

Using Definitive Screening Design to Assess Factor Significance on the Compressive Strength and Volumetric Weight of a Ternary Blend Geopolymer

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Abstract: In the building sector which has been Portland cement (OPC)-based for the past century, geopolymers have emerged to have the potential to become the new norm. Its technical properties have been shown to be comparable if not better and its production results in as much as 80% reduction in CO_2 emissions compared to OPC. Moreover, sustainability is accessible since geopolymers, synthesized via alkali activation of amorphous alumino-silicate materials, can be formed from alumina- and silica- rich industrial and agro-industrial wastes such as coal ash and rice hull ash.

Synthesis of geopolymers are determined by three sets of factors: raw materials used (type, mineral composition, mix ratio, particle size, etc.), alkali activator (type, mix proportion, pH, liquid-to-solid ratio, etc.), and synthesis and curing conditions (curing time, curing temperature, applied pressure, etc.). These set of factors have to be identified for optimum properties of the geopolymers formed. As raw materials compositions are inherently variable, the effect of each factor cannot be taken absolutely.

In this study, the raw material mix ratio is set as 1:1:1 mass ratio of coal fly ash (CFA), coal bottom ash (CBA), and rice hull ash (RHA) and the curing time at 28 days. The order of significance of the effects of (1) NaOH/water glass ratio as alkali activator, (2) liquid-to-solid ratio, (3) curing temperature, and (4) particle size of bottom ash on the compressive strength and volumetric weight of the geopolymers formed will be determined The Definitive Screening Design (DSD), a new, robust screening design that allows for three level tests at only 2m+1 runs (i.e. m = 4, 9 runs), will be used as the design of experiments.

Keywords: Green building materials, insulation, geopolymers, building simulation, carbon emissions

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The production and use of geopolymers as an alternative binder to ordinary Portland cement (OPC) consume much less energy and generates as much as 80% less greenhouse gas emissions (Davidovits, 1991; Barbosa et al., 2000). And its development from industrial waste materials such as blast furnace slag and coal ashes increases its potential for sustainability. Optimized geopolymer production using different precursor materials have been able to produce alternative binders that are of comparable strength if not better, lighter, and with better fire and high temperature performance than OPC (Davidovits, 1994).

These present the prospect of geopolymer technology in replacing OPC as the binder of choice in the construction industry.

In this study, this prospect is considered by investigating the potential of using coal ash and



rice hull ash mixtures as raw materials for geopolymer production. Coal ashes (fly ash and bottom ash) and rice hulls are among the top agroindustrial by-products that are generally disposed of in landfills. The fly ash and bottom ash, mostly from coal fired power plants, have high alumina and silica content (Li and Xu, 2009). And the rice hull ash, from local biomass-fired power plants, is a rich source of amorphous silica (Siddique and Iqbal Khan, 2011).

1.2 Geopolymer Formation

Geopolymers are inorganic polymers formed from the alkaline activation of amorphous alumino-silicate materials resulting in a threedimensional polymeric network. The products formed are the synthetic equivalent of natural rocks thus the term "geopolymer" (geo – meaning earth). As rock-like materials, they also possess properties similar to rocks such as hardness, chemical stability and longevity (Davidovits, 1994; Kumar et al., 2007).

The quality of the geopolymer formed depends on three sets of factors: the precursor materials used (type, mineral composition, mix ratio, particle size, etc.), the alkali activator used (type, mix proportion, pH, liquid-to-solid ratio, etc.), and synthesis and curing conditions (curing time, curing temperature, applied pressure, etc.). These set of factors have to be identified for optimum properties of the geopolymers formed. However, as the precursor materials compositions are inherently variable, the effect of each factor cannot be taken absolutely.

The precursor alumino-silicate materials can be divided into two main groups: (1) calcined materials, such as fly ash, metakaolinite, slag, construction residues, pozzolanic wastes, etc., and (2) non-calcined materials, for instance, kaolinite, feldspars, rock-type aluminosilicate minerals, mine tailings, etc.(Xu & van Deventer, 2003).

Of the common alkali activators, such as NaOH, Na₂SO₄, waterglass, Na₂CO₃, K₂CO₃, KOH, and K₂SO₄, the most utilized for geopolymer synthesis are a mixture of sodium or potassium hydroxides (NaOH, KOH) and sodium waterglass ($nSiO_2$ - Na_2O) or potassium waterglass ($nSiO_2$ - K_2O) (Pacheco-Torgal et al., 2007).

1.3 Factor Screening

Because of the many factors needed to be considered, testing a new formulation (precursor material mix) may involve a significant number of experimental/test runs. Thus it is imperative that the number of factors considered be as small as possible.

In this study, a ternary mix of coal fly ash (CFA), coal bottom ash (CBA), and rice hull ash

Presented at the DLSU Research Congress 2015 De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines March 2-4, 2015

(RHA) is considered. Samples of these materials are shown in Figure 1. The proportion of the 3 materials, using a mixture design model, are three factors already. A fourth factor considered in the model is curing time.



Fig. 1. Precursor materials used in the ternary mix geopolymer.

For a manageable experimental design, other factors are set on a fixed value but these values need also be identified.

In this study, four additional factors are considered for significance:

- X1 = NaOH-water glass ratio (alkali activator)
 - X2 = liquid-solid ratio
 - X3 = curing temperature
 - X4 = particle size of CBA

The evaluation of the order significance of these four factors on the geopolymer formed is evaluated using the Definitive Screening Design (DSD) run on the JMP software.

DSD is a small, robust screening design that allows for three level tests with only 2m + 1runs (m = number of factors). Thus for m = 4 factors, at 3 levels each, only nine runs are needed. In this screening design, the main effects are not biased by any second-order effect and all quadratic effects can be quantified. Figure 2 shows the color map of the factor correlations for a 4-factor DSD.



Fig. 2. Color Map on Correlations for 4 factor DSD (From JMP software)

For four factors, Table 1 shows the 9 runs of the Definitive Screening Design with three levels -1, 0, and +1 for each factor.

Table 1. Definitive screening design for 4 factors

RUN	X1	X2	X3	X4
1	0	1	1	1
2	0	-1	-1	-1
3	1	0	1	-1
4	-1	0	-1	1
5	1	-1	0	1
6	-1	1	0	-1
7	1	1	-1	0
8	-1	-1	1	0
9	0	0	0	0

2. METHODOLOGY

The definitive screening design (DSD) is used to determine the significance of four input factors:

- X1 NaOH/water glass ratio
- X2 liquid-to-solid ratio
- X3 curing temperature

X4 particle size (of coal bottom ash) on two response variables:

- Sc compressive strength and
- γ volumetric weight

of the geopolymers formed from a 1:1:1 mass ratio of coal fly ash (CFA), coal bottom ash (CBA) and rice hull ash (RHA).

Table 2 shows the 3 levels used for each factor in the DSD.

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Table 2. Levels abea for each factor in DoD								
Factor	-1	0	+1					
X1	Pure WG	50-50	75-25					
X2	50%	60%	70%					
X3	40°C	60°C	80°C					
X4	Very fine	Fine	Coarse					

Table 2 Levels used for each factor in DSD

In the formation of the geopolymer specimens, all coal ash used come from the same source and batch and the same is true for the rice hull ash. Cubical specimens (50mm x 50mm x 50mm) are formed using the factor levels shown in Table 2. The specimens remain in the molds for 24 hours, then de-molded and placed in an oven for another 24 hours, and then allowed to cure at ambient temperature for a total of 28 days. The process of specimen formation is shown in Figure 3.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3 shows the results of the material testing on the geopolymer specimens.



Fig. 3. Flow diagram of geopolymer specimen production

Tuble 5. Measured responded for each test run										
RUN	X1	X2	X3	X4	Sc, MPa	γ , kg/m ³				
1	0	+1	+1	-1	2.027	1130				
2	0	-1	-1	+1	4.712	1365				
3	+1	0	-1	-1	3.203	1226				
4	-1	0	+1	+1	2.973	1274				
5	+1	+1	0	+1	2.531	1237				
6	-1	-1	0	-1	Br	1263				
7	+1	-1	+1	0	4.718	1361				
8	-1	+1	-1	0	1.260	1085				
9	0	0	0	0	2.698	1221				

Table 3. Measured responses for each test run

Note: Br - broken specimen

Using the data in Table 3, Figure 4 shows the results of the screening for compressive strength. In this figure, it can be seen that the order of significance of the factors contributing to compressive strength is: liquid-solid ratio, NaOHwaterglass ratio, CBA particle size, curing



temperature with curing temperature having the least effect.



Fig. 4. Results of screening for compressive strength.

Using generalized regression model for compressive strength, the parameter estimates are shown in Figure 5.

Generalized Reg	ression						
Model Launch							
Elastic Net wit	h BIC Valio	lation					
Model Summar	r y						
Response Distribution Estimation Method Validation Method Mean Model Link Scale Model Link	C_strength Normal Elastic Net BIC Identity Identity						
Measure	Training						
Number of rows Sum of Frequencies -LogLikelihood BIC AIC	9 -18.28328 -19.93103 -20.56657						
Solution Path							
A Parameter Esti	mates for	Centered	and Scal	ed Predict	ors		
				Wald	Prob >		
		Estimate	Std Error	ChiSquare	ChiSquare	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Term							
Term Intercept		3.01525	0.0087032	120030.96	<.0001*	2.9981921	3.0323079
Term Intercept liq-sol ratio		3.01525 -2.851176	0.0087032 0.0290066	120030.96 9661.6931	<.0001* <.0001*	2.9981921 -2.908028	3.0323079 -2.794324
Term Intercept liq-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio		3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001*	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712179
Term Intercept Iiq-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio curing_temp		3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589 0.1916633	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755 0.0235189	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688 66.411847	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001*	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999 0.1455672	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712179 0.2377594
Term Intercept Iiq-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio curing_temp BA_size		3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589 0.1916633 0.2640272	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755 0.0235189 0.01923	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688 66.411847 188.51263	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001*	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999 0.1455672 0.2263371	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712179 0.2377594 0.3017172
Term Intercept liq-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio curing_temp BA_size liq-sol ratio*liq-sol r	ratio	3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589 0.1916633 0.2640272 0.3603425	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755 0.0235189 0.01923 0.0254456	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688 66.411847 188.51263 200.54232	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001*	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999 0.1455672 0.2263371 0.31047	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712179 0.2377594 0.3017172 0.4102149
Term Intercept liq-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio curing_temp BA_size liq-sol ratio*liq-sol r NaOH-WG ratio*Na	ratio OH-WG ratio	3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589 0.1916633 0.2640272 0.3603425 0	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755 0.0235189 0.01923 0.0254456 0	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688 66.411847 188.51263 200.54232 0	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* 1.0000	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999 0.1455672 0.2263371 0.31047 0	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712179 0.2377594 0.3017172 0.4102149
Term Intercept liq-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio curing_temp BA_size liq-sol ratio*liq-sol n NaOH-WG ratio*Na curing_temp*curing	ratio .OH-WG ratio g_temp	3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589 0.1916633 0.2640272 0.3603425 0 0	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755 0.0235189 0.01923 0.0254456 0 0	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688 66.411847 188.51263 200.54232 0 0	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* 1.0000 1.0000	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999 0.1455672 0.2263371 0.31047 0 0	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712179 0.2377594 0.3017172 0.4102149 0 0
Term Intercept liq-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio curing_temp BA_size liq-sol ratio*liq-sol n NaOH-WG ratio*Na curing_temp*curing BA_size*BA_size	ratio OH-WG ratio <u></u> temp	3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589 0.1916633 0.2640272 0.3603425 0 0 0.4959038	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755 0.0235189 0.01923 0.0254456 0 0 0.0289912	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688 66.411847 188.51263 200.54232 0 0 292.59197	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* 1.0000 1.0000 <.0001*	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999 0.1455672 0.2263371 0.31047 0 0 0.4390821	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712179 0.2377594 0.3017172 0.4102149 0 0 0.5527255
Term Intercept ling-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio curing_temp BA_size ling-sol ratio*ling-sol n NaOH-WG ratio*Na Curing_temp*curing BA_size*BA_size ling-sol ratio*NaOH-	ratio OH-WG ratio 9_temp WG ratio	3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589 0.1916633 0.2640272 0.3603425 0 0 0.4959038 0	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755 0.0235189 0.01923 0.0254456 0 0 0.0289912 0	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688 66.411847 188.51263 200.54232 0 0 292.59197 0	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* 1.0000 1.0000 <.0001* 1.0000 <.0001*	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999 0.1455672 0.2263371 0.31047 0 0 0.4390821 0	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712179 0.2377594 0.3017172 0.4102149 0 0 0.5527255 0 0
Term Intercept lig-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio curing_temp BA_size lig-sol ratio*Na curing_temp*curing BA_size*BA_size lig-sol ratio*NaOH- lig-sol ratio*curing_	ratio OH-WG ratio J_temp WG ratio temp	3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589 0.1916633 0.2640272 0.3603425 0 0 0.4959038 0 0	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755 0.0235189 0.01923 0.0254456 0 0 0.0289912 0	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688 66.411847 188.51263 200.54232 0 0 292.59197 0 0	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* 1.0000 1.0000 <.0001* 1.0000 1.0000	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999 0.1455672 0.2263371 0.31047 0 0 0.4390821 0 0	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712179 0.2377594 0.3017172 0.4102149 0.5527255 0.5527255
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Term Intercept Iiq-sol ratio NaOH-WG ratio curing_temp BA_size Iiq-sol ratio*Iiq-sol 1 NaOH-WG ratio*Na Umay Iiq-sol ratio*NaOH- Iiq-sol ratio*NaOH- Iiq-sol ratio*NaOH- Iiq-sol ratio*NaOH- Umay ratio*BA size NaOH-WG ratio*Ca	ratio OH-WG ratio g_temp WG ratio temp ring_temp _size re	3.01525 -2.851176 0.7177589 0.1916633 0.2640272 0.3603425 0 0 0.4959038 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	0.0087032 0.0290066 0.0272755 0.0235189 0.01923 0.0254456 0 0 0 0.0289912 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	120030.96 9661.6931 692.48688 66.411847 188.51263 200.54232 0 0 292.59197 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	<.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* <.0001* 1.0000 1.0000 1.0000 1.0000 1.0000 1.0000 1.0000	2.9981921 -2.908028 0.6642999 0.1455672 0.2263371 0.31047 0 0 0.4390821 0 0 0.4390821 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	3.0323079 -2.794324 0.7712175 0.2377594 0.3017172 0.4102149 0 0 0.5527255 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0



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Thus the compressive strength regression model is:

$$\begin{split} S_c = & 3.01525 + 0.7177589 X_1 - 2.851176 X_2 + 0.1916633 X_3 \\ & + 0.2640272 X_4 \!\!+\!\! 0.3603425 X_2^2 + 0.4959038 X_4^2 \end{split}$$



Fig. 5. Individual correlation of factors on the compressive strength (clockwise from top left: vs NaOH-WG, liquid-solid, BA size, curing temperature)

Comparing with the individual correlation of each factor, as seen from Figure 5, the compressive strength regression model captures the non-linear effects of X2 (liquid-solid ratio) and X4 (CBA particle size). Figure 5 also shows that except for X2 (liquid-solid ratio), increase in the other factor levels also increases the response (compressive strength).

Figure 6 shows the results of the screening for volumetric weight. In this figure, the order of significance of the factors contributing to volumetric weight is: liquid-solid ratio, CBA particle size, NaOH-waterglass ratio, curing temperature with curing temperature also having the least effect.





Fig. 6. Results of screening for volumetric weight

Using generalized regression model for volumetric weight, the parameter estimates are shown in Figure 7.

Thus, the volumetric weight regression model is:

Comparing with the individual correlation of each factor, as seen from Figure 8, the volumetric weight regression model captures the non-linear effects of X1 (NaOH-waterglass ratio) and X4 (CBA particle size). Figure 8 also shows that except for X2 (liquid-solid ratio), increase in the other factor levels also increases the response (compressive strength). Presented at the DLSU Research Congress 2015 De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines March 2-4, 2015

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	Jodel Launch	ression							-
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	Response	Vol_wt							
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	Validation Method	BIC							
	Mean Model Link	Identity							
	Scale Model Link	Identity							
	Measure	Training							
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	Sum of Frequencies	9							
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	AIC	52 055386							
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, v	Solution Path								Ξ
4	Parameter Esti	mates for (Centered	and Scal	ed Predict	ors			
					Wald	Prob >			
	Term		Estimate	Std Error	ChiSquare	ChiSquare	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	
	Intercept		1240.2222	0.59/8151	4303931.1	<.0001*	1239.0505	1241.3939	
	NaOH-WG ratio		80 273861	1.0501002	1660 7838	< 0001*	76 423583	*215.5200 84.12414	
	curing temp		34,141805	1.8961002	324,22788	<.0001*	30.425516	37.858093	
	BA_size		102.72752	1.3126505	6124.5665	<.0001*	100.15477	105.30027	
	liq-sol ratio*liq-sol r	atio	0	0	0	1.0000	0	0	
	NaOH-WG ratio*NaOH-WG ratio		1.1075383	1.6042984	0.4765925	0.4900	-2.036829	4.2519054	
	curing_temp*curing_temp		0	0	0	1.0000	0	0	
	BA_size*BA_size		35.755771	2.1702166	271.44768	<.0001*	31.502224	40.009317	
	liq-sol ratio*NaOH-WG ratio		0	0	0	1.0000	0	0	
	lig-sol ratio*BA size	temp	0	0	0	1,0000	0	0	
	NaOH-WG ratio*cu	ring temp	0	0	0	1.0000	0	0	
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Figure 7. Parameter estimates for volumetric weight using generalized regression



Fig. 8. Individual correlation of factors on the volumetric weight (clockwise from top left: vs NaOH-WG, liquid-solid, BA size, curing temperature)

4. CONCLUSIONS

The screening shows that curing temperature has the least effect on compressive strength and volumetric weight thus this factor may be excluded from the model.



Thus, the regression equations may be represented as:

$$\begin{split} S_c = & 3.01525 + 0.7177589 X_1 - 2.851176 X_2 \\ & + 0.2640272 X_4 \!\!+\! 0.3603425 X_2^2 + 0.4959038 X_4^2 \end{split}$$

and

The screening has also shown that for compressive strength, the liquid-solid ratio followed by the NaOH-waterglass ratio are the most significant factors while for volumetric weight, the liquid-solid ratio followed by the BA size are the most significant factors.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors express their appreciation to the ME, CHE and CIV Departments of De La Salle University for the use of their facilities and to JICA and AUN/SEEDNet for providing financial and technical support. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Khoi, Mr. Hien and the students and staff of the Ceramics Lab of the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology for helping with the laboratory tests.

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Presented at the DLSU Research Congress 2015 De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines March 2-4, 2015

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SEE-V-047