

**MODIFIED ZEOLITE BETA AS CATALYSTS IN FRIEDEL-CRAFTS
ALKYLATION OF RESORCINOL**

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MODIFIED ZEOLITE BETA AS CATALYSTS IN FRIEDEL-CRAFTS
ALKYLATION OF RESORCINOL

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Special dedicated for:

**my beloved mother and father, my parents in law
my husband, Muhazar Mohammad and my beloved daughter,
Fatin Afrina**

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ABSTRACT

Zeolites are widely used as acid catalysts for the synthesis of fine chemicals in industrial processes. One such process is Friedel-Crafts alkylation which proceeds in the presence of acid catalysts. In this research, the acid property of zeolite Beta was studied in order to increase its activity in the Friedel-Crafts alkylation of resorcinol with *tert*-butanol. Zeolite Beta was chosen as catalysts in the Friedel-Crafts alkylation because it possesses large pore and high acid strength. Zeolite Beta was modified by varying the SiO₂/Al₂O₃ ratios of the initial gel and introducing niobium oxide into zeolite Beta samples. All samples were characterized by XRD, FTIR, N₂ adsorption, UV-Vis DR and ²⁹Si MAS NMR. XRD results showed all samples gave highly pure zeolite Beta phase. ²⁹Si MAS NMR showed that the zeolite Beta samples with initial SiO₂/Al₂O₃ ratios = 27, 45 and 90 result in the zeolite Beta having Si/Al framework ratios of 11, 21 and 19 respectively. The crystallinity of zeolite Beta is slightly decreased after the introduction of niobium oxide into the samples. UV-Vis DR results showed that the niobium species in zeolite Beta samples are mainly in the tetrahedral form. Acidity study of the catalysts was measured by FTIR pyridine adsorption and TPD of ammonia. FTIR pyridine showed that the amount of Brønsted acid sites in zeolite Beta samples increased in the order of framework Si/Al ratios = 21 < 19 < 11 and also increased after 2 % wt Nb loading but decreased after 4 % Nb loading. Meanwhile the Lewis acid site did not show any correlation to the Si/Al ratios of zeolite Beta but increased after incorporated with niobium. TPD results showed that the amount of acid sites in zeolite Beta samples decreased while the acid strength increased with the increased of Si/Al ratios of zeolite Beta framework. The strength and the amount of acid sites also increased after 2 % wt Nb loading and decreased after 4 % wt Nb loading. All catalysts were tested in Friedel-Crafts alkylation of resorcinol with *tert*-butanol. GC analysis showed the alkylation of resorcinol over zeolite Beta at different Si/Al ratios produced 4,6-di-*tert*-butylresorcinol (main product) and 4-*tert*-butylresorcinol. The conversion decreased in the order, zeolite Beta with Si/Al = 11 (95 %) > 19 (70 %) > 21 (64 %) and the selectivity of 4,6-di-*tert*-butylresorcinol also decreased in the order Si/Al = 11 (81 %) > 19 (78 %) > 21 (56 %). Zeolite Beta sample with Nb loading has successfully produced 4,6-di-*tert*-butylresorcinol with 100 % selectivity. ESR analysis showed that the alkylation product containing butylated resorcinol is 4 times stronger antioxidant than the resorcinol itself.

ABSTRAK

Zeolit telah digunakan secara meluas sebagai mangkin asid untuk sintesis bahan kimia dalam proses industri. Satu contoh proses ialah pengalkilan Friedel-Crafts dengan bermangkikan asid. Dalam kajian ini, sifat keasidan zeolit Beta telah dikaji untuk meningkatkan aktiviti dalam tindak balas pengalkilan Friedel-Crafts antara resorsinol dan *tert*-butanol. Ia dipilih kerana mempunyai liang yang besar dan tapak asid yang kuat. Zeolit Beta telah diubahsuai dengan mempelbagaikan nisbah $\text{SiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ campuran gel awal dan memasukkan niobium oksida kedalam sampel zeolit Beta. Semua sampel telah dicirikan dengan kaedah XRD, FTIR, penjerapan nitrogen, UV-Vis DR dan ^{29}Si MAS NMR. Hasil XRD menunjukkan semua sampel mempunyai ketulenan fasa zeolit Beta yang tinggi. Hasil ^{29}Si MAS NMR menunjukkan sampel zeolit Beta dengan nisbah awal $\text{SiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 = 27, 45$ dan 90 masing-masing menghasilkan zeolit Beta dengan nisbah bingkai $\text{Si}/\text{Al} = 11, 21$ dan 19 . Kehabluran sampel zeolit Beta berkurang sedikit setelah ditambah niobium oksida. Hasil UV-Vis DR menunjukkan spesies niobium dalam sampel zeolite Beta sebahagian besarnya adalah dalam bentuk tetrahedron. Kajian terhadap keasidan mangkin telah diukur menggunakan kaedah penjerapan piridina-FTIR dan ammonia TPD. Hasil penjerapan piridina-FTIR menunjukkan jumlah tapak asid Brönsted dalam sampel zeolit Beta bertambah mengikut urutan nisbah bingkai $\text{Si}/\text{Al} = 21 < 19 < 11$ dan juga bertambah selepas dimuatkan dengan 2% w/w Nb dan berkurang selepas dimuatkan dengan 4% w/w Nb. Sementara itu, tapak asid Lewis tidak menunjukkan wujudnya sebarang korelasi terhadap nisbah Si/Al tetapi bertambah selepas dimuatkan dengan niobium. Hasil TPD menunjukkan jumlah tapak asid dalam sampel zeolit Beta berkurang sementara kekuatan tapak asid bertambah dengan pertambahan nisbah Si/Al dalam bingkai zeolit Beta. Kekuatan dan jumlah tapak asid juga bertambah selepas dimuatkan dengan 2% w/w Nb dan berkurang selepas dimuatkan dengan 4% w/w Nb. Semua mangkin diuji dalam tindak balas pengalkilan Friedel-Crafts antara resorsinol dan *tert*-butanol. Analisis KG menunjukkan pengalkilan resorsinol menggunakan zeolit Beta yang berbeza nisbah Si/Al telah menghasilkan 4,6-di-*tert*-butilresorcinol (hasil utama) dan 4-*tert*-butilresorcinol. Peratus pertukaran resorcinol berkurang mengikut urutan, zeolit Beta dengan nisbah $\text{Si}/\text{Al} = 11 (95\%) > 19 (70\%) > 21 (64\%)$ dan peratus kepilihan 4,6-di-*tert*-butilresorcinol juga berkurang mengikut urutan nisbah $\text{Si}/\text{Al} = 11 (81\%) > 19 (78\%) > 21 (56\%)$. Sampel zeolite Beta yang mengandungi Nb telah berjaya menghasilkan 4,6-di-*tert*-butilresorcinol dengan kepilihan 100% . Analisis ESR menunjukkan produk pengalkilan yang mengandungi butil resorcinol mempunyai sifat antioksidan 4 kali lebih kuat daripada resorcinol sendiri.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	TITLE	
	DECLARATION	ii
	DEDICATION	iii
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
	ABSTRACT	v
	ABSTRAK	vi
	TABLE OF CONTENT	vii
	LIST OF TABLES	xi
	LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
	LIST OF SYMBOL / ABBREVIATIONS	xvii
	LIST OF APPENDICES	xviii
1	INTRODUCTION	
	1.1 General Introduction	1
	1.2 Research Background	2
	1.3 Research Objectives	3
	1.4 Scope of Research	4
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	
	2.1 Rice Husk Ash	5
	2.2 Zeolite	7
	2.2.1 Zeolite structure	9
	2.2.2 Zeolite properties	13
	2.2.3 Synthesis of zeolite	15

2.2.4	Acidity of zeolite	17
2.3	Zeolite Beta	21
2.4	Niobium	24
2.5	Friedel-Crafts Alkylation	25
2.6	Antioxidant	30
2.7	Characterization Techniques	31
2.7.1	X-ray Diffraction	31
2.7.2	Infrared Spectroscopy	33
2.7.3	Temperature Programmed Desorption of Ammonia	36
2.7.4	²⁹ Si Magic Angle Spinning Nuclear Magnetic Resonance	38
2.7.5	Nitrogen Adsorption	40
3	EXPERIMENTAL	
3.1	Chemicals	43
3.2	Instruments	44
3.3	Synthesis of Zeolite Beta	44
3.4	Modification of Zeolite Beta	45
3.4.1	Preparation of Zeolite Beta at Different SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ Ratios	46
3.4.2	Ammonium Ion-exchange Method	46
3.4.3	Impregnation with Niobium(V) ethoxide	47 48
3.5	Characterization Techniques	48
3.5.1	X-ray Diffraction	48
3.5.2	Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy	48
3.5.3	Solid State NMR Spectroscopy	49
3.5.4	Nitrogen Adsorption	49
3.5.5	Ultra Violet-Visible Diffuse Reflectance (UV-Vis DR)	49
3.6	Acidity Measurement of Zeolite Beta	50
3.6.1	Pyridine Adsorption Monitored by IR	50

	Spectroscopy	
3.6.2	Temperature Programmed Desorption of Ammonia	50
3.7	Catalytic Test	51
3.7.1	Activation of Catalysts	51
3.7.2	Butylation of Resorcinol over Zeolite Beta Catalysts	51
3.8	Antioxidant Testing	52
4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
	Preparation of Zeolite Beta Based Catalysts	54
4.2	Zeolite Beta at Various SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ Ratios	58
4.2.1	X-Ray Diffraction	58
4.2.2	Fourier Transform Infrared	60
4.2.3	BET Surface Area	62
4.2.4	²⁹ Si MAS NMR	64
4.3	Incorporation of Niobium in Zeolite Beta	68
4.3.1	X-Ray Diffraction	68
4.3.2	Ultra Violet-Visible Diffuse Reflectance (UV-Vis DR)	70
4.4	Acidity Study of Zeolite Beta	71
4.4.1	Pyridine Adsorption Monitored by IR Spectroscopy	71
4.4.2	Temperature Programmed Desorption (TPD) of Ammonia	80
4.5	Catalytic Activity of Zeolite Beta in Friedel- Crafts Alkylation	85
4.5.1	Optimization of Reaction Condition	87
4.5.1.1	Effect of Reaction Time	87
4.5.1.2	Effect of Reaction Temperature	90
4.5.2	Effect of Different Si/Al Ratio of Zeolite Beta Catalyst	92

4.5.3	Effect of Zeolite Beta with Niobium Loading	95
4.5.4	Influence of Catalyst Acidity Towards Catalytic Activity	97
4.5.5	Proposed Reaction Mechanism	99
4.6	Antioxidant Property of Butylated Resorcinol	101
5	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1	Conclusion	105
5.2	Recommendations	108
	REFERENCES	109
	Appendices A-C	119-121

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	The composition of compounds in rice husk ash.	6
3.1	Ratio of gel oxides mixture in the preparation of zeolite Beta based on the mole oxides.	46
3.2	The oven-programmed setup for GC-MSD	52
4.1	Crystallinity of zeolite Beta samples at different SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ ratios of the initial gel	59
4.2	Assignment of zeolite Beta lattice vibration	62
4.3	The BET surface area of zeolite Beta at various SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ ratios of the initial gel	63
4.4	The chemical shifting and Si/Al ratio of as-synthesized zeolite Beta at different SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ ratios of the initial gel	66
4.5	Crystallinity of zeolite Beta (BEA-11) and zeolite Beta with different wt% of niobium loading	69
4.6	Amount of Brönsted (B) and Lewis (L) acid in zeolite Beta samples at different Si/Al ratios	77
4.7	The amount of Brönsted and Lewis acid sites in zeolite Beta samples.	80
4.8	Quantitative results of H-Beta at different Si/Al ratio of zeolite Beta framework	83
4.9	Quantitative results of unmodified zeolite Beta (BEA-11) and modified zeolite Beta (2Nb-BEA-11 and 4Nb-BEA-11)	84
4.10	Selectivity of 4,6-di- <i>tert</i> -butylresorcinol and 4- <i>tert</i> -butylresorcinol with different Si/Al ratios of zeolite Beta catalyst	93
4.11	The correlation between the catalytic performances with the	95

surface area and crystallinity of zeolite Beta at different Si/Al ratios

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Zeolite utilization demand in United State of America in 1995	9
2.2	Primary Building Unit (PBU) : $[\text{SiO}_4]^{4-}$ or $[\text{AlO}_4]^{5-}$	10
2.3	The Secondary Building Units (SBU) in zeolite framework.	11
2.4	Schematic representative of the building of zeolite framework a) Primary Building Units b) Secondary Building Units c) Zeolite structure	12
2.5	Brönsted and Lewis acid sites in zeolite framework	18
2.6	Diagram of a zeolite framework surface (a) In the as-synthesized form, M^+ is either an organic cation or an alkali metal cation. (b) Ammonium ion exchange produces the NH_4^+ exchanged form. (c) Thermal treatment is used to remove ammonia, producing the H^+ , acid form. (d) Equilibrium form with the acid form showing a silanol group adjacent to a tricoordinate aluminium	20
2.7	Zeolite Beta framework viewed along a) [100] b) [001]	22
2.8	Three-dimensional structure of zeolite Beta	23
2.9	Zeolite Beta structure	23
2.10	Mechanism of electrophile substitution of benzene using AlCl_3 as catalyst	27
2.11	The formation of different products in Friedel-Crafts alkylation of resorcinol with <i>tert</i> -butanol	29
2.12	Schematic representation of diffracted beams in crystal lattice	32
2.13	Infrared frequency of vibration in zeolite Beta framework; (a) Asymmetric stretch, (insensitive to structure change)	34

	(b) Template stretch (c) Symmetric stretch, (sensitive to structure change) (d) Symmetric stretch, (sensitive)	
2.14	IR spectra of (a) hydroxyl groups in zeolite after heated at 400°C (b) after pyridine adsorption	36
2.15	NH ₃ -TPD profiles of zeolite Beta samples	37
2.16	Range of ²⁹ Si chemical shifts of Q ⁴ (nAl) units in aluminosilicates	40
2.17	The six types of adsorption and desorption isotherm for macroporous and mesoporous materials	41
3.1	Heterogeneous batch reaction apparatus	53
4.1	X-ray diffractograms pattern of rice husk ash (RHA) and the as-synthesized zeolite Beta at SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ = 27 (Si-27 sample).	55
4.2	X-ray diffractograms of the as-synthesized (Si-27), calcined (Si-27cal) and hydrogen form of zeolite Beta (H-Si-27)	56
4.3	IR spectra of rice husk ash (RHA) and Si-27 samples: (a) as-synthesized (b) calcined	57
4.4	X-ray diffractograms pattern of as-synthesized zeolite beta; (a) Si-27, (b) Si-45 and (c) Si-90	60
4.5	IR spectra of zeolite Beta at different SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ ratio of the initial gel [(a) Si-27 (b) Si-90 (c) Si-45]	61
4.6	Nitrogen adsorption isotherm of zeolite Beta at various SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ ratios	63
4.7	²⁹ Si MAS NMR spectra of as-synthesized zeolite beta at different SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ ratios of initial gel.	65
4.8	The amount of Si/Al ratios in bulk samples and Si/Al in zeolite framework	67
4.9	X-Ray diffractogram pattern of (a) zeolite Beta (BEA-11) (b) zeolite Beta with 2 % wt of niobium loading (2Nb-BEA-11) and (c) zeolite Beta with 4 % wt of niobium loading (4Nb-BEA-11).	69
4.10	UV-Vis spectra of niobic acid (Nb) sample, zeolite Beta (BEA-11) and zeolite Beta with 2 % wt of niobium loading (2Nb-BEA-11) and zeolite Beta with 4 % wt of niobium loading (4 Nb-BEA-11)	71
4.11	IR spectra of H-beta at different Si/Al ratio after degassed under vacuum (<10 ⁻² mbar) at 400°C for 16 h [(a) BEA-11 (b) BEA-19	73

	(c) BEA-21]	
4.12	IR spectra of BEA-11 after [(a) thermal treatment at 400°C under vacuum, (b) Pyridine adsorption at room temperature, (c) Pyridine desorption at 150°C (d) Pyridine desorption at 400°C.	75
4.13	FTIR spectra of H-beta at different Si/Al ratios after pyridine desorption at 150°C	76
4.14	IR spectra of hydroxyl groups of zeolite Beta (BEA-11) and zeolite Beta (BEA-11) with different % wt of niobium loading at room temperature	78
4.15	FTIR spectra of zeolite Beta (BEA-11); niobic acid and zeolite Beta with different % wt of niobium loading (2Nb-BEA-11 and 4Nb-BEA-11) after pyridine desorption at 150°C	79
4.16	Proposed models for the surface structure of zeolite Beta with niobium loading	80
4.17	NH ₃ -TPD profiles of zeolite Beta with various SiO ₂ /Al ₂ O ₃ ratios	82
4.18	TPD of ammonia thermograms of zeolite Beta (BEA-11) and zeolite Beta with different wt % of niobium loading (2Nb-BEA-11 and 4Nb-BEA-11)	84
4.19	Chromatogram for the alkylation of resorcinol with tert-butanol reaction at 80°C for 8 h catalysed by BEA-11	86
4.20	Standard calibration graph for the area of resorcinol/toluene versus the concentration of resorcinol (mmole/ mL)	87
4.21	The conversion of resorcinol in alkylation reaction; catalyst and non catalysts	88
4.22	Alkylation of resorcinol with tert-butanol catalysed by BEA-11: Effect of reaction time	89
4.23	Effect of reaction time on the yield of 4,6-di- <i>tert</i> -butylresorcinol	90
4.24	Influence of reaction temperatures on the conversion of resorcinol over H-BEA-11	91
4.25	Influence of reaction temperatures on the yield of 4,6-di- <i>tert</i> -butylresorcinol at 8 hours reaction time over BEA-11	91
4.26	Conversion of resorcinol versus reaction time over different	92

	Si/Al ratios of zeolite beta catalyst	
4.27	The correlation between the selectivity and the yield of 4,6-di- <i>tert</i> -butylresorcinol with the amount of Brönsted and Lewis acid sites at different Si/Al ratios of zeolite Beta	94
4.28	The conversion of resorcinol for sample of alkylation reaction catalysed by zeolite beta with niobium loading (2Nb-BEA-11) and zeolite beta without niobium loading (BEA-11)	96
4.29	the correlation between the selectivity and the yield of 4,6-di- <i>tert</i> -butylresorcinol with the amount of Brönsted and Lewis acid sites in BEA-11 and 2Nb-BEA-11 samples.	97
4.30	Proposed reaction mechanism of the alkylation of resorcinol with <i>tert</i> -butanol over zeolite Beta catalysts	100
4.31	Chemical structure of 1,1-diphenyl-2-picryl-hydrazyl (DPPH)	101
4.32	ESR spectra of (a) DPPH free radical (solid state) (b) DPPH radical in an ethanol solution of 10 mM (c) DPPH radical in an ethanol solution of 10 mM after reacted with butylated resorcinol, $g = 2.00178$ (d) DPPH completely reacted after reacted with butylated resorcinol	102
4.33	Graph of ESR signals of DPPH (standard series), DPPH after reacted with resorcinol and DPPH after reacted with butylated resorcinol at different concentration.	104

LIST OF SYMBOLS / ABBREVIATIONS

BEA-11	Zeolite Beta with Si/Al=11 ratio in zeolite framework
BET	Brunnauer, Emmet and Teller
BHA	Butylated hydroxyanisole
BHT	Butylated hydroxytoluene
2,4-DTBP	2,4-di <i>tert</i> -butylphenol
D4R	Double 4 ring
D6R	Double 6 ring
DPPH	1,1-Diphenyl-2-picryl-hydrazyl
ESR	Electron Spin Resonance
FTIR	Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy
GC	Gas chromatography
GC-MS	Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry
H-BEA	Zeolite Beta in hydrogen form
Nb	Niobium
2Nb-BEA-11	Zeolite Beta (Si/Al=11) with 2 % niobium loading
PBU	Primary Building Unit
RHA	Rice Husk Ash
SBU	Secondary Building Unit
Si-27	Zeolite Beta with $\text{SiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 = 27$
^{29}Si MAS NMR	^{29}Si Magic Angle Spinning Nuclear Magnetic Resonance
TEAOH	Tetraethylammonium hydroxide
TPD-Ammonia	Temperature Programmed Desorption of Ammonia
UV-Vis DR	Ultra Violet - Visible Diffuse Reflectance
wt %	Weight %
XRD	X-Ray Diffractogram

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDICES.	TITLE	PAGE
A	The example of Si/Al ratios calculation.	119
B	The Example calculation of the amount of niobium(V) ethoxide taken	120
C	Publications	121

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

Chemical process industry is a large industry with a global turnover of US \$1400 billion per year (Roland and Kleinschmit, 1996). It has been recognized that the status of chemical process industry is a reliable indicator of the country's state of industrialization. It is well known that the chemical process industry is mainly based on catalytic processes. More than 90% of all chemical products manufactured involve at least one catalytic step, mostly even several catalytic procedures (Hölderich *et al.*, 1997). Zeolite acid catalysts have a wide application in industrial processes such as alkylation, isomerization, amination, cracking and etc (Tanabe and Hölderich, 1999). According to them, zeolites are the highest number of catalyst used in industrial processes. The utilization of zeolites as catalysts in industrial processes occupies 40%, followed by the oxides, complex oxides and ion-exchange resins.

The ability of zeolites as catalysts in organic processes has been investigated by many researchers. Zeolite Beta is a typical example of the zeolite with high activity in fine chemical reactions. Zeolite Beta has proven to be a reactive acid catalyst in many organic processes such as alkylation (Cheralathan *et al.*, 2003; Chiu *et al.*, 2004), acylation (Casagrande *et al.*, 2000) and various hydrocarbon reactions (Absil and Hatzikos, 1998). Zeolites are employed as an alternative heterogeneous catalyst instead of homogeneous catalysts particularly in Friedel-Crafts reaction since it is more efficient and environmentally-friendly which can eventually reduce plant

corrosion and eliminate environmental problems. The key opportunity for the use of zeolites as catalysts relies on their unique pores which can control the selectivity of the reaction. Zeolites possess acid sites on the surface which can catalyze reaction such as Friedel-Crafts. The acid sites in zeolites are linked to tetrahedral aluminium atoms in the framework of the zeolite (Zaiku *et al.*, 2002). Therefore the acidity depends on the amount of aluminium framework.

1.2 Research Background

Friedel-Crafts alkylation of aromatics is one of the most significant basic reaction in organic chemistry and of great importance in synthesizing fine chemicals. Some of these chemicals are used in the production of antioxidants (Narayanan and Murthy, 2001; Zhang *et al.*, 1998), intermediates for polyester fibers, engineering plastics, and liquid crystalline polymers for electronic and mechanical devices and films (Ahedi *et al.*, 2003). More specifically, the alkylation of resorcinol with *tert*-butanol is a reaction of practical interest since it produces butyl resorcinol which has potential uses as antioxidants, polymer stabilizers and in the treatment of mitochondrial respiration ailments (Narayanan and Murthy, 2001).

In general, Friedel-Crafts reaction is carried out with classic Lewis acid catalyst such as AlCl_3 , BF_3 and TiCl_4 , coupled with strong mineral acids such as HF and H_2SO_4 , $\text{Cu}(\text{OTf})_2$ and $\text{Sn}(\text{OTf})_2$ (Chandra *et al.*, 2002). However the present use of conventional Lewis acid catalysts such as AlCl_3 courses a number of problems. First, the use of greater than stoichiometric amounts of the catalyst are needed, due to the configuration of a complex between the product and the catalyst. Second, the following hydrolysis of the catalysts leads to the loss of the catalyst as well as the problem of the disposal of the catalyst which consequently affects the environment. Therefore, heterogeneous catalysts have been chosen to replace the homogeneous catalysts in Friedel-Crafts reaction. The use of zeolites and other solid acid catalysts as heterogeneous catalysts in the manufacture of chemical intermediates and fine

chemicals is gaining much more attention in recent years (Tanabe and Hölderich, 1999).

In this research, we have chosen zeolite Beta to be studied as the catalyst, following the current development in heterogeneous catalysis in Friedel-Crafts reaction. Zeolite Beta has great potential industrial interest because of its high acidity, large pore (5.0-7.0 Å) and peculiar pore systems and high silica content and has a high thermal stability. It is well known that zeolite possesses both Brönsted and Lewis acid sites. The acidity of a zeolite is one of the most important topics in the study of zeolite catalysis. The acid sites in zeolites are linked to the tetrahedral aluminium atoms in the framework of the zeolite (Zaiku *et al.*, 2002). Studies have shown that the amount of Brönsted and Lewis acid determine the selectivity of Friedel-Crafts reaction (Narayanan and Muthy, 2001; Narayanan and Sultana, 1998; Nivarthy *et al.*, 1998; Yadav and Doshi, 2003). Therefore, in this study the acidity of zeolite Beta will be modified by varying the Si/Al ratio of the framework as well as introducing niobium oxides as a support metal into zeolite Beta lattice.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- 1) To synthesize zeolite Beta at different Si/Al ratios.
- 2) To modify the acidity of zeolite Beta by introducing niobium oxide
- 3) To determine the acidity of the modified zeolite beta.
- 4) To test the reactivity of the catalysts in Friedel-Crafts alkylation of resorcinol with *tert*-butanol.

1.4 Scope of Research

In this research, zeolite Beta was first synthesized using white rice husk ash (RHA) as silica sources. Zeolite Beta was synthesized with various SiO₂: Al₂O₃ molar ratios of the initial gel to obtain zeolite Beta with different Si/Al ratios framework. The acidity of zeolite Beta was further modified by introducing niobic acid as niobium oxide precursor through wet impregnation method.

The characterization of the catalysts was performed by using appropriate techniques which include powder X-ray diffraction (XRD), Fourier Transform Infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), ²⁹Si Magic Angle Spinning (MAS) NMR spectroscopy, UV-Visible Diffuse Reflectance spectroscopy (UV-Vis DR) and nitrogen adsorption-desorption measurement. The acidity measurement of the prepared zeolite Beta catalysts was carried out by Temperature Programmed Desorption (TPD) of ammonia method and pyridine adsorption monitored by Fourier Transform Infrared spectroscopy (FTIR).

The final part in this study was to test the catalytic activity of the prepared catalysts in Friedel-Crafts alkylation of resorcinol with *tert*-butanol. The comparison of reactivity and selectivity of the catalysts in the Friedel-Crafts alkylation has been made between unmodified zeolite Beta and modified zeolite beta. The reaction was performed in a batch reactor and the product was analysed by gas chromatography (GC) while the identification of the products was carried out by using Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS). Lastly, the study of antioxidant properties of the Friedel-Crafts reaction product was conducted by reacting the sample with 1,1-diphenyl-2-picryl-hydrazyl (DPPH) radical and the activity was measured using Electron Spin Resonance (ESR) method.

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