



Research Paper

# Development of A vehicle Brake Pad Using Composites of Palm Kernel Fiber and Groundnut Shells As Filler Material

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## Abstract

This study investigated the development and assessment brake pad using palm kernel fiber (PKF) and groundnut shell as filter. Palm kernel fiber (PKF) of different particle sizes were combined with groundnut shell used as filler to produce brake pads following standard procedure. The performance of the produced brake pads was evaluated, and compared with commercial (asbestos based) brake pad. Natural waste has been used to produce fillers and fibers, including palm kernel fiber and fiber, groundnut shell, maize husk and rice straw. This study seeks to explore research using combination of fillers and fibers at different ratios with a view to studying their effects on brake pad properties using various mixtures for the production. Composite materials from fiber and fillers have been seen to improve composite mechanical properties, reduce costs and increase impact strength. The choice of fiber, filler, binder, particle size and composition play important responsibility in the composite of the brake pad performance. It was observed that palm kernel fiber particle size and groundnut shell as filler have a significant influence on the performance of palm kernel fiber based brake pads.

In order to obtain better physical properties, palm kernel fiber and groundnut fiber brake pads were studied and the composition percentage was optimized.

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## I. Introduction

The braking system is an indispensable component of an automobile, and is composed of many parts including brake pads, master cylinder, wheel cylinders, and a hydraulic control system (Maleque *et al.*, 2012). The brake pad is an important part of the brake system and consists of steel braking plates with friction materials bound to the surface facing the brake disc.

The brake pad generally consists of asbestos fibers embedded in polymeric matrix, along with several other ingredients (Olele, Nkwocha, Ekeke, Ileagu & Okeke, 2016). The use of asbestos in brake pads has become a source of concern due to its carcinogenic nature and problem of disposal, consequently, it is being phased out. The current trend in the automotive industry is the development and use of asbestos-free brake pads. Brake pads are components of disc brakes used in automobiles. They are steel backing plates with friction materials bound to the surface facing the brake disc. Brake pads are used in the braking systems to control the speed of the automobile (Nagesh, 2014) by converting the kinetic energy of the automobile to thermal energy by friction and dissipating the heat produced to the surroundings. In the recent time the production of composite materials has grown significantly worldwide, which means many industries and technology sectors are using polymer composite materials to successfully replace traditional composite materials (Nagesh, 2014). The investigation of new materials, especially agricultural waste as a filler material, is providing new and low-cost materials

for development of brake pads which are commercially viable and environmentally acceptable and which have all the required properties. Brake pads are used to control the speed of a vehicle via the braking system (Idris, 2015). Friction materials in braking applications systems are considered as the most important sections in a vehicle performance. The brake pad material must be able to sustain a higher and uniform coefficient of friction along side the brake disc.

Industrial and agricultural wastes are currently receiving attention as alternative raw materials to asbestos in the manufacture of brake pads (Leman *et al.*, 2008). The use of suitable waste materials can provide added values and reduce environmental problems and costs associated with disposal.

Brake pads used as automobile brakes are of two types: drum brakes and disc brakes. The drum brake is located inside a drum so that on application of the brakes, the brake lining is forced outward and pressed against the drum, while disc brakes operate in a similar way except that they are exposed to the environment (Deepika, 2013). Asbestos had a few engineering properties that made it very suitable for inclusion in brake linings, and was the most preferred filler material up till 1990. The use of asbestos has been avoided due to its carcinogenic nature. Therefore, a new asbestos free friction material and brake pads have been developed.

The use of thermosetting resins to produce moulded brake lining instead of knitted linings were made by combining fiber with resin and polymerizing resin under elevated pressure and temperature. The fabrication and performance evaluation of a composite material for wear resistance application (Bashar, 2012) made use of an agro-waste (palm kernel fiber - PKF) as filler material with sulphur, cashew nut shell liquid, calcium carbonate, brass chips,

quartz, iron ore, ceramics, and carbon black. Similarly, coconut shells based brake pad was produced with a formulation of grinded coconut shells (filler), epoxy resin (binder - matrix), iron chips (reinforcement), methyl ethyl ketone peroxide (catalyst), cobalt naphthanate (accelerator), iron and silica (abrasives), and brass (friction modifier) (Yawas, 2016).

The major component in the brake pad is the lining materials, which are categorized as metallic, semi-metallic, organic and carbon-based, depending on the composition of the constituent elements. Typical formulations consist of more than 10 ingredients, and more than 300 materials are in different brands (Edokpia, 2014). These ingredients are classified into four broad groups: binders, reinforcing fibers or structural materials, fillers, and frictional additives/modifiers, based on the major function they perform apart from controlling friction and wear performance. The binder holds the ingredients together, to maintain structural integrity of the brake lining under varying mechanical and thermal stresses. The structural materials provide the structural reinforcement to the composite matrix; fillers make up the free volume of the brake lining and friction modifiers stabilize the coefficient of friction and wear rates. These components perform synergistically in controlling friction and wear performance of the brake pad.

Palm Kernel fiber (PKF) is recovered as by-product in palm oil production. Large quantities of PKF are generated annually and only some fractions are used for fuel and other applications such as palliative for untarred road and in producing activated carbon.

The unused PKF are dumped around the processing mill, constituting an environmental and economic liability for the mill. Although, PKF must be ground into fine particles to be suitable for

inclusion in brake lining, available information in the literature are on the ungrounded shell particles. Coefficients of friction of PKF on metal surfaces were in the range of 0.37-0.52 (Lagel, 2016). In contrast, friction coefficient in the range of 0.30-0.70 is normally desirable when using brake lining material (Bala, 2016). It has been found that incorporation

of PKF in the production of structural lightweight concretes increased the mechanical strength. Thus, PKF appeared suitable for use as base material in friction composites, because they are subjected to hard and variable braking forces.

Most commercial automotive brake pad friction materials contain multiple components (Kumar, 2011) and divided into four groups: fibers, fillers, binders, and friction modifiers. Fibers provide mechanical strength in the composition. Friction modifiers influence the brake pads frictional properties and contain a mixture of abrasive as well as lubricants.

Filler materials are mainly used for brake pad production to improve brake manufacturability and reduce production

costs and as functional modifiers. A small amount of filler is usually added to improve or optimize performance of brake pad material. Harder particles, for instance  $Al_2O_3$  is added to increase the COF ( $\mu$ ) which is the force of friction caused by the scraping of the surface of the material and the disc (Bijwe, 1997).

Binders hold all the components together in the brake pad application, thereby reducing the component shear rate (Blau, 2001). Binders contribute to the brake pad friction and wear rate (Rohatgi, 2012). The binder offers mechanical unity to the friction materials by firmly combining the other three components in order to improve the composite properties. In the past fifty years, phenolic resins (unmodified or modified) have been employed as binders in the preparation of the friction materials due to their good thermal and mechanical properties

in addition to lower costs (Chan., 2004) **Methodology The Raw Materials Preparation**

Existing agricultural waste cannot be used directly in the formulation of the final brake pad. Therefore, some treatments such as mechanical and chemical treatments are required earlier in the brake pads composition. The following are some of the natural fiber treatment methods proposed according to the literature.

### **Palm Kernel Fiber**

5 kg of palm kernel fiber was obtained from a palm oil processing mill. The fibers were collected using a rubber bucket and thoroughly washed with water and soap to remove residual oil and extraneous materials. Thereafter, the fibers were sun-dried for three (3) days. The dried fibers were pounded using mortar and pestle until the desired particle size was obtained. The fine particles of the fibers were reclassified into different particle sizes.

### **Palm Kernel fiber as Brake Lining Ingredient**

Palm Kernel fiber (PKF) is recovered as a by-product in palm oil production. Large quantities of PKS are generated annually and only some fractions are used for fuel and other applications such as a palliative for untarred roads and in producing activated carbon.

The unused PKF is dumped around the processing mill, constituting an environmental and economic liability for the mill. Although, PKF must be ground into fine particles to be suitable for inclusion in brake lining, available information in the literature are on the ungrounded shell particles.

Coefficients of friction of PKF on metal surfaces were in the range of 0.37-0.52 (Deepika, 2013). In contrast, friction coefficient in the range of 0.30-

0.70 is normally desirable when using brake lining material. It has been found (Nagesh, 2011) that incorporation of PKS in the production of structural lightweight concrete increases the mechanical strength. Thus,

PKF appears suitable for use as a base material in friction composites, because they are subjected to hard and variable braking forces. Reported that PKF did not change significantly in physical structure and weight, for appreciable time duration, when exposed to organic solvent. It is also important that the friction materials experience very little or no changes on

contacting varying environmental conditions: wet or dry weather, or hydraulic fluid spilling over.

These observations therefore, stimulated the interest in considering PKF for use as friction material in brake lining. Hence, the aim of this research is to develop a new asbestos-free brake pad from Palm kernel fiber, which is readily available and nontoxic.

### **Brake pad formulation**

Production of the brake pad consists of a series of unit operations including mixing, cold and hot pressing, cooling, post-curing and finishing (Fono-Tamo., 2013). The samples were produced using compression moulding machine. Each of the three PKS grit sizes was used to formulate brake pad by mixing with brass chips, steel fibre, graphite, latex rubber, calcium carbonate, resin binder, carbon black powder and groundnut shell was used as the filler. After mixing, the mixture was compacted in a mould to assume the required shape. A compressive force of 50 kN was applied through a punch, by a hydraulic press, for a period of 20 min. The brake pad produced was cured by heating in a wooden oven at a temperature of 80°C for 45 minutes, and allowed

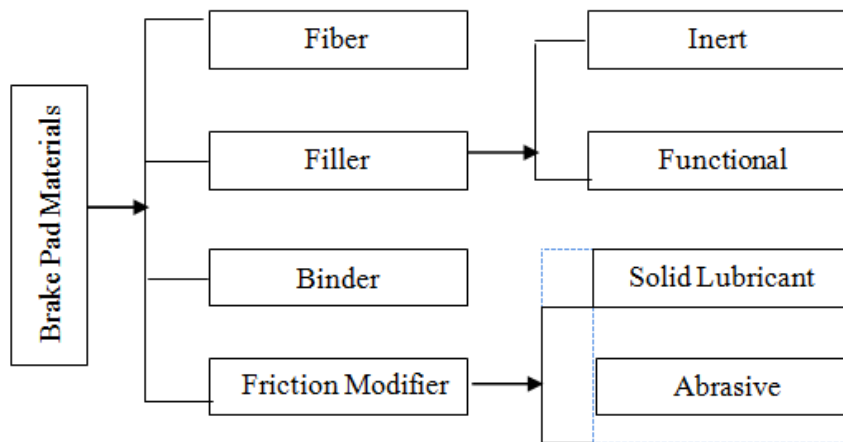
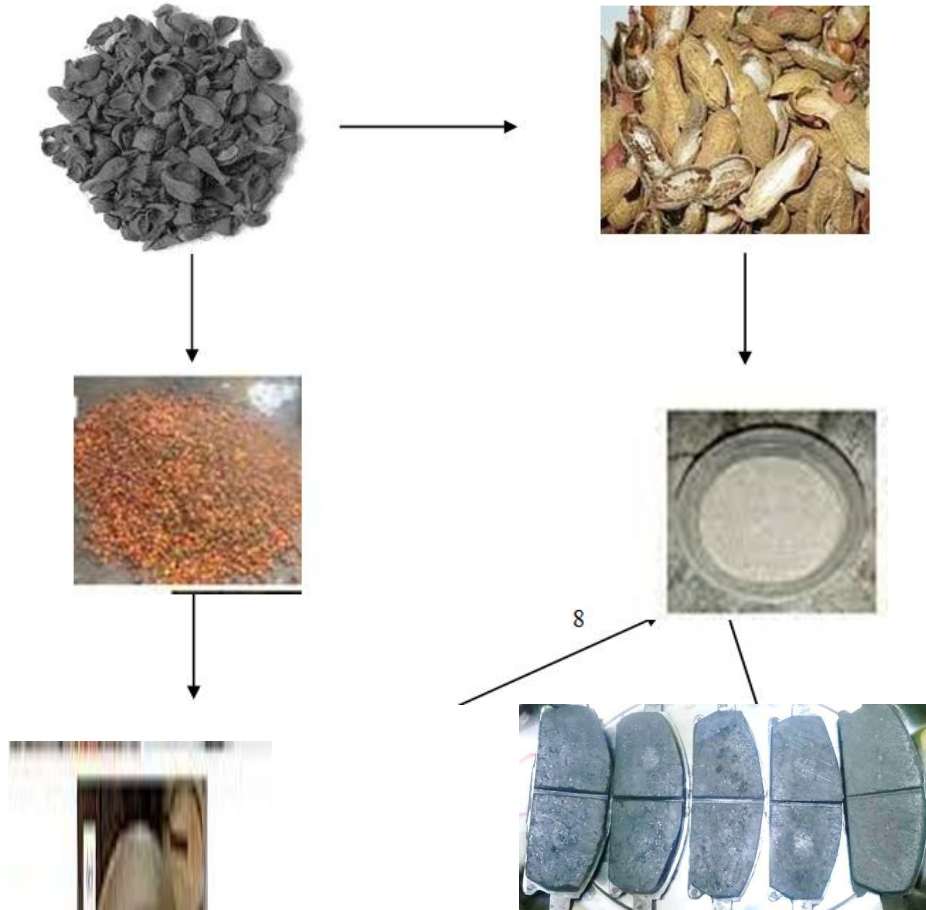
to cool. Afterward the brake pad samples were subjected to performance tests. The produced brake pad samples and a commercial brake pad (produced from asbestos) were tested for wear/application, disc temperature rise, and disc stopping time (braking efficiency) at different speeds.

### **Groundnut Shell**

Groundnut shell was collected and washed with water to remove sand and put in a

sodiumhydroxide(NaOH)solutionhavingacompositionratioof1:20withwatertoremoveimpuritiessuchas lignin and pectin. After this, the groundnut shell was washed in distilled water to reduce the sodiumhydroxideinthe shelland sundried tillallthe moisture content inthe shelldried up. Thedried shell was ground in a grinding machine to reduce its size, after which the shell wassieved into a 200 and 400 um sieve size. The shell particles were then mixed in a two-rollmixingmill togetherwithotherconstituentsto filler the brake pad with palm kernel shell.

**Fig. 1: Diagrams of materials used for the formulation of PKF + GS brake pad**



**Fig. 2: Diagram of materials combination for the production of brake pad**

### Microstructure analysis

The microstructure analysis of the samples was carried out by grinding the samples using 200, 300 and 500 grit papers respectively. Dry polishing was then carried out on

thesamplesandtheinternalstructureswereviewedunderthecomputerizedMetallurgicalmicroscope.

### Brinellhardnesstest

The resistance of the composites to indentation was carried out using the Brinellhardnesstesting equipment of BS240, a Tensometer (M500-25kN, hardened steel ball of diameter  $D$  to indent the test specimen. Based on ASTM specification, a steel ball of  $D = 10\text{mm}$  diameter steel ball was used, and the load applied  $P$  was kept stable at 3000 kgf. The diameter of the indentation,  $d$ , was measured along two perpendicular directions, using an optical micrometer screw gauge. The mean value was used to obtain the Brinell Hardness Number (BHN) using equation below.

$$\text{BHN} = \frac{2P}{\pi D (D - \sqrt{D^2 - d^2})}$$

Where  $P$  = applied load,  $D$  = diameter of hardened steel ball,  $d$  = diameter of indentation.

### Compressivestrengthtest

The compressive strength test was done using the Tensometric Machine. The samples of diameter 29.40mm were subjected to compressive force, loaded continuously until failure occurred. The load at which failure occurred was then recorded.

### Ashcontent test

About  $1.30 \text{ g} \pm 0.2 \text{ g}$  of the samples were weighed in a cooled crucible which was oven dried by heating in a furnace to  $600^\circ\text{C}$  for 30 minutes. Then the samples were charred by heating in a hot plate after which the charred samples were placed in a furnace and heated at  $600^\circ\text{C}$  for minutes. Then cooled in a desiccator and weighed. This process of heating, cooling and weighing were repeated until a constant

weight was obtained the ash content was calculated using equation below.

$$\text{Ash content} = \frac{W_2 - W_0}{W_1 - W_0} \times 100 \quad (2)$$

Where  $W_0$  = weight of empty crucible,  $W_1$  = weight of crucible and sample,  $W_2$  = weight of crucible and residue after cooling.

### Densitytest

The density of the samples was determined by weighing the samples on a digital weighing machine and their volumes determined by liquid displacement method. The density was determined using equation below.

$$\text{Density, } \rho = \frac{M}{V}$$

where  $M$  = mass of test piece (g),  $V$  = volume of the test piece ( $\text{cm}^3$ ) by liquid displacement method.

### Wear test

The wear rate for the samples were measured using pin on disc machine by sliding it over a cast iron surface at a load of 10N, sliding speed of 125 rev/min and sliding distance of 2000m. The initial weight of the samples was measured using a single pan electronic weighing machine with an accuracy of 0.02g. During the test, the pin was pressed against the counterpart rotating cast iron disc of Rockwell hardness 65HRC of counter surface roughness of  $0.3\mu\text{m}$  by applying the load. A friction detecting arm connected to a strain gauge held and loaded the pin samples vertically into the rotating hardened cast iron disc. After running through a fixed sliding distance, the samples were removed, cleaned with acetone, dried, and weighed to determine the weight loss due to wear. The difference in weight measured

beforeandafterthetestsgive thewear ofthe samplesand thewear rateiscalculated byequation

$$\text{Wear rate} = \frac{\Delta W}{S}$$

Where  $\Delta W$  = weight difference of the sample before and after the test (mg),  $S$  = is the total sliding distance (m).

#### **Water absorption test**

The samples were weighed on a digital weighing machine and soaked in water at room temperature for 24 hours. The samples were then removed, cleaned and weighed. The water absorption rate was calculated thus:

$$\text{Water absorption} = \frac{M_2 - M_1}{M_1}$$

$M_1$

$\times 100 \%$

where  $M_1$  = mass of the sample (g),  $M_2$  = mass of the sample after absorbing water (g).

#### **Flame Resistance Test**

Weigh about  $1.30\text{g} \pm 0.2\text{g}$  of the samples in a cooled crucible previously oven dried by heating in a furnace at  $600^\circ\text{C}$  for 30 minutes. Then the samples were charred by heating in a hot plate thereafter, the charred samples were taken into the furnace and heated at  $600^\circ\text{C}$  for 30 minutes. Then cooled in a desiccator and weigh. This cycle of heating, cooling and weighing were repeated until a constant weight was obtained.

#### **Calculation:**

$$\% \text{ ash} = \frac{W_2 - W_0}{W_1 - W_0}$$

$\times 100$

Where  $W_0$ =weight of empty crucible  $W_1$ =weight of crucible sample  $W_2$ =weight of crucible and residue  
i.e. after cooling.

$$\text{Density}(\rho) = \frac{M}{V}$$

V

$\times 10$

Where M is the mass of test piece (g) and V is the measuring volume of test piece ( $\text{cm}^3$ ) by liquid displacement method

**Specific Gravity Test** Subsequently their specific gravities were determined by dividing the unit weight of the sample in air by the unit weight of the sample in water. The formula is show below.

$$\text{Specific gravity (sg)} = \frac{W_a}{W_a - W_b}$$

Where  $W_a$  is the weight of sample in air (g); and  $W_b$  is the weight of sample in water (g).

## Result

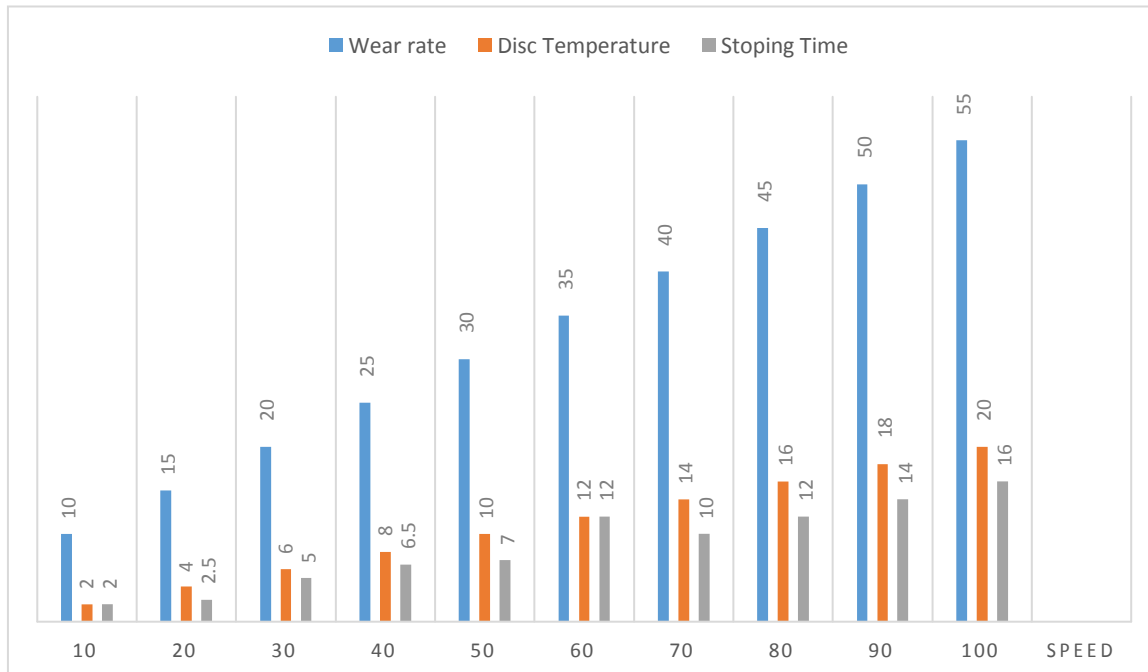
**Table 1: Brake pad Formation from the combination of PKF and GS**

S/N	MATERIAL	FUNCTION	QUANTITY (g)	PROPORTION
1	Palm Kernel fiber	Base material	300	30.5
2	Groundnut Shell	Filler	80	10.2
3	Steel Fibre	Reinforcement	60	7.5
4	Calcium Carbonate	Hardening Agent	330	31.5
5	Resin Binder	Binding Agent	200	25.3
6	Graphite	Lubricant	32	4.5
7	Brass Chips	Abrasive	50.5	6.2

**Table 2: Brake pad application with speed**

WEAR RATE (mg)	DISC TEMPEATURE ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )	STOPING TIME (sec)	SPEED (Km/h)
10	2	2	10
15	4	2.5	20
20	6	5.0	30
25	8	6.5	40
30	10	7.0	50
35	12	12	60
40	14	10	70
45	16	12	80
50	18	14	90





**Fig. 3: Graph of Brake pad application Vs speed**

## Discussion

Effect of epoxy resin binder and palm kernel fiber on brake pad performance. The presence of PKF and low binder content (epoxy resin) in the mixture increased the wear rates of the pad. The water and oil absorption rate for GS-based brake pad was closed to the conventional brake pad with a % deviation of 0.001 and 0.022. GS-based brake pads are environmental friendly and cost effective. When the wt% of PKF increased in the composition, the compressive strength of the sample also increased. The reason for the increase may be attributed to the percentage and ratio of the composite in the pad. The pad's hardness values increased when the wt% of PKF samples increased in the composition. Assessment of the wear behaviour of the brake pad samples when subjected to different speeds is presented in Fig.

1. All the samples including the asbestos based exhibited marginal increase in wear rate

with speed up to 80 km/h. The asbestos brake pad had the lowest wear rate followed by the PKF sample. The PKF based samples showed different resistances to wear.

The presence of PKF particles provides a higher thermal stability, increased abrasion and sliding wear resistance and delay the transition from mild to severe wear (Olele, 2016).

However, when the brake pad samples were retested at speeds above 80 km/h, they presented sharp increases in wear rates. It is well known that wear process involves fracture, tribochemical effects and plastic flow. Transitions between regions dominated by each of these commonly give rise to changes in wear rate. This behaviour beyond 70 km/h speed could be due to subsurface deformation of the brake pad as a result of high temperature.

The PKF brake pads generally did not show any difference in behavior in terms of disc temperature rise with speed. They maintained the same temperature change. However, at speeds below 40 km/h the asbestos brake pad had a lower disc temperature rise while the PKF samples maintained lower values of temperature change. The Asbestos sample was higher beyond 30 km/h speed. Thus, the PKF brake pads are a better choice ahead of the asbestos in applications where disc temperature rise is of great concern.

At speed below 60 km/h all the PKF pads with the exception of sample A, had lower stoppage time (that is, better braking efficiency) when compared with the asbestos pad beyond 60 km/h and up to 90 km/h.

## Conclusion

Although asbestos brake pads have good tribological and mechanical properties, they are carcinogenic in nature. From the studies, better physical properties were obtained with palm

kernel fiber brake pads as the percentage of composition was optimized. In palm kernel fiber, both filler materials and binder improved the mechanical, tribological, and physical properties of the brake pads sample developed. These studies also indicate that chemical and physical treatments also used to subdue poor wettability and enable higher moisture absorption. The wear rate improved with the addition of filler material in the brake pads sample preparation. Wear rate of the developed composite also affected by the speed significantly. The smaller quantity of the filler, binder and fiber material had effect on the composite wear rate and gave better. The performance of the composite material such as mechanical and physical properties have been reported to be affected by the filler materials in the composition. In addition, various studies so far have found that as the composite filler material content decreases the properties for example hardness, compressive strength, thermal conductivity and tensile strength, of the composite produced increase, while the density, oil and water absorption of the developed brake pads sample increases when the filler content of the composite increases.

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