

CHARACTERIZATION AND PROPERTIES OF  
CALCIUM CARBONATE FILLED  
POLYPROPYLENE (PP) / ETHYLENE PROPYLENE  
DIENE TERPOLYMER (EPDM) COMPOSITES

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2009



**Characterization and Properties of Calcium  
Carbonate Filled Polypropylene (PP) / Ethylene  
Propylene Diene Terpolymer (EPDM) Composites**

by

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A thesis submitted  
In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science (Materials engineering)

**School Of Materials Engineering  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA PERLIS**

2009

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Alhamdulillah....

In the name of Allah S.W.T, The Almighty One, The Most Merciful, who has given me enough strength and ability to make this thesis, become a success.

First and foremost, I would like to express my greatest gratitude to Dr. Ir. Salmah Husseinsyah my supervisor for her precious sources of knowledge, all sorts of support, dedications, encouragements, helps, guidance's, useful of advices and motivations throughout the work on this thesis. As a main supervisor, she always tries to guide me to understand the requirements of this thesis. I wish also to thanks my co-supervisor Kol. Prof. Dato' Dr. Kamarudin Hussin.

Here, special thanks are conveyed to my husband, Mr. Muhammad Zunnurrin Bin Ghazali and my son, Muhammad Umarzafran for their patience and thoughtful. I would like also to show my appreciation to my parent, parent-in-law and siblings especially Siti Zaharah Binti Ahmad for giving me ideas and moral supports. My appreciation, I am thankful to Tuan Haji Ghazali Bin Mahmud, my father-in-law for financial support.

My thanks go out to Associate Professor Che Mohd Ruzaidi Bin Ghazali, School of Materials Engineering Dean's for his support and for allowing me to work and complete the thesis. A bunch of thanks to all technicians of material engineering especially Mr. Nasir, Mr. Zaidi and Mr. Hazrul, for their instructions, information's, providing me their fully effort, assistance and help me to do the work in laboratory. Not to forget, thanks to Dr. Supri, Mr. Ichwan, Prof. Nasir for their generous advice and all staff in this school that not I mention their name here. I would like to grateful to all my postgraduate colleagues who are Ismail, Dahlia, Siti Shuhadah, and Nur Hidayah for their support. My days of complete this thesis either works on laboratory or writing would be extremely obscurity without unlimited suggestions, corrections and advice given by them.

Last but not least, thanks to Universiti Malaysia Perlis for providing me a space for excellent facilities, my friends and to any person who is contribute as direct or indirect throughout the process to complete this thesis.

Thank you very much.....

**- Siti Rohana Binti Ahmad -**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	iii
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	iv
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	ix
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xiii
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS, SYMBOLS, SPECIALIZED NOMENCLATURES</b>	xiv
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	xvii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	xviii
<b>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Research Background	1
1.2 Research Objectives	7
<b>CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.1 Polymer Composite	8
2.1.1 Introduction of Polymer Composite	8
2.1.2 Classifications of Polymer Composites	10
2.1.3 Matrix	11
2.1.4 Filler	12
2.1.5 Filler-matrix interface	16
2.2 Thermoplastic Elastomer Composites	18
2.2.1 Introduction of TPE	18
2.2.2 Classifications and Properties of TPE	19
2.2.3 Application of TPE	21
2.2.4 Thermoplastic Elastomer Olefin (TPO)	21
2.2.5 PP/EPDM Blends	24

2.3	Polypropylene (PP)	27
2.3.1	Introduction of PP	27
2.3.2	Classification and Properties of PP	28
2.3.3	Applications of PP	31
2.3.4	Polypropylene Composites	31
2.4	Ethylene Propylene Diene Terpolymer (EPDM)	35
2.4.1	Introduction of EPDM	35
2.4.2	Properties of EPDM	36
2.4.3	Applications of EPDM	37
2.5	Mineral filler	37
2.5.1	Calcium carbonate	38
2.5.1.1	Production methods of $\text{CaCO}_3$	39
2.5.1.2	The structures and properties of $\text{CaCO}_3$	40
2.5.1.3	The applications of $\text{CaCO}_3$	42
2.6	Compatibilizer and Coupling Agents	42
2.6.1	Maleic anhydride grafted polypropylene (MAPP)	44
2.6.2	3-aminopropyltriethoxysilane (3-APE)	47
2.6.3	Acrylic Acid	50
2.7	Dynamic vulcanization	53
2.7.1	Introduction of dynamic vulcanization	53
2.7.2	Sulphur vulcanization	55
2.7.3	Physical Aspects of dynamic vulcanization	56
2.7.4	Accelerators	57
2.7.5	Activators	58
2.7.6	Applications of dynamic vulcanization	59
2.8	Thermal Properties	59

## CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Materials	62
3.1.1	Base Materials	62
3.1.2	Filler	64
3.1.3	Compatibilizer	65
3.1.4	Coupling Agent	65
3.1.5	Curative	65

3.2	Filler Treatment	66
3.3	Sample Preparation of Composites	67
3.3.1	Compounding	67
3.3.1.1	Preparation of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with different filler loading	68
3.3.1.2	Preparation of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with MAPP	68
3.3.1.3	Preparation of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with 3-APE or acrylic acid	69
3.3.1.4	Preparation of Dynamic Vulcanized of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites	69
3.4	Compression Moulding	71
3.5	Mechanical Properties Measurements	72
3.5.1	Tensile Test	72
3.5.2	Morphology Study	73
3.5.3	Swelling Behaviour	74
3.5.4	Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)	74
3.5.5	Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA)	76

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1	Effects of filler loading of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites	77
4.1.1	Tensile Properties	77
4.1.2	Swelling Behaviour	83
4.1.3	Morphology Study	85
4.1.4	Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)	88
4.1.5	Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA)	90
4.2	Effects of Compatibilizer and Silane coupling agent on properties of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites	93
4.2.1	Tensile Properties	93
4.2.2	Swelling Behaviour	99
4.2.3	Morphology Study	103
4.2.4	Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)	106
4.2.5	Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA)	109
4.3	Effects of Chemical Modification on properties of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites	112

4.3.1	Tensile Properties	112
4.3.2	Swelling Behaviour	117
4.3.3	Morphology Study	119
4.3.4	Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)	121
4.3.5	Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA)	124
4.4	Effects of Dynamic Vulcanization on properties of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites	126
4.4.1	Tensile Properties	126
4.4.2	Swelling Behaviour	130
4.4.3	Morphology Study	132
4.4.4	Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)	135
4.4.5	Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA)	137

## **CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER WORK**

5.1	Conclusions	140
5.2	Suggestions for Further Work	143

<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>144</b>
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<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>157</b>
-------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX B</b>	<b>158</b>
-------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX C</b>	<b>159</b>
-------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX D</b>	<b>160</b>
-------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX E</b>	<b>161</b>
-------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX F</b>	<b>162</b>
-------------------	------------

## LIST OF FIGURES

		Pages
Figure 2.1	The shell of a mollusk made up of layers of calcium salts separated by protein.	10
Figure 2.2	Types of particle shapes of filler.	14
Figure 2.3	The interface and interphase of polymer matrix-filler.	17
Figure 2.4	Configurations of thermoplastic elastomer.	18
Figure 2.5	Morphology of thermoplastic elastomer.	19
Figure 2.6	Morphology of thermoplastic elastomer olefin (TPO).	22
Figure 2.7	The representation of chain structure for Polypropylene.	28
Figure 2.8	Polymerization structure of polypropylene.	28
Figure 2.9	Polypropylene structure (a) Isotactic, (b) Syndiotactic and (c) Atactic	29
Figure 2.10	Molecule structure of ethylene propylene diene terpolymer (EPDM).	35
Figure 2.11	The synthesis of ethylene propylene diene terpolymer (EPDM).	36
Figure 2.12	Solid state structures of calcium carbonate, $\text{CaCO}_3$ .	39
Figure 2.13	Coarsely ground, fine ground and precipitated grads of calcium carbonate.	39
Figure 2.14	Chemical structure for MAPP.	45
Figure 2.15	Typical structure of silane coupling agent.	48
Figure 2.16	A schematic on the condensation of the silanol (hydrolyzed silane) with reactive groups on the filler surface.	48
Figure 2.17	Structural formula for 3-APE.	50
Figure 2.18	Chemical structure of acrylic acid.	52
Figure 2.19	The reactions to form disulfide or sulphide crosslinks chains.	55

Figure 2.20	The formation of cyclic sulphides.	56
Figure 2.21	The removal of hydrogens by the proton acceptor.	56
Figure 2.22	An example schematic reaction of accelerators.	58
Figure 3.1	Filler treatment preparation.	66
Figure 3.2	Z-blade mixer machines.	67
Figure 3.3	Compression moulding machine.	71
Figure 3.4	Universal Testing Machine (UTM): Instron Model 5569.	72
Figure 3.5	Scanning electron microscope (SEM) equipments.	73
Figure 3.6	Perkin Elmer DSC analyser equipments.	75
Figure 3.7	Perkin Elmer TGA analyzer equipments.	76
Figure 4.1	The effect of filler loading on tensile strength of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	78
Figure 4.2	Scanning electron micrograph of calcium carbonate at magnification 1000X.	79
Figure 4.3	The effect of filler loading on elongation at break of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	80
Figure 4.4	The effect of filler loading on modulus of elasticity of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	81
Figure 4.5	Percentage of water absorption versus time of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with different filler loading.	84
Figure 4.6	The percentage of equilibrium water absorption versus time of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with different loading.	85
Figure 4.7	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of PP/EPDM composites at magnification of 400X.	87
Figure 4.8	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites (20 php) at magnification of 400X.	87
Figure 4.9	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites (40 php) at magnification of 400X.	88
Figure 4.10	Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) curve of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites at 0, 20 and 40 php.	89
Figure 4.11	Comparison of thermogravimetric analysis curves of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites at different filler loading.	91

Figure 4.12	The effect of filler loading and MAPP or 3-APE on tensile strength of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	94
Figure 4.13	The effect of filler loading and MAPP or 3-APE on elongation at break of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	96
Figure 4.14	The effect of filler loading and MAPP or 3-APE on Modulus of elasticity of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	97
Figure 4.15	Schematic reactions between filler surface with MAPP.	98
Figure 4.16	Schematic reactions between filler surface with silane (3-APE) of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	99
Figure 4.17	Percentage of water absorption versus time of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with and without MAPP at different filler loading.	100
Figure 4.18	Percentage of water absorption versus time of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with and without 3-APE at different filler loading.	101
Figure 4.19	The percentage of equilibrium water absorption versus time of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with and without MAPP or 3-APE at different filler loading.	102
Figure 4.20	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with MAPP (20 php) at magnification of 400X.	104
Figure 4.21	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with MAPP (40 php) at magnification of 400X.	104
Figure 4.22	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with 3-APE (20 php) at magnification of 400X.	105
Figure 4.23	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with 3-APE (40 php) at magnification of 400X.	105
Figure 4.24	Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) curve comparison of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with and without MAPP or 3-APE at 40 php CaCO <sub>3</sub> .	107
Figure 4.25	Comparison of thermogravimetric analysis curves of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with and without MAPP at 0, 20 and 40 php CaCO <sub>3</sub> .	109
Figure 4.26	Comparison of thermogravimetric analysis curves of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with and without 3-APE at 20 and 40 php CaCO <sub>3</sub> .	110

Figure 4.27	The effect of filler loading on tensile strength of untreated and treated PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with AA.	112
Figure 4.28	The effect of filler loading on elongation at break of untreated and treated PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with AA.	114
Figure 4.29	The effect of filler loading on modulus of elasticity of untreated and treated PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with AA.	115
Figure 4.30	Chemical reaction of calcium carbonate with AA.	117
Figure 4.31	Percentage of water absorption versus time of untreated and treated PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with AA at different filler loading.	118
Figure 4.32	The percentage of equilibrium water absorption versus time of untreated and treated PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with AA at different loading.	119
Figure 4.33	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of treated PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with AA (20 php) at magnification of 400X.	120
Figure 4.34	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of treated PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with AA (40 php) at magnification of 400X.	121
Figure 4.35	Comparison of differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) curve of untreated and treated PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with AA at 40 php CaCO <sub>3</sub> .	122
Figure 4.36	Comparison of thermogravimetric analysis curves of untreated and treated PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites at different filler loading.	125
Figure 4.37	The effect of filler loading on tensile strength of unvulcanized and dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	127
Figure 4.38	The effect of filler loading on elongation at break of unvulcanized and dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	128
Figure 4.39	The effect of filler loading on modulus of elasticity of unvulcanized and dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	129
Figure 4.40	Schematic representation of crosslink formed during dynamic vulcanization using sulfur.	130
Figure 4.41	Percentage of water absorption versus time of unvulcanized and dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with different filler loading.	131

Figure 4.42	The percentage of equilibrium water absorption versus time of unvulcanized and dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with different loading.	132
Figure 4.43	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM at magnification of 400X.	133
Figure 4.44	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites (20 php) at magnification of 400X.	134
Figure 4.45	Scanning electron micrograph of tensile fracture surface of dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites (40 php) at magnification of 400X.	134
Figure 4.46	Comparison of differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) curve of unvulcanized and dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites at 40 php CaCO <sub>3</sub> .	136
Figure 4.47	Comparison of thermogravimetric analysis curves of unvulcanized and dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites at 20 and 40 php CaCO <sub>3</sub> .	138

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## LIST OF TABLES

		Pages
Table 2.1	Chemical families of fillers for plastic.	12
Table 2.2	Particle morphology of fillers.	15
Table 3.1	Typical properties of polypropylene (PP).	63
Table 3.2	Typical properties of ethylene propylene diene terpolymer (EPDM).	63
Table 3.3	Semi quantitative analysis of CaCO <sub>3</sub> using X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometer Rigaku RIX 3000.	64
Table 3.4	Formulation of PP/EPDM/ CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with different filler loading.	68
Table 3.5	Formulation of PP/EPDM/ CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with MAPP.	69
Table 3.6	Formulation of PP/EPDM/ CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with 3-APE or acrylic acid.	69
Table 3.7	Formulation of dynamic vulcanized of PP/EPDM/ CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites.	70
Table 4.1	Parameter DSC of PP/EPDM/ CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with different filler loading.	90
Table 4.2	Percentage weight loss of PP/EPDM/ CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites at different filler loading and temperature.	92
Table 4.3	Parameter DSC of PP/EPDM/ CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites for with and without MAPP or 3-APE with different filler loading.	108
Table 4.4	Percentage of weight loss of PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites with and without MAPP or 3-APE at different filler loading and temperatures.	111
Table 4.5	Parameter DSC of PP/EPDM/ CaCO <sub>3</sub> for untreated and treated composites with AA at different filler loading.	123
Table 4.6	Percentage of weight loss for untreated and treated composites with AA at different filler loading and temperature.	125
Table 4.7	Parameter DSC of PP/EPDM/ CaCO <sub>3</sub> for unvulcanized and dynamic vulcanized composites with different filler loading.	137
Table 4.8	Percentage of weight loss for unvulcanized and dynamic vulcanized PP/EPDM/CaCO <sub>3</sub> composites at different filler loading and temperature.	139

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS, SYMBOLS, SPECIALIZED NOMENCLATURES

$\mu$	Micron
$\mu\text{m}$	Micron meter
3-APE	3-Aminopropyltriethoxysilane
AA	Acrylic acid
ABS	Acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene copolymer
AFM	Atomic Force Microscope
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Material
BA	Butyl acrylate
BPO	Benzoyl peroxide
$\text{CaCO}_3$	Calcium carbonate
COPEs	Thermoplastic copolyester elastomers
CPP	Nanocomposites chlorinated polypropylene
DCPD	Dicyclopentadine
DMA	Dynamic Mechanical Analysis
DSC	Differential Scanning Calorimetry
DTA	Differential Thermal Analysis
DV	Dynamic Vulcanization
EAA	Ethylene-acrylic acid
$E_b$	Elongation at break
EEA	Ethylacrylate
ENB	5-ethylidene norbornene
EMA	Ethylene methyl acrylate
EPDM	Ethylene propylene diene terpolymer

EPM	Ethylene propylene copolymer
EVA	Ethylene vinyl acetate
EWF	Essential work of fracture
FTIR	Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy
$G_{Ic}$	Strain energy release rate
HDPE	High density polyethylene
HPC:poly(AA)	Hydroxypropyl cellulose: poly(acrylic acid)
$K_{Ic}$	Critical stress intensity factor
LDPE	Low density polyethylene
MAA	Methacrylic acid
MAPP	Maleic anhydride grafted polypropylene
MMA	Methyl methacrylate
NR	Natural rubber
NBR	Acrylonitrile-butadiene rubbers
OMMT	Organophilic montmorillonite
Pd	Palladium
PE	Polyethylene
PET	Polyethylene terephthalate
PLLA	Amorphous poly(L-lactide)
PMMA	Polymethyl Methacrylate
PP	Polypropylene
PVC	Polyvinyl chloride
SBS	Styrene block copolymers
SEBS	Styrene-ethylene-butylene block copolymer
SEM	Scanning electron microscope
T	Temperature
$T_c$	Crystallization temperature
TEM	Transmission electron microscope

TGA	Thermogravimetric analysis
TPEs	Thermoplastic elastomers
TPOs	Thermoplastic olefinics
TPR	Thermoplastic rubber
TPUs	Thermoplastic polyurethanes
TPVs	Thermoplastic vulcanisates
VI	Vinylimidazole
$W_d$	Original dry weights
$W_N$	After exposure weights
WRHA	White rice hush ash
WFC	Wood flour composite
$X_{com}$	Crystallinity of composites
$X_{pp}$	Crystallinity of PP
1,4 HD	4 hexadiene
3-APE	3-aminopropyltriethoxysilane
$\Delta H_{f(com)}^0$	Heat of fusion of composites

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# **PENCIRIAN DAN SIFAT-SIFAT KOMPOSIT POLIPROPILENA (PP)/ ETILENA PROPILENA DIENA MONOMER (EPDM) TERISI KALSIUM KARBONAT**

## **ABSTRAK**

Komposit elastomer termoplastik bagi adunan polypropilena (PP) dan etilena propilena diena monomer (EPDM) yang diperkuat kalsium karbonat telah dikaji. Kesemua komposit disediakan menggunakan pencampur bilah-Z pada 180°C dan kelajuan rotor 50 rpm. Kesan pembebanan pengisi kalsium karbonat terisi komposit PP/EPDM keatas sifat-sifat mekanikal, penyerapan air, morfologi dan sifat-sifat terma telah dikaji. Secara umumnya, didapati pembebanan kalsium karbonat yang semakin meningkat telah meningkatkan modulus elastisiti, penyerapan air, kestabilan terma dan penghabluran komposit didapati berkurang. Manakala kekuatan tensil dan pemanjangan pada takat putus didapati berkurang. Agen pengserasi, MAPP atau agen pengkupel 3-APE digunakan untuk meningkatkan sifat-sifat mekanikal komposit. Kehadiran MAPP atau 3-APE telah meningkatkan kekuatan tensil, modulus elastisiti, kestabilan terma, penghabluran komposit kecuali pemanjangan pada takat putus dan penyerapan air yang didapati semakin berkurang. Kajian mikroskop electron penskanan (SEM) menunjukkan bahawa kehadiran MAPP atau 3-APE telah meningkatkan interaksi antara muka pengisi-matrik. Kesan modifikasi kimia kalsium karbonat dengan asid akrilik (AA) untuk komposit PP/EPDM telah meningkatkan kekuatan tensil, modulus elastisiti, kestabilan terma dan penghabluran komposit tetapi penyerapan air didapati berkurang. Morfologi SEM menunjukkan komposit rawatan dengan asid akrilik menghasilkan penyebaran pengisi di dalam matrik yang lebih baik. Kesan pemvulkanan dinamik bagi komposit PP/EPDM/CaCO<sub>3</sub> menunjukkan kekuatan tensil, pemanjangan pada takat putus dan modulus elastisiti yang lebih tinggi tetapi penyerapan air yang rendah. Kajian SEM pada permukaan patahan tensil komposit pemvulkanan dinamik menunjukkan peningkatan interaksi antara muka di antara kalsium karbonat dan matrik PP/EPDM. Komposit pemvulkanan dinamik menunjukkan kestabilan terma yang lebih baik dan penghabluran yang lebih tinggi.

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COMPOSITES**

**ABSTRACT**

*Composites of thermoplastic elastomer blend of polypropylene (PP) and ethylene propylene diene terpolymer (EPDM) reinforced calcium carbonate ( $\text{CaCO}_3$ ) was investigated. All the composites were prepared by using Z-blade mixer at  $180^\circ\text{C}$  and rotor speed 50 rpm. The effect of filler loading of calcium carbonate filled PP/EPDM composites on mechanical properties, water absorption, morphology and thermal properties were studied. In general, increased of calcium carbonate loading have increased the value of modulus of elasticity, water absorption, thermal stability, whereas tensile strength, elongation at break and crystallinity of composites reduced. A compatibilizer, (MAPP) or coupling agent, (3-APE) was used to improve the mechanical properties of composites. The presence of MAPP or 3-APE improved the tensile strength, modulus of elasticity, thermal stability and crystallinity composites, whereas elongation at break and water absorption reduced. Results from scanning electron microscope (SEM) show that filler-matrix interaction was improved with incorporation of MAPP or 3-APE. The effect chemical modification of calcium carbonate with acrylic acid (AA) in PP/EPDM composites increased the tensile strength, elongation at break, modulus of elasticity, thermal stability and crystallinity composite but water absorption reduced. The micrograph SEM showed the treated composites with acrylic acid has better dispersion in PP/EPDM matrix. Effects of dynamic vulcanization on the properties of PP/EPDM/ $\text{CaCO}_3$  composites exhibit higher tensile strength, elongation at break and modulus of elasticity but lower water absorption. The SEM study of tensile fracture surface of dynamic vulcanized composites show interfacial interaction between calcium carbonate and PP/EPDM matrix has been improved. The dynamic vulcanized composites also exhibit better thermal stability and higher crystallinity.*

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research Background

Nowadays in new era of technologies, the improvement of material becomes an important in industries. Many researchers has come out with several ideas in order to meet the material properties requirement for most modern applications includes automotive, aerospace, underwater and etc. Besides, needs of sophisticated materials that friendly environment playing an important role due to ecological reasons.

In recent years, polymers become an important engineering materials and the number of applications is increasing steadily. Polymers have increasingly replaced metallic components in an amazing array of applications, including automobiles, microelectronics, composites, civilian and military aircraft, sporting goods, toys, appliances, and office equipment, due to their many unique and diverse properties. Humans have taken advantage of the versatility of polymers for many centuries in the form of naturally occurring polymers (those derive from plants and animals) include tars, gums, resins, oils, wood, rubber, cotton, wool, leather, and silk. The introduction of these revolutionary materials began an explosion in polymer research that is still going on today.

“Polymer” word literally means “many units”. In other words, repeating many structural unit of a plastics chain is termed as ‘mers’. Also, polymer is a branch of carbon chains from petrol-chemical industry. According to the ASTM, the definition of a plastic is; *“A material that contains as an essential ingredient an organic substance of*

*large molecular weight, is solid in its finished state, and at some stage in its manufacture or in its processing into finished can be shaped by flow*". Polymers are generally classified into three main groups according to their structure, properties and use as thermoplastics, thermosetting plastic and elastomers. The advantages of polymers are low density, corrosion resistance and resistance to chemical, high strength-to-weight ratio, particularly when reinforced, low electrical and thermal conductivity, noise reduction, relatively low cost, ease of manufacturing and complexity of design possibilities etc. The modification of polymer molecular architecture either during or post polymerization includes (i) copolymerization of more than one polymer (ii) control of monomer architecture (iii) post polymerization polymer reactions (iv) introduction of functional groups (Ebewele, 2000).

Polymer composites receive increasingly interest because it is a relatively easy way to obtain new materials with balanced properties. The name polyolefinic thermoplastic elastomer (TPE) has been coined to refer to a specific family of thermoplastic alloys that offers the main advantages of two types of polymeric materials: elastomeric behavior at room temperature and thermoplastic behavior at processing temperatures. This dual behavior is obtained because the morphology consists of small rubber particles dispersed in a continuous thermoplastic matrix.

To date, thermoplastic elastomer compositions based on polypropylene (PP)/ ethylene polypropylene diene terpolymer (EPDM) composites have increased tremendously in popularity. These composites are used for a wide range of products including automotive parts such as rub strips, sight shields, bumper covers, side claddings and etc. PP/EPDM composites also excellent weatheability, low density and relatively low cost make them a common component in a number of exterior and interior automotive applications (De and Bhowmick, 1990).

Polypropylene is an economical material that offers a combination of outstanding physical, chemical, mechanical, thermal and electrical properties not found in any other thermoplastic. In addition, toward the comparison with low or high density

polyethylene, it has a lower impact strength, but superior working temperature and tensile strength. Polypropylene (PP) is one of the important commodity polymers. It is widely used in automobile, household appliance and construction industry due to its balanced mechanical properties. The application of PP, however, is limited by its brittleness, especially at low temperature, as well as low stiffness at elevated temperature.

Most commercial elastomer are based on ethylene propylene diene terpolymers (EPDM), because of its stability against high temperatures, oxygen and ozone, thus giving to the corresponding good heat, oxidation and ozone resistance. Ethylene propylene diene terpolymer (EPDM) is an unsaturated polyolefin rubber with wide applications, it has become extensively used in making automotive tire sidewalls, cover stripes, wires, cables, hoses, belting, footwear, roofing barriers and sporting goods.

In the past decade, the use of inorganic filler to improve the physical properties of polymer composites has become widespread in the production of high-performance materials. Adding inorganic filler can enhance the stiffness but result in a decrease of toughness. To overcome the drawback resulted by only adding elastomer or filler, a lot of work has been done on polymer/elastomer/filler ternary system, where both elastomer and filler were used to enhance the toughness and stiffness simultaneously (Zhang *et al.*, 2000; Jancar & Dibenedetto, 1995).

Fillers are essential components of multiphase composite structures. The use of fillers in the preparation of polymeric compositions increases every year, because of the advantages which can be obtained, such as reduction in the final price of the product, improvement in process ability and achievement of specific. Usually, fillers form the minor dispersed phase in a polymeric matrix. Various fillers have been employed in ternary phase polymer composites. These include talc, calcium carbonate (Kolarik *et al.*, 1990) and kaolin. In particular, the fillers can improve the toughness, processibility, heat distortion temperature of polymer blends, and conductive fillers can even make the insulative polymer blend to become a conductive one.

Mineral filler such as calcium carbonate ( $\text{CaCO}_3$ ) used in the PP/EPDM composites to reduce cost and improve the properties of the composites. Besides, this type of filler has a primary function as a mechanical property improver like slightly increased modulus of elasticity (Zuiderduin *et al.*, 2003; Xanthos, 2005). It is available in different grades: dry processed, wet or water ground and can be easily surface treated (Lazzeri *et al.*, 2005) and usually micron-sized (easier to disperse) with a broad size distribution and irregular shape (Osman *et al.*, 2004).

Gonzalez *et al.*, (2002) used  $\text{CaCO}_3$  particles treated by different coupling agents to modify the mechanical properties of PP/HDPE blends. They found that, due to the particular characteristics of the coupling agents, each treated  $\text{CaCO}_3$  particles gave rise to increase in a specific mechanical property. The main problem of preparation of  $\text{CaCO}_3$  thermoplastic elastomer composite is the incompatibility of hydrophilic  $\text{CaCO}_3$  and hydrophobic thermoplastic elastomer matrix.

Maleic anhydride grafted polypropylene (MAPP) was used as a compatibilizer in order to improve the properties of PP/EPDM/ $\text{CaCO}_3$  composites. MAPP has been used as a coupling agent to promote the filler-matrix adhesive strength. Furthermore, the PP part of MAPP adheres to the long hydrophobic chains of the PP virgin matrix and lowers the surface tension of the fibres and form a strong interface (Mohanty and Nayak, 2007). MAPP have been widely used to improve the interfacial interaction between the components in polymer blends and polymer composites to maximize the physical properties (Moad, 1999). Qui *et al.*, (2005) reported that the novel technique for preparing maleic anhydride grafted polypropylene offers new opportunities in modification of polyolefins, which has also the advantages of solventless, lower process temperature, energy efficient, low cost, and simple running process.

Since 1950's, silanes have been used, whereby it had been instrumental in producing successful fibreglass reinforced thermoset polyester composite applied on automotive industry. The incorporation of coupling agents onto the filler surface is an obvious solution in order to modify interaction or increased the bonding of filler to

polymer by either altering the strength or changing the size of the interaction. Liang and Li, (2000) reported that the treatment of glass beads with silane coupling agents have successfully improved the tensile strength and modulus of elasticity of PP. Demjen, (1997) on studied of the treatment of calcium carbonate using eight types of silane coupling agents to determine their effect on PP/CaCO<sub>3</sub> composite. The incorporation of aminofunctional silane coupling agents was carried out in the reactive coupling of PP and CaCO<sub>3</sub>, in which both are inactive components, leading to increased strength and decreased deformability. Bezerdi *et al.*, (1998) concluded that the reactive (aminosilane) coupling agent lead to an increase in composite strength in their research used linear elastic fracture mechanics to characterize fracture resistance of PP/CaCO<sub>3</sub> composites with aminosilane coupling agent.

Some of academicians, researchers or industrial scientists have a significant interest in developing techniques for modifying the surfaces of solid substrates without altering the bulk properties (Ma *et al.*, 2001). Acrylic acid was classified as surface modifiers in polymer composites industry. Some of the method used for rubber surfaces is surface modification using acrylic acid. According to Kaynak *et al.*, (2001), the interface between an epoxy resin matrix and recycled scrap car tire rubber particles can be improved by the modification of the surfaces of rubber particles. Okrasa *et al.*, (2001) reported that the larger modification of the molecular relaxation processes is observed in the hydroxypropyl cellulose: poly (Acrylic acid), (HPC:poly(AA)) composites, where the stronger intermolecular interactions are present.

Vulcanization or cross-linking is the process in which mainly polymer is converted from a plastic state to an elastic state or a hard rubber state. The process is brought about by linking of macromolecules at their reactive sites (Ismail *et al.*, 2004). Dynamic vulcanization (DV) is a process of cross-linking the elastomer during its melt mixing with molten plastic. It can improve properties such as mechanical properties (Mehrabzadeh and Delfan, 2000), resistance to heat and resistance to attack by fluid (Ismail *et al.*, 2001). It is quite obvious that the cross-link density of the dispersed

rubber phase plays a key role in achieving higher strength (Mousa *et al.*, 1997; Jain *et al.*, 2000; Katbab *et al.*, 2000). DV also offers several improvements such as reduced set, improved ultimate properties and fatigue resistance and resistance to hot oils.

Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) and differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) commonly used to investigate the thermal properties of the polymer. The variation in the mobility of the macromolecules in boundary layers, the orientation of polymer molecules influenced by fillers, the degree of polymer degradation, the change in chemical composition and molecular weight of the polymer during processing, the interactions between fillers and polymers and the crystallization kinetics can be detected throughout this thermal analysis techniques. Thermal analysis of polymers is very important in determining their utility under various environmental conditions, high temperature application, misunderstanding molecular architecture, decomposition mechanism, etc. Thermogravimetric analysis can be used as a way to measure the thermal stability of polymer due to the simplicity of this weight loss method. The thermal degradation of polymer blends was investigated by various researchers using the thermogravimetric method (Grassie, 1998). Polymers are useable over a certain range of temperatures. The working range can be increased by copolymerization using additives and stabilizers, etc. Thermal stable and heat resistant polymers are in great demand as insulators, enamels, etc. DTA and DSC are very sensitive and provide information on glass transition, heat of fusion, melting temperature, etc. Thermal degradation causes a rupture of chemical bonds, which gives an endothermic peak. TGA studies are very useful to differentiate an endothermic melting peak from that of a peak due to thermal degradation.