

# LEACHING OPTIMIZATION OF MANGANESE ORE FROM NORTH CENTRAL TIMOR USING $H_2O_2$ AS A REDUCING AGENT

## OPTIMALISASI PELINDIAN BIJIH MANGAN ASAL TIMOR TENGAH UTARA MENGGUNAKAN $H_2O_2$ SEBAGAI PEREDUKSI

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### ABSTRACT

Optimization of manganese ore leaching process from North Central Timor, Indonesia has been investigated. The final product of the leaching process was  $MnSO_4$ . Variables that were optimized during the process were volume of  $H_2O_2$ , reaction temperature, and reaction time. The final products were characterized by FTIR, powder-XRD, XRF, and AAS. Experimental data shows that the optimum conditions for the leaching process were 50 mL  $H_2SO_4$  4 M, 25 mL  $H_2O_2$  2 M, in which the reaction was done at room temperature for two hours. This optimum condition resulting in 38.2% of Mn extraction with 96.88% purity. Based on powder-XRD, the products were a mixture of crystalline  $MnSO_4 \cdot 4H_2O$ ,  $MnSO_4 \cdot 5H_2O$  and  $[NH_4]_8[Mn_8(SO_4)_{12}]$ .

Keywords: hydrometallurgy, leaching, manganese ore, peroxide, sulfuric acid.

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian optimalisasi proses pelindian bijih mangan dari Timor Tengah Utara, Indonesia telah dilakukan. Produk akhir proses pelindian berupa  $MnSO_4$ . Variabel yang dioptimalkan selama proses pelindian adalah volume  $H_2O_2$ , suhu reaksi, dan waktu reaksi. Produk akhir dikarakterisasi dengan FTIR, powder-XRD, XRF dan AAS. Data hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kondisi optimum proses pelindian untuk mendapatkan  $MnSO_4$  adalah 50 mL  $H_2SO_4$  4 M, 25 mL  $H_2O_2$  2 M, dan reaksi dilakukan pada suhu ruang selama dua jam. Kondisi optimum ini menghasilkan ekstraksi Mn sebesar 38,2% dengan kemurnian 96,88%. Berdasarkan analisis powder-XRD, produk yang dihasilkan adalah campuran kristal  $MnSO_4 \cdot 4H_2O$ ,  $MnSO_4 \cdot 5H_2O$  and  $[NH_4]_8[Mn_8(SO_4)_{12}]$ .

Kata kunci: hidrometalurgi, pelindian, bijih mangan, peroksida, asam sulfat.

### INTRODUCTION

East Nusa Tenggara (ENT) Province is one of the manganese-producing provinces in Indonesia with total manganese ore resources around 36,207,271 tons and manganese ore reserves approximately 79,712,386 tons (Supriadi *et al.*, 2017). Manganese resources in ENT are naturally distributed in several areas particularly in the Districts of Manggarai, Kupang, South Central Timor, Belu, and North Central Timor (NCT). The most abundant distribution of the ore is in the Central District

of NCT (Leto, 2017). To this date, this natural resource has not been optimally explored. The people of ENT, especially in the NCT Regency, only mine the ore traditionally, collect, and then sell them to the collectors at low prices. In the form of oxide, manganese can be used as catalysts and sensors (Paulose and Mohan, 2019), supercapacitors (Singu and Yoon, 2019), and as photocatalysts for degradation of rhodamine B (Hao *et al.*, 2017), or image improvement from MRI (Sun *et al.*, 2018). In the form of salt and other derivative products, manganese can be

used as fertilizer and livestock supplements (Šaric and Lucchini, 2007), as a regulator for immune responses, immune function, cellular energy, blood sugar, digestion, reproduction, blood clotting, growth of bone and antioxidant defense (Ali and Iqbal, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2021).

Manganese ore is classified into several mineral types, namely pyrolusite, manganese, psilomelane, hausmannite, rhodochrosite, rhodonite, and bementite (Sukandarrumidi, 2007). Pyrolusite ( $MnO_2$ ) is a metallic luster gray oxide mineral with a manganese content of 63%, while manganese ( $Mn_2O_3 \cdot H_2O$ ) is a hydrated mineral that is iron black or steel gray, with a manganese content of 62.4%. The psilomelane ( $MnO \cdot MnO_2 \cdot 2H_2O$ ) is a gray hydrated secondary mineral deposited and its manganese content is 45-60%. Hausmannite ( $Mn_3O_4$ ) is a blackish-brown manganese mineral with a sub-metallic luster and retains a manganese content of about 72.5%, meanwhile rhodochrosite ( $MnCO_3$ ) is a pink to brown manganese mineral containing manganese of 47.6%. Rhodonite ( $MnSiO_3$ ) is a manganese mineral containing about 41.9% manganese, whereas bementite ( $2MnSiO_3 \cdot H_2O$ ) is a mineral that contains about 39.1% manganese (Sukandarrumidi, 2007). In addition, based on the quality, manganese is categorized as a high grade if the percentage of the manganese within the ore is greater than 44%; while the medium-grade contains Mn as much as 40-44%, and the low grade has as much as 35-40% of Mn; and steel mill grade has Mn as much as 28-35% (Gao *et al.*, 2012).

Manganese can be obtained from the manganese ore using various leaching methods, one of which is hydrometallurgy namely a technique for extracting metals or compounds from ores using liquid phase chemicals at temperatures below 100 °C to about 300 °C. The main procedure in hydrometallurgical process is leaching (using acids, bases, cyanides, and an organic solvent), separation, enrichment, and extraction. Meanwhile, the reactions involved in this process are oxidation, reduction, neutralization, hydrolysis, and complexation (Haldar, 2018). The recent development of the hydrometallurgy process of manganese ore is reported by Li *et al.* (2017). In their study, low-grade manganese-zinc ore components were leached using 2.16 mol/L  $H_2SO_4$  and 1.48 mol/L  $H_2O_2$  (added 30

minutes after) as a reducing agent for two hours at room temperature (25 °C) and stirred at 120 rpm. The solid-liquid ratio used was 1:5 and the yield obtained by this method was 95.73% which had a sharp increase compared to that of leaching without  $H_2O_2$ , which was only 40.64% (Li *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, Hazek *et al.* (2006) reported that his method resulted in a leaching efficiency of higher than 97%. The leaching method was done by reacting the manganese ore with 2 M HCl and 0.4 M  $H_2O_2$  with an S/L ratio of 1:12 for 1 hour at a temperature of 60–90 °C (El Hazek, Lasheen and Helal, 2006).

In this research, manganese ore was taken from North Central Timor was firstly grounded into 200 mesh which then characterized by powder-XRD and XRF to determine the type of mineral and composition of the ore. The ore sample was then leached using sulfuric acid and hydrogen peroxide in various parameters, namely peroxide volume, various leaching temperature, and various leaching time.

## METHOD

### Chemicals and Instrumentation

Chemicals and materials used in this study include the manganese ore from Luniup village, North Central Timor (East Nusa Tenggara – Indonesia), sulphuric acid (Merk), ammonium hydroxide (Merck), hydrogen peroxide (Merck).

General laboratory wares were used in this work, such as standard glassware, Whatman filter paper no.42, pH paper, hot plate, magnetic stirrer (and the bar), 200 mesh and 300 mesh sieves, XRF spectrometer (PANalytical Minipal 4), powder-XRD (PANalytical X'Pert PRO), UV-Vis spectrophotometer (Shimadzu 1601), and Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer (Shimadzu AA-6200).

### Sample Preparation

The manganese ore was separated from the soil and other impurities physically, then it was crushed with a hammer into powder and passed through the sieves. Fine powder that passed the 200-mesh sieve but unpassed the 300-mesh sieve were used on the next stage. At this point, XRF and powder XRD characterizations were carried out to

determine the composition and the type of manganese ore from North Central Timor, respectively.

### Optimization of Manganese Ore Leaching

The leaching of manganese ore was conducted in three optimization stages, namely (1) leaching volume of  $H_2O_2$ , (2) leaching temperature, and (3) leaching reaction time. The final product obtained from the third stage was then selected for characterization using FTIR spectrometer, XRF spectrometer, powder X-Ray diffractometer and atomic absorption spectrometer (AAS), then compared with the results of the initial manganese ore.

At the first optimization stage, a total of 10 grams of ore powder were added to 50 mL of 4M  $H_2SO_4$ . The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 30 minutes. Next, 5 mL of 2M  $H_2O_2$  was added to the mixture and the mixture was kept stirred for 1.5 hours (in total was two hours of leaching time). After cooling it to room temperature, the mixture was filtered off using a filter paper. The filtrate, in a red purplish color solution, was then added with 25% of  $NH_4OH$  dropwise until the pH of the solution turned into 7. The solution was then stood at room temperature overnight and resulting in brown precipitation. A clear solution was obtained after the brown precipitate was separated by a filter paper. Next, the clear solution was fully evaporated and resulting in a white crystalline solid. The solid was then dried in an oven at 100 °C for two hours, followed by saving it in a desiccator for several days, in which silica gels beads were used as a drying agent. The yield was measured using an analytical balance. This treatment was repeated using different compared volumes of  $H_2O_2$ , namely 10, 15, 20, and 25 mL. The optimum condition was selected based on the volume of  $H_2O_2$  that gives the highest yield of dry solid.

In the second optimization stage, the optimum volume of  $H_2O_2$  selected from the previous stage was used. An identical procedure was used as in the first stage but the temperature for the leaching process was 70 °C. The result was then compared to that of the first stage at the optimum volume of  $H_2O_2$ . Similarly, the optimum condition was selected based on the leaching temperature that gives the highest yield of dry solid. In the

last stage, both optimum volumes of  $H_2O_2$  and leaching temperature were used. At this stage, an identical procedure was used but the leaching time was varied, namely two, three and four hours. Similarly, the optimum condition was selected based on the leaching temperature that gives the highest yield of dry solid.

After the last stage was finished and the optimum leaching time was obtained, the product, which is expected to be in the form of manganese (II) sulfate, was characterized. The results were then compared to that of the initial manganese ore.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Sample Preparation

The XRF measurement results are presented in Table 1, whereas the XRD diffraction pattern of the ore is presented in Figure 1. Based on Table 1, the content of Mn in the ore, supplied from the Luniup Village in the North Central Timor, is 77.5%, which indicates that the manganese ore sample was classified as a high-grade (Gao *et al.*, 2012). There are several other major and minor elements within the ore, in which the three major elements were Ca (8.57%), Fe (6.58%), and Si (4.1%). Hence, enrichment of the ore was mainly focused on the elimination of those major elements.

Meanwhile, X-ray diffraction pattern of the ore was quantitatively analyzed using a High Score Plus software using the Rietveld method and compared to the COD standard database. The analysis result confirms that the manganese ore is pyrolusite ( $MnO_2$ ) in a space group of  $P_{42}/MNM$ , with the four high intense peaks at angles of 28.67°, 37.37°, 56.64° and 72.47° (Kusumaningrum *et al.*, 2018). Those peaks, along with other peaks, match with that of the ID number of 1514110 and give GoF value of 2. This GoF value indicates that the refinement Rietveld is acceptable because the value of the requirement of GoF is lower than 4% (Mukminin, 2019). Other peaks that were observed and mixed with the main peaks (around 26°, 30°, 39°, and 48°) indicate the presence of minor elements and/or other types of minerals within the ore.

Table 1. XRF analysis of the manganese ore from the Luniup village

Element	Percentage (%)	Compound	Percentage (%)
Mn	77.5	MnO <sub>2</sub>	78.29
Ca	8.57	CaO	7.66
Fe	6.58	Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	6.00
Si	4.1	SiO <sub>2</sub>	5.61
Ba	1.9	BaO	1.36
Re	0.29	Re <sub>2</sub> O <sub>7</sub>	0.24
Sr	0.27	SrO	0.199
P	0.20	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	0.29
K	0.20	K <sub>2</sub> O	0.15
Cu	0.17	CuO	0.14
Ti	0.06	TiO <sub>2</sub>	0.04
Zn	0.01	ZnO	0.008

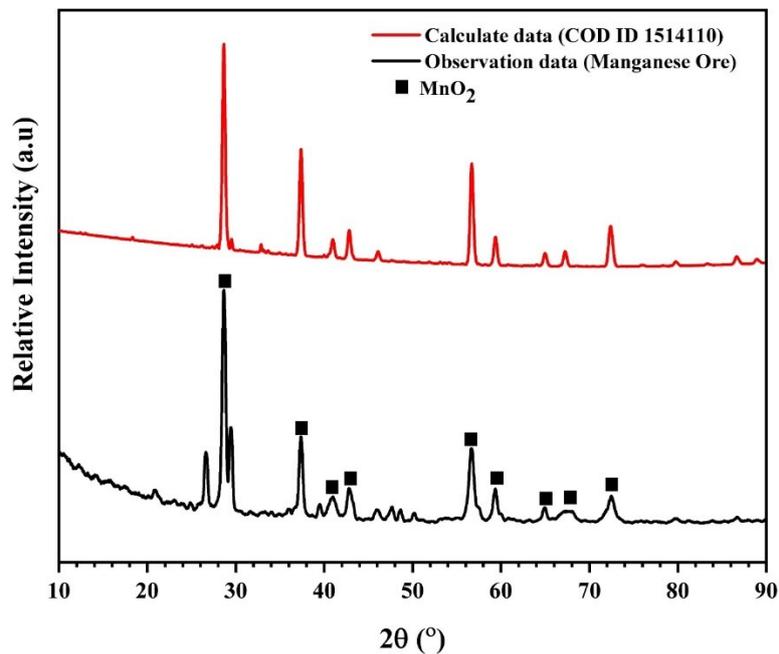
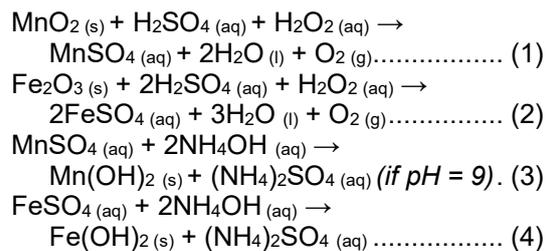


Figure 1. X-ray diffraction pattern of the manganese ore supplied from the Luniup village compared to that of pyrolusite (MnO<sub>2</sub>) standard (COD ID: 1514110).

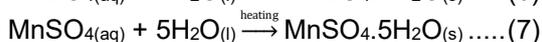
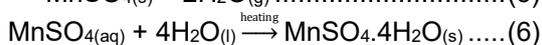
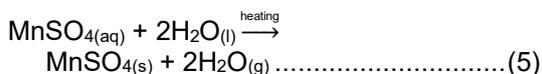
**Optimization of Manganese Ore Leaching**

The leaching of manganese ore was conducted using hydrogen peroxide as the reducing agent. The ore was dissolved in sulfuric acid and then was added with the peroxide to reduce Mn(IV) to Mn(II), in which the latter is more soluble in an acid solvent (Li *et al.*, 2017; Royani *et al.*, 2017), thus, more manganese can be extracted from the ore. Next, the solution resulting from the leaching was neutralized with NH<sub>4</sub>OH 25% solution to precipitate other dissolved substances, such as iron, since the iron was easily deposited in the pH range of 6.9–7.2. However, manganese precipitation can also occur at

pH below 9.5 but very slowly (Makhmudah and Notodarmojo, 2010), thus direct filtration was conducted to avoid this. In general, the main reactions that occur during the leaching and purification process are (Kusumaningrum *et al.*, 2018):



The reaction for producing MnSO<sub>4</sub> crystal are:



**Optimization of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> Addition**

In this stage, the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was added gradually every 5 ml (up to 25 mL). Multistep addition of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> affects the number of moles of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> that reacts with manganese in the ore. The addition of more H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> will enhance the reduction of Mn(IV) to water-soluble Mn(II) (Li *et al.*, 2017). The more volume of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> used, the higher the number of moles involved in the leaching process. This is in accordance to general chemical equation, which a number of mol is equal to multiplication of molarity and volume ( $n = M \times V$ ). An increase in manganese concentration was also observed within the XRF results of the obtained MnSO<sub>4</sub> (Table 2), in which at the first 5 mL addition, the percentage of Mn in the product was only 19.4%, and it was increased to 50.3% at the 25 mL- total addition. Moreover, the content of other elements was also reduced, namely Mo and Ca, due to the oxidation of Mo and Ca by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> to form soluble Mo and Ca compounds. This reduction of concentration shows that the more volume of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> used, the higher purity of MnSO<sub>4</sub> produced. The MnSO<sub>4</sub> obtained from every 5 mL addition was also analyzed using the UV Vis spectrophotometry to measure the Mn concentrations. The result is shown in Figure 2. The more volume of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> added, the higher Mn concentration in the sample obtained. This increase indicates that the purity of the MnSO<sub>4</sub> is getting higher, which is also in accordance with the XRF result. The concentration level of Mn is raised from 3.42 × 10<sup>4</sup> mg/kg to 6.41 × 10<sup>4</sup> mg/kg. It is predicted that the addition of more H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> volume may or may not increase the Mn due to the result having nearly reach a flat curve.

Table 2. XRF results of MnSO<sub>4</sub> in the lowest and the highest H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> addition

Elements (%)	Mn	S	Mo	Ca	Yb
H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> = 5 mL	19.4	64.2	15	1.3	0.2
H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> = 25 mL	50.3	45.1	3	0.85	0.2

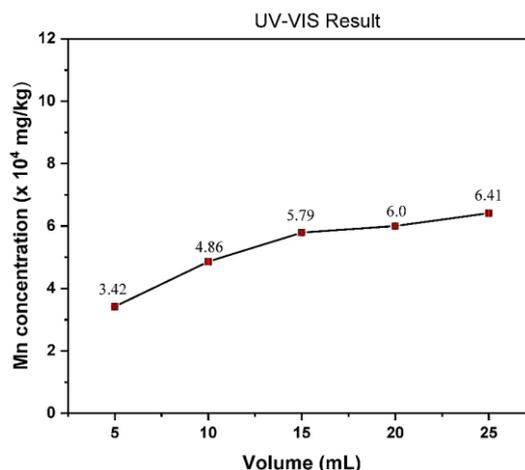


Figure 2. UV-Vis results for Mn concentration after H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> addition

**Optimization of Leaching Temperature**

In this stage, the manganese ore leaching was carried out by dissolving 10 grams of manganese ore into 50 mL of 4 M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and adding directly 25 mL of 2 M H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. The leaching was carried out for two hours at room temperature and 70°C. At lower temperatures (20–40°C), the leaching kinetics on the surface was controlled chemically while at higher temperatures, the leaching kinetics was controlled by diffusion, in which in this process also occurs the formation of metal oxides in the matrix (Nayl, Ismail and Aly, 2011).

The result shows that at 70°C, the content of manganese in the product decreased about 17% from 6.41 × 10<sup>4</sup> mg/kg to 5.32 × 10<sup>4</sup> mg/kg. This might be due to at high temperatures, not only H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> easily decomposed into H<sub>2</sub>O and O<sub>2</sub> (Li *et al.*, 2017), but also diffusion-reaction occurs (Nayl, Ismail and Aly, 2011). When the temperature is high, more H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> diffuses into manganese ore, thus substances other than Mn that can dissolve in acid solvents will also dissolve easily and reduces the ability of the acid to dissolve the Mn. This result is also supported by the fact that the residual mass obtained after purification at room temperature is lower (0.13 grams) than that of at 70°C (1.24 grams).

**Optimization of Leaching Time**

In this study, the leaching process was carried out based on the previous optimum

condition by dissolving 10 grams of manganese ore in 50 mL of 4 M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and adding 25 mL of 2 M H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. This leaching was carried out at room temperature with time variations of two, three, and four hours.

The result shows that the time variation gives fluctuated results of Mn concentrations, namely 6.41 x 10<sup>4</sup> mg/kg (2 hrs), 5.39 x 10<sup>4</sup> mg/kg (3 hrs), and 6.15 x 10<sup>4</sup> mg/kg (4 hrs). The difference between the lowest and the highest concentrations is 1.02 x 10<sup>4</sup> mg/kg. There is a slight decline between the 2-hr and the 4-hr reaction (0.26 x 10<sup>4</sup> mg/kg). This trend indicates that if longer time was applied (i.e 5 or 6 hrs and so on), the result might not be insignificantly different. Therefore, the 2-hour reaction time was decided to be the optimum reaction time.

During the leaching of manganese ore, the ore went through several stages, namely hydrolysis, the reductant diffusion from the solution through the boundary layer to the manganese ore active site, product nucleation to the active site, and product hydration and diffusion into the leach solution (Nayl, Ismail and Aly, 2011).

**Characterization of the Product**

From 10 grams of manganese ore, as much as 17.48 grams of MnSO<sub>4</sub> with percent recovery after purification of 113.38% were obtained using the optimized procedures. It is

an increase of 62% from percent recovery before refining.

The MnSO<sub>4</sub> was then characterized by infrared spectroscopy, powder-XRD, XRF, and AAS. The infrared data and diffraction pattern of the MnSO<sub>4</sub> product were presented in Figure 3.

Infrared analysis shows that the MnSO<sub>4</sub> sample has absorption at 1401.97 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 1126.71 cm<sup>-1</sup>, which corresponds to S=O stretching of the sulphate (OChemOnline, 2011). Absorption at 981.23 cm<sup>-1</sup> relates to the symmetrical vibration of SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> ion. Absorptions at 643.22 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 617.55 cm<sup>-1</sup> indicate the out-of-plane bending vibration of SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> (Lane, 2007; Guo *et al.*, 2010; Ramaswamy, Vimalathithan and Ponnusamy, 2010). Absorption at 464.95 cm<sup>-1</sup> indicates the presence of Mn-O bonds (Sagunthala, Yasotha and Vijaya, 2013). A broadband around 3200 cm<sup>-1</sup> indicates the O-H stretching of the water (Guo *et al.*, 2010). Meanwhile for powder-XRD analysis, the MnSO<sub>4</sub> product is confirmed to be a mixture of MnSO<sub>4</sub>.4H<sub>2</sub>O and MnSO<sub>4</sub>.5H<sub>2</sub>O with the high intensity peaks observed at 2-theta angles of 27.72°, 29.32°, 29.86° for MnSO<sub>4</sub>.4H<sub>2</sub>O and at 2-theta angles of 17.02°, 20.50°, 32.90° for MnSO<sub>4</sub>.5H<sub>2</sub>O. Other peak at theta angles of 15,12° is MnSO<sub>4</sub> three dimensional (3D) ([NH<sub>4</sub>]<sub>8</sub>[Mn<sub>8</sub>(SO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>12</sub>] (Behera *et al.*, 2014).

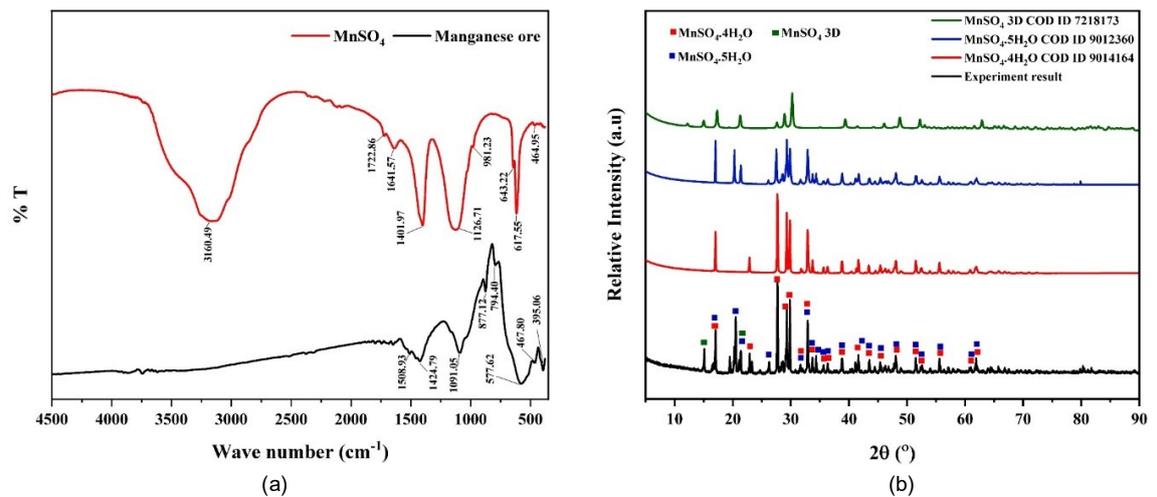


Figure 3. FTIR pattern of manganese ore and optimum product (MnSO<sub>4</sub>, V<sub>H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub></sub> = 25 mL, t = two hours, T = room temperature (a); XRD pattern of optimum product (b)

Table 3. XRF result of the product in optimum conditions

Compound	Percentage (%)	Element	Percentage (%)
MnO	30.08	Mn	50.27
SO <sub>3</sub>	66.8	S	45.1
CaO	0.62	Ca	0.85
CuO	0.16	Cu	0.3
MoO <sub>3</sub>	2	Mo	3
Yb <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	0.08	Yb	0.2
Re <sub>2</sub> O <sub>7</sub>	0.1	Re	0.2

Table 4. AAS results of manganese ore and product in optimum conditions

Sample	Concentration (mg/kg)
Manganese ore	$3.081 \times 10^5$
MnSO <sub>4</sub>	$1.177 \times 10^5$

Furthermore, based on the XRF analysis (Table 3), the MnSO<sub>4</sub> product has a purity of 96.88% with the percentages of MnO and Mn in the sample being 30.08% and 50.27% respectively. This result is higher than that of the previous studies that reported the purity of MnSO<sub>4</sub> of 79.11% with an MnO percentage of 27.56% (Sumardi, Mubarak and Saleh, 2013). Meanwhile, based on AAS analysis (Table 4), the concentration of Mn in the MnSO<sub>4</sub> product is only  $1.177 \times 10^5$  mg/kg. This result shows that the ability of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> as a reducing agent in the extraction of Mn from manganese ore is on medium level (38.2%), as compared to the initial Mn content in the ore ( $3.081 \times 10^5$  mg/kg). However, although this result is lower than 50%, the purity of the obtained MnSO<sub>4</sub> is much higher than that of the previous study.

## CONCLUSIONS

Manganese ore from North Central Timor is categorized as pyrolusite mineral which contains 77.50% Mn and is classified as high-grade manganese ore. The optimum leaching conditions of the manganese ore in this work are 50 mL H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> 4 M, 25 mL H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, and at room temperature for two hours. This optimum condition results in 38.2% Mn extraction with 96.88% purity. In addition, the products were a mixture of crystalline MnSO<sub>4</sub>.4H<sub>2</sub>O, MnSO<sub>4</sub>.5H<sub>2</sub>O and [NH<sub>4</sub>]<sub>8</sub>[Mn<sub>8</sub>(SO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>12</sub>].

The percentage of Mn extraction was moderate. It was probably due to the insufficient amount H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> added, so not all of the Mn was dissolved. Therefore, recommended being able to vary the addition of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in large quantities or volume or by variant the concentration of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>.

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