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DEVELOPMENT OF CARBON NANOTUBE (CNT)-PHILIC SURFACTANT DESIGN FOR LATEX TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study is to investigate the roles played by the chemical nature of the CNT-philic surfactant for dispersing MWCNTs in polymer matrix. In this respect, the performance of single-, double-, and triple- chain anionic sulphosuccinate surfactants for the dispersion of MWNCTs in natural rubber latex (NR-latex) via latex technology was studied using a range of techniques, including field emission scanning electron microscopy (FESEM), transmission electron microscopy (TEM), and Raman spectroscopy. The conductivities of the nanocomposites were also measured using four point probe instruments. The results show MWCNTs were efficiently dispersed in NR-latex with an aid of hyper- and benzene ring- branched triple-chain sulphosuccinate anionic surfactants, namely, sodium 1,4-bis (neopentyloxy)-3-(neopentyloxycarbonyl)-1,4-dioxobutane-2-sulphonate (TC14) and sodium 1.5dioxo-1,5-bis (3-phenylpropoxy)-3-((3-phenylpropoxy)carbonyl)pentane-2-sulphonate (TCPh), respectively. Importantly, compared to commercially available surfactants sodium dodecyl sulphate (SDS) and sodium dodecylbenzenesulphonate (SDBS), the use of TC14 and TCPh surfactants exhibits more homogeneously dispersion of MWCNTs. This indicates the performance of TC14 and TCPh as dispersants is better than both of commercially available surfactants. This study generates a fundamental understanding of the molecular structure requirements for surfactants to disperse MWCNTs via latex technology approach.

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menyiasat peranan ciri kimia surfaktan CNT-filik bagi menyerakkan MWCNTs di dalam matrik polimer. Dalam hal ini, keupayaan surfaktan anionik sulfosuksinik rantaian tunggal-, dua-, dan tiga- bagi penyerakan MWNCTs dalam getah semulajadi (NR-latex) melalui teknologi lateks telah dikaji menggunakan pelbagai teknik, termasuk mikroskopi pengimbas pancaran medan elektron (FESEM), mikroskopi transmisi elektron (TEM), dan spektroskopi Raman. Kekonduksian nanokomposit juga telah dikaji menggunakan instrumen prob empat titik. Hasil kajian menunjukkan, MWCNTs terserak dengan efisien di dalam NR-latex dengan bantuan surfaktan anionik sulfosuksinik yang mempunyai rantaian bercabang tiga berlebihan dan bergelang benzena, yang dinamakan, natrium 1,4-bis (neopentiloksi)-3-(neopentiloksikarbonil)-1,4-dioksobutana-2-sulfonat (TC14) dan natrium 1,5-diokso-1,5-bis (3-fenilpropoksi)-3-((3-fenilpropoksi)karbonil) pentana-2-sulfonat (TCPh). Pentingnya lagi, dibandingkan dengan surfaktan komersial seperti natrium dodesilsulfat (SDS) dan natrium dodesilbenzenasulfonat (SDBS), penggunaan TC14 dan TCPh memberikan hasil penyerakan MWCNTs yang lebih homogen. Ini menunjukkan keupayaan TC14 dan TCPh sebagai penyerak adalah lebih baik berbanding kedua surfaktan komersial tersebut. Kajian ini memberi kefahaman asas tentang struktur molekul yang diperlukan oleh surfaktan bagi menyerakkan MWCNTs melalui pendekatan teknologi lateks.

UNIVER	SITI PENDIDIKAN SUL	TAN IDRIS	TABLE OF CONTENTS VULTAN IDRIS	UNIVERSITI PENDI
N IDRIS	UNIVERSITI PENDIDIK	AN SULTAN	I IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN I	DRIS UNIVERSITI Page
	DECLARATIO	DN		ii
	ACKNOWLEI	OGEMENT	S	iii
	ABSTRACT			iv
	ABSTRAK			v
	TABLE OF CO	ONTENTS		vi
	LIST OF TAB	LES		х
	LIST OF FIGU	IRES		xi
	LIST OF ABB	REVIATIO	NS	xiii
	CHAPTER 1	INTROD	UCTION	
		1.1 Cart	oon Nanotubes and Its Applications	1
		1.2 Late	x Technology and Its Applications	6
		1.3 Surf	actant and Its Applications	7
		1.4 Rese	earch Objectives	9
		1.5 Scop	be of Study	9
		1.6 Sign	ificance of Study	10
	CHAPTER 2	LITERAT	TURE REVIEW	
		2.1 Cart	oon Nanotubes	11
		2.1.1	Synthesis of CNTs	11
		2.1.2	2 Structure and Electrical Properties of CNTs	15
		2.2 CN	Ts/Polymer Nanocomposites	17
		2.2.3	1 Methods in Dispersion of CNTs	18

2.2.1.2 Chemical Method 19

18

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKA DRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PEN

2.2.1.1 Physical Method

				2.2.2.2	Melt Blending		23
				2.2.2.3	In Situ Polymerisation		24
				2.2.2.4	Latex Technology		24
		2.3	Surfac	ctants			25
			2.3.1	Reducin	g Interfacial Tension by Surfacta	nts	26
			2.3.2	Critical	Micelle Concentration (cmc)		27
			2.3.3	The Typ	e of Surfactant		27
		2.4	Natura	al Rubber	Latex		30
	CHAPTER 3	MET	rhodo	DLOGY			
		3.1	Introd	luction			33
		3.2	Mater	ial			36
			3.2.1	Chemica	als		36
			3.2.2	Solvents			36
		3.3	Synth	esis of Su	rfactants		37
			3.3.1	Esterific	ation		37
				3.3.1.1	Diesterification		37
				3.3.1.2	Triesterification		38
			3.3.2	Purifica	tion of Di- and Tri- ester		38
			3.3.3	Sulphon	ation of Di- and Tri- ester		39
			3.3.4	Purifica	tion of Surfactant		39
		3.4	Purifi	cation of]	MWCNTs		40
		3.5	Deterr	mination (of NR-latex Properties		43
			3.5.1	Total Sc	olid Content (TSC)		43

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN ID2.2.2 Preparation of CNTs/Polymer Nanocomposites UNIVE23 ITT PENDID

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDPIS 2.2.1 Solution Mixing 23

 UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN ID3.5.2 Dry Rubber Content (DRC) SULTAN IDRIS
 UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN ID3.5.2 Dry Rubber Content (DRC) SULTAN IDRIS
 UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

 N IDRIS
 UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS
 3.6 Preparation of Nanocomposites
 45 NIVERSITI F

 3.7
 Characterisations
 46

 3.7.1
 Surfactant Characterisation
 46

	3.7.1.1	Proton Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy (¹ H-NMR)	46
	3.7.1.2	CHNS Elemental Analysis	47
3.7.2	Nanoco	mposites Characterisation	47
	3.7.2.1	Four Point Probe	47
	3.7.2.2	Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscopy (FESEM)	48
	3.7.2.3	Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM)	49
	3.7.2.4	Raman Spectroscopy	50

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1	Introduction				
4.2	Surfactant Characterisation	53			
	4.2.1 ¹ H-NMR Spectroscopy	53			
	4.2.2 CHNS Elemental Analysis	60			
4.3	CNTs-Based Colloidal System Stabilised by CNT-philic Surfactant: The Effect of Hyper Methylated Branched	61			
	4.3.1 Electrical Conductivity Measurements	61			
	4.3.2 FESEM Observations	67			
	4.3.3 TEM Observations	70			
	4.3.4 Raman Spectroscopy Measurements	71			
4.4	CNTs-based Colloidal System Stabilised by CNT-philic Surfactant: The Effect of Benzene Ring in Surfactant Chain	73			

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN DRIS UNIVERSITI PEND	SULTAN IDRIS UNI DIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS	/ERSITI PENDIDIKAN S UNIVERSITI PENDII	ULTAN IDRIS UNIN DIKAN SULTAN IDRIS	/ERSITI PENDIDIKA UNIVERSITI PEN

ORIS	UNIVERSITI PENDIDI	KAN S	4.4.2	FESEM Observations	77 ^{JNI}
			4.4.3	STEM Observations	79
			4.4.4	Raman Spectroscopy Measurements	80
		4.5	Propos Latex	ed Mechanism MWCNTs Dispersed into NR- Stabilised by CNT-philic Surfactants	81
			4.5.1	The Effect of Hyper Methylated Branched Surfactant	82
			4.5.2	The Effect of Benzene Ring Moieties in The Surfactant Chains	86
	CHAPTER 5	COl	NCLUSI	ONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
		5.1	Conclu	usions	89
		5.2	Recom	amendations	91
	REFERENCES	5			92
	APPENDIX				104

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN ID4.4.1 Electrical Conductivity Measurements ORIS UNIV 174SITI PENDID

х

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS LISTIOFITABLES IKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDID

Tables		Page
2.1	Chemical structures of the surfactants discussed in Chapter 2	29
3.1	Surfactants used in this study	35
3.2	Amount of chemicals and solvents used for synthesised di- and tri- chain CNT-philic surfactants	40
4.1	Comparison of theoretical and experimental ¹ H-NMR peak integrals single-chain sulphosuccinate surfactants	57
4.2	Comparison of theoretical and experimental ¹ H-NMR peak integrals for double-chain sulphosuccinate surfactants	58
4.3	Comparison of theoretical and experimental ¹ H-NMR peak integrals for triple-chain sulphosuccinate surfactants	59
4.4	Comparison of theoretical and experimental elemental analysis results for di- and tri- chain CNT-philic surfactants	60
4.5	Surface tension properties of surfactants and electrical conductivities of nanocomposites	63
4.6	Surface tension properties of surfactants contains benzene ring and electrical conductivities of nanocomposites	76

xi

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS LIST/OFIFIGURESKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDID

Figures		Page
1.1	The schematic of multi-wall carbon nanotubes (MWCNTs) and single-wall carbon nanotubes (SWCNTs)	3
2.1	C ₆₀ : Buckminsterfullerene	12
2.2	Schematic representations for the method in synthesising of CNTs: (a) arc discharge, (b) laser ablation, and (c) chemical vapour decomposition	13
2.3	Schematic representation of the rolling up graphene sheet to form CNTs with different chirality	16
2.4	Schematic representations for covalent functionalisation of a CNTs via 1,3-dipolar cyclo addition	20
2.5	Schematic representations of the non-covalent functionalisation by which surfactants help to stabilise the colloidal system of CNTs	21
2.6	Schematic representations of the non-covalent functionalisation by which polymers wrapping around the CNTs surface	22
2.7	Schematic representations for part of surfactants	25
2.8	The schematic model for the structure of natural rubber latex particle	32
3.1	Graphical summary of Chapter 3	34
3.2	The general synthesis of di- chain and tri- chain sulphosuccinate surfactants.	37
3.3	TGA curves of un-purified and purified MWCNTs.	42
3.4	Schematic of the latex technology	45
4.1	¹ H-NMR spectra of SDS surfactant, solvent (CD ₃) ₂ CO	53
4.2	¹ H-NMR spectra of SDBS surfactant, solvent CDCl ₃	54
4.3	¹ H-NMR spectra of AOT4 surfactants, solvent CDCl ₃	54
4.4	¹ H-NMR spectra of AOT14 surfactant, solvent CDCl ₃	55
4.5	¹ H-NMR spectra of AOTPh surfactant, solvent CDCl ₃	55

xii

UNIVE	ersiti pendidik. 4.6	¹ H-NMR spectra of TC4 surfactant, solvent CDCl ₃	UNIVERSITI PENDII
N IDRIS	UNIVERSITI PE 4.7	H-NMR spectra of TC14 surfactant, solvent CDCl ₃	RIS UNIVERSITI 56
	4.8	¹ H-NMR spectra of TCPh surfactant, solvent CDCl ₃	57
	4.9	The electrical conductivity of the NR-latex matrix and the 5 wt% MWCNTs/NR-latex containing surfactant with methylated branched	62
	4.10	FESEM images of NR-latex matrix and pristine MWCNTs	68
	4.11	FESEM images of MWCNTs/NR-latex: in the absence of surfactant; with SDS; with TC14	69
	4.12	TEM image of MWCNTs/NR-latex stabilised by TC14 surfactant	71
	4.13	Raman spectra of NR-latex matrix, MWCNTs, MWCNTs/NR-latex, MWCNTs/NR-latex/SDS, and MWCNTs/NR-latex/TC14	72
	4.14	The electrical conductivity of the NR-latex matrix and the 5 wt% MWCNTs/NR-latex containing surfactant with benzene ring branched	75
	4.15	FESEM images of MWCNTs/NR-latex: with SDBS; with AOTPh; with TCPh	78
	4.16	STEM image of MWCNTs/NR-latex stabilised by TCPh surfactant	79
	4.17	Raman spectra of NR-latex matrix, MWCNTs, MWCNTs/NR-latex, MWCNTs/NR-latex/SDS, MWCNTs/NR-latex/SDBS, MWCNTs/NR-latex/AOTPh, and MWCNTs/NR-latex/TCPh	80
	4.18	Stabilisation of individual MWCNTs by a CNT-philic surfactant	83
	4.19	Mechanism of surfactant micelle formation in the MWCNTs dispersion	85
	4.20	Mechanism of MWCNTs/NR-latex nanocomposites stabilised by surfactant with benzene ring branched	87

xiii

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS** SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDID

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(CD ₃) ₂ CO	Acetone-d ₆
¹ H-NMR	Proton Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy
AOT	Aerosol-OT/Sodium bis(2-ethylhexyl) sulphosuccinate
С	Carbon
CalTech	California Institute of Technology
CDCl ₃	Chloroform-d
C _H	Chiral Vector
CH ₃	Methyl
cmc	Critical Micelle Concentration
CNTs	Carbon Nanotubes
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CTAB	Cetyl Trimethyl Ammonium Bromide
CVD	Chemical Vapour Decomposition
D-band	Disorder Band
DRC	Dry Rubber Content
FESEM	Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscopy
G-band	Graphite Band
H	Hydrogen
H_2SO_4	Sulphuric Acid
HCl	Hydrochloric Acid
HNO ₃	Nitric Acid
HRTEM	High Resolution Transmission Electron Microscopy
i	Integer
ID/IG	Intensity ratio of the D- and G- bands

UNIVERSITI PELDS IKAN SULTAN IDRIS Lithium Dodecyl Sulphate UNIVERSITI PENDID

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N IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS Multi-Wall Carbon Nanotubes UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULT **MWCNTs** Ν Nitrogen NR-latex Natural Rubber latex PANI Poly(aniline) PS Poly(styrene) PTFE Poly(tetrafluoroethylene) S Sulphur SDBS Sodium Dodecyl Benzenesulphonate SDS Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate Scanning Transmission Electron Microscopy **STEM** Surface Active Agent Surfactant **SWCNTs** Single-Wall Carbon Nanotubes TEM Transmission Electron Microscopy TGA Thermogravimetric Analysis TLC Thin Layer Chromatography Tetramethylsilane TMS Total Solid Content TSC Surface tension at the cmc Ycmc

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Carbon Nanotubes and Its Applications

Nanotechnology is one of invention field that opens up a new perspective in observing, manipulating, measuring, and manufacturing of material deep into nanoscale dimension, roughly in range of 1 to 100 nm (Mongillo, 2007; Ratner & Ratner, 2002). Historically, the idea and concept of nanotechnology was first introduced by physicist Richard Feynman, in a talk entitled "There's Plenty of Room at the Bottom" at an Annual Meeting of American Physical Society in California Institute of Technology (CalTech) on 1959 (Ramsden, 2011). The term of "nanotechnology" was then coined by Japanese researcher namely Norio Taniguchi in 1974, at International Conference on Production Engineering. In the 1980's, Eric Drexler was further explored the existence of nanotechnology (Drexler, 1986). His

UNIVERSITI PEbook "Engines of Creation: The Coming Era of Nanotechnology and Nanosystem" PENDID N IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS (published 1986) is considered as the first book on nanotechnology and successfully created a number of advantages in developing nanomaterial properties.

Structures of nanomaterial have been reported to have unique chemical, physical, and biological properties (Weiss, Takhistov, & McClements, 2006). Based on this reason, the great potential of nanotechnology has been already attracted a number of research communities, especially for improving material performances. In this respect, nanotechnology involves integrated multidisciplinary field including physics, biology, chemistry, electronic, engineering, *etc.* Nanofibres, nanosilica, nanoclay and carbon nanotubes (CNTs) are the current examples of nanomaterial that have been successfully developed by implementing nanotechnology.

Since its discovered and fully characterised by Sumio Iijima in 1991 (Iijima, 1991), an intensive research activity on investigating the incredible properties and performance of carbon nanotubes is significantly increased. The first CNTs observed were multi-wall carbon nanotubes (MWCNTs), which are arranged by rolling up of two or more concentric cylinders of graphite sheet (Figure 1.1a). In contrast, single-wall carbon nanotubes (SWCNTs) consist of single graphite sheet which rolled up into a hollow cylinder (Figure 1.1b). They exhibit outstanding electrical, mechanical, and thermal properties compared to traditional fillers, such as micro-particle carbon black (Tilstra *et al.*, 2008), and have therefore already attracted interest in numerous industries for possible applications including electronic wires, hydrogen storage, field emission devices, electrochemical devices, supercapasitor and transistor (Baughman,

Zakhidov, & de Heer, 2002; Jarosz et al., 2011). In addition, these various outstanding

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN DRISDINGLY enabled their use as an ideal nanofillers for polymeric UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS for polymeric UNIVERSITI PENDID N IDRIS UNIVEreinforcement to produce nanocomposites (Guo, Zhu, Lin, & Zhang, 2008). RIS UNIVERSITI F



Figure 1.1 The schematic of: (a) multi-wall carbon nanotubes (MWCNTs) and (b) single-wall carbon nanotubes (SWCNTs) (Zhang, Bai, & Yan, 2010)

The field of nanocomposite involves the study of two or more phase material where at least one of the dispersed phases has one dimension in the nanometer scale (Ajayan, Schadler, & Braun, 2003). The exciting properties of nanocomposite materials are come from their unique combinations of material structure that are unachievable by conventional composite. Generally, these combinations can generate different properties than those of each single component. In case of CNTs, incorporation of this nanofiller into polymer matrix was firstly reported by Ajayan, Stephan, Colliex, and Trauth (1994). This pioneer study become starting point of nanocomposite research, which then followed by other various study using different types of polymer.

Recently, De Rosa, Sarasini, Sarto, and Tamburrano (2008) noted the need in the aerospace industry for nanomaterials with not only superficial properties but also high-performance materials. Natural rubber latex (NR-latex) is one class of

UNIVERSITIP biosynthesised, hydrophilic polymer that performs various attractive properties, such TPENDID as high resilience, good tear resistance, good tensile strength (Pichayakorn, Suksaeree, Boonme, Taweepreda, & Ritthidej, 2012). As a result of these notable features, NRlatex has been widely used in numerous applications, such as hoses, gloves, belts, tires, rubber-backed carpets, footwear, and adhesives (White & De, 2001; Yip & Cacioli, 2002). Thus, as a critical stage in the development of MWCNTs incorporated in polymers for obtaining nanocomposite applied in wire technologies and aerospace cable, NR-latex appears to be a potential candidate polymer.

> In addition, the CNTs have been used to produce conductive materials used in aerospace-based technology (De Rosa *et al.*, 2008; Njuguna & Pielichowski, 2003). Conductive materials such as copper are conventionally conducted to fabricate wire components. Unfortunately, they have greater mass, which is not appropriate for aerospace conditions (De Rosa *et al.*, 2008). CNTs are around six times lighter than copper and are an order of magnitude more conductive. Hence, when incorporated into a polymer as the nanocomposites, they have great potential to replace traditional transition metals components (Zhong *et al.*, 2012).

> However, due to CNTs' miniscule size, their outstanding properties can only be utilised if they are homogenously dispersed in polymer matrixes that provide good filler-matrix interface performance. In this respect, good dispersibility of CNTs is still a major challenge because of strong Van der Waals forces rendering agglomeration (Choi, Park, Kim, & Jhon, 2005). Furthermore, the CNTs are chemically inert and potentially entangled causes the individual tubes have a tendency to form aggregation.

To overcome these hurdles, two various approaches are mostly used to provide UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN DRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PEN

UNIVERSITI Phomogenously disperseds of CNTsvinspolymer matrix including mechanical vand ITI PENDID chemical approach (Ma & Kim, 2011). The mechanical approach includes stirring, ultrasonication, extrusion, calendering, and ball milling. However, these processes are not completely ideal due to low efficiency and high time consuming. On the other hand, chemical approach consists of two strategies for treating CNTs surface: (1) covalent treatments and (2) non-covalent treatments, potentially shows good performance for CNTs dispersion.

> In the first strategy, the treatment of the CNTs' surface improves the interfacial interaction between the CNTs and the polymer matrix via covalent bonding. It can be employed by using concentrated acid such as nitric acid (HNO₃) (Yu, Jin, Peng, Wang, & Yang, 2008), mixture of nitric acid/sulphuric acid (HNO₃/H₂SO₄) (Wang, Iqbal, & Mitra, 2005), and also mixture of nitric acid/sulphuric acid/hydrochloric acid (HNO₃/H₂SO₄/HCl) (Osorio, Silveira, Bueno, & Bergmann, 2008), as an oxidant agent to functionalise the CNTs surface. The excitation phenomenon from sp² to sp³ hybridisation will be occurred in the formation of carbon atoms. Hence, the exited carbons will be easily reacts with other molecules or atoms to form reactive functional group such as hydroxyl or carboxyl. Unfortunately, the electrical properties of CNTs have been demonstrated to be substantially affected by the disruption of their π -system (Vaisman, Wagner, & Marom, 2006).

> On the other hand, for non-covalent strategy, CNTs are incorporated into a polymer matrix with the help of a surfactant (so-called 'latex technology') that has the ability to both assist in dispersion and arrange the nanocomposite to be more useful in

UNIVERSITI P numerous applications (Preetha, Thomas, & Joseph, 2012). This is a safe method III PENDID

Which has been frequently used for CNTs stabilisation is both organic and aqueous solvent. Geng, Liu, Li, Shi, and Kim (2008) reported that non-covalent treatment by surfactant has been successfully improved the CNTs-polymer interfacial interactions, so that enhanced the dispersion of CNTs in polymer matrix. This improvement of CNTs dispersion has a good effect on the properties of nanocomposite. Importantly, there is no disturbance on the π -system of CNTs because the surfactant-CNTs interaction is based on physical adsorption which effectively prevents CNTs from aggregation.

1.2 Latex Technology and Its Applications

The method of utilising a surfactant or latex technology generates a stable, mixed colloidal system that contains a suspension of CNTs in a polymer matrix. Latex technology is quietly new method which has been used for incorporating CNTs in polymer matrix via liquid phase. This method is applied using non-toxic solvent which make it environmental friendly, easily handling, reliable, and reproducible (Tkalya, Ghislandi, de With, & Koning, 2012). Yu *et al.* (2007) incorporated multiwall carbon nanotubes into polystyrene (PS) using latex technology to provide conductive nanocomposites. They reported the electrical conductivity of MWCNTs/PS nanocomposites is higher than pure PS matrix, about ten orders of magnitude. Their result suggested that latex technology can be adapted for preparing other nanocomposites with different type of CNTs or polymer.

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIThe utilising of surfactant makes latex technology different with other CNTs ITI PENDID

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dispersion techniques such as solution mixing, melt blending, and in situ ^{NIVERSI} polymerisation (Ma & Kim, 2011). In this respect, the surfactants will adsorb at the CNTs-polymer interface and reduce the interfacial tension by balancing lyophobic and lyophilic interactions. Importantly, the unique chemical structure of the surfactant enables the arrangement of a stable structure via lyophobic parts (called as 'tails') and lyophilic parts (called as 'head groups'), where the tails interact with the CNTs surface.

1.3 Surfactant and Its Applications

As a result, latex technology has triggered significant efforts to find a molecular structure that promotes efficient stabilisation of CNTs in polymer matrixes. Thus, the effect of some commercially available ionic surfactants, including sodium dodecyl sulphate (SDS) (Haldorai, Lyoo, & Shim, 2009), sodium dodecyl benzenesulphonate (SDBS) (Preetha *et al.*, 2012), and lithium dodecyl sulphate (LDS) (Chatterjee, Lorenzo, & Krishnamoorti, 2011), as well as non-ionic surfactants such as Triton X-100, Tween-20, Tween-40, Tween-60, and Tween-80 (Wenseleers *et al.*, 2004) have been studied. The results demonstrated that surfactants with long, highly branched and unsaturated carbon chains are better at dispersing CNTs in polymer matrixes. This result is correlated to the π -electronic affinity of the surfactant toward the CNTs benzene rings (Vaisman *et al.*, 2006).

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS DI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SU

UNIVERSITI PENDIDI The aforementioned studies showed the nature of the straight chained it pendid

surfactants that are the most efficient at dispersing CNTs in polymer matrixes.

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However, applications are restricted because studies have concerned on limited range commercially available surfactants and based upon head group selection. Therefore, further systematic studies of surfactant architecture can help elucidate the general tendencies of surfactant analogues that assist the dispersion of CNTs in polymer matrixes. One of typical surfactant type that attracted attention in dispersion study is sulphosuccinate surfactants. It is mainly surprising that these surfactants have not yet been systematically studied because these surfactants, such as the commercially available Aerosol-OT (AOT, sodium bis(2-ethylhexyl) sulphosuccinate), have already been investigated to have multiple hydrophobic tails that adsorb onto CNTs and lead a temporary surface charge due to the interaction with the hydrophilic polymer (Bai *et al.*, 2012).

Up to now, a study on AOT-analogue surfactants for stabilising mixed colloidal system of water in continuous, supercritical carbon dioxide (CO₂) phase microemulsions (w/c) was studied by Eastoe, Yan, and Mohamed (2012). Importantly, this study demonstrated that the stability of this mixed colloidal system can be remarkably improved via the addition of a third, hyper branched hydrocarbon and methylated chain, *i.e.*, TC14 surfactant (sodium 1,4-bis(neopentyloxy)-3-(neopentyloxycarbonyl)-1,4-dioxobutane-2-sulphonate) (Mohamed *et al.*, 2010). The introduction of this tri-chain surfactant is commonly believed to efficiently reduce the surface energy and packing requirements of a surfactant at the CO₂-water interface (Mohamed *et al.*, 2010). Importantly this feature also seems to be similar being

UNIVERSITI PObvious in arranging CNTs dispersibility in polymer matrix (Bai *et al.*, 2012; Clark_{STT PENDID} N IDRIS UNIVERSITI F Subramanian, & Krishnamoorti, 2011; Rastogi *et al.*, 2008).

1.4 Research Objectives

The aim of this research is to systematically study the roles played by the chemical nature of the CNT-philic surfactant (surfactant-like-CNT) in the stabilisation of MWCNTs incorporated in NR-latex.

Thus, the objectives of this research were:

- 1. To synthesise and characterise CNT-philic surfactants for latex technology.
- 2. To investigate morphology and electrical properties MWCNTs/NR-latex nanocomposite stabilised by CNT-philic surfactants.
- To formulate the proposed mechanism of CNTs stabilisation by CNT-philic surfactant.

1.5 Scope of Study

In general, the concern of this study is directed towards the synthesising CNT-philic surfactants for latex technology, which is consequently important in preparation of conductive nanocomposites. The surfactant compounds were synthesised using standard method (Nave, Eastoe, & Penfold, 2000) with chain modification based using different alcohol precursors. The approach focused on two strategies: effect of hyper

UNIVERSITI methylated- and benzene ring- branched. In this case, the incorporation of MWCNTs SITI PENDID N IDRIS UNIVERSITI Facilitated by the surfactant tails interacting with the NR-latex matrix in an attempt UNIVERSITI F to improve the electrical properties of the nanocomposites.

For the characterisations of surfactants, proton nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy (¹H-NMR) and CHNS elemental analysis were employed. Meanwhile, the nanocomposite samples were characterised by four point probe measurement, field emission scanning electron microscopy (FESEM), transmission electron microscopy (TEM), and Raman spectroscopy.

1.6 Significance of Study

Significantly, the result of this study is beneficial to enrich the fundamental understand of CNTs-dispersing effort. Here, we develop a systematic study of CNT-philic surfactant architecture by choosing a range of sulphosuccinate type surfactant introduced hyper methylated- and benzene ring- branched in their alkyl chains. The effects of the surfactant-stabilised MWCNTs/NR-latex nanocomposites on the composites' morphological and electrical properties are investigated by studying the behaviour of single-chain, double-chain, and triple-chain sulphosuccinate analogues that compared as a function of their tail structure. It is generates additional insight into the molecular requirements of the surfactant used to disperse MWCNTs into the NR-latex matrix via latex technology approach. Furthermore, this information can be used as extra guidelines in developing of the next generation of conductive CNTs-polymer based material, such as nanowire concept in aerospace technology.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Carbon Nanotubes

2.1.1 Synthesis of CNTs

The development of carbon nanotubes is initiated by a high interest of several researchers in the field of carbon-based material before 1980s (Monthioux & Kuznetsov, 2006). It was then followed by Kroto, Heath, O'Brien, Curl, and Smalley (1985) that discovered a new molecular carbon structure known as fullerene, usually consists of 60 carbon atoms (see Figure 2.1). This discovery was inspired Iijima to investigate new cluster of carbon using similar method to that used for synthesising of fullerene, known as arc-discharge evaporation (Iijima, 1991). By applying high

UNIVERSITI Presolution transmission electron microscopy (HRTEM), he observed the appearance of SITI PENDID

carbon structure consists of needle-like tubes, which currently known as CNTs. The initial observation by Ijima in 1991 was multi-wall carbon nanotubes. It is continued by the discovery of single-wall carbon nanotubes in 1993, separately by Iijima group at the NEC (Iijima & Ichihashi, 1993) and Bethune group at the IBM (Bethune *et al.*, 1993).



Figure 2.1 C₆₀: Buckminsterfullerene (Harris, 2009)

Recently, there are three dominant methods to synthesise CNTs including arc discharge, laser ablation, and chemical vapour decomposition (CVD) (see Figure 2.2). In arc discharge method, 20 V of voltage and 50 - 100 A of current were generated between two graphite electrodes under inert atmosphere of helium or argon. The distances between both of electrodes are adjustable, so that the arc discharge between cathode and anode can be occurred. After the arc discharge was completed, the CNTs can be collected from the cathode. This synthesise method appears very simple, however usually produces low yield of CNTs and needs careful control of experimental condition (Harris, 2009). The next method for synthesising CNTs is