

THE HYDRAULICS RETENTION TIME IMPACT IN MOVING BED BIOFILM REACTOR COUPLED WITH ELECTROCOAGULATION FOR TREATING PALM OIL MILL EFFLUENT

KHUSNITA AZIZAH



**MASTER PROGRAM OF CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
IPB UNIVERSITY
BOGOR
2026**

THE HYDRAULICS RETENTION TIME IMPACT IN MOVING BED BIOFILM REACTOR COUPLED WITH ELECTROCOAGULATION FOR TREATING PALM OIL MILL EFFLUENT

KHUSNITA AZIZAH

thesis

as the requirement to obtain a Master's Degree in
Civil and Environmental Engineering Department

**MASTER PROGRAM OF CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
IPB UNIVERSITY
BOGOR
2026**

@Hak cipta milik IPB University

IPB University



- Hak Cipta Dilindungi Undang-undang
1. Dilarang mengutip sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini tanpa mencantumkan dan menyebutkan sumber :
 - a. Pengutipan hanya untuk kepentingan pendidikan, penelitian, penulisan karya ilmiah, penyusunan laporan, penulisan kritik atau tinjauan suatu masalah
 - b. Pengutipan tidak merugikan kepentingan yang wajar IPB University.
 2. Dilarang mengumumkan dan memperbanyak sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini dalam bentuk apapun tanpa izin IPB University.

DECLARATION OF THE THESIS INFORMATION SOURCES AND COPYRIGHTS TRANSFER

I hereby declare that the student thesis entitled “The Hydraulics Retention Time Impact in Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor Coupled with Electrocoagulation for Treating Palm Oil Mill Effluent” is my own work under the guidance of my supervisors and has not been published or submitted to any university in any form. Source of information derived or quoted from unpublished or published document by any other authors have been mentioned in the text and has also been included in the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

Hereby, I assign the copyright of this undergraduate thesis to the IPB University.

Bogor, July 2026
Khusnita Azizah
F4501241029

@Hak cipta milik IPB University

IPB University



- Hak Cipta Dilindungi Undang-undang
1. Dilarang mengutip sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini tanpa mencantumkan dan menyebutkan sumber :
 - a. Pengutipan hanya untuk kepentingan pendidikan, penelitian, penulisan karya ilmiah, penyusunan laporan, penulisan kritik atau tinjauan suatu masalah
 - b. Pengutipan tidak merugikan kepentingan yang wajar IPB University.
 2. Dilarang mengumumkan dan memperbanyak sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini dalam bentuk apapun tanpa izin IPB University.



@Hak cipta milik IPB University

IPB University

- Hak Cipta Dilindungi Undang-undang
1. Dilarang mengutip sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini tanpa mencantumkan dan menyebutkan sumber :
 - a. Pengutipan hanya untuk kepentingan pendidikan, penelitian, penulisan karya ilmiah, penyusunan laporan, penulisan kritik atau tinjauan suatu masalah
 - b. Pengutipan tidak merugikan kepentingan yang wajar IPB University.
 2. Dilarang mengumumkan dan memperbanyak sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini dalam bentuk apapun tanpa izin IPB University.

SUMMARY

KHUSNITA AZIZAH. The Hydraulics Retention Time Impact in Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor Coupled with Electrocoagulation for Treating Palm Oil Mill Effluent. Supervised by ALLEN KURNIAWAN and PUTERI KUSUMA WARDHANI.

The palm oil industry emerged as a primary non-oil and gas exporter in 2023, providing massive revenue contributions to Indonesia. However, this economic achievement is accompanied by urgent environmental responsibility, particularly in managing high volume palm oil mill effluent. This study investigates the performance of a hybrid Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) integrated with an Electrocoagulation (EC) unit and trimethylchlorosilane modified Kapok Fibre (KF). The overall system performance was evaluated at various hydraulic retention times (24, 36, and 48 h) for pollutant removal, followed by the estimation of biokinetic parameters under unsteady state conditions. Experimental results indicated that the superhydrophobic KF successfully adsorbed 46% - 53% of the oil, while the EC unit only removed 9% – 18% of sCOD. Overall, the average system sCOD removal reached 52%, 54%, and 66%, whereas oil and grease removal achieved 71.7%, 81.38%, and 80.2% respectively. The most optimal MBBR performance was attained at a 36-h HRT, achieving 92% BOD removal while maintaining stable biomass quantity. Conversely, a 48-h HRT maximized TSS removal up to 73.38% but produced a highly alkaline effluent with a pH of 10.56. This alkaline condition induced the accumulation of iron precipitate on the Kaldness, thickening from a range of 47 to 119 μm up to 68 to 191 μm , accompanied by a distinct yellowish discoloration. Consequently, BOD and Total Nitrogen efficiencies experienced a sharp decline to 50% and 43%. The biokinetic modeling confirmed the validity of the Monod model with pH inhibition, yielding a maximum specific growth rate (μ_{max}) of 1.77/day, half-saturation constant (K_s) of 20.00 mg sCOD/L, endogenous decay coefficient (K_e) of 0.98/day, and biomass yield (Y) of 6.07 mg TSS/mg sCOD.

Keywords: electrocoagulation, HRT, kapok fiber, MBBR, POME

RINGKASAN

KHUSNITA AZIZAH. The Hydraulics Retention Time Impact in Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor Coupled with Electrocoagulation for Treating Palm Oil Mill Effluent. Dibimbing oleh ALLEN KURNIAWAN dan PUTERI KUSUMA WARDHANI.

Industri kelapa sawit menjadi eksportir utama sektor nonmigas pada tahun 2023, yang memberikan kontribusi pendapatan yang masif bagi Indonesia. Namun demikian, pencapaian ekonomi ini diiringi oleh tanggung jawab lingkungan yang mendesak, khususnya dalam pengelolaan limbah cair kelapa sawit yang bervolume tinggi. Penelitian ini mengkaji kinerja sistem hibrida *Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor* (MBBR) yang terintegrasi dengan unit Elektrokoagulasi (EC) dan Serat Kapuk (KF) termodifikasi oleh *trimethylchlorosilane*. Kinerja keseluruhan sistem dalam menyisihkan polutan dievaluasi pada berbagai variasi *Hydraulic Retention Time* (HRT) 24, 36, dan 48 jam, dan dilanjutkan dengan estimasi parameter biokinetika pada kondisi tidak tunak. Hasil eksperimen menunjukkan bahwa KF bersifat superhidrofobik berhasil mengadsorpsi 46% - 53% minyak dan lemak, sementara unit EC hanya mampu menyisihkan sCOD sebesar 9 % - 18%. Secara keseluruhan, rata-rata efisiensi penyisihan sCOD sistem mencapai 52%, 54%, dan 66%, sedangkan penyisihan minyak dan lemak mencapai 71,7%; 81,38%; dan 80,2%. Kinerja MBBR paling optimal dicapai pada HRT 36 jam, menghasilkan efisiensi penyisihan BOD 92% dan mempertahankan kestabilan kuantitas biomassa. HRT 48 jam memaksimalkan penyisihan TSS, tetapi menghasilkan effluen yang sangat basa dengan pH 10,56. Selain itu, kondisi basa memicu akumulasi persipitat besi pada media, yang menyebabkan penebalan biofilm dari 47-119 μm menjadi 68-191 μm dengan karakteristik warna kekuningan. Akibatnya, efisiensi penyisihan BOD dan TN mengalami penurunan drastis menjadi 50% dan 43%. Pemodelan biokinetika mengonfirmasi validitas model Monod dengan parameter inhibisi pH, yang menghasilkan estimasi laju pertumbuhan spesifik maksimum sebesar (μ_{max}) 1,77/hari, kondisi setengah saturasi (K_s) sebesar 20,00 mgsCOD/L, koefisien kematian endogen (K_e) sebesar 0,98/hari, dan koefisien yield (Y) sebesar 6,07 mgTSS/mgsCOD.

Kata kunci: elektrokoagulasi, HRT, LCKS, MBBR, serat kapuk



Hak Cipta Dilindungi Undang-undang

1. Dilarang mengutip sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini tanpa mencantumkan dan menyebutkan sumber :
 - a. Pengutipan hanya untuk kepentingan pendidikan, penelitian, penulisan karya ilmiah, penyusunan laporan, penulisan kritik atau tinjauan suatu masalah
 - b. Pengutipan tidak merugikan kepentingan yang wajar IPB University.
2. Dilarang mengumumkan dan memperbanyak sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini dalam bentuk apapun tanpa izin IPB University.

© Copyrighted by IPB University, 2026
Copyright is protected by Law

It is prohibited to quote parts or all of this paper without acknowledging or citing the source. Citation is only for the purposes of education, research, writing scientific papers, compiling report, writing criticism, or reviewing a problem, and the citation is not detrimental to IPB University interests.

It is prohibited to publish and reproduce parts or all of this paper without IPB University's permission.

THE HYDRAULICS RETENTION TIME IMPACT IN MOVING BED BIOFILM REACTOR COUPLED WITH ELECTROCOAGULATION FOR TREATING PALM OIL MILL EFFLUENT

KHUSNITA AZIZAH

A thesis

as the requirement to obtain a Master's Degree in
Civil and Environmental Engineering Department

**MASTER PROGRAM OF CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
IPB UNIVERSITY
BOGOR
2026**

@Hak cipta milik IPB University

IPB University



Hak Cipta Dilindungi Undang-undang
1. Dilarang mengutip sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini tanpa mencantumkan dan menyebutkan sumber :
a. Pengutipan hanya untuk kepentingan pendidikan, penelitian, penulisan karya ilmiah, penyusunan laporan, penulisan kritik atau tinjauan suatu masalah
b. Pengutipan tidak merugikan kepentingan yang wajar IPB University.
2. Dilarang mengumumkan dan memperbanyak sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini dalam bentuk apapun tanpa izin IPB University.



@Hak cipta milik IPB University

IPB University



Title : The Hydraulics Retention Time Impact in Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor Coupled with Electrocoagulation for Treating Palm Oil Mill Effluent

Name : Khusnita Azizah

Student ID : F4501241029

Approved by

Supervisor:

Dr. Eng. Ir. Allen Kurniawan, S.T., M.T

NIP. 19820729 201012 1 005



Co-supervisor:

Puteri Kusuma Wardhani, S.T., M.Sc., Ph.D.

NIP. 19880611 201903 2 013

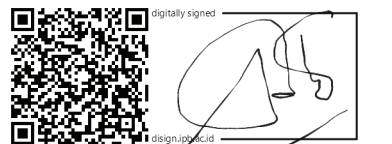


Known by

Head of Department

Prof. Dr. Satyanto Krido Saptomo, S.TP., M.Si

NIP. 19730411 200501 1 002



Dean of Faculty of Engineering and Technology

Prof. Dr. Ir. Slamet Budijanto, M. Agr.

NIP. 19610502 198603 1 002



Examination date: May 25th, 2026

Graduate Date:



@Hak cipta milik IPB University

IPB University



- Hak Cipta Dilindungi Undang-undang
1. Dilarang mengutip sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini tanpa mencantumkan dan menyebutkan sumber :
 - a. Pengutipan hanya untuk kepentingan pendidikan, penelitian, penulisan karya ilmiah, penyusunan laporan, penulisan kritik atau tinjauan suatu masalah
 - b. Pengutipan tidak merugikan kepentingan yang wajar IPB University.
 2. Dilarang mengumumkan dan memperbanyak sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini dalam bentuk apapun tanpa izin IPB University.

PREFACE

The author prays the praise and gratitude to the Almighty, Allah SWT, who has given the author health and blessing to correctly complete the graduate thesis entitled “Estimation of Biokinetics Parameters in Integrated Moving Bed Biofilm Reactors with Electrocoagulation for Treating Palm Oil Mill Effluent” right on time. The thesis was created and submitted to fulfill the requirement for a bachelor’s degree in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. IPB University.

On this occasion, the author would like to thank all associates who gave their support in the thesis preparation, particularly to:

1. Bachrul Ulum, Siti Nurbaiti, and Anis Faizah as family who are given unconditional and unlimited love, support, and prayers.
2. Dr. Eng. Allen Kurniawan, S.T., M.T. and Puteri Kusuma Wardhani, S.T., M.Sc., Ph.D., as supervisors who have given suggestions and guidance from the beginning until the completion of this thesis.
3. Maulina Lamuse, S.T., M.T., Alimah Hasyati Sahda, S.T., M.T., Arya Muhammad Koernia, S.T., Daffa Aqilla Prayogi, S.T., and Rizky Mursyidan Baldan S.T., M.T., who were with me throughout most of my college years.
4. Lastly, all other friends and associates cannot be mentioned individually for the help and support.

The author has contrived the thesis as best as possible but is also aware of many imperfections in both content and grammar. Consequently, the author welcomes any suggestions and constructive corrections to improve. The author wishes this thesis would be help enrich reader’s knowledge.

Bogor, July 2026
Khusnita Azizah





- Hak Cipta Dilindungi Undang-undang
1. Dilarang mengutip sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini tanpa mencantumkan dan menyebutkan sumber :
 - a. Pengutipan hanya untuk kepentingan pendidikan, penelitian, penulisan karya ilmiah, penyusunan laporan, penulisan kritik atau tinjauan suatu masalah
 - b. Pengutipan tidak merugikan kepentingan yang wajar IPB University.
 2. Dilarang mengumumkan dan memperbanyak sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini dalam bentuk apapun tanpa izin IPB University.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	v
RINGKASAN	vi
PREFACE	xii
CONTENTS	xiv
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF NOTATIONS	xvi
GLOSSARY	xvii
I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problems Formulation	4
1.3 Objectives of The Research	4
1.4 Significance of The Research	4
1.5 Scope of The Research	4
II METHODOLOGY	6
2.1 Research Site and Timeline	6
2.2 Tools and Materials	6
2.3 Research Operation Procedure	7
2.4 Data Analysis	10
III RESULT AND DISCUSSION	16
3.1. Characterization of Palm Oil Mill Effluent	16
3.2. Microbial Seeding and Acclimatization	17
3.3. The Performance of The Hybrid EC-MBBR Reactor System	18
3.4. MBBR Performance and The Impact of Hydraulic Retention Time (HRT)	23
3.5. Estimation of Biokinetic Parameters and Effluent Substrates	28
3.6. Sensitivity Analysis	31
3.7. Estimated Effluent Substrate Concentration (S') of the MBBR Unit	32
3.8. Monod Kinetics with Cardinal pH and Temperature Scenario	34
IV CONCLUSION	36
REFERENCE	38
APPENDIX	44
CURRICULUM VITAE	53

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 The instruments and chemical for conducting the research	8
Table 2.2 Constraints on biokinetic parameter variables for MBBR units	14
Table 3.1 Sample characteristics and compliance with regulatory standards	16
Table 3.2 The EC-MBBR Performance	21
Table 3.3 Monod biokinetic parameters based on variations in substrate and environmental factors	28

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 2.1 Flowchart of the research.....	7
Fig. 2.2 Configuration of the integrated EC-MBBR system: ((a) Influent; (b) EC unit; (c) Sedimentation unit; (d) MBBR unit).....	10
Fig. 3.1 Biodegradation of soluble COD by seeding and acclimatization	17
Fig. 3.2 Attached biofilm formation on kaldness helix-5	18
Fig. 3.3 SEM images of KF: (a) untreated, (b) treated with TMCS	19
Fig. 3.4 FTIR spectra for KF: (a) untreated, (b) treated with TMCS	20
Fig. 3. 5 EC unit process schematic	21
Fig. 3.6 Changes in oil and grease, TSS, and sCOD concentrations	23
Fig. 3.7 Attached of biofilm formation during 24h HRT	24
Fig. 3. 8 Attached of biofilm formation during 36h HRT	25
Fig. 3.9 Gradual accumulation of iron-derived precipitates from the EC unit	24
Fig. 3.10 Attached of biofilm formation during 48h HRT	25
Fig. 3.11 Box-and-whisker plot for attached biofilm thicknesses by HRT	26
Fig. 3.12 Influent and effluent soluble COD concentrations	27
Fig. 3.13 Box-and-whisker plot of removal efficiency by HRT	28
Fig. 3.14 Sensitivity analysis result	32
Fig. 3.15 Estimation of effluent substrate (S') using the Monod model	33

LIST OF NOTATIONS

S	=	sCOD in MBBR unit (mg/L)
V	=	Volume reactor (L)
S_0	=	sCOD influen in MBBR unit (mg/L)
Q	=	Flow discharge (L/day)
X	=	Biomass concentration (mg/L)
μ	=	Specific growth rate of microorganisms (/day)
$\mu_{\max}$	=	Maximum specific growth rate of microorganism (/day)
K_s	=	Saturation concentration (mg sCOD/L)
S_{mb}	=	sCOD effluent unit MBBR (mg/L)
$S_{mb'}$	=	sCOD effluent prediction in MBBR unit (mg/L)
K_e	=	Death rate of microorganism (/day)
Y	=	Sludge production coefficient (mg TSS/mg sCOD)
θ_i	=	Hydraulic retention time (day)
t	=	Time (day)

@Hak cipta milik IPB University

IPB University



Hak Cipta Dilindungi Undang-undang
1. Dilarang mengutip sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini tanpa mencantumkan dan menyebutkan sumber :
a. Pengutipan hanya untuk kepentingan pendidikan, penelitian, penulisan karya ilmiah, penyusunan laporan, penulisan kritik atau tinjauan suatu masalah
b. Pengutipan tidak merugikan kepentingan yang wajar IPB University.
2. Dilarang mengumunkan dan memperbanyak sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini dalam bentuk apapun tanpa izin IPB University.

GLOSSARY

Attached Growth	:	A type of biological treatment where microorganisms grow on the surface of media rather than being suspended in the liquid phase.
Biofilm	:	A complex aggregation of microorganisms growing on a solid substrate typically encased in a self-produced matrix of extracellular polymeric substances (EPS).
Biokinetics	:	A complex aggregation of microorganisms growing on a solid substrate typically encased in a self-produced matrix of extracellular polymeric substances (EPS).
Biomass	:	The total mass of living microorganisms in a given volume of water, typically used in biological wastewater treatment.
BOD	:	A measure of the amount of oxygen aerobic microorganism require to break down organic matter in water over a specific period, typically five days.
EC	:	Electrocoagulation is a water treatment process that uses electrical current to remove contaminants by coagulating and precipitating particles from the water.
HRT	:	Hydraulic retention time measure of the average time soluble compound remains in a constructed reactor or other treatment system.
MBBR	:	Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor, an attached growth biological treatment process that uses biomass carriers to support biofilm growth within a reactor.
MLSS	:	Mixed Liquor Suspended Solids, the concentration of suspended solids in the mixed liquor of a suspended growth biological treatment process, represents the biomass in the aeration tank.
Monod	:	A mathematical model describing the growth rate of microorganisms as a function of substrate concentration, commonly used in environmental and biochemical engineering.
POME	:	Palm Oil Mill Effluent, a by-product of the palm oil milling process contains high organic matter, suspended solids, and nutrients.
Reactor	:	A vessel or structure in which chemical or biological reactions are carried out, typically used in the context of industrial processes and wastewater treatment.
sCOD	:	Soluble Chemical Oxygen Demand (sCOD) is a parameter used to measure the amount of oxygen required to oxidize dissolved organic matter in water.
Substrate	:	Any substance or material used or consumed by microorganisms for growth and metabolism in biological treatment processes.
Supernatant	:	The clear liquid found on top of a solid residue after centrifugation, precipitation, settling, or similar processes.
Suspended Growth	:	A type of biological treatment where microorganisms are suspended in the liquid phase.
TSS	:	Total Suspended Solids is the measure of the suspended solid particles in a liquid, typically water, which are not dissolved and can be removed by filtration.
Unsteady-state	:	A condition in which the variables (such as concentrations. MLSS) in a system change with time instead of a steady-state where they remain constant over time.

- : Visual Basic Application is an event-driven programming language from Microsoft primarily used for automating tasks in Microsoft Office applications.

VBA

@Hak cipta milik IPB University

IPB University

