

SURFACE MODIFICATION OF POLYETHYLENE GLYCOL-NANO SILICA  
USING SDS TO IMPROVE RHEOLOGICAL AND FILTRATION PROPERTIES  
OF WATER-BASED MUD

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, 5 concentrations of SDS are used to surface-modify nanocomposite of polyethylene glycol-based silica (PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub>-SDS NC). The objectives of the study are to evaluate the influence of SDS concentration in the surface modification of PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub>-SDS on the rheological properties (plastic viscosity (PV), yield point (YP), and gel strength) and filtration properties of water-based drilling fluid. The experiment was conducted into two stages. The first part is the synthesis of PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> NC then surface modifying it with 5 SDS concentrations of 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, 4.5, 5.5 vol%. The synthesized PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub>-SDS NCs undergo characterizations such as FESEM, EDX and TEM in order to confirm the synthesis and modification processes are successful. The second part is to study the effect of the 5 NCs on rheological properties and filtration properties as an additive to water-based mud (WBM). PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> NC was synthesized from Tetraethyl orthosilicate (TEOS), polyethylene glycol (PEG), Ethanol (EtOH), ammonium hydroxide (NH<sub>4</sub>OH), and deionized water. The sodium dodecyl sulfonate (SDS) surfactant was used to functionalize the synthesized PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> NC via surface modification. The WBM materials are freshwater (320 ml), caustic soda (NaOH) (0.15 gm), and bentonite (25 gm). All the materials were used as obtained without purification. The experimental results revealed that after modifying SDS, the low pressure-low temperature (LPLT) and high pressure-high temperature (HPHT) filtration loss of PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> additives was improved before and after hot rolling of mud samples at 250 °F for 16 h. When compared to base mud, the modified 0.1 g of PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> with 3.5 vol% of SDS reduced the LPLT and HPHT filtration loss of drilling fluid by 46.3% and 45.5%, respectively. Drilling fluid rheological parameters such as AV, PV, YP, and gelation were also improved by modifying PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> with SDS. The optimal SDS concentration for the best rheological properties is 3.5 vol%. As a result, the use of PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> with 3.5% SDS in water-based mud produced favourable results, reaffirming the feasibility of using them in successful drilling operations.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

API	-	American Petroleum Institute
AV	-	Apparent Viscosity
EDX	-	Energy Dispersive X-ray
EtOH	-	Ethanol
FTIR	-	Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy
HPHT	-	High Pressure High Temperature
LPLT	-	Low Pressure Low Temperature
NC	-	Nanocomposite
NP	-	Nanoparticle
PEG	-	Polyethylene Glycol
PV	-	Plastic Viscosity
RPM	-	Revolution Per Minute
SDS	-	Sodium Dodecyl Sulfate
SiO <sub>2</sub>	-	Silica/Silicon Dioxide
TEM	-	Transmission Electron Microscope
TEOS	-	Tetra Ethyl Ortho Silicate
TGA	-	Thermogravimetric Analysis
WBM	-	Water-Based Mud
YP	-	Yield Point

## LIST OF SYMBOLS

$V_b$	-	Amount of barite needs to make the increment, cc
$V_i$	-	Initial mud volume, bbl
$\rho_i$	-	Initial mud density, ppg
$\rho_f$	-	Final mud density, ppg
$\rho_b$	-	Density of Barite (35.4 ppg)

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Drilling fluids have progressed from simple combinations of water and clays to sophisticated organic and inorganic mixtures of drilling fluid addition items. Drilling fluids are a vital part of the drilling process; the drilling fluid's performance determines how successful a drilling operation is. In typical circumstances, drilling fluids account for up to one-fifth (15 to 18%) of the total cost of drilling well, but they can account for up to 40% of the total cost in catastrophic losses (Ragab and Noah 2014). As a result, the optimal choice of drilling fluid type and features is critical to reducing drilling time and costs, especially given the current global challenge of low crude oil prices (Amanullah and Al-Tahini 2009).

Drilling fluids are intended to perform a variety of functions, such as managing reservoir pressure, cleaning holes, reducing the damage of the formation, lubricating and cooling drill bits, and preserving the stability of the wellbore. These tasks may be accomplished by addressing drilling fluid characteristics such as PV, mud density, YP, gel strength, apparent viscosity (AV), lubricity, mud filtrate loss volume, and shale inhibition well. Furthermore, regardless of the kind of formation or operating conditions, these obligations must be carried out consistently throughout the operation. Failure to follow any of these steps can result in serious drilling issues such as clogged pipes, reduced circulation, excessive torque and drag, formation damage, inadequate hole cleaning, and wellbore instability when conditions change (Abduo et al. 2016).

The rheological and filtration characteristics of the drilling fluid are two critical criteria that govern drilling operations. Polymers are used in drilling fluids to improve their rheological and filtration properties, and they are used to drill in difficult reactive-shale formations, high-pressure high-temperature (HPHT) wells, and saline

environments (Smith et al. 2018; Caenn, Darley, and Gray 2017). As the depth of the hole increases, heat resistance becomes a vital component for polymer behavior under extreme temperatures (Smith et al. 2018; Mao et al. 2015). At high temperatures, the chains and branches of polymer break, causing viscosity degradation, a decrease in penetration rate, and a reduction in hole cleaning effectiveness (Boyou et al. 2019; Hakim et al. 2018; Aftab et al. 2016; Aftab, Ismail, and Ibupoto 2017; Jain, Mahto, and Mahto 2016). As a result, enhancing polymer heat resistance is a crucial research topic.

Once at the surface facilities, the cuttings must be removed from the system to avoid recirculation by using a low-gel-strength fluid and allowing the cuttings to settle (Egenti 2014). Drilling workers have previously depended on observation and expertise to determine the lifting ability of drilling fluids by raising either the flow rate or effective viscosity of the fluid to overcome ineffective cuttings removals, such as thick muds and high annulus velocities (Werner, Myrseth, and Saasen 2017). While increasing the viscosity or flow rate of the mud increases the cleaning action beneath the bit, it decreases the penetration rate (Polipropilena et al. 2015).

Nanotechnology has grown in popularity in the petroleum industry in recent years, particularly in the field of drilling fluid (Abdo et al. 2014; Xu et al. 2018). Some inorganic nano-materials, such as nano-silica, were used to seal pore throats, additives in drilling fluids to improve their qualities, and fissures in shale formations, forming a thin and compacted mud cake and significantly reducing pore pressure transfer (Cai et al. 2012; Akhtarmanesh, Shahrabi, and Atashnezhad 2013). However, due to their strong self-agglomeration tendency, they cannot completely solve the problems of wellbore instability (Elochukwu, Gholami, and Sham Dol 2017; Aftab, Ismail, and Ibupoto 2017). This has a major impact on the dispersion stability of WBM systems containing macro- or micro-sized particles.

Polyethylene glycol (PEG), a water-soluble alkaline oxide copolymer, is a good shale inhibiting agent in WBM and has effectively replaced older polyglycerols (Yuxiu et al. 2016). When employed in WBMs, it has been shown to be particularly successful in intercalating within the formation's clay matrix to limit filtrate loss, hold

drilled cuttings together, and improve wellbore stability (William et al. 2014) created a WBM with PEG and found that the developed PEG-based drilling fluid system performs well in terms of shale inhibition and mud rheological qualities. As a result, it improved wellbore stability by suspending and lifting drilled cuttings to the surface. However, despite the technical efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and environmental acceptability of using PEG to formulate conventional WBM, it has a problem with thermal stability in high-temperature applications, which can cause a reduction in rheological property performance, thereby reducing cuttings transport efficiency (Aston and Elliott 1994)

Sodium dodecyl sulfonate (SDS) is a surfactant with an amphiphilic polar head and non-polar tail that allows it to self-associate in solution. Because of its low cost and ability to prevent particle oxidation and separation, SDS is the most commonly used and desired surfactant. It can also boost the hydrophilicity of PEG and help to stabilize the charge of SiO<sub>2</sub> solution.

A water-based nanomud must comprise chemical additive particles of nanoscale dimensions ( $1 \text{ m}=10^9 \text{ nm}$ ). Unlike its micro-sized parent particles, nanoparticles have a high surface area to volume ratio and supply additional charges to the mud, as well as minuscule sizes with great sensitivity and excellent particle dispersion. As a result, they are highly charged particles. Furthermore, they are classed as cationic or anionic nanoparticles based on the ion (atom) types on their surface. As a result, a small number of them can play important roles and execute several activities in water-based drilling mud.(Salih, Elshehabi, and Bilgesu 2017)

With the investigation of tight oil and gas reservoirs, nanoparticles in drilling fluid became more popular. Because shale deposits have narrow pore throats, it is difficult to create an impenetrable filter cake. As a result, the use of nanoparticles in drilling fluids in such applications was discovered to be effective in generating an impermeable filter cake around the wellbore wall and sealing micro cracks (Hoelscher et al. 2012)(Riley et al. 2012). Silica (SiO<sub>2</sub> NPs) is one of the most commonly employed NPs in drilling fluid due to its well-established chemistry that can be easily changed to minimize fluid interactions with formation fluids (Wilson 2012). Several

studies were conducted to examine the influence of SiO<sub>2</sub> NPs on various base drilling fluids under various situations. Total, it was established that adding SiO<sub>2</sub> NPs to bentonite water-based fluid improved filtering properties and reduced overall fluid yield stress. Adding SiO<sub>2</sub> NPs to calcium-bentonite base fluid, on the other hand, resulted in a decrease in filter cake efficiency. Under HPHT testing settings, the rheological behavior of SiO<sub>2</sub> NPs in mineral oil base fluid revealed that fluid viscosity increases with increasing pressure and decreases with decreasing temperature. When compared to the base fluid and SiO<sub>2</sub> NPs, Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> NPs improved filtration characteristics (Mahmoud et al. 2016). Other research on iron-based NPs found that they increased filtration while not influencing rheological qualities in oil base fluid. However, in the case of bentonite water-based drilling fluid, iron-based NPs demonstrated a minor improvement in rheological parameters, particularly yield stress (Al-Saba et al. 2018) theme.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

As a result, poorly constructed mud causes a variety of mud-related issues such as shale swelling, stuck pipe, bit balling, torque & drag, formation caving/sloughing, surge and swab pressures, reservoir damage, mud circulation loss, insufficient mud hydraulic system, and so on. All of these issues are directly tied to the drilling mud's rheological, filtration, and hydraulic qualities, which are directly related to the mud's flocculation level. As a result, high flocculation is recognized as one of the most damaging phenomena in water-based mud, failing the mud design and increasing drilling challenges. This has a high filtering volume, yield point, plastic viscosity, gel strength, mud cake thickness, and low mud pumpability as a result (Salih and Bilgesu 2017).

PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> NP alone is facing agglomeration (less stable) problem and need to be treated via surface modification continuing on the success of PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub>-SDS NP that was reported by (Blkoor et al. 2022).

However, the impacts of varying the SDS composition on the modified PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> NC material in WBM towards optimum stability thus optimum in reducing agglomeration have not been determined. Moreover, the effect of SDS composition on rheology, filtrate loss control, filter cake thickness and permeability, pH, and density have also not been determined, for both LPLT and HPHT.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the research are:

- (a) To synthesize and characterize PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> NC material.
- (b) To treat (by surface modification) and characterize (for stability) the said PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> NC with various volume% (concentration) of SDS
- (c) To verify the effect of various concentrations of SDS in PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub>-SDS NC on the rheological and filtration properties of WBM under LPLT and HPHT conditions.
- (d) To find the optimum concentration of SDS in stabilizing the PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub>-SDS NC as well as the optimum in the rheological and filtration properties in WBM.

### **1.4 Scope of the study**

- (a) Synthesizing PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub> NC and modifying it with 5 SDS concentration (1.5, 2.5, 3.5, 4.5, 5.5 vol%)
- (b) Characterizing of the 5 synthesized PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub>-SDS NC with different techniques such as (FESEM), EDX and (TEM) in order to confirm the synthesis and modification processes.

- (c) Comparing the effect of the 5 synthesized PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub>-SDS NC in WBM on rheological properties (Density, Plastic viscosity, Yield point, Gel strength, and Apparent viscosity) for both low temperature and after hot rolling
- (d) Comparing the effect of the 5 synthesized PEG-SiO<sub>2</sub>-SDS NC in WBM on filtration properties for both LPLT and HPHT conditions

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

- (a) This study's findings could lead to a new method and opportunities for enhancing rheological and filtration properties
- (b) The findings of this research could also give the optimal concentration of SDS to enhance rheological and filtration qualities.
- (c) Other areas of the oil and gas business that nanoparticles can be used in include EOR, workover, and completion tasks.

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