



**BIODIESEL PRODUCTION FROM WASTE COOKING  
OIL USING CALCIUM OXIDE/NANOCRYSTAL  
CELLULOSE/POLYVINYL ALCOHOL CATALYST IN  
A PACKED BED REACTOR**

**BY**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the  
degree of Master of Science (Biotechnology Engineering)**

**Kulliyyah of Engineering  
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## ABSTRACT

Environmental problems and a shortage of conventional fossil fuel caused by the global consumption of fossil fuel have promoted the production of biodiesel from renewable resources. Biodiesel is produced from a chemical process of vegetable oil or animal fats and alcohol in the presence of a catalyst. Use of homogeneous catalyst indirectly produces a high amount of wastewater in order to purify the complex product from the reaction, and the catalyst is not reusable thus it is economically inviable. In the current work, biodiesel was synthesized from a reaction of waste cooking oil (WCO) and methanol in the presence of a catalyst which was derived from chicken bone and coconut residue in a packed bed reactor. Calcium oxide (CaO) was extracted from calcined chicken bone and nano-crystal cellulose (NCC) was isolated from coconut residue by acid hydrolyzed. CaO and NCC were supported by polyvinyl alcohol (PVA). The catalyst was analyzed using Fourier transform infrared (FTIR), Field emission scanning electron microscopy (FESEM), Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) and X-ray diffraction (XRD) to study its elemental composition and surface morphology. The parameters used for the reaction were optimized by Design of Experiment (DOE) using Central Composite Design (CCD) of Response Surface Methodology (RSM) to produce maximum biodiesel yield. The maximum yield of 98.40 % was obtained at optimum temperature, methanol: oil and catalyst loading of 65 °C, 6:1 and 0.5 wt% respectively. Evaluation of catalyst reusability indicated that it was reusable for four times while maintaining over 90 % of biodiesel yield. Investigation on the kinetic characteristics of the reaction specified that the reaction followed pseudo-first-order reaction with k-value ranged from 0.0092 min<sup>-1</sup> to 0.0151 min<sup>-1</sup> and the model was attested by Thiele modulus less than 2. The activation energy  $E_a$  observed for the transesterification reaction was 45.72 kJ/mol. Therefore, utilizing waste for biodiesel production of biodiesel can lower the production cost as well as help to save and clean the environment.

## خلاصة البحث

المشاكل البيئية ونقص الوقود الأحفوري التقليدي الذي سببه الاستهلاك العالمي للوقود الأحفوري عززت الحاجة إلى إنتاج وقود الديزل الحيوي من موارد متجددة. يتم إنتاج وقود الديزل الحيوي من الموارد المتجددة في عملية كيميائية من زيت الخضروات أو الدهون الحيوانية والكحول في وجود محفز. وثبت أن استخدام المحفز المتجانس ينتج بشكل غير مباشر كمية كبيرة من مياه الصرف من أجل تنقية المنتج المعقد الناجم من التفاعل كما أن المحفز غير قابل لإعادة الاستخدام وبالتالي فهو غير قابل مجد اقتصادياً. في الدراسة الحالية تم تصنيع وقود الديزل الحيوي من تفاعل متبقي زيت الطهي (النفائيات) (WCO) والميثانول في وجود محفز مشتق من عظام الدجاج وبقايا جوز الهند في مفاعل العامودي المحشي. تم استخلاص أكسيد الكالسيوم (CaO) من عظام الدجاج المكلسة وعزل السيلولوز النانوي البلوري (NCC) من بقايا جوز الهند بواسطة التحلل الحمضي. تم دعم CaO و NCC باستخدام كحول البولي فينيل (PVA). ثم تم تحليل المحفز باستخدام مطياف الأشعة تحت الحمراء (FTIR) وحقل المسح الضوئي والمسح المجهر الإلكتروني (FESEM) والتحليل الحراري (TGA) وانكسار الأشعة السينية (XRD) لدراسة المكونات العنصرية والخواص الشكلية للسطح. تم تحسين العوامل المتغيرة المستخدمة للتفاعل من خلال تصميم التجربة (DOE) باستخدام التصميم المركب المركزي (CCD) منهجية استجابة السطح (RSM) لتحقيق أقصى عائد من وقود الديزل الحيوي. وتم الحصول على أقصى قدرة من المحصول بنسبة 98.40% عند درجة الحرارة المثلى (65 درجة مئوية) وكانت نسبة الميثانول:الزيت (1:6) وتحميل المحفز 0.5% بالوزن. تبين من خلال تقييم إعادة استخدام المحفز أنه يمكن إعادة استخدامه أربع مرات مع الحفاظ على أكثر من 95% من إنتاج الديزل الحيوي. أظهرت دراسة الخصائص الحركية للتفاعل أنه شبيه تفاعل من الدرجة الأولى مع قيمة K تراوحت من 0.0092 إلى 0.0151 لكل دقيقة. وشهد النموذج بواسطة معامل ثيل أقل من 2. وتلاحظ أن طاقة التنشيط لتفاعل تقنية الأسترة (transesterification) 45.72 كيلو جول/مول. لذلك فإن استخدام المتبقي من زيوت الطهي أي النفائيات في إنتاج وقود الديزل الحيوي كمادة وسيطة ومحفزة يمكن أن يقلل من تكلفة الإنتاج وكذلك يساعد علي توفير بيئة نظيفة.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science (Biotechnology Engineering).

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as whole for any others degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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*This thesis is dedicated to my parents Zik bin Muda and Zainab binti Salleh and my family.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Abstract in Arabic .....	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration.....	v
Copyright.....	vi
Dedication.....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
List of Tables .....	xii
List of Figures .....	xiv
List of Abbreviations .....	xvi
List of Symbols.....	xvii

### **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ..... 1**

1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	4
1.3 Research Objectives.....	5
1.4 Significance of Study.....	5
1.5 Scope of Study.....	7
1.6 Thesis Organization .....	8

### **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ..... 9**

2.1 Introduction .....	9
2.2 Biodiesel .....	9
2.2.1 Properties of Biodiesel Fuel.....	11
2.3 Raw Materials.....	12
2.3.1 Vegetable Oil .....	13
2.3.1.1 Edible Vegetable Oil.....	13
2.3.1.2 Non-edible Vegetable Oil .....	14
2.3.2 Waste Cooking Oil (WCO).....	15
2.3.3 Animal Fat .....	16
2.3.4 Alcohol.....	17
2.4 The Process In Biodiesel Production.....	17
2.4.1 Transesterification.....	18
2.4.1.1 Esterification .....	20
2.4.1.2 In-Situ.....	21
2.4.1.3 Transesterification waste.....	21
2.4.2 Micro-Emulsification.....	22
2.4.3 Pyrolysis.....	23
2.5 System Development – Packed Bed Reactor .....	24
2.6 Catalyst .....	25
2.6.1 Homogeneous catalyst .....	28
2.6.1.1 Homogeneous Acid Catalyst.....	28
2.6.1.2 Homogeneous Base Catalyst.....	29

2.6.2 Heterogeneous Catalyst.....	30
2.6.2.1 Heterogeneous Acid Catalyst.....	31
2.6.2.2 Heterogeneous Base Catalyst.....	32
2.6.2.3 Animal Bone Catalyst.....	33
2.6.2.4 Nano-sized of Calcium Oxide (CaO).....	34
2.6.2.4.1 Thermal Decomposition of CaO.....	35
2.6.3 Biocatalyst.....	40
2.6.4 Nano-cellulose.....	40
2.7 Parameters Used In Biodiesel Production .....	42
2.7.1 Temperature .....	42
2.7.2 Catalyst Loading .....	43
2.7.3 Methanol to Oil Molar Ratio.....	44
2.8 Polyvinyl Alcohol (PVA) .....	45
2.9 Kinetic Study of Transesterification Reaction.....	47
2.10 Research Gap.....	52
2.11 Summary.....	57

**CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY..... 58**

3.1 Introduction .....	58
3.2 Materials .....	59
3.2.1 Raw Materials .....	59
3.2.2 Chemicals.....	59
3.3 Equipment.....	59
3.4 Process Flowchart.....	60
3.5 Nano-Catalyst Preparation.....	61
3.5.1 Nano-catalyst Preparation.....	61
3.5.1.1 Nano-crystal Cellulose (NCC).....	61
3.5.1.1.1 Isolation of Cellulose .....	61
3.5.1.1.2 Preparation of Nano-crystal Cellulose.....	61
3.5.1.2 Preparation of Nano-size Calcium Oxide (CaO).....	62
3.6 Nano-Catalyst Characterization.....	62
3.7 Screening of Nano-Catalyst.....	63
3.7.1 NCC.....	63
3.7.2 CaO .....	64
3.8 Biodiesel Production.....	65
3.8.1 Set-Up of Packed-Bed Reactor For Transesterification Reaction .....	66
3.8.2 Design of Experiment .....	67
3.9 Product Separation and Purification.....	68
3.10 Reusability of The Catalyst .....	69
3.11 Biodiesel Characterization.....	69
3.12 Biodiesel Test Method.....	70
3.12.1 Free Fatty Acids (FFA) .....	70
3.12.2 Density .....	71
3.12.3 Kinematic Viscosity.....	71
3.13 Kinetic Study of Transesterification Reaction.....	71
3.14 Summary.....	74

<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULT AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>75</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	75
4.2 Synthesis of Heterogeneous Nano-Catalyst.....	75
4.2.1 Nano-Crystal Cellulose From Coconut Residue.....	75
4.2.2 Nano-Sized Calcium Oxide From Chicken Bone .....	77
4.3 Screening of Nano-Crystal Cellulose and Calcium Oxide. ....	73
4.3.1 Nano-Crystal Cellulose (Ncc).....	77
4.3.2 Calcium Oxide (Cao) .....	79
4.4 Characterization of Nano-Catalyst .....	82
4.4.1 FTIR .....	82
4.4.2 FESEM.....	84
4.4.3 XRD .....	86
4.4.4 TGA STUDY .....	89
4.5 Biodiesel Production.....	91
4.5.1 Optimization of Reaction Conditions .....	91
4.5.2 Model Validation .....	99
4.5.3 Catalyst Reusability .....	100
4.5.4 Biodiesel Properties .....	102
4.5.5 Biodiesel Composition.....	105
4.6 Kinetic Heterogeneous Catalyst .....	106
4.6.1 Rate of Reaction, $k$ .....	109
4.6.2 Thiele Modulus .....	111
4.6.3 Activation Energy, $E_a$ .....	112
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....</b>	<b>115</b>
5.1 Conclusion .....	115
5.2 Recommendation .....	118
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>APPENDIX A .....</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>APPENDIX B .....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>APPENDIX C .....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>LIST OF PUBLICATION.....</b>	<b>131</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	2.1	ASTM D6751 biodiesel standard	13
Table	2.2	Reviews of production of biodiesel by using waste cooking oil (WCO)	17
Table	2.3	Example of previous studies that used a different type of catalyst	28
Table	2.4	Several studies that used an animal bone as a catalyst in biodiesel production	38
Table	2.5	Comparisons of reactions conditions for various types of nano-catalysts	39
Table	2.6	Calcination conditions for various type of catalyst and its morphology	40
Table	2.7	Review of studies that were used catalyst based cellulose as catalyst in the production of biodiesel	43
Table	2.8	Kinetics of biodiesel production using heterogeneous catalyst	52
Table	2.9	Research gap from literature review of previous study	55
Table	3.1	Design of Experiment of CaO/PVA screening for biodiesel production	66
Table	3.2	Three independents variable with values that given by CCD to produce biodiesel fuel for the optimization process	69
Table	4.1	The yield of biodiesel in screening by using NCC as the catalyst for transesterification	79
Table	4.2	Response Surface Methodology using Central Composite Design by Design of Experiment for screening in the synthesis of CaO	82
Table	4.3	Statistical analysis of variance for biodiesel yield for CaO screening	82
Table	4.4	Central composite design from response surface methodology for reaction conditions for optimization in biodiesel production	93
Table	4.5	Statistical analysis of variance for biodiesel yield	96
Table	4.6	Solutions for model validation	101

Table	4.7	Comparison of physicochemical properties of biodiesel determined in the study with international standard and previous study	106
Table	4.8	Composition of fatty acid methyl ester at different retention time	107
Table	4.9	Kinetic studies of transesterification of pseudo first order kinetic	115

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1:	Demand growth of product category in the long-term	11
Figure 2.2	General transesterification reaction scheme	21
Figure 2.3:	Illustration of a packed bed reactor	26
Figure 2.4:	Plot of $-\ln[1-x]$ versus time for kinetic study of transesterification reaction	50
Figure 2.5:	Plot of $\ln k$ versus $1/T$ for kinetic study of transesterification reaction	51
Figure 3.1:	Experimental flow chart	61
Figure 3.2:	Experiment set up for transesterification of waste cooking oil in a packed bed column	68
Figure 4.1	<b>(a)</b> Raw coconut residue <b>(b)</b> coconut residue while treating with alkali <b>(c)</b> coconut residue after treated with $H_2O_2$ <b>(d)</b> NCC that obtained after acid hydrolysis	77
Figure 4.2	NCC suspension after sonicated <b>(b)</b> NCC after fully dried	78
Figure 4.3	Catalyst loading of NCC/PVA vs biodiesel yield in screening	80
Figure 4.4	Response surface plots of the effect of variables on the yield of biodiesel	83
Figure 4.5	FTIR spectrum of NCC (b) FTIR spectrum of CaO (c) FTIR spectrum of NCC/CaO/PVA	85
Figure 4.6	FESEM images of NCC with different magnifications	86
Figure 4.7	(a) FESEM images of chicken bone (b) FESEM images of calcine chicken bone	87
Figure 4.8	X-ray diffraction pattern of NCC	89
Figure 4.9	X-ray diffraction pattern of CaO	89
Figure 4.10	X-ray diffraction pattern of NCC/CaO/PVA	89
Figure 4.11	TGA curves of NCC/CaO/PVA nano-catalyst	91
Figure 4.12	A comparative plot between predicted and experimental response for biodiesel yield	96

Figure 4.13	3D response of biodiesel yield based on interaction between two independent variables of (a) temperature vs methanol:oil (b) catalyst loading vs methanol:oil (c) catalyst loading vs temperature	99
Figure 4.14	Reusability of NCC/CaO/PVA nano-catalyst at 65 °C with 0.5 wt% of catalyst loading, 6:1 methanol to oil ratio within 4 hours	103
Figure 4.15	Biodiesel yield at 55, 60, 65 °C with constant of methanol:oil molar ratio (6:1) and catalyst loading (0.5 wt%)	110
Figure 4.16	A linear graph of $-\ln(1-X_{ME})$ versus time on different temperature	112
Figure 4.17	A line graph of $\ln k$ versus $1/T$	114

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ANOVA</i>	Analysis of variance
<i>BC</i>	Bacterial cellulose
<i>CCD</i>	Central composite design
<i>CNC</i>	Cellulose nano-crystal
<i>CNF</i>	Cellulose nano-fibrils
<i>DOE</i>	Design of experiment
<i>E<sub>a</sub></i>	Activation energy
<i>EPA</i>	Environmental Protection Agency
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>FAME</i>	Fatty acid methyl ester
<i>FESEM</i>	Field emission scanning electron microscopy
<i>FFA</i>	Free fatty acid
<i>FTIR</i>	Fourier Transform Infrared
<i>GCMS</i>	Gas chromatography mass spectrometry
<i>k</i>	Rate constant
<i>Kpa</i>	Kilopascal
<i>MFC</i>	Micro-fibrillated cellulose
<i>NCC</i>	Nano-crystal cellulose
<i>NFC</i>	Nano-fibrillated cellulose
<i>OPEC</i>	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<i>PBR</i>	Packed bed reactor
<i>PVA</i>	Polyvinyl alcohol
<i>RSM</i>	Response surface methodology
<i>TGA</i>	Thermogravimetric analysis
<i>WCO</i>	Waste cooking oil
<i>XRD</i>	X-ray diffraction



## LIST OF SYMBOLS

%	Percent
° C	Degree Celsius
µm	Micro Meter
h	Hour
g	Gram
pH	Potential Hydrogen
V	Volume
M	Molarity of Standard NaOH (M)
W	Mass of Sample
TG	Triglycerides
t	Time
X <sub>ME</sub>	Methyl ester
r	Ratio of reactant size
Y	Biodiesel yield
Ø	Thield modulus
E <sub>a</sub>	Activation energy
k	Rate of reaction

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the environmental issues associated with the emission of the greenhouse gases such as NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, CO, CO<sub>2</sub> and shortage in the conventional fossil fuel sources were caused by the global consumption of fossil fuel (Alsharifi et al., 2017). Moreover, the consumption of fossil fuel keeps rising and cannot be sustained. This is because, energy is considered as the most important element for the growth and development of an economy (Hashmi et al., 2016). Therefore, in order to overcome this problem, an alternative measurement has to be taken.

Biodiesel is a source of energy that can be renewed and has the potential to replace fossil fuels thus it can be defined as a biofuel (Hashmi et al., 2016). Normally, biodiesel can be produced from transesterification reaction which is a chemical reaction from vegetable oil or animal fat that react with alcohol in the presence of a catalyst to produce methyl esters (biodiesel) and glycerin (soap, side product) (Hua et al., 2015). The example of vegetable oils are soybean oil, palm oil and corn oil which are edible oils. Besides, waste cooking oil (WCO) also can be used in biodiesel production. European Union (EU) produces about 700,000 to 1,000,000 tonnes of WCO annually and it was estimated approximately 40,000 tonnes of WCO produced per year in Asian countries including Malaysia (Hanisah et al., 2013).

In addition, to have a high yield of biodiesel, the type of catalyst used and the parameters for the transesterification process play as an important role in biodiesel production. This is because, the catalyst is used to enhance the reaction rate and

increase the yield of a reaction (Hua et al., 2015). There are several types of catalysts that can be used in biodiesel production such as homogeneous, heterogeneous and enzymatic catalyst. However, catalyst must be separated at the end of the reaction therefore, by using heterogeneous catalyst, it can be separated easily and reusable and resulted in lower production cost (Hua et al., 2015; Suwannasom et al., 2016). Besides, the heterogeneous catalyst also has a low sensitivity towards free fatty acid (FFA) which can result in saponification, exhibit high catalytic activity during the reaction, shows reusability, prevent equipment corrosion and also reduce wastewater production (Hashmi et al., 2016; Ma et al., 2017; Suwannasom et al., 2016).

Furthermore, in order to increase the biodiesel production, nano-cellulose catalyst was also used in this study which is the most abundant, inexpensive and readily available carbohydrate polymer in the world, traditionally extracted from plants or their waste are the superiority of cellulose (Esa et al., 2014). It has to undergo a chemical process with alkali and acid treatment to obtain the pure product because this type of polymer normally branches with hemicellulose and lignin. Moreover, cellulose is widely distributed in nature and it exhibits biocompatibility to biological molecules, easy modification with usual ligands, and has a suitable porosity for high adsorption capacity (Zhang et al., 2015). In this study, the nano-cellulose was produced from coconut residue.

In Malaysia, coconut also is an important industrial crop after palm oil, rubber, and paddy in terms of total planted area (Sivapragasam, 2008). In 2017, Berita Harian had reported that the total crop area for coconut tree in Malaysia is 95,000 hectare. However, most of the coconut supply was imported from Indonesia was about 90,000,000 in 2017. This scenario causes the increased of coconut waste in Malaysia. For instance, Malaysia produces annually approximately 168 million tons of biomass

production including coconut waste (Ozturk et al., 2017). Therefore, in this study, nano-cellulose was extracted from coconut residue in order to reduce the total of biomass in Malaysia yet enhance the production of biodiesel yield.

Upon that, to support the nano-catalyst, polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) was used in this study. PVA is a semi-crystalline synthetic polymer, which is soluble in water, slightly soluble in ethanol and insoluble in other organic solvents, tasteless, odourless, has a good mechanical properties (tensile strength), has a high ability to form films and also a good compatibility and biodegradability in human tissues and fluids (Marin et al., 2014). PVA has been applied in many applications such as in the production of composites reinforced with polyester or cellulose to give mechanical strength to carbon nanotubes, medical field, etc. (Marin et al., 2014).

In addition, in this study, the packed-bed reactor has its own advantages which was used for the continuous process due to its simple and easy to operate, good mixing performance and high production efficiency. Thus, it became the most attractive reactor due to its advantages (Chueluecha et al., 2016). Besides, it is also reported that a packed-bed reactor is considered as one of the most promising reactors for continuous biodiesel synthesis. During transesterification reaction, the catalyst use was easily damaged due to continuous stirring in the slurry reactor and in order to minimize catalyst mechanical damage, a packed-bed catalytic reactor configuration can be useful (Borges et al., 2013). In this study, methanol and WCO was used as a source of alcohol and triglyceride to undergo transesterification reaction with the presence of nano-catalyst, CaO/ nano-cellulose which was supported on PVA to enhance the production of biodiesel.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The rises of global consumption on diesel fuel has resulted in environmental problems in relation to the emission of greenhouse gases and a shortage of conventional fossil fuel sources. In addition, the disposal of WCO through irrigation system caused the clogging of drainage system and also increasing the breeding of pests which can affect human health. In biodiesel production, WCO can be used in transesterification reaction with methanol in the presence of catalyst to reduce the cost of the production instead of using edible vegetable oil as it could match up with food.

However, in the process of producing biodiesel, the type of catalyst that is widely used in the industry is the homogenous base catalyst which is sodium hydroxide (NaOH) or potassium hydroxide (KOH). After the transesterification reaction by using these type of catalyst, the products of the reaction have to be washed and purified in order to collect the FAME (biodiesel) that is soluble with the catalyst (homogeneous catalyst). This caused a high production of waste water during the purification process that could affect the environment. Thus, by using a heterogeneous base catalyst in biodiesel production the catalyst can be separated easily from the byproducts and indirectly reduces the production time.

Heterogeneous base catalyst is a solid catalyst that can be used in biodiesel production. Most of the heterogeneous catalysts that is used in biodiesel production are derived from non-renewable resources and is highly expensive with low stability. However, it can be controlled by the amount and strength of the active basic site. In order to increase the active site of this type of catalyst, a small-sized catalyst which is the nano-sized catalyst can increase the surface area and the active site of the catalyst. The nano-catalyst was supported with PVA to enhance the yield of biodiesel.

In addition, by using a solid catalyst, the mechanical damage of catalyst can occur due to continuous mechanical stirring during the transesterification process. However, this issue can be solved by using a packed bed reactor (PBR) for when the catalyst stays confined in the PBR, the products can be easily separated while achieving a mechanical stability of catalyst particles.

In this study, NCC/CaO/PVA nanocatalyst was used as heterogeneous catalyst in producing biodiesel where NCC/CaO was derived from waste. Furthermore, WCO, methanol and the prepared nano-catalyst reaction produced biodiesel by transesterification reaction.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To investigate and characterize nano-catalyst CaO / nano-crystal cellulose from chicken bones and coconut residue supported by polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) for biodiesel production.
2. To investigate the kinetics of transesterification in a packed bed reactor for the production of biodiesel production using nano-catalyst CaO / nano-crystal cellulose supported on polyvinyl alcohol (NCC/CaO/PVA).
3. To optimize the reaction conditions of transesterification such as methanol to oil ratio, temperature, and catalyst amount in a packed bed reactor.

### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

In this study, biodiesel was produced from the transesterification reaction between WCO and methanol in the presence nano-sized of NCC/CaO supported by PVA. This study is an alternative to substitute the commercial diesel fuel with biodiesel with a

high yield of production. This is because, the consumption of diesel fuel has resulted in the environmental problem associated with the emission of greenhouse gases and the shortage of the conventional diesel fuel sources which are expected to be run out in 2050 as the fuel is consumed  $10^5$  faster than its natural production. This natural fuel cannot be sustained yet the consumption keeps rising. However, these issues can be overcome by replacing diesel fuel with biodiesel. Biodiesel is a renewable source of energy and environmental friendly. Besides, it is also biodegradable, non-toxic, free from sulfur and aromatics as well as contains oxygen in its structure. In addition, by using biodiesel, it does not only overcome the issues which caused by diesel fuel, but it also provides a good lubricity which can enhance the durability of the engine

In addition, the WCO that normally discarded through drainage system which resulted in pollution and clogging of the system, was collected from the night market and used for the production of biodiesel. Besides, in order to have a high yield of biodiesel, the catalyst was synthesized from chicken bone (CaO) and coconut residue (NCC) which is a waste that abundantly available in restaurants, night markets, shops and etc. Chicken bone was boiled, washed, dried, calcined, and used as a catalyst while NCC was extracted from coconut residue by bleaching, alkaline treatment and hydrolysis process. The methanol to oil ratio, temperature, and catalyst loading were varied in order to optimize its conditions in a transesterification reaction to have a high yield of biodiesel. Then, the produced biodiesel was analyzed and study its kinetics of the reaction in the production of biodiesel.

## 1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY

Calcium oxide (CaO) was synthesized from chicken bone and was dried in an oven at 55 °C for 48 hours before it was crushed and blended to a fine powder. Then, the fine powder of chicken bone was calcined at temperature 700, 800 and 900 °C with 4, 5 and 6 h for every different temperature. Meanwhile, nano-crystal cellulose (NCC) was extracted from coconut residue which has been dried in an oven for 24 hours before bleached with hydrogen peroxide (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) and acid hydrolyzed with sulfuric acid (H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>).

The produced nano-catalysts were characterized by Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscope (FESEM), Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) and X-ray Diffraction (XRD) respectively. The CaO was mixed with the same amount of NCC based on the result of the screening and supported by polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) before transesterification reaction took place.

The transesterification reaction was carried out in a packed bed column which was connected to three-neck round bottom flask equipped with a condenser, a mechanical stirrer and a temperature controller. The transesterification reaction in this study was a reaction between waste cooking oil (WCO) and methanol was pumped into packed bed column in the presence of nano-sized of NCC/CaO supported by PVA for 4 hours with a temperature between 55 to 65 °C and was stirred at 600 rpm.

In addition, the kinetic study was performed in three separate experiments at 55, 60 and 65 °C. For each experiment set up, the methanol: oil molar ratio and catalyst loading in weight percent were kept constant. The yield of biodiesel was measure in 5, 10, 15, 30, 60, 90, 120, 180, and 240 minutes.