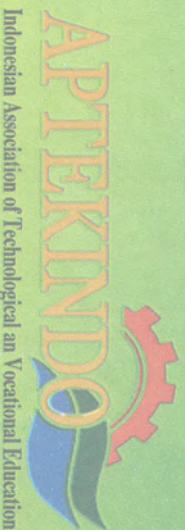
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**Janter P Simanjuntak**

*Has participated as*

**PRESENTER**

International Seminar

"The Role of the Technological and Vocational Education in Asean Economic Community (AEC)"  
at the 8<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Indonesian Association of Technological and Vocational Education (APTEKINDO)  
and 19<sup>th</sup> Indonesian Congress of Engineering Faculty / FPTK-JPTK

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The Committee / Vice Rector of Academic

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