A review of biogas production from palm oil mill effluents using different configurations of bioreactors

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ABSTRACT

Palm oil mill effluent (POME) is generated from the sterilization, condensation and hydrocycloning of palm oil in mills. If the effluent is discharged into the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem without treatment, it could lead to high biological oxygen demand (BOD), chemical oxygen demand (COD) and acidic pH of the receiving waters. Biogas consisting mostly of methane, carbon dioxide, and to a lesser hydrogen has been produced through anaerobic treatment of this toxic effluent. The process of biogas production involves microbial synthesis involving hydrolysis, acidogenesis, acetogenesis and methanogenesis. Biogas is formed during anaerobic degradation of POME by indigenous microbial communities. This review updates the current state of art of biogas production through anaerobic digestion of POME using different configurations of reactors such as fluidized bed reactor, anaerobic filtration, up-flow anaerobic sludge blanket (UASB) reactor, anaerobic contact digestion, up-flow anaerobic sludge fixed-film (UASFF) reactor, modified anaerobic baffled bioreactor (MABB), anaerobic baffled bioreactor (ABR), continuous stirred tank reactor (CSTR), expanded granular sludge bed (EGSB) reactor, Ultrasonicated membrane anaerobic system (UMAS), Ultrasonic-assisted Membrane Anaerobic System (UAMAS), membrane anaerobic system (MAS) and upflow anaerobic sludge blanket reactor (UASBR). The factors that influences biogas yield during treatment include pH, temperature (environmental factors), organic loading rate (OLR), hydraulic retention time (HRT), mixing rate, pressure, equilibrium, nutrient and microbial activities (Internal factors). Based on this study, UAMAS is the best configuration for methane production from POME during anaerobic treatment. Biogas from POME could contribute to energy sources of oil palm producing nations, while preventing the attendant environmental impacts associated with its disposal.

Keywords: Anaerobic digestion, biogas, palm oil mill effluents

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1 Introduction

Biomass energy resources have emerged as a credible fuel resource. Some biomass energy such as biodiesel, bioethanol etc. have been commercialized in some countries of the World. Among the notable feedstock for biomass energy is oil palm processing feedstocks, which can be used in the production of biofuels such as biogas [1, 2], bioethanol, biodiesel, bio-methanol, bio-butanol, bio-oil, briquette, bio-hydrogen and bioelectricity using different conversion technologies. Biogas is renewable with high quality fuel properties and can be utilized for various energy services such as heat, combined heat and power (electricity) and transportation fuel [3].

The use of biogas would reduce the use of fossil energy and reduce environmental impacts, including global warming and pollution, improve sanitation, reduce demand for wood and charcoal for cooking [3, 4]. Bioconversion signifies biological transformation of waste and/or the reformation of complex organic waste into a valuable metabolite using biological processes or microorganisms (bacteria, yeast and fungi) [5]. This transformation is carried out in anaerobic digester, which uses microbes in anoxic conditions to stabilize the organic matters by transforming it into methane and other inorganic products [6]. Several microbial species have been known for their ability to break down organic materials present in wastes there by producing value added products [7].

Oil palm is a perennial crop cultivated extensively in the humid tropical and subtropical region [6] of West Africa where it was first cultivated [8]. But currently, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Columbia and Nigeria are the world largest producers of crude palm oil [9-11]. Oil palm is the most important species of the genus *Elaeis* belonging to the family Palmae [12]. However, it is often regarded as the most productive and economic oil crop in the world [12 – 19], with a hectare of oil palm crop producing 10 to 35 tonnes of fresh fruit bunch (FFB) per year [20 - 22] in comparison to 0.5-0.7 and 0.3-0.4 tonnes per hectare produced by rapeseed oil and soy bean oil, respectively [23]. Similarly, during oil palm processing, three wastes streams are generated namely solid wastes, liquid and gaseous emissions. In processing FFB, voluminous quantity of water are used [24 – 26].

Unfortunately, the physico-chemical properties of palm oil mill effluents (POME) showed that if discharged untreated into the environment, this substance could cause pollution [27]. The adverse environmental impacts associated with POME could be prevented through treatment, while tapping useful energy resources such as biogas. Both aerobic and anaerobic methods can be used to treat POME. Aerobic digester involves the use of oxygen during treatment. Aerobic digester has high microbial growth rate which could lead to lower retention time during biogas production. While anaerobic treatment process is devoid of oxygen and is characterized by slow microbial growth and far high retention time compared to aerobic processes. POME can be degraded anaerobically in an anaerobic digester to produce biogas. The anaerobic method is more effective to degrade in terms of cost and conversion into useful product. The anaerobic methods that have been widely used include fluidized bed reactor (FBR), anaerobic filtration, up-flow anaerobic sludge blanket (UASB) reactor, anaerobic contact digestion, up-flow anaerobic sludge fixed-film (UASFF) reactor, modified anaerobic baffled bioreactor (MABB), anaerobic baffled bioreactor (ABR), continuous stirred tank reactor (CSTR) [28, 29], Expanded Granular Sludge Bed (EGSB) reactor, Ultrasonicated Membrane Anaerobic System (UMAS), Ultrasonic-assisted Membrane Anaerobic System (UAMAS) and Membrane Anaerobic System (MAS) [1].

During anaerobic treatment, the organic content of POME are degraded, and this process releases methane and carbon dioxide.

The microbial synthesis pathway for the conversion of organic matter to biogas includes hydrolysis, acidogenesis, acetogenesis and methanogenesis and often regarded as biomethanation process [30, 31]. The decomposition of organic materials in waste water by microorganisms in the absence of air produces biogas fuel [32, 33]. This gas contributes significantly to greenhouse gas effects. The methane thus released to the atmosphere presents a special challenge to environmental protection [9]. Methane is considered to be 21 times more lethal on greenhouse effect compared to carbon dioxide emission in the atmosphere. Biogas is a colorless, relatively odorless inflammable, combustible and renewable [34, 35]. The typical composition of biogas from both estimates and actual yield from biomass is presented in Table 1. Therefore, if biogas is captured from POME, benefits could occur in two ways including; direct greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction and renewable energy recovery.

The utilization of biomass wastes such as POME will help reduce dependency on refined petroleum fuel products, boost electricity generation and lower environmental impact associated with oil palm processing [36]. A 30 tonne FFB per hour produces POME that could generate methane with yearly burning rate of 12.0 million litres fuel oil [37]. Additionally, biogas from the closed treatment system can be utilized as a fuel for electricity generation. Biogas burns with 60% efficiency in a conventional biogas stove [38] and it has caloric/heating value of 20 MJ/m³ [39], 4500 – 5000 kcal/m² [35], while biogas from POME has energy content of 34.5MJ/m³ [40].

POME contains several minerals, carbohydrates, fibres, protein, remains of oil etc and as such has environmental components. The production of biogas from POME involves microbiological processes. This typically converts POME constituents (remains of carbohydrates, protein and fatty acids) into biogas through the interaction of microbes and other factors influencing its production. These factors determine biogas production rate of from POME. Biogas production is a technological process involving the use of digesters. However, anaerobic digesters have proven to be effective for biogas production from POME. Since, its commercialization has begun, hence its sustainability also need to be studied.

Therefore, the focus of this paper is to review biogas production from POME in different configurations of anaerobic digesters. Also factors affecting the production of biogas from POME including organic loading rates (OLR), hydraulic retention time (HRT), pH, temperature, mixing, pressure, nutrient, chemical equilibrium, microbial composition of the effluents and potential sustainability are discussed in brief.

The paper is arranged in different sections. Section 1 contained the introduction which focused on brief description of POME and biogas, their characteristics and different configurations for converting POME to biogas during treatment. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews POME generation, composition and environmental impacts. Section 3 explains the microbiological processes involved in biogas production in anaerobic digester. Section 4 focused on biogas production technology. Section 5 reviews the factors influencing biogas production. Section 6 reviews the sustainability of biogas as a renewable energy. The last section concludes by presenting best configuration for biogas production using POME as substrate.

Table 1: Typical biogas composition

2 POME generation, composition and environmental impacts

Palm oil is extracted from FFB via dry or wet milling processes. The wet process of palm oil milling is the most common in most advanced oil palm producing countries [44]. POME is constantly associated with environmental burden due to the voluminous discharge of the wastewater during milling process [45]. Ahmad et al. [28] and Wu et al. [44] estimated that 5 – 7 tonnes of fresh water are required for the milling of one tonne of FFB, out of these, 50 - 79% end up as POME [24, 46 – 48]

In large mills, POME is mainly generated from sterilization condensate, separator sludge (clarification) and hydrocyclone during oil palm milling processes [15, 25, 49, 50]. In small mills, POME is mostly generated from sterilization condensate and clarification but not from hydrocyclone. Raw POME consisting of complex vegetative matter is thick, brownish, colloidal slurry of water from the crushing of the palm fruit mesocarp [51]. POME is a colloidal suspension of substances of which 95-96% is water, 0.6-0.7% oil and 4-5% total solids including 2-4% suspended solids and high concentration of organic nitrogen [25, 52, 53]. The brownish and colloidal suspension of POME contain high concentration of organic matter, high amounts of total solids, oil and grease, chemical oxygen demand (COD) and biological oxygen demand (BOD). However, it also contains considerable amounts of plants nutrient such as nitrogen, potassium, magnesium and calcium [54, 55], cadmium, copper, chromium and iron [27]. The physico-chemical properties of POME are presented in Table 2. The raw or partially treated POME has an extremely high content of degradable organic matter, which is due in part to the presence of unrecovered palm oil [26].

The high concentration of carbohydrate, protein, nitrogenous compounds, lipids and minerals found in POME [54, 56, 57] render it impossible to reuse [44] without appropriate treatment [26]. POME can cause environmental pollution due to oxygen depletion, soil pollution and other related effects [20, 26, 46, 47, 50]. The discharge of POME on aquatic ecosystem turns the water brown, smelly and slimy [47, 50], and it may kill fishes and other aquatic organisms and deny the human inhabitant of such region access to good water for domestic uses [58]. So there is a need for mass integration approach as water management and optimization tool [59]. Untreated POME affects the health of the communities [21]. Besides, it also contaminates the land and ecosystem leading to loss of land resources and biodiversity [22].

Table 2: Physicochemical parameters of palm oil milling effluents

3 Microbiological processes involved in biogas production in anaerobic digester

Anaerobic digestion is the degradation of complex organic matters in the absence of oxygen [29]. During anaerobic digestion, POME produces methane, carbon dioxide and water. The conversion processes principally involves hydrolysis, fermentation (acidogenesis/acetogenesis) and methanogenesis [9, 30, 51, 62, 63] (Fig. 1). The microbes commonly found in POME suspected to be involved in biogas generation are listed in Table 3 and 4.

Hydrolysis involves the conversion of POME complex substances i.e. lipids, protein and carbohydrates into monomers such as fatty acids, amino acids and sugars, respectively [9, 29, 63] by hydrolytic microorganisms and/or their enzymes. Hydrolytic pathway is high in organic waste and may become rate limiting. The size of these product play essential role in transportation in cell membrane. For instance Nayono [62] reported that small soluble products permits movement into bacteria cell membrane. During acidogenesis (Table 4), metabolic intermediaries including volatile fatty acids, alcohol, aldehydes formed are degraded into acetate, carbon dioxide and hydrogen gas [62, 63]. However acidogenesis is sometimes referred to as fermentation [62, 63]. Of these products, volatile fatty acids are mostly formed by acidogenic bacteria. In acetogenesis other products such as ethanol, lactate, propionate and butyrate are formed concurrently with the product formed during acidogenesis (acetate, carbon dioxide and hydrogen gas) [63]. The final step in biogas production is methanogenesis and two group of bacterial are involved in the process viz: acetotrophic and hydrogenotrophic [63]. Hydrogenotrophic methanogens uses hydrogen as electron acceptor for methane production, while acetotrophic methanogens uses formate as electron donor for methane and carbon dioxide reduction [31, 63]. Acetate which is from acetic acid can be directly used as a substrate by methanogenic bacteria to produce biogas (Fig 1). The degradation of the products is carried out by large diversity of facultative anaerobes through many fermentative pathways.

However, at low limited hydrogen pressure the production processes can be thermodynamically enhanced [62]. Ibrahim et al. [64] asserted that methanogenesis is the rate limiting step in anaerobic digestion. Methane gas can be captured properly using high rated anaerobic bioreactor as proposed by Ibrahim et al. [64], Borja and Banks [65]. The metabolic activities of methanogens in POME result in the production of methane gas. Typically, approximately 66% of the methane produced is formed via acetate decarboxylation, while the remaining 34% is produced via carbon dioxide reduction mechanisms by the activities of hydrogenophilic bacteria [62].

Fig 1: Processes of biogas production from anaerobic treatment of POME

Table 3: Microbial species isolated from POME, which may be involved in the decomposition process.

Table 4: Microorganisms involved in microbial conversion of wastes to biogas

4 Biogas Production Technology

Anaerobic digestion technology has advanced within the past decades [71]. The recent anaerobic biodigester can compete favorably with aerobic systems for wastewater treatment [71]. Due to higher cell retention times of 4 – 10 fold greater than those utilized in aerobic treatment processes [71], they are widely studied for the biogas production. Again, the microbial community used for biogas production (i.e. methanogens) is mostly found under anaerobic environment. Anaerobic digestion of POME typically produces biogas which is a mixture of methane and carbon dioxide in 65 and 35% composition respectively [1, 2, 20]. The methane produced from the anaerobic digestion of POME has a good potential for power generation using gas engine. Biogas production from POME range from 20 – 28 m³-CH₄/m³-biogas [20]. Basically, 28 m³ of biogas is produced from 1 m³ of POME [63, 72 – 76]. About 1m³ biogas is capable of generating about 1.8kWh, which is equivalent to 25% power generation efficiency [20]. Ugoji [67] stated that 2.4cm³ of biogas/m³ of digester vol/day is produced from anaerobic digester. The power generated from POME can be transferred to the grid and consumed locally for domestic, industrial and commercial purposes. With this, the attendant environmental pollution associated with POME is prevented.

Several anaerobic digestion techniques have been employed for POME treatment, while generating energy. The major different configurations of anaerobic digestion that have been used for the treatment of POME and production of biogas including, up-flow anaerobic filtration [77], pond system, Anaerobic Filtration, Anaerobic digester, FBR, UASB, UASFF, CSTR, EGSB, UMAS, UAMAS, MAS, MABR, MABB, ABR, Suspended close anaerobic bioreactor (SCABR) and anaerobic contact digestion.

The anaerobic technologies for conversion of POME into biogas have been variously reported in literature including definition, characteristics, advantages and disadvantages. However, the merits and limitations of anaerobic and alternative POME treatment methods including membrane, evaporation and aerobic processes have been comprehensively reviewed and documented by Poh and Chong [29] and Abdulrahman et al [78]. The demerit and merit of anaerobic treatment processes have been reviewed and documented by Abdelgadir et al. [79]. Again, the advantages and disadvantages of different treatment configurations including pond

system, anaerobic filtration, FBR, UASB, UASFF, CSTR have also been reviewed and documented Poh and Chong [29]; Abdulrahman et al [78] Bala et al. [80]

4.1 Pond system

Pond system is one of the commonest treatment technology probably due to its cost effectiveness. The pond system of POME treatment has a huge potential of emitting methane gas. According to Yacob et al. [75], the ponding system is a series of 12 ponds which consisting of a cooling pond, a mixing pond, four anaerobic ponds, two facultative anaerobic ponds and four algae ponds. The detailed schematics of anaerobic open pond are found in Yacob et al. [75]. An anaerobic pond in palm oil mill in most advanced oil palm producing countries is 60 x 29.6 x 5.8m (length x width x depth). Each pond system has a processing capacity of 54 tonnes per hour [75]. The typical retention time of anaerobic pond varies from 20 – 200 days [57]. An anaerobic pond is capable of generating methane gas up to 54.4% by composition [75]. In an aerobic pond, a low emission is generated and because oxygen is fed into the digester. However, the emission of methane is greatly influenced by the method of processing and the prevailing season [29, 75].

4.2 Anaerobic filtration

The anaerobic filtration has been successfully employed in the treatment of POME because of the benefits ascribed to it, which includes small reactor volume with low hydraulic retention time, ability to withstand shock loadings, no solid separation/recycling and inexpensiveness of the reactor [29, 76, 77]. Typically anaerobic filtration consist of several compartment including airtight vessel and a septic tank with a temperature gauge, completely mixed digester, high rate reactor with a density highly active biomass section [78]. The schematics design of anaerobic filtration has been documented in Cavaleiro et al. [71]. This type of treatment method has recorded 63.3% of methane production by composition at an OLR of 4.5 kg COD/m³/day [29].

4.3 Modified Anaerobic Baffled Bioreactor

MABB has proven to be efficient for POME treatment. The schematic design which have been reported by Faisal and Unno [81] have several compartments including feed tank, magnetic stirrer, peristaltic pump, water jacket, gas and effluents collection bottle, sewer, water bath etc. MABB is capable of maintaining and keeping the microbial communities especially the methanogens in close proximity especially at a long HRT, which helps the microbes to converts the volatile organic substances to methane without noticeable production of intermediate products [81]. MABB is able to produce methane gas in a range of 0.32 – 0.421-CH₄ (g-COD)⁻¹ removal, with a corresponding methane content of 67.3 – 71.2% in an HRT of 3 – 10 days [81]. Biogas production by MABB has the tendency of producing biogas at short HRT under high OLRs.

4.4 Fluidized bed reactor

A FBR is an advanced packed bed system, which permits the expansion of the bed during operation [82]. FBR is a type of anaerobic reactor device that have the capacity of carrying out several multiphase chemical reactions. FBR In addition to the already known merits of FBR, it is essential for treatment of high-strength wastewaters [78]. FBR is a treatment method employed for POME [83]. This method has the tendency of treating high-strength wastes, high up-flow

velocity of raw POME as against anaerobic digestion method. However, the FBR has the ability to withstand high OLRs and a better methane gas production.

4.5 Up-flow anaerobic sludge blanket

UASB possess several features such as sludge from organic matter and biomass which settles in the reactor when the organic matter comes in contact with the sludge it will be digested by the biomass granules [29, 78, 82]. Others include influents, sludge blanket, gas separator, collection and exit sampling parts pump etc. The complete design of this configuration has been documented by Chaisri et al. [84], Amin and Vriens [85]. UASB reactor has been successfully been used for the treatment of diverse industrial effluents including those with high organic content capable of inhibiting digestion [31, 83, 86]. The suspended organic solids of POME have a high biogas potential which make the conversion technology economically feasible, which are the driving force of UASB [28]. Basically, during the use of UASB for POME treatment, over loading condition of wastewater with high volatile fatty acid content makes the process to be epileptic after about 15 days of use. However, Borja et al. [28] proposed two stage UASB for POME treatment with the intention of inhibiting the granules formed at the higher OLRs without the corresponding removal of the solid residues from the POME during treatment [29].

4.6 Anaerobic Baffled Reactor

ABR can treat industrial waste effluents and is economically feasible for the treatment of POME because of its simplicity and low cost [81]. ABR consists of a series of vertical baffles to force the wastewater to flow under and over them as it passes from the inlet to the outlet [88]. The detailed schematic design of ABR have been documented by Ferraz et al. [87], Liu et al. [88]. In the design of ABR, several modifications have been made to enhanced the efficiency in waste water treatment, such designs have been discussed in Liu et al. [88]. ABR has no mechanical component so it is not highly sophisticated. This bioreactor is meant for water soluble effluents, and is relatively stable at high OLR. The effect on HRT under steady state condition and kinetic analysis has been reported for substrate utilization and methane production [81].

4.7 Up-flow Anaerobic Sludge Fixed-Film

UASFF reactor is a hybrid of anaerobic filter and UASB. UASFF have two compartments including lower part which is basically UASB that aid in flocculation and development in granular sludge, while the upper section acts as fixed film reactor [89, 90]. Based on characteristics, UASFF consist of gas separator, holder, pump, settling and feed tank. The schematics of UASFF configuration have been described by Najafpour et al. [89, 90], Emadian et al. [91]. UASFF is a good technique for POME treatment [89]. Within a short HRT, UASFF have been successfully used to treat high rate anaerobic digestion of pre-settled and chemically pre-settled POME [92]. The UASFF has the potential of withstanding high loading rates more than UASB and anaerobic filter [29]. Najafpour et al. [89] reported the methane composition of 71.9% under OLR of 11.58 kg COD/m³ day with HRT of 3 days. The internal packing and high rate of effluent recycling are both vital to control the stability of UASFF reactor [29].

4.8 Continuous Stirred Tank Reactor

CSTR is sometimes refers to as closed tank digester. CSTR works at a continuous flow of reactants and products with a constant make up in the reactor including exit stream having the

same composition as the tank [78]. The mechanical agitator of the CSTR provides more area of contact with the biomass thus enhancing gas production [78]. The design of CSTR has been documented by Irvan et al. [6]. CSTR has been used for the treatment of POME [43], to produce biogas [86]. It has mechanical agitator/blender which helps to increase the surface area for reaction [63]. CSTR has been used in Malaysia and has been functioning effectively since 1980s [93]. CSTR typically have net methane production of 62.5% by composition [63]. CSTR uses microorganisms to digest the organic substances in the waste water under anaerobic condition. During this process, the BOD of the effluent is reduced at the same time producing biogas [20].

4.9 Anaerobic contact digestion

Anaerobic contact digestion involves the use of digester and sedimentation tank whereby the digested effluents is left to coagulate and the effluent is recycled back into the digester [29]. Anaerobic contact digestion has been successfully been used for POME treatment, during which 63% of methane gas by composition is generated [64]. The anaerobic contact process is a type of anaerobic digester.

4.10 Anaerobic digesters

Anaerobic digesters are the aerobic equivalents of activated sludge process and have found application in treating diversity of effluents including sugar processing, distilleries, citric acid and yeast production, industries producing canned vegetables, pectin, starch, meat products, etc [78]. Typically anaerobic digester is cylindrical in shape with different compartments including gear motor, torque tubes, scraper set and draft tube for mixing, hydrogen sulphide removal tank, moisture trap, gas pressure, regulator etc [36]. The design of this configuration has been documented by Puetpaiboon and Chotwattanasak [43].

4.11 Ultrasonicated Membrane Anaerobic System, Ultrasonic-assisted Membrane Anaerobic System and membrane anaerobic system

UMAS has two modifications including UAMAS and MAS. UAMAS have various components including cross flow ultra-filtration membrane, apparatus, a centrifugal pump, and an anaerobic reactor [95, 96]. The schematics design of UAMAS has been variously reported [94, 95]. Typically, UMAS have series of compartments including membrane reactor, membrane modules, pressure gauge, valve etc [94]. The schematics of UMAS have been documented by Abdulrahman et al. [94]. Similarly MAS consist of valve, pressure gauge, pump, sludge wastage, feeder tank, and anaerobic reactor. The design of this configuration has been reported by Abdulrahman et al. [96]. UMAS and MAS are some of the most suitable anaerobic treatment technologies of POME due to its relative small volume as compared to conventional digester [1, 94 – 96]. UMAS has the potential of removing high COD within a short period of time and thus having a high substrate removal efficiency [94 – 96].

4.12 Expanded Granular Sludge Bed

EGSB reactor has been modified from UASB. EGSB reactor comprises of three compartments including phase separator at the top, reactor body in the middle, and liquid distributor at the bottom [99]. The structural designed have been documented by Wang et al. [97] Yejian et al. [98]. EGSB has enhanced substrate-biomass contact within the treatment system by expanding

the sludge bed and intensifying hydraulic mixing, and consequently EGSB has enhanced reactor performance and stability [98, 99]. EGSB reactor relatively stable with regard to acidity and alkalinity, hence addition of alkalis is not important for pH adjustment.

4.13 Suspended Close Anaerobic Bioreactor

SCABR typically consist of cylindrical –shaped glass vessel with total and working volume, integrated online pH recording system. The schematics architecture of SCABR has been reported by Wong et al. [100].

4.14 Upflow anaerobic sludge blanket reactor

UASBR is similar to UASB configuration with slight variation. UASBR schematics is able to generate high quality effluent that have effectively meet the stringent effluent discharge standards set out in the Environmental Quality [101]. The UASBR schematics comprises of refill pipe, POME holding tank, stirrer motor, sodium hydrogen carbonate dosing tank, pH and temperature indicator, baffles, water jacket, overflow pipe, liquid splitter, biogas flow meter, biogas collection port, methane gas holder, pressure controller, hot water tank, drain pump, sampling point, peristaltic pumps and control valves [101]. These compartments enhance the effective functioning of this configuration.

4.15 Other less widely used biogas technology

Other biogas production technologies include upflow anaerobic filter (UFAF) (which consists of gas collector pump, microbial supporting material, effluents, gas exist and the design of UFAF have been documented by Chaisri et al. [84], semi-closed digester tank (which consists of sludge recycling and appropriate feeding strategy design consisting of inlet chamber, recycling pump, settling tank, sampling port, pH, temperature probe etc and the schematics design have been documented [102], Anaerobic hybrid reactor (whose schematic design consists of several compartment including gas counter, insulators, water tubes, sludge zones, e-circulation water inlet and outlet, feeder tank, effluent tank etc) [103], anaerobic covered lagoon (ACL), anaerobic fixed film (AFF) [84], and Upflow Anaerobic Sludge Blanket Reactor (UASBR) [101].

The methane composition (%), HRT (days) and OLRs (kg COD/m³ day) of various anaerobic treatment methods is presented in Table 5. The UASFF provides the best/quality performance for biogas production from POME treatment at high OLRs with low HRT as against other anaerobic treatment methods [29]. However, based on our observations, the UAMAS performs better than all other reactors due to its ability to degrade POME at higher OLR of 16 kg COD/m³/day with a relative short HRT of 0.5 days, producing 77% of methane gas.

Table 5: Methane composition during anaerobic treatment of POME with their OLR and HRT

5 Factors influencing biogas production

Bioreactor for anaerobic treatment of POME to produce biogas consisting of methane, carbon dioxide and hydrogen gas is influenced by several factors including pH, reaction temperature, OLR, HRT, microbial activity, pressure, nutrient, chemical equilibrium, mixing of effluent among others [1, 9, 63, 94 – 96]. These factors can be grouped into environmental and internal factors. However, technological challenge to improving the anaerobic digestion lies in enhancing the microbial activity together with adequate mixing to ensure uniformity of the environmental factors (i.e. temperature and pH) so as to enhance the contact rate between the cells and their substrates [81].

5.1 Environmental factors

Environmental factors typically influence the internal working condition of the biogas technology which may affect biogas production. The major environmental factors include temperature and pH.

5.1.1 pH

pH is a typical example of unstable parameter used in evaluating the acidity and alkalinity of water, wastewater and/ or effluents. pH is essential parameter that used to show strength of an effluent under anaerobic condition for biogas production. In a typical anaerobic bioreactor, the various metabolic products at each phase of biomethanation are successively transformed into their corresponding output without any major substantial accumulation of intermediate products leading to decline in pH [62]. The decrease in pH is due to hindrance by the methanogenic microorganisms. Microorganisms respond to changes in internal and external pH by adjusting their activity and synthesis of proteins associated with proton translocation, amino acid degradation, and adaptation to acidic or alkaline conditions [106]. Nevertheless, the alkalinity of the POME is typically below the level at which optimum methane is produced. Several characteristics of the multifaceted microbial metabolism are seriously affected by differences in pH of the biodigester [62]. Typically, neutral pH favours the rate of methanogenesis during biogas production. Most anaerobic bacteria especially methanogens enhance the production of biogas at pH range of 6.5 to 7.5, and peak at pH of 6.8 to 7.6 [62, 107]. This suggests that the rate of biogas production may decline at pH lower than 6.5 and higher than 7.6

Typically, the higher the pH (tending toward neutral) and lower the alkalinity, the higher the methane composition. Fang et al. [104] reported that using UASB and EGSB design showed that deoiled POME with a pH and alkalinity of 4.7 and 85mg/l respectively have a higher percentage methane (72 – 74% for UASB and 70 – 73% for EGSB) than composition of 55 -66% for UASB and 51 – 60% for EGSB under same conditions such as HRT, OLR, substrate concentration level in water. Using SCABR design Wong et al. [100] reported that methane concentration from the treatment of POME increase as pH increases (i.e. pH of 5.26, 5.36, 5.44, 5.53, 5.34 and 5.20 was 32.20, 28.85, 24.35, 21.00 and 18.28% respectively). However, fluctuation in the methane yield when the pH was increased suggesting that pH is not the sole factor responsible for optimal methane production from POME.

In other to control the volatile fatty acid produced, bicarbonates salts such as sodium, potassium, and calcium, calcium hydroxide (quick lime) and sodium nitrate are essential in the maintenance of the systems alkalinity. Abdulrahman et al. [94, 95] stated that sodium hydroxide could be added to maintain the pH of the system to a pH of 6.8 – 7.0. Other bicarbonate alkaline that may be required by methanogens to balance pH during biogas production is sodium and potassium

and lime could also be used. However, these should be carried out gradually to avoid any opposing impact on the microbial consortia [62].

5.1.2 Temperature

Temperature is another unstable parameter that is often considered during biogas production. Temperature is one parameter that basically designates the efficiency of biogas production probably because it varies with the rates of hydrolysis and methanogenesis [1, 62]. Temperature also impacts on the metabolic events of the microbial density, gas transfer rates and settling features and condition of the remains of solid materials found in the substrate [62, 107]. POME generated in palm oil mills is usually discharged at a temperature of about 80 - 90°C [5, 108]. This temperature range makes both mesophilic and thermophilic microbes to function effectively during treatment [29]. The treatment of POME at a high temperature (thermophilic (55 °C) generates high gas when compared to mesophilic (37 °C) temperature. Mesophilic bacteria are hypothetically more vigorous and forceful and can withstand high variation in the environmental conditions such as temperature [62]. For instance, Yu et al. [109] reported that biogas is produced at high temperature of 55 °C compared to temperature of 37 °C. In Malaysia, Yeoh [110] reported that biogas and methane yield at 35 °C to be 0.78 m³ kg⁻¹- BOD and 0.47 m³ kg⁻¹- BOD respectively whereas at 55 °C the biogas and methane yield were 1.41 m³ kg⁻¹- BOD and 0.92 m³ kg⁻¹- BOD respectively. At cold climates, poor insulated digesters are vulnerable to temperature variations, which may be valuable if the digester is run in the mesophilic temperature range. Thermophilic process offers higher rate of substrate degradation, biogas production and specific formation rate [109]. During biogas production at thermophilic temperature, fluctuation influence may affect the stability of the system. But, this problem can be overcome by keeping the microbial community in close proximity [29]. Temperature typically plays a vital role in OLRs and HRT during biogas production. Yilmaz et al. [111] and Kim et al. [112] asserted that temperature withstand high OLRs and short HRT in the production of more biogas. Therefore thermophilic condition which enhances the production of biogas more could be maintained by using appropriate insulation technology.

5.2 Internal factors

Another condition that affects biogas production in anaerobic configuration is internal factors. These factors include OLR, nutrient composition, hydraulic retention time, microbial activity including diversity and density, pressure, inhibitory materials, chemical equilibrium and mixing rate.

5.2.1 Nutrients

Biogas is produced via microbial breakdown of POME. These microbes require nutrient to function effectively. Several micro (trace) and macro element such as potassium, sodium, magnesium, calcium, iron, cadmium, chromium, nitrogen are needed, even though some of the minerals found in POME could be toxic to the biogas producing microorganisms. These toxic substances are produced from leaching processing equipment, and can decrease the rate at which methane is produced. In Nigeria, such rate reductions are common because oil palm industry is basically handled by smallholder who uses rudimentary equipment during processing. During processing, rainfall could increase the volume of POME, which may result to nutrient level being

lowered as well as inhibitory materials. Rainfall during processing can also contribute to low methane yield at high HRT.

5.2.2 Hydraulic retention time and organic loading rate

HRT is typically used to determine time that a certain substrate exist in a bioreactor. The OLR is defined as the amount of organic matter that must be treated by a certain volume of anaerobic digester in a certain period of time [62]. In anaerobic biodigester with constant mixing, the substances in the bioreactor have a comparative even retention time [62]. System catastrophe usually occurs due to short HRT. This is dictated by the rate of growth of important microbial community of the bioreactor [62, 113], even though this process leads to a high yield of methane. Najafpour et al. [89] reported a HRT of 3 days with 71.9% methane gas production rate. HRT enhances metabolic shift in concurrence with extended fermentation time, nature of effluent, pH and OLR [114]. Furthermore, short HRT yields a higher biogas production rate, but less efficient degradation of organic matter. Atif et al. [115] and Vijayaraghavan and Ahmad [116] reported an average biogas generation of 0.42L/g COD destroyed, with hydrogen content of 57% at 7day HRT using microflora isolated from the sludge of an anaerobic pond treatment of POME on the effects of hydrogen production from POME studies.

The OLR is frequently shows the relationship with the HRT value. In substrate with fairly stable organic constituents, high OLR is obtained at short HRT [62]. Fang et al. [104] reported that overloading in EGSB could lead to poor biomass settlement leading to wash off by the effluents. Also when the OLR increases, methane production rate is intensified. But excess OLR due organic over load often results to acidity of the medium which is detrimental to methanogens [104, 117], which could lead to reduction in methane composition [106]. Under separate reactors, Fang et al. [104] reported that overloading in EGSB could lead to poor biomass settlement. However, in this study (Table 5) showed that the OLR varies even at constant HRT. During treatment, biogas production is enhanced with OLR until the methanogens could not convert the acetates produced to methane [29]. Again, this study has shown that high OLR produces high methane gas as compared to low OLR with relative short HRT.

The optimization of HRT and OLR depend mainly on the type of configuration. Some treatment technology generates higher methane composition at lower OLR at higher HRT e.g. anaerobic digester, MAS, UMAS, SCABR, while few others produces high methane composition at higher OLR at lower HRT e.g. UAMAS (Table 5). Hence, configurations with lower HRT and OLR should be studied for optimization for biogas production from POME during anaerobic treatment.

5.2.3 Microbial Population and Activities

The role of microbes in biogas formation is often taken for granted. Researchers erroneously believe that once anaerobic conditions are provided, suitable methane producing biota became established. Biogas formation is a complex process involving different processes such as hydrolysis, acidogenesis, acetogenesis and methanogenesis involving different types of microorganisms. Ohimain et al. [55, 66] and Ugoji [67] isolated microorganisms capable of catalyzing the four basic steps that could lead to biogas production from POME. Work on the microbial content of POME is limited. However among the few available include Ohimain et al. [55, 66], that reported the microbial content to be in the range of 10^5 to 10^6 cfu/ml. Izah and Ohimain [13], Okechalu et al. [17] isolated some groups of microorganisms from crude palm oil that have not been reported in POME before and these species include *Proteus* spp.,

Enterobacter spp. Because these microbes are found in crude palm oil, this may be the reason that these species are also found in POME. *Proteus* are hydrolytic bacteria, which could convert protein to amino acids and peptide.

The role of methanogenes in biogas production is a major factor in anaerobic treatment technology just as the other factors that influences biogas yield. In order to optimize the microbial constituents, more methanogenes could be introduced into the medium. Due to less methanogenes reported in POME as compared to other microbes that play essential roles in hydrolysis, acidogenesis and acetatogenesis.

5.2.4 Presence of inhibitory materials

Presence of inhibitory materials during biogas production could be noxious to the medium and this could lead to reduction in biogas production rate and without significant decrease in chemical oxygen. It could also lead to inability of the microbial consortia to acclimatize. Acclimatization is the capacity of microbes to reposition or reorganize their metabolic tendencies to surpass the metabolic shock that may be generated by the inhibitory materials when the levels of these substances are gradually enhanced within the environment [1, 62]. Light metal ions, heavy metals and organic compound are substances that are capable of causing inhibition during anaerobic treatment of POME for biogas production.

The light metal ions that are found in POME include sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium etc. These ions may affect the rate of biogas production. For instance, adequate ion levels are crucial for the stimulation of microbial growth, while high level could slow down growth and promotes inhibition [62]. Salt that frequently occurred in the effluent are cations and anions. Although cations salt in solution are associated with anions. Again, cation which associated anion in biogas bioreactor is harmful to the system. Potassium has been reported to occur in large concentration in POME [20].

In addition, heavy metals in trace concentration in POME could enhance the growth of microflora. Though, heavy metals are not easily biodegradable and can accumulate to potentially toxic levels in the bioreactor. The toxic effect of heavy metals is associated to their capacity to deactivate a wide spectrum of enzyme function and structures [118 cited in 62].

Also, organic material of POME possesses inhibitory potential during anaerobic digestion for biogas production. Exposure time, temperature of the POME and acclimatization of the organic materials could influence biogas production from POME. However, POME have been variously reported to contain high levels of organic materials particularly oil and grease. Typically materials such as oil in the POME could reduce methane yield. For instance, Fang et al. [104] reported a higher methane yield in deoiled POME than oily POME using UASB and EGSB treatment technology.

Inhibitory materials such as oil and grease could be avoided by deoiling the POME. Study by Fang et al. [104] showed that deoiled POME enhances methane composition at lower OLR using UASB and EGSB treatment technology than oily POME (Table 5). Nutrients (light ions) are required by microbes, hence increasing the microbial density of the medium could aid in the reduction of inhibition due to nutrient during treatment, while enhancing methane yield due to the activities of microbes that utilizes the POME nutrients.

5.2.5 Pressure

High pressure produced in the biogas digester during anaerobic treatment could affect the production rate of methane. Barophilic microorganisms may be present in POME, although none have been reported. At high pressure, the microbial and chemical equilibrium of the system could be challenging if the methane produced is not tapped instantly into use. Low methanogenic bacteria population in POME could result to low yield of methane. The overall pressure that occurs during biogas production could adversely affect bacteria if the weight of the gases outside the reactor is greater than the force inside the system. Negative pressure will pull air into the reactor and the mixture (biogas and air) may explode. When such an explosion occurs, the oxygen in the air destroyed the microbial properties of the POME and methane production ceases. This could be averted by tapping the methane as it is being produced.

5.2.6 Mixing condition

Mixing aids in the dilution of inhibitory substances and stabilization of enabling environmental condition for maximum biogas yield. During anaerobic treatment of POME, if the pH or temperature of the same substrate in reactor varies due to volume, the overall gas production will be affected. So therefore, mixing is essential for optimal biogas yield, although it has to be moderate amount of mixing because low and high mixing affects the methanogens found in the POME.

5.2.7 Chemical equilibrium

At least three processes influence the chemical equilibrium of biogas production. These include hydrolysis involving the breakdown of complex polymers of POME into monomers [119], the conversion of volatile fatty acids formed into acetate, hydrogen gas and carbon dioxide [64] and the utilization of the gas produced. The hydrolysis process is considered to be the driving force of biogas production from POME because it requires high energy and the process is slow. Volatile fatty acid is converted to methane through the activities of acetogenic and acetoclastic methanogens found in POME. This conversion process can only be thermodynamically favored if the partial hydrogen pressure is kept low. Ibrahim et al. [64] reported that methanogenesis is the rate limiting step in anaerobic digestion. Methane gas can be captured properly using high rated anaerobic bioreactor. The utilization of the gas can shift the equilibrium to the right i.e. in favor of the product.

6 Sustainability of biogas as a renewable energy

Biogas is one of the renewable energy produced from anaerobic digestion technology. Biogas can gain triple benefits in the reduction of organic pollutants for environmental protection, resources conservation, and generation of high quality renewable fuel [83]. POME typically produces two form of gas; biogas and bio-hydrogen gas. Biogas production is not challenged by raw material because oil palm milling is carried out continually in oil palm producing countries. Biogas can be used as a source of heat by direct combustion. The system reduces pollutants and also produces biogas that mills utilizes as fuel to produce electricity using the internal combustion engines. In Thailand, biogas is used in form of thermal energy (heat) and electricity. The existing utilization of biogas was 224 ktOE for thermal energy and 46 MW for electricity in 2005 [120, 121]. Biogas anaerobic digester has been able to produce electricity using 500 kW

gas engines [43]. The efficiency of the gas engine that used 65% CH₄ of biogas was calculated to be 35% efficient. The Malaysia Government has recommended POME treatment at thermophilic temperature so as to generate biogas at a range of about 2250 million kWh of electricity which is capable of contributing about 4% of the national electricity demand of Malaysia in 1999 [29]. Also, the Bunge Guatemala POME project estimated 22,500m³/day biogas production and electricity generation of 2MW [122]. Furthermore, the recovery and utilization of methane contributes to significant GHG emission reduction [43].

Biohydrogen production attracts attention of researchers, as it is less energy intensive and can be coupled with wastewater treatment processes using dark-and photo-fermentation techniques [6]. Thus, biohydrogen is characterized with a high energy yield of 122 MJ/kg which is 2.75 times higher than the hydrocarbon fuels and the only end-product is water [123]. These characteristics make it a promising alternative fuel. The recent biological approach to producing hydrogen is to convert agro-industrial residues into hydrogen-rich gas through anaerobic processes by microbial action. Researchers have established many means of harnessing hydrogen from POME [6]. Therefore, sustainable production of biohydrogen from POME could help in reducing the energy-linked environmental impacts of global warming [29] due to anthropogenic carbon emissions and mobile source emissions such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, non-methane hydrocarbons, and particulates [6].

7. Conclusion

With the increase in cost of conventional energy resources and concern over climate change, there is a growing need for energy resources that are sustainable and can provide base-load electrical generating capacity. The world energy supply has diminished over the past years, even when global population has increased. Hence, there is intense search for energy from renewable resources. POME has emerged as one of the fastest growing biogas resources. POME is generated in palm oil mill during the processing of FFB of oil palm to palm oil. Biogas is produced through anaerobic treatment of the effluent. Though, the production of biogas from POME is still at the infant stage, advanced oil palm producing countries like Malaysia and Thailand are currently tapping the resources for heat and power generation. Among the several configuration reviewed UAMAS appears to be superior due to the fact that high methane composition is produced at lower HRT and OLR. Also the study found that biogas yield is influenced by several factors depending on the configurations. However, POME discharged into the environment without treatment can lead to environmental pollution.

Acknowledgement

The authors wish to thank Dr. Beth Middleton of USGS for proofreading the manuscript. The authors also wish to thank the three anonymous reviewers and Editor-in-Chief for the valuable comments and suggestions.

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Fig 1: Processes of biogas production from anaerobic treatment of POME

Table 1: Typical biogas composition

Constituents	% Composition (References)				
	[34, 35, 41]	[42]	[20]	[43]	[1, 2, 9]
Methane (CH ₄)	55-75	50 – 70	65	66 – 67	65
Carbon dioxide (CO ₂)	30-45	30 – 40	30	29	35
Hydrogen sulphide	1-2	-	-	-	-
Nitrogen (N ₂)	0-1	1 – 2	-	<3	-
Hydrogen (H ₂)	0-1	5 – 10	-	-	-
Oxygen (O ₂)	-	-	-	< 1	-

Table 2: Physicochemical parameters of palm oil milling effluents

Parameters	References					
	[61]	[55]	[27]	[60]	[46]	[28]
pH	5.10	6.56	5.21 – 6.36	-	5.34	4.40
Dissolved Oxygen, mg/l	-	4.69	2.57 – 4.13	-	1.25	-
COD, mg/l	821.45	1806.33	1231.00 – 2422.00	42900.00 – 88250.00	284.79	30.60
Suspended solid mg/l	-	-	-	14.10 – 26.40	-	10.80
Volatile suspended solid g/l	-	-	-	-	-	8.10
Total solid mg/l	-	-	-	29.60 – 55.40	517.11	31.20
Volatile solid g/l	-	-	-	-	-	24.30
Electrical conductivity, μ S/cm	137.34	-	-	-	2.51	-
BOD, mg/l	502.93	382.93	254.00 – 1541.00	17000.00 – 26700.00	123.68	-
SO ₄ , mg/l	-	-	-	-	65.75	60.00
NO ₃ , mg/l	-	-	-	-	262.26	-
K, mg/l	-	19.64	9.53 – 29.14	1281.00 – 1928.00	295.74	510.00
Mg, mg/l	193.50	-	-	254.00 – 344.00	283.46	170.00
Na, mg/l	225.50	-	-	-	332.26	4.00
Ca, mg/l	605.50	-	-	276.00 – 405.00	252.41	220.00
Al, mg/l	-	-	-	-	-	120.00
B, mg/l	-	-	-	-	-	0.90
N, mg/l	3.24	12.87	7.55 – 20.65	-	-	365.00
P, mg/l	17.80	8.18	5.26 – 8.68	-	165.65	110.00

Cd, mg/l	-	0.03	0.01 – 0.02	0.01 – 0.02	-	-
Cu, mg/l	-	2.44	0.60 – 1.61	0.80– 1.60	-	1.00
Fe, mg/l	-	5.62	1.81 – 13.81	75.00 – 164.00	183.49	205.00
Cr, mg/l	-	2.01	0.61 – 1.68	0.05 – 0.43	-	-
Zn, mg/l	-	-	-	1.20 - 1.80	120.95	6.00
Mo, mg/l	-	-	-	-	-	0.10
Mn, mg/l	-	-	-	2.10 – 4.40	34.25	0.60
Ni, mg/l	-	-	-	-	-	1.20
Si, mg/l	-	-	-	-	-	55.00
Ba, mg/l	-	-	-	-	-	0.30
Co, mg/l	-	-	-	0.04 – 0.06	-	0.01

Table 3: Microbial species isolated from POME, which may be involved in the decomposition process.

Microbial class	Microbial groups	Microorganisms				
		[61]	[55]	[66]	[67]	[68,69]
Fungi	-	<i>Aspergillus niger</i>	<i>Aspergillus niger, A. fumigatus</i>	<i>Aspergillus niger, A. flavus, A. ochraceous</i>	<i>Aspergillus flavus</i>	<i>Aspergillus niger, A. flavus</i>
		<i>Penicillium species</i>	<i>Penicillium species</i>	<i>Penicillium species</i>	<i>Penicillium species</i>	<i>Penicillium species.</i>
		-	-	-	<i>Trichoderma viride</i>	-
		-	-	-	<i>Botryodiplodia theobromae</i>	-
		-	<i>Mucor species</i>	<i>Mucor species</i>	<i>Cunninghamella echinulata</i>	-
		<i>Geotrichum candidum</i>	-	-	<i>Geotrichum candidum</i>	-
		-	<i>Fusarium species</i>	<i>Fusarium species</i>	<i>Fusarium moniliforme</i>	-
		-	-	-	-	<i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i>
		-	-	-	-	<i>Yarrowia lipolytica</i>
		-	-	-	-	<i>Clavispora lusitaneae</i>
		<i>Candida species</i>	<i>Candida species</i>	-	-	<i>Candida intermedia, C. tropicalis</i>
Bacteria	Acid formers; hydrocarbon degraders	<i>Pseudomonas species</i>	<i>Pseudomonas species</i>	<i>Pseudomonas species</i>	<i>Pseudomonas species</i>	-
		<i>Bacillus species</i>	<i>Bacillus species</i>	<i>Bacillus species</i>	<i>Bacillus species</i>	<i>Bacillus carotarum, B. lentus, B. pumilis, B. stearothermophilus,</i>
		-	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	<i>Staphylococcus species</i>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>	-
		<i>Corynebacterium species.</i>	-	<i>Corynebacterium species.</i>	<i>Clostridium species</i>	-
		-	-	<i>Serratia species</i>	<i>Flavobacterium</i>	-

		-	-	-	<i>Desulfovibrio</i>	-
		<i>Micrococcus</i> species	<i>Micrococcus</i> species	-	<i>Micrococcus</i>	<i>Micrococcus luteus</i>
	Methane formers	-	-	-	<i>Methanococcus</i> species	-
		-	-	-	<i>Methanobacterium</i>	-

Table 4: Microorganisms involved in microbial conversion of wastes to biogas

Microbiological pathways	Microbial class	Substrate/products	Conversion process	Examples	References
Hydrolysis	Hydrolytic bacteria	Complex polymer to monomers	Proteins to its lower forms viz. amino acid and peptides	Some species of <i>Clostridium</i> and <i>Bacillus</i>	[1, 9, 62, 70]
		Complex polymer to monomers	Carbohydrate to its lower products viz sugar	Some species of <i>Clostridium</i> and <i>Staphylococcus</i>	[9, 70 62, 70]
		Complex polymer to monomers	Lipids to its lower fatty acid, constituents and alcohol etc	Some species of <i>Clostridium</i> <i>Staphylococcus</i>	[1, 9, 62, 70]
Acidogenesis	Acidogenic fermentative bacteria	Monomers to intermediaries product	Amino acids are converted to fatty acids, acetate	<i>E. coli</i> , Some species of <i>Staphylococcus</i> , <i>Pseudomonas</i> , <i>Bacillus</i> , <i>Desulfovibrio</i>	[1, 9, 62, 70]
		Monomers to intermediaries product	Sugar to lower metabolites	Some species of <i>Clostridium</i>	[9, 62, 70]
Acetogenesis	Acetogenesis bacteria	Metabolic intermediaries to methane, carbon dioxide, acetate etc	Fatty acid or alcohol to hydrogen or acetate	<i>Clostridium</i> species	[9, 62, 70]
		Metabolic intermediaries to methane, carbon dioxide, acetate etc	Fatty acid or alcohol to hydrogen or acetate	<i>Syntrophomonas</i> species	[9, 62, 70]
Methanogenesis	CO ₂ reducing methanogens	Methane, carbon dioxide, acetate etc to methane, carbon dioxide, hydrogen	Hydrogen and CO ₂ to methane	<i>Methanobacterium</i> , <i>methanoplanus</i>	[9, 62, 70]
	Aceticlastic methanogens	Methane, carbon dioxide, acetate etc to methane, carbon dioxide	Acetate to methane and CO ₂	Methanobacteria (methanococcus)	[9, 62, 70]

Table 5: Methane composition during anaerobic treatment of POME with their OLR and HRT

Configurators	Methane composition, %	Organic loading rates (kg COD/m ³ day)	Hydraulic retention time (days)	COD removal efficiency, %	References
EGSB	70	1.45 - 17.5	2	91	[98]
	70	1.45 - 16.5	3	90.5	[99]
	51	2 gVSK reactor.day	10	96.5	[104]
	61	2.9 gVSK reactor.day	5	95.5	
	60	5.8 gVSK reactor.day	5	92.5	
	59	10.4gVSK reactor.day	5	65	
EGSB ^c	70	1.3 gVSK reactor.day	5	94	
	73	2.6 gVSK reactor.day	5	91.5	
Anaerobic digester	70.03	2.43	14	70	[36]
	69.29	5.09	10	68	
	66.83	6.50	7	65	
	66.41	8.70	6.5	65	
Anaerobic pond	54.4	1.4	40	97.8	[75]
MAS	74.2	2	400.6	96.5	[93]
	72.6	5	63.6	96.0	
	69.7	7	20.4	95.8	
	70.8	9	11.6	95.4	
	69.1	11	8.86	94.9	
	65.7	13	5.70	94.8	
UAMAS	77	16	0.5	98.7	[95]
	74	12	2.0	97.0	
	71.8	8	4	96.0	
	68.4	6	11.0	93.0	
	73.0	5	13.0	95.0	
	67.8	4	15.0	93.0	
UMAS	79	0.5	480.3	98.5	[96]
	75.5	1.5	76.40	97.5	
	70.2	3	20.3	98.0	
	71.8	5.5	8.78	97.7	
	70.6	8.5	7.36	97.6	
	68.5	9.5	5.40	96.7	
UASFF ^a	51.33 – 84.4	3.8	-	82.7 – 97.3	[105]
UASFF ^b	30.96 – 82.61	29g/COD/l.d	-	62.2 – 96.7	
UASFF	71.9	11.58	3	97	[89]
CSTR	67	-	4	-	[87]
	66	-	6	-	
	64	-	8	-	
	62.5	3.33	18	80	[93]
UASB	54.2	10.63	4	98.4	[65]
UASB	55	2 gVSK reactor.day	10	96.5	[104]
	66	2.9 gVSK reactor.day	5	95.5	
	61	5.8 gVSK reactor.day	5	92.5	

		reactor.day			
	58	10.4gVSK reactor.day	- 5	65	
UASB ^c	72	1.3 gVSK reactor.day	- 5	94	
	74	2.6 gVSK reactor.day	- 5	91.5	
MABB	69.1	-	3	87.4 – 95.3	[81]
	68.0	-	5		
	70.2	-	6		
	67.3	-	7		
	69.1	-	8		
	71.2	-	10		
Anaerobic contact process	63	3.44	4.7	93.3 (BOD)	[64]
Anaerobic filtration	63	4.5	15	94	[77]
UASBR	70–80	1.5–11.5 CODI ⁻¹ d ⁻¹ g-	4 -11	97 -99	[101]
SCABR	18.28	38.29	2	38.20	[100]
	21.00	19.87	4	48.18	
	24.35	12.96	6	54.10	
	28.85	9.45	8	58.10	
	32.20	7.60	10	63.87	
	40.42	6.67	12	87.08	

a = presettled POME, b = chemically pretreated POME (coagulation and flocculation),c = deoiled POME