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Article (Special Issue on the 2nd International Congress on Catalysis for Biorefineries (CatBior 2013))

Hydrodeoxygenation of palm oil to hydrocarbon fuels over Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts

Qiyang Liu, Hualiang Zuo, Qi Zhang, Tiejun Wang*, Longlong Ma #

CAS Key Laboratory of Renewable Energy, Guangzhou Institute of Energy Conversion, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Guangzhou 510640, Guangdong, China

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 22 August 2013

Accepted 12 September 2013

Published 20 May 2014

Keywords:

Palm oil

Hydrodeoxygenation

Hydrocarbon

Isomerization

Synergistic effect

ABSTRACT

Small particles of SAPO-11 with large surface area and mesoporosity were synthesized hydrothermally. Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts with different Ni loadings were prepared by incipient wetness impregnation, and their physicochemical properties were characterized by X-ray diffraction, scanning electron microscopy, N₂ adsorption-desorption, NH₃ temperature-programmed desorption, Thermogravimetric, and H₂ chemisorption. In the Ni impregnation of SAPO-11, the mesopores of SAPO-11 accommodated the Ni particles and give good dispersions, but with the partial blocking of some micropores. In the hydrodeoxygenation of palm oil, the production of liquid alkanes depends on the competition between hydrodeoxygenation and decarbonylation pathways via the corresponding carboxylic acid intermediates. The weak and medium acidity of SAPO-11 and a good match of the Ni and SAPO-11 functions in the Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts decreased the cracking of primary long chain alkanes and gave a high liquid alkane yield of 70 wt% and isomerization selectivity of >80 mol%.

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1. Introduction

Vegetable oil contained in biomass is a vast and easily available renewable carbon resource. Using vegetable oil as the feedstock to produce green fuels for substituting nonrenewable fossil energy has received more attention in the last decade due to increasing concerns over environmental problems induced by burning fossil fuels [1,2]. Catalytic hydrodeoxygenation (HDO) of vegetable oil to hydrocarbon fuels has obvious advantages as compared to their transesterification with methanol because oxygen removal and saturation of C=C bonds during HDO processing result in hydrocarbon fuels with desirable transportation fuel properties such as high heating value,

chemical stability, and low freezing point [3,4].

Sulfided W and Mo modified with Ni and Co catalysts were used for obtaining high alkane yields in the HDO of vegetable oil to hydrocarbon fuels. However, sulfur containing reagents are necessary to maintain the catalytic activity and stability during the pretreatment of catalysts and HDO processing, which inevitably causes sulfur contamination of the final products [5–7]. Noble metals including Pt and Pd were also employed to produce hydrocarbon fuel in the diesel range [8,9], but the exorbitant costs limit their applications on a large scale. Recently, metal carbides and phosphides were investigated and high yields of liquid hydrocarbon were obtained. However, the preparation procedures for these catalysts were tedious, and

* Corresponding author. Tel: +86-20-87057751; Fax: +86-20-87057737; E-mail: wangtj@ms.giec.ac.cn

Corresponding author. Tel/Fax: +86-20-87057673; E-mail: mall@ms.giec.ac.cn

This work was supported by the National Basic Research Program of China (973 Program, 2012CB215304), the Natural Scientific Foundation of Guangdong Province (S2012040006992), and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (51376185 and 51161140331).

DOI: 10.1016/S1872-2067(12)60710-4 | http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/18722067 | Chin. J. Catal., Vol. 35, No. 5, May 2014

change in the active phase was observed during the HDO of vegetable oils, leading to the limited lifetimes of these catalysts [10–12].

In addition, the acid-base properties of the support play an essential role in mediating the product distribution in the HDO of vegetable oil. For example, with basic MgO as the catalyst, heavy alkanes with carbon number larger than 35 were mainly manufactured due to C–C coupling of fatty ester intermediates [13]. In comparison, supports with the appropriate acidity significantly promoted liquid hydrocarbon production by enhancing dehydration/hydrogenation of the alcohol intermediates, but supports with strong acidity cause severe cracking to lighter hydrocarbons [14].

A drawback of the hydrocarbons produced by the HDO of vegetable oil is their poor low temperature properties because the freezing points of *n*-alkanes with long carbon chains are higher than 273 K, and they are unsuitable for cold areas. This problem can be solved by hydro-isomerization of the *n*-alkanes using noble metals supported on acidic zeolite catalysts [15]. However, for good economics and process efficiency, a one-step production of isomerized hydrocarbons by coupling HDO processing and the isomerization of long *n*-alkanes in one reactor is desirable.

SAPO zeolites synthesized by replacing framework Al with Si possess different pore structures with a wide range of pore sizes. They are important members in the family of aluminophosphate molecular sieves. SAPOs mainly have weak and medium acidity from the Si doping and they have shown promising applications in many acid-catalyzed reactions [16,17]. High selectivity in the hydroisomerization of long *n*-alkanes was observed with noble metal Pt and Pd supported on SAPOs as bifunctional catalysts [18]. Owing to their intrinsic acidity and pore structures, SAPOs would be good supports for producing isomerized hydrocarbon in the HDO of vegetable oils. However, the investigation of this was seldom [19,20]. Recently, we compared the catalytic performance of Ni supported on different commercial supports in the HDO of methyl hexadecanoate in an autoclave, in which it was found that a Ni/SAPO-11 catalyst with weak and medium acidity showed > 95% liquid alkane yield with very low isomerization selectivity [21].

In this work, we hydrothermally synthesized SAPO-11 as small particles with large surface area and mesoporosity. Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts were prepared by incipient wetness impregnation, and their catalytic performance was tested in a one-step HDO of palm oil to isomerized hydrocarbons. The catalysts were characterized by X-ray diffraction (XRD), scanning electron microscopy (SEM), N₂ adsorption-desorption, NH₃ temperature-programmed desorption (NH₃-TPD), Thermogravimetric (TG), and H₂ chemisorption. The relation between the acid and metal functions of the catalysts and HDO performance was elucidated, and the HDO reaction pathway was discussed.

2. Experimental

2.1. Catalyst preparation

According to the previous report [22], SAPO-11 can be hydrothermally synthesized without using a surfactant. H₃PO₄ (85% of aqueous solution, 26.0 g) and pseudo-boehmite (27.1 g) were dissolved in 124.5 g H₂O and stirred for 90 min. Then 6.5 g tetrapropyloxysilane (TPOS) and 35.1 g *n*-propanol were added, and the mixture was further stirred for 120 min, followed by dropwise addition of an aqueous solution of 23.7 g di-*n*-propylamine to form a homogeneous sol with the molar ratio of H₃PO₄:Al₂O₃:*n*H₂O:TPOS:di-*n*-propylamine:*n*-propanol:H₂O of 0.226:0.225:0.0246:0.235:0.585:6.917. The sol was transferred to a hydrothermal autoclave (100 mL) lined with Teflon and heated at 458 K for 24 h. The solid product was dried at 393 K and calcined at 873 K for 6 h to obtain the SAPO-11.

The Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts were prepared by impregnating the catalyst support with an aqueous solution of Ni(NO₃)₂·6H₂O with Ni loadings of 2%–9% by weight. The resulting suspension was stirred for 10 h at ambient temperature, followed by evaporating excess water at 353 K. The solid that remained was dried at 393 K and calcined at 823 K for 3 h in air.

2.2. Catalyst characterization

XRD patterns of catalyst were obtained with a X'pert PRO MPD diffraction instrument (PANalytical) operated at 40 kV and 40 mA with Cu K α (λ = 0.15406 nm) radiation. SEM images of the catalysts were recorded using an S-4800 instrument operated at 2.0 kV. BET surface area and pore size distribution were determined by isothermal adsorption of N₂ at 77 K using a Micromeritics ASAP-2010 automated system. NH₃-TPD experiments were carried out on a homemade instrument equipped with a thermal conductivity detector (TCD). TG analysis of the spent catalyst was performed on a NETZSCH-STA 409PC DSC-SP Thermal analyzer by increasing the temperature from 313 to 1073 K at 10 K/min under air (30 mL/min). H₂ chemisorption measurements were performed on a Quantachrome-ASIQACIV200-2 automated gas sorption analyzer. The catalysts were reduced at 773 K for 2 h with H₂ and further heated at 823 K for 0.5 h under He, followed by cooling down to 323 K for H₂ chemisorption tests. The dispersion of Ni was estimated from the molar ratio of surface metallic Ni to initially introduced Ni species, assuming that one H atom is adsorbed on one Ni atom and no dissolution of H takes place in the Ni particles.

2.3. HDO of palm oil composition

The palm oil (> 99%) was commercially obtained from Yihai (Guangzhou) Food & Oil Industrial Co., Ltd and used without further treatment. The components of the palm oil were determined by transesterification using an alkaline catalyst. Methanol and palm oil with the molar ratio of 6:1 were mixed with KOH in a batch reactor, and the reaction was performed at 338 K for 2 h. After reaction, the supernatant liquid was separated off and washed with distilled water. The methyl esters were diluted with cyclohexane and analyzed on a gas chromatograph (Shimadzu GC-2010) with an FID and a capillary

Table 1

Fatty acid composition of the palm oil.

Fatty acid	Structure	Formula	Composition (mol %)
Myristic acid	C _{14:0}	C ₁₄ H ₂₈ O ₂	2.31
Palmitic acid	C _{16:0}	C ₁₆ H ₃₂ O ₂	44.23
Stearic acid	C _{18:0}	C ₁₈ H ₃₆ O ₂	3.63
Oleic acid	C _{18:1}	C ₁₈ H ₃₄ O ₂	41.06
Linoleic acid	C _{18:2}	C ₁₈ H ₃₂ O ₂	8.36
Linolenic acid	C _{18:3}	C ₁₈ H ₃₀ O ₂	0.12

column (DB-1 HT, 30 m × 0.25 mm × 0.1 μm) using *n*-heptadecane as internal standard. The composition of the palm oil is listed in Table 1.

The HDO of the palm oil was performed on a fixed-bed reactor at high pressure. Before reaction, 2.0 g (3 mL) catalyst (40–60 mesh) was loaded into a tubular stainless steel reactor with the inner diameter of 10 mm and the length of 300 mm, and reduced at 773 K for 2 h by a high purity H₂ (99.999%) flow. After the system was cooled to the reaction temperature, palm oil was fed in at 0.05 mL/min by a syringe pump and mixed with the high purity H₂ of 50 mL/min. Then the gas-liquid mixture was introduced into the reactor using a preheater at 473 K at the LHSV of 1.0 h⁻¹ and H₂ pressure of 4.0 MPa. The reaction temperature was measured by a thermocouple in the catalyst bed and controlled by a temperature controller. The system pressure was controlled by a backpressure regulator. The gas was collected by a sampling bag placed after a condenser and a gas-liquid separator. The liquid products including unconverted palm oil were obtained by collecting the upper oil phase of the two-phase oil-water liquid from an oil-water separator.

C₁–C₄ hydrocarbons were analyzed by a GC 9800 chromatograph equipped with an FID and a packed column (Porapak-Q column, 3 m × 3 mm) using N₂ as the carrier gas. CO, CO₂, and CH₄ were analyzed by another GC 9800 equipped with a TCD and a packed column (TDX-01 column, 3 m × 3 mm) using He as the carrier gas. The gaseous products were quantified by the external standard method using CH₄ as the standard. The liquid products were diluted with cyclohexane, identified by GC-MS measurement, and quantified by an Agilent Technologies 4890 gas chromatograph equipped with an FID and a capillary column (DB-1701, 60 m × 0.25 mm × 0.25 μm) using *n*-nonadecane as the internal standard. The experimental error of the GC measurements was ±5%.

Yield of liquid hydrocarbons (*Y*) and selectivity of product *i* (*S_i*, mol%) were defined as:

$$Y = m_i / \Delta m \times 100\%$$

Table 2

HDO of palm oil over Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts with different Ni loadings.

Catalyst	Product distribution (C mol%)								Yield of liquid alkane (wt%)	
	CO	CO ₂	C ₁ –C ₄	C ₅ –C ₁₄		C ₁₅ –C ₁₈		Liquid alkane		
				<i>i</i> ^a	<i>n</i> ^b	<i>i</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>i</i>		<i>n</i>
2 wt%Ni/SAPO-11	1.4	0.0	9.5	12.9	5.8	28.0	42.0	46.2	53.8	60.0
5 wt%Ni/SAPO-11	1.3	0.0	9.4	10.2	6.8	37.7	34.1	54.0	46.0	60.4
7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11	1.7	0.0	10.0	7.7	5.7	46.8	28.5	61.5	38.5	67.4
9 wt%Ni/SAPO-11	1.1	0.0	14.1	26.2	9.2	44.2	4.8	83.4	16.6	67.9

Reaction conditions: catalyst 2 g, 633 K, H₂ pressure 4.0 MPa, TOS = 6.0 h, LHSV = 1.0 h⁻¹.

$$S_i = n_i \times a_i / \left(\sum_{i=1}^i n_i \times a_i \right) \times 100\%$$

Here, Δm is the weight of palm oil fed in, m_i means the weight of liquid hydrocarbons calculated by GC analysis, n_i indicates the moles of product *i*, and a_i represents the carbon atom number of product *i*.

Assuming the same calibration factor for the normal and branched alkane isomers in the GC measurement, the selectivity of isomerized liquid alkane was determined by

$$S_{iso} = \sum_{i=1}^i (A_i/M_i) / \sum_{i=1}^i (A_i/M_i + A_n/M_n) \times 100\%$$

A_i and M_i are the peak areas of isomerized alkane product *i* in GC analysis and its molecular weight, respectively. A_n and M_n indicate the peak area of normal alkane product *i* and its molecular weight.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. HDO of palm oil

Palm oil contains mainly palmitic and oleic fatty chains (total amount > 85%) with small amounts of myristic, stearic, linoleic, and linolenic fatty chains (Table 1). Its acid value and water content were measured as less than 0.12 and 0.3 mg/g, respectively, indicating trace amounts of free carboxylic acid and H₂O in the palm oil.

Table 2 shows the catalytic performance of Ni/SAPO-11 with different Ni loadings in the HDO of palm oil. At the Ni loading of 2 wt%, the liquid alkane yield of C₅–C₁₈ was 60 wt% with the isomerized selectivity of 46%. Among the liquid alkanes, the selectivities to C₅–C₁₄ and C₁₅–C₁₈ chains were 18.7% and 70%, respectively, indicating that some cracking of long chain alkanes took place. In addition, gaseous CO and C₁–C₄ alkanes were detected with a total amount of 10.9%. As the Ni loading was increased to 7 wt%, the liquid alkane yield and isomerized selectivity were significantly increased to 67.4% and 61.5%, respectively. As the Ni loading was further increased to 9 wt%, the liquid alkane yield was similar, but the C₅–C₁₄ and C₁–C₄ alkanes increased obviously because primary long chain alkanes were susceptible to cracking to lighter compounds [23]. The production of isomerized alkanes depends on the formation of carbenium ions from the primary *n*-alkanes on the acidic SAPO-11 and the skeletal rearrangement and propagation of the carbenium ions over metallic Ni centers [18]. The high isomerization selectivity of >83% in this case indicated that a good balance between the metal Ni and

Fig. 1. Liquid alkane distribution over 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 under the same reaction condition as Table 2.

acid SAPO-11 functions was reached with the 9 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 catalyst. A typical liquid alkane distribution in the HDO of palm oil is shown in Fig. 1. More than 85% of the liquid alkanes were C₁₅–C₁₈, indicating that the cracking of long alkanes was significantly suppressed.

Considering that the 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 showed a high liquid alkane yield and significantly suppressed cracking selectivity, the influence of the reaction temperature was further investigated in the HDO of palm oil with this catalyst. The results are presented in Table 3. At the low reaction temperature of 593 K, the liquid alkane yield and isomerized selectivity were 43.8% and 35%, respectively. The selectivity of the primary C₁₅–C₁₈ alkanes was 85.1% with the cracked C₅–C₁₄ alkane selectivity of 8% and the gaseous C₁–C₄ alkane selectivity of 4.4%. As the temperature increased to 633 K, the liquid alkane yield and the isomerized selectivity gradually increased for the liquid C₅–C₁₄ fraction and that of the gaseous C₁–C₄ alkanes slightly increased at the expense of the C₁₅–C₁₈ alkanes. As the reaction temperatures were further increased to 653 and 673 K, the liquid alkane yields changed a little, but the isomerized selectivities were significantly increased to above 80%. Meanwhile, both the gaseous C₁–C₄ and the liquid C₅–C₁₄ alkanes were sharply increased due to the significant cracking of the primary C₁₅–C₁₈ alkanes at higher temperatures. Therefore, the reaction temperature showed the essential role of mediating the liquid alkane yields, product distribution, and isomerization selectivities.

Figure 2 shows the stability test of 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 in the HDO of palm oil at 633 K, H₂ pressure 4.0 MPa, and LHSV = 1.0 h⁻¹. The liquid alkane yield increased from the initial 62% to

Fig. 2. Stability test of 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 in the HDO of palm oil. Reaction conditions: 633 K, H₂ pressure 4.0 MPa, LHSV = 1.0 h⁻¹.

the maximum of 82% after 5 h, and then gradually decreased and stabilized at 58%. On the other hand, the selectivity to isomerized alkanes monotonically dropped from the initial 62% to the stabilized 52% after 7 h of time on stream. This 58% of liquid alkane yield corresponded to 70% of the maximum possible value based on average molecular weight of palm oil and weight discrepancy due to C=C bond saturation, and oxygen and propane removal. Neither obviously decreased liquid alkane yield nor isomerized selectivity was observed after 35 h of reaction, demonstrating the good stability of the Ni/SAPO-11 catalyst in the HDO of palm oil.

3.2. Catalyst characterization

Figures 3(a) and (b) show the SEM image of SAPO-11 and XRD patterns of SAPO-11 and 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11, respectively. The SAPO-11 sample was present as cloud-like with very small particles of less than 50 nm. The XRD pattern of pristine SAPO-11 showed a typical AEL structure, indicating that SAPO-11 was successfully synthesized by this hydrothermal method. After the SAPO-11 was impregnated with 7 wt% Ni, the diffraction intensities corresponding to the AEL structure decreased but were largely conserved, indicating that this incipient wetness impregnation did not destroy the crystalline and pore structures of SAPO-11. Apart from those of SAPO-11, diffraction peaks corresponding to NiO ($2\theta = 37.2^\circ$, 43.4° , and 62.8°) were present, indicating that the supported Ni²⁺ species were aggregated into NiO crystallites on the surface of SAPO-11. After 35 h of the stability test, the sizes of the SAPO-11 particles were significantly sintered to 100 nm while

Table 3
HDO of palm oil over 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 at different temperatures.

Reaction temperature (K)	Product distribution (C mol%)								Yield of liquid alkane (wt%)	
	CO	CO ₂	C ₁ –C ₄	C ₅ –C ₁₄		C ₁₅ –C ₁₈		Liquid alkane		
				<i>i</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>i</i>		<i>n</i>
593	2.5	0.0	4.4	4.6	3.4	30.8	54.3	35.0	65.0	43.8
613	2.1	0.0	4.4	2.5	3.4	45.3	36.8	54.3	45.7	62.1
633	1.7	0.0	10.0	7.7	5.7	46.8	28.5	61.5	38.5	67.4
653	1.6	0.5	8.0	31.8	7.9	43.3	6.7	83.8	16.2	69.3
673	1.2	0.0	17.0	36.2	12.4	29.6	3.4	80.7	19.3	66.1

Reaction conditions see Table 2.

Fig. 3. SEM images of SAPO-11 (a) and spent 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 (c), XRD patterns (b) of SAPO-11 (1) and 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 (2) and (d) TG profile of spent 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11.

the Ni particles were less than 20 nm, as indicated by the SEM result (Fig. 3(c)). The TG profile of the spent 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 revealed 2% weight loss at 350–550 K and 8.7% weight loss at 550–900 K (Fig. 3(d)). The first weight loss was due to the removal of physically adsorbed water and organic products and the latter one was due to the combustion of deposited carbon on catalyst surface. We propose that the good stability of 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 in the HDO of palm oil originated from less carbon deposition due to the fact that the mesopores of the catalyst enhanced the fast diffusion of feedstock and products.

The textural properties of the Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts with different Ni loadings are shown in Table 4. The pristine SAPO-11 support had the BET surface area of 255.5 m²/g with

the external surface of 151.1 m²/g and mesopore volume of 0.214 cm³/g. The external surface and mesoporosity were possibly from the nano-sized SAPO-11 particles and their stacking, respectively. Ni loading significantly reduced the BET and external surface area and mesoporosity of the Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts, but these still had the large surface area and mesopore volumes of more than 100 m²/g and 0.1 cm³/g, respectively, even at the high Ni loading of 9 wt%. As compared with the loss in interior surface area (surface area determined by BET surface area subtracted from external surface area) in the Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts, the external surface area decreased more. SAPO-11 is a microporous zeolite with ten-membered rings of 0.4 nm × 0.65 nm [24]. This small pore size cannot afford enough space for Ni particles, which results in most Ni species were agglomerated into particles in the mesopores of SAPO-11 even at the low Ni loading. It was highly possible that supported Ni was also located at the pore mouth of SAPO-11 and partial blocked its microchannels, leading to the significant drop in surface area and pore volume. Ni dispersion on the Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts with different Ni loadings were measured by H₂ chemisorption, and their particle sizes were evaluated as in a previous report [25]. The Ni dispersion decreased with increasing Ni loading, and larger Ni particle sizes were obtained at higher Ni loadings. The pore size distribution of Ni/SAPO-11 is shown in Fig. 4. As compared with SAPO-11, a slightly reduced pore size was observed on the 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 catalyst. This implied that 7 wt% Ni loading on SAPO-11 did not significantly block its mesopores.

Table 4

Textural properties and chemisorption analysis of Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts.

Catalyst	S_{BET}^a (m ² /g)	S_{ex}^b (m ² /g)	V_p^c (cm ³ /g)	D^d (%)	d^e (nm)
SAPO-11	255.5	151.1	0.214	—	—
2 wt%NiSAPO-11	210.8	121.6	0.188	13.7	5
5 wt%NiSAPO-11	181.3	95.5	0.141	7.4	11
7 wt%NiSAPO-11	159.4	83.6	0.128	6.9	14
9 wt%NiSAPO-11	114.9	50.7	0.098	3.8	25

^a Surface area calculated by the BET method.

^b External surface area calculated from the desorption branch by the BJH method.

^c Mesopore volume calculated from the desorption branch by the BJH method.

^d Ni dispersion.

^e Calculated size of Ni particles.

Fig. 4. Pore size distributions of SAPO-11 (1) and 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 (2) catalysts.

NH₃-TPD profiles of Ni/SAPO-11 with different Ni loadings are shown in Fig. 5. A main NH₃ desorption peak at 475 K with a weak shoulder at 580 K were observed with the pristine SAPO-11, indicating that weak and medium acidic sites simultaneously existed. Over 2 wt%Ni/SAPO-11, the acidic amounts were nearly unchanged, but the medium acidic sites were increased slightly. As the Ni loading was further increased, both the total and weak acidic sites decreased, but the medium acidic sites slightly increased, which were perhaps created by the supported Ni²⁺ species. The weak and medium acidity of the Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts play the essential role of suppressing the cracking of long alkanes to give high yields of liquid alkanes (Table 2, Table 3, and Fig. 1).

3.3. HDO pathway

The HDO of vegetable oils is a complex reaction network comprising the saturation of unsaturated fatty chains, HDO, decarbonylation/decarboxylation, cracking and carbon deposition with carboxylic acids and alcohols as intermediates [26–29]. The unsaturated C=C bonds in palm oil are first hy-

Fig. 5. NH₃-TPD profiles of Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts with different Ni loadings. (1) SAPO-11; (2) 2 wt%Ni/SAPO-11; (3) 5 wt%Ni/SAPO-11; (4) 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11; (5) 9 wt%Ni/SAPO-11.

drogenated to give the saturated triglycerides because of their low energy barrier. Apart from the HDO of saturated palm oil (during this HDO process, palm oil is hydrogenated to fatty acids and then fatty aldehydes, followed by fast hydrogenation to fatty alcohol intermediates [30]) to the alkanes with lengths equal to the corresponding fatty chains, the competitive decarbonylation/decarboxylation of fatty acid intermediates (fatty aldehyde intermediates are produced by decarbonylation and alkanes are obtained from decarboxylation) was observed to occur in parallel to give alkanes with one carbon number less than the pristine fatty chains and CO/CO₂. Both the HDO and decarbonylation pathways proceed by successive hydrogenation, dehydration, and hydrogenation steps. During the transformation of palm oil, hydrogenation and decarbonylation/decarboxylation occur over the metal Ni component in the Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts, while cracking and carbon deposition take place over both Ni and SAPO-11 sites. In addition, the acidic SAPO-11 promotes the dehydration of fatty alcohol intermediates to alkenes, which are further hydrogenated to alkanes and accelerates the total HDO kinetics to give trace amounts of fatty alcohols in the final product (below 0.01%).

In our case, intermediates including myristic, palmitic, and stearic acids were detected. Their yields decreased with increasing reaction temperature (Fig. 6) because the kinetics of the sequential hydrogenation of triglycerides and carbonylation/carboxylation of carboxylic acids were enhanced at higher temperatures. The formation of carboxylic acids occurred by splitting of the ether bonds followed by hydrogenation over our bifunctional Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts (synergistic activation of C–O bond over acidic sites and hydrogenation over metal sites) during hydrogenolysis of palm oil [31], which is consistent with the previous report [27].

The selectivities to gaseous CO and C₁–C₄ alkanes and the molar ratios of C₁₅/C₁₆ and C₁₇/C₁₈ alkanes were investigated at different reaction temperatures. The results are shown in Fig. 7. As the reaction temperature increased from 593 to 653 K, CO sharply decreased together with significantly increased CH₄ and slightly increased C₂–C₃ alkanes. As the reaction temperature was further increased to 673 K, both CO and CH₄ amounts dropped, with the ethane and propane amounts almost unchanged and butane amount slightly increased. Among these

Fig. 6. Carboxylic acid yields in the HDO of palm oil over 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 at different reaction temperatures. Reaction conditions: H₂ pressure 4.0 MPa, TOS = 6.0 h, LHSV = 1.0 h^{−1}. The detectable acids include myristic, palmitic, and stearic acids.

Fig. 7. Gas product selectivities (a) and molar ratios of C₁₅/C₁₆ and C₁₇/C₁₈ alkanes (b) in the HDO of palm oil over 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts at different reaction temperatures. The reaction conditions see Fig. 6.

products, CH₄ was the majority species at temperatures higher than 633 K mainly due to the methanation of CO originating from the decarbonylation of carboxylic acid intermediates. Propane produced by the direct hydrogenolysis of palm oil can be further cracked into ethane and CH₄, which are the same products from the splitting of the long alkanes. More important, butane exclusively produced by the cracking of long alkanes was less than 10% in the gas products, demonstrating that heavy cracking of long alkanes was significantly suppressed. Despite that no pentadecanoic and heptadecanoic acids were observed in the palm oil (Table 1), C₁₅ and C₁₇ alkanes were detected in significant amounts in the liquid products and the molar ratios of C₁₅/C₁₆ and C₁₇/C₁₈ increased while the ratios of C₁₇/C₁₈ increased more remarkably as the reaction temperature increased. This implied that a higher reaction temperature facilitated the decarbonylation of carboxylic acid intermediates and the decarbonylation of stearic acid was easier than that of palmitic acid, possibly due to its longer carbon chain [32]. The lower ratio of C₁₇/C₁₈ observed at 673 K was due to the enhanced cracking kinetics of alkanes with long chains. The trends of the gas products and the molar ratio of C₁₇/C₁₈ and

C₁₅/C₁₆ alkanes with reaction temperatures were similar for different times on stream (Fig. 8).

The Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts in this work allowed the HDO of palm oil to proceed along the carboxylic acid pathway and gave nearly 70 wt% liquid hydrocarbon yield. This was due to that the weak and medium acidity of the SAPO-11 support effectively suppressed the cracking of primary long chain alkanes, which gave high stability [14]. In addition, the acidic property of the Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts promoted the isomerization of long alkanes, giving the isomerization selectivity of > 80%. This was significantly superior to those in previous reports where < 20% isomerization selectivities were obtained over sulfided Ni-Mo/Al₂O₃ and Ni/H β in the HDO of jatropha and microalgae oils [10,27].

4. Conclusions

SAPO-11 with a large surface area and mesoporosity was hydrothermally synthesized. Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts with different Ni loadings were prepared by incipient wetness impregnation. During Ni impregnation on SAPO-11, the mesopores of

Fig. 8. Gas product selectivities (a) and molar ratios of C₁₅/C₁₆ and C₁₇/C₁₈ alkanes (b) in the HDO of palm oil over 7 wt%Ni/SAPO-11 up to TOS of 6 h. The reaction conditions were the same as Fig. 2.

Graphical Abstract

Chin. J. Catal., 2013, 34: 748–756 doi: 10.1016/S1872-2067(12)60710-4

Hydrodeoxygenation of palm oil to hydrocarbon fuels over Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts

Qiyang Liu, Hualiang Zuo, Qi Zhang, Tiejun Wang*, Longlong Ma*

Guangzhou Institute of Energy Conversion, Chinese Academy of Sciences

A bifunctional Ni/SAPO-11 catalyst with weak and medium acidities gave high yields of liquid hydrocarbons, > 50% isomerization selectivity, and good stability in the one-step HDO of palm oil.

SAPO-11 could accommodate Ni particles to give good dispersions that depended on Ni loading, but partly blocked its micropores due to that the one dimensional micropores of SAPO-11 do not afford enough space for Ni particles. The transformation of palm oil showed that the production of hydrocarbons depended on parallel HDO and decarbonylation pathways via their carboxylic acid intermediates. Due to the weak and medium acidity and the well matched balance between the metallic Ni and acidic SAPO-11 functions, the Ni/SAPO-11 catalysts significantly suppressed the cracking of long hydrocarbons and gave the high liquid alkane yield of 70% with more than 80% isomerization selectivity and good stability.

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Ni/SAPO-11催化剂上棕榈油加氢脱氧制异构烃燃料

刘琪英, 左华亮, 张琦, 王铁军*, 马隆龙[#]

中国科学院广州能源研究所, 中科院可再生能源重点实验室, 广东广州510640

摘要: 采用水热法合成了小粒径、具有介孔结构的SAPO-11分子筛。采用浸渍法制备了不同Ni负载量的Ni/SAPO-11催化剂。并采用X射线衍射, 扫描电镜, N₂物理吸附-脱附, NH₃程序升温脱附, 热重和H₂化学吸附技术对该类催化剂的物理化学性质进行了详细表征。结果表明, SAPO-11较大表面积和介孔结构可分散Ni, 使得Ni粒子尺寸较小。在棕榈油加氢脱氧制备液体烃类燃料反应中, 液体烷烃产物由相关脂肪酸中间产物的直接加氢脱氧和脱羧-加氢脱氧两种途径产生。Ni/SAPO-11催化剂的弱/中强酸性性质及其匹配的金属-酸双功能可显著抑制积炭反应, 提高催化剂的寿命, 液体烷烃收率高达70%, 异构烷烃选择性超过80%。

关键词: 棕榈油; 加氢脱氧; 烃; 异构化; 协同效应

收稿日期: 2013-08-22. 接受日期: 2013-09-12. 出版日期: 2014-05-20.

*通讯联系人. 电话: (020)87057751; 传真: (020)87057737; 电子信箱: wangtj@ms.giec.ac.cn

[#]通讯联系人. 电话/传真: (020)87057673; 电子信箱: mall@ms.giec.ac.cn

基金来源: 国家重点基础研究发展计划(973计划, 2012CB215304); 广东省自然科学基金(S2012040006992); 国家自然科学基金(51376185和51161140331).

本文的英文电子版由Elsevier出版社在ScienceDirect上出版(<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/18722067>).

第四届太阳燃料和太阳电池国际会议通知

(投稿截止日期2014年7月31日)

第四届太阳燃料和太阳电池国际会议现面向国内外征集会议摘要。本次会议将于2014年10月21–24日在大连举行(由大连化学物理研究所和大连理工大学主办)。会议主席为中国科学院大连化学物理研究所李灿院士和大连理工大学孙立成教授。会议的主要议题如下:

1. 人工光合作用制备太阳燃料, 包括光催化分解水制氢、光催化还原二氧化碳等前沿应用基础科学问题;
2. 太阳能光-化学转化中遇到的瓶颈科学问题;
3. 太阳电池研究新技术、新材料、新工艺等。

多位国际著名学者将参加此次会议。我们诚挚地邀请国内外太阳能光催化和光伏研究相关领域的学者、学生和企业界代表参加本次盛会。

会议网址: <http://sfsc2014.csp.escience.cn>

电子信箱: sfsc@dicp.ac.cn

电话: (0411)84379838; (0411)84379005

传真: (0411)84379842

(SFSC IV组委会)

The 4th International Symposium on Solar Fuels and Solar Cells (SFSC 2014)

The 4th International Symposium on Solar Fuels and Solar Cells (SFSC), which will be held in Dalian, China on October 21–24, 2014, now is open for registration and abstract submission. Note that the deadline for abstract on-line submission is July 31, 2014.

The scope of this symposium mainly focuses on the research of solar fuels and solar cells. The principal goal of this symposium is to provide an academic forum for scientists and researchers to present some of the latest outstanding research progress, exchange and share experiences and ideas, and brainstorm the solutions to the scientific and technical challenges in the development of efficient solar energy conversion and utilization systems.

The SFSC is a biannual symposium co-chaired by Prof. Can Li (Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics, Chinese Academy of

Sciences) and Prof. Licheng Sun (Dalian University of Technology & KTH Royal Institute of Technology). We have been striving to make this symposium as a highly standard “Gordon Research Conference” like special forum in China in the research field of solar fuels and solar cells. Following the previous three very successful symposiums, we are anticipating a more exciting one for this 4th SFSC. And your participant will be a great beneficial for the success of the symposium. We hope you will have a memorable and impressive SFSC conference in 2014, and look forward to meeting you in the romantic city of Dalian!

You may get more information on the symposium website at <http://sfsc2014.csp.escience.cn>. For any inquiry, please send email to sfsc@dicp.ac.cn.

(SFSC IV Organizing Committee)