



Title	Hydration of ferrite-rich Portland cement: Evaluation of Fe-hydrates and Fe uptake in calcium-silicate-hydrates
Author(s)	Noguchi, Natsumi; Siventhirarajah, Krishny; Chabayashi, Takashi; Kato, Hiroyoshi; Nawa, Toyoharu; Elakneswaran, Yogarajah
Citation	Construction and building materials, 288, 123142 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conbuildmat.2021.123142
Issue Date	2021-06-21
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/88719
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Type	article (author version)
File Information	Revised manuscript_Fe-rich cement.pdf



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1 **Hydration of Ferrite-Rich Portland Cement: Evaluation of Fe-Hydrates and Fe**
2 **Uptake in Calcium-Silicate-Hydrates**

3

4 Natsumi Noguchi ¹, Krishnya Siventhirarajah ¹, Takashi Chabayashi ², Hiroyoshi Kato ², Toyoharu
5 Nawa ¹, Yogarajah Elakneswaran ^{1,*}

6

7 ¹ Division of Sustainable Resources Engineering

8 Faculty of Engineering, Hokkaido University

9 Kita 13, Nishi 8, Kita-ku, Sapporo, 060-8628, Japan

10

11 ² Development Department, Cement Business Division,

12 Tokuyama Corporation, Yamaguchi, Japan

13

14 * Corresponding author

15 E-mail: elakneswaran@eng.hokudai.ac.jp

16 Tel: +81-11-706-7274

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27 **Abstract**

28 The hydration process in ferrite-rich cement (FC) and its pore structure have been investigated by
29 experimental and thermodynamic modelling techniques. X-ray diffraction (XRD)/Rietveld analysis,
30 thermogravimetry (TG), and mercury intrusion porosimetry (MIP) were performed to study the
31 hydration process, pore volume-pore size distributions, and Fe uptake in calcium-silicate-hydrate (C-
32 S-H). Similar phases were found in both FC and ordinary Portland cement (OPC). The hydration
33 degree of FC was higher at the early stage compared with that of OPC; however, the hydration of
34 OPC exceeded that of FC after 14 days because the high amount of C₂S in OPC promoted the late
35 hydration. The XRD-TG results revealed relatively similar Fe uptake by C-S-H in both FC and OPC.
36 The thermodynamic model confirmed the formation of a high amount of Fe phases in FC. Moreover,
37 the model predictions agreed well with the experimental results, demonstrating the accuracy of the
38 proposed model for FC.

39
40 **Keywords:** Ferrite-rich cement (FC); hydration; Fe phases; calcium-silicate-hydrate (C-S-H);
41 thermodynamic modelling

42
43 **1. Introduction**

44 Concrete is the second most used material in the world after water [1]. Due to the significant increase
45 in the demand and production of cementitious materials, (the worldwide production has
46 approximately doubled between 2005–2015 [2]), the global CO₂ emissions increase daily, thereby
47 posing several environmental risks. Cement manufacturing plants are responsible for approximately
48 8–9% of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions and approximately 1 tonne of CO₂ are produced during the
49 production of 1 tonne of cement [3-5]. In addition, high amount of thermal energy is required for the
50 production process (approximately 4.7 million British Thermal Unit per 1 tonne of cement) [2].
51 Recently, there have been considerable developments to reduce CO₂ emission and to increase energy
52 savings in the cement and concrete industry. It includes the developments of supplementary

53 cementitious materials, production of alternative clinkers with reduced amounts of limestone in the
54 raw mix, alternative fuels and renewable energy sources, and process optimisation [3, 5-7].

55

56 Very recently, the reduction of the firing temperature of the clinker has been proposed and
57 investigated to reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emission [8-9]. In this process, the clinker has
58 been produced alternatively, by reducing the firing temperature of the clinker by 100 °C, which varies
59 from the production of conventional ordinary Portland cement (OPC) wherein the burning
60 temperature of the clinker is 1450 °C. The clinker burnt at 1350 °C consists of higher amount of ferrite
61 (C₄AF) (approximately twice) and lower amounts of belite (C₂S) (approximately half) compared to
62 those in OPC. This novel cement produced on the aforementioned low-temperature basis is called
63 ferrite-rich Portland cement (FC). It should be noted that the same raw materials as used for OPC
64 have been used to produce FC, but the ratio of the raw materials has been adjusted to achieve the
65 target mineral composition of FC. Further, it has been demonstrated that the FC can reduce
66 approximately 5 % of CO₂ emission compared to OPC during the clinkering process [8]. Although
67 the FC has been proven to be an eco-friendly alternative to OPC, the number of studies on the subject
68 are very limited [10-12], providing insufficient information on the hydration process, evolution of
69 mechanical properties and performance of FC, which restricts the commercialisation, industrial
70 applications and particularly the developments of numerical models.

71

72 The application of thermodynamic models coupled with an accurate database have gained significant
73 momentum to accurately investigate the hydration process of a large variety of cement pastes with
74 wide range of variables such as temperature, water to cement ratio and relative humidity [13-16].
75 Basically, chemical behaviours of numerous minerals and phases existing in the hydrated cement are
76 thermodynamically well defined. However, the necessary thermodynamic data for Fe phases are still
77 very limited. Besides, the experimental characterisation of Fe phases is complicated, as the signals
78 from Fe phases in hydrated cement significantly overlap with those of the Al analogues using typical

79 techniques such as X-ray diffraction (XRD), thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) and scanning
80 electron microscopy [13, 17]. The identification of amorphous Fe phases in the hydrated cement
81 matrix is also difficult using conventional techniques. In addition, Fe(III) could partly substitute
82 Al(III)-bearing hydrates such as Fe-ettringite, Fe-monosulfate, Fe-monocarbonate, Fe-hemicarbonate
83 and Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet depending on the presence of calcium, sulphate or carbonate during
84 cement hydration [13, 18-19]. As experimentally demonstrated by Dilnesa et al [13], Fe/Al-siliceous
85 hydrogarnet ($C_3(A,F)S_{0.84}H_{4.32}$) is more stable than Fe-containing AFm phases and Fe-ettringite in
86 OPC. Moreover, the leaching of Ca from C-S-H and the low Ca/Si ratio induce the uptake of Fe^{3+}
87 ions in the place vacated by calcium [20-21]. However, a recent study showed that the uptake of Fe^{3+}
88 ions occurs highly at high Ca/Si ratios (1.2 and 1.5) of synthesised C-S-H [19]. At high Ca/Si ratios,
89 the presence of Fe^{3+} ions is witnessed in the interlayer of C-S-H phases. On the other hand, the uptake
90 of Fe^{3+} ions by the interlayer is eliminated at a low Ca/Si ratio (0.8), instead, leading to the formation
91 of Ca-Si-rich complex on the surface of C-S-H. With all the above contrast observations, the
92 mechanism of Fe(III) uptake by C-S-H is poorly understood and remains ambiguous.

93

94 In our previous work [10], we have studied the hydration behaviour of FC and compared it with that
95 of OPC. However, we did not identify or quantify the Fe-hydrates in the cements. Therefore, the
96 objectives of this study were (i) to investigate the hydration process of FC and quantify Fe-hydrates
97 and (ii) to evaluate Fe uptake by C-S-H. All the experimental results were synergistically used to
98 verify the coupled thermodynamic model developed in our previous work [22] to predict the
99 hydration products including the Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet and Fe uptake by C-S-H (C-F-S-H).

100

101 **2. Materials and methods**

102 **2.1 Experimental procedure**

103 OPC and ferrite-rich Portland cements were used in this study. The physical properties and the
104 mineral composition of the cements are tabulated in **Table 1**, and the chemical composition of oxide

105 and the proportions of raw materials are given in Table 1 of ref. [10]. The cement was mixed with
106 distilled water at a water to cement ratio of 0.5. The mixture was stirred manually until the bleeding
107 stopped. Further, it was cast into cylindrical moulds and sealed-cured at 20 °C. The samples that
108 reached the predetermined curing time (1, 6, and 12 h and 1, 2, 3, 7, 14, 28, 91 and 182 days) were
109 ground and immersed in acetone for 1 h to stop the hydration. Thereafter, the samples were removed
110 from the acetone solution by suction filtration using an aspirator. Finally, the samples were kept in
111 an oven at 40 °C until they reached a constant mass. The prepared samples were ground and powdered
112 for XRD and TG measurements. The selective dissolution experiment was performed according to
113 the method proposed by Dilnesa et al. [13]. In the selective dissolution method, 5 g of a crushed
114 hydrated cement sample was stirred for 2 h using a magnetic stirrer in a beaker containing 300 mL
115 methanol and 20 g salicylic acid. The suspension was allowed to settle for approximately 15 min and
116 then it was vacuum-filtered through 0.08-mm filter paper. Thereafter, the samples were dried at 90 °C
117 for 45 min in an electric furnace. The XRD/Rietveld analysis was performed to determine the
118 quantities of hydration products and un-hydrated clinker minerals. Rigaku MultiFlex X-ray generator
119 with CuK α radiation was used for XRD measurements while Siroquant Version 4.0, manufactured
120 by Sietronics, was adopted for quantitative Rietveld analysis. The TG-differential thermal analysis
121 (DTA) was conducted using TG/DTA7220 manufactured by HITACHI under an N₂ flow
122 environment. The waiting time before the measurement for stabilising the apparatus was 50 min. The
123 temperature was raised at a rate of 5 °C/min from 20 to 1000 °C and was maintained for 10 min and
124 then reduced at a rate of 50 °C/min. Approximately 10 mg of the sample was weighed and used for
125 measurements. Mercury intrusion porosimetry (MIP) was conducted using Shimadzu Auto Pore IV
126 9500 with a pressure range of 0.5–60000 psi. The samples were cut into cubes (3 mm) after curing
127 and immersed in acetone for 24 h. Thereafter, the samples were vacuum-dried for 24 h before
128 conducting MIP measurements.

129

130

131 **Table 1:** Physical properties and mineral composition of cements used

Cement	OPC	FC
Blaine specific surface area (cm ² /g)	3220	3220
Density(g/cm ³)	3.19	3.20
LoI	0.80	0.76
C ₃ S	57.6	59.1
C ₂ S	18.0	8.6
C ₃ A	9.0	8.5
C ₄ AF	9.3	17.2
Gypsum	3.02	2.78

132

133 2.2 Modelling approach

134 The hydrate assemblage of OPC and FC as a function of hydration time was calculated using the
 135 thermodynamic model, which couples IPhreeqc module [23] for thermodynamic equilibrium and
 136 Microsoft Excel for solving cement hydration. The thermodynamic properties of cement hydrates
 137 including Fe-containing phases were collected from Cemdata18 [24-25]. The data were converted to
 138 PHREEQC format [22] and used along with PHREEQC default thermodynamic database [26]. The
 139 uptake of Fe by C-S-H can be expressed by the distribution coefficient, R_d , which can be defined as
 140 follows with reference to the alkali adsorption on C-S-H [27]:

141

$$142 \quad R_d(\text{mL/g}) = \frac{\text{Fe in solid C-S-H}}{\text{Fe concentration in solution}} \quad (1)$$

143

144 where *Fe in solid C-S-H* is the amount of Fe uptake by 1 g of C-S-H (mmol/g), and *Fe concentration*
 145 *in solution* is the equilibrium concentration of Fe (mmol/mL).

146

147

148 **3. Results and discussion**

149 **3.1 Characterisation of cements and Fe-hydrates**

150 **Fig. 1** shows the hydration reaction of each clinker mineral and the total hydration degree of cement
151 determined by XRD/Rietveld analysis. The hydration degree of C_3S and C_3A are similar in both
152 cements, and they are fully hydrated after 28 days. However, the hydrations of C_2S and C_4AF in OPC
153 are higher than those in FC. The difference becomes remarkable from 91 days for C_2S and 14 days
154 for C_4AF . The change in the proportions of the clinker minerals affects their hydration degree. These
155 differences did not alter the total hydration degree of cement (**Fig. 1. (E)**). FC shows higher hydration
156 degree up to 7 days, and the high amount of C_2S contributes to the increase in the late hydration of
157 OPC.

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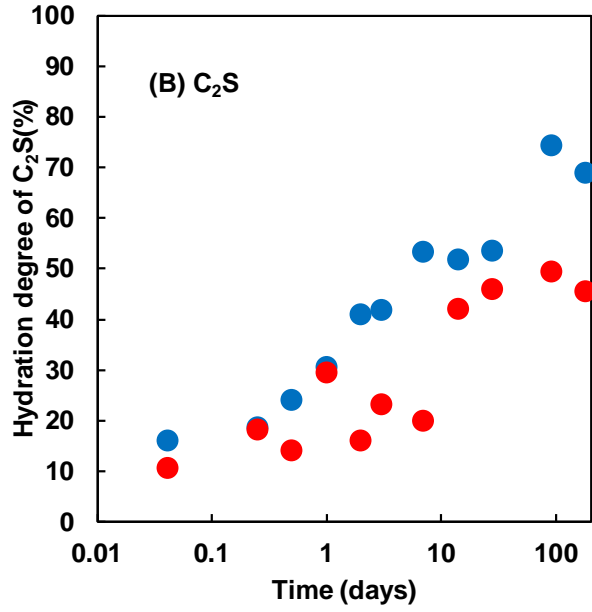
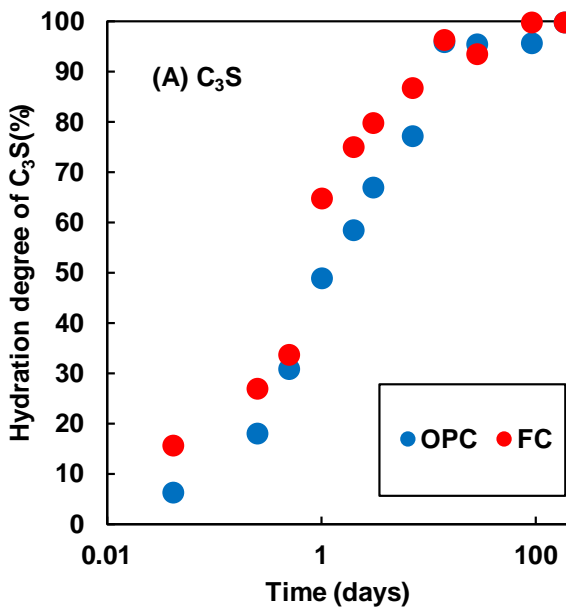
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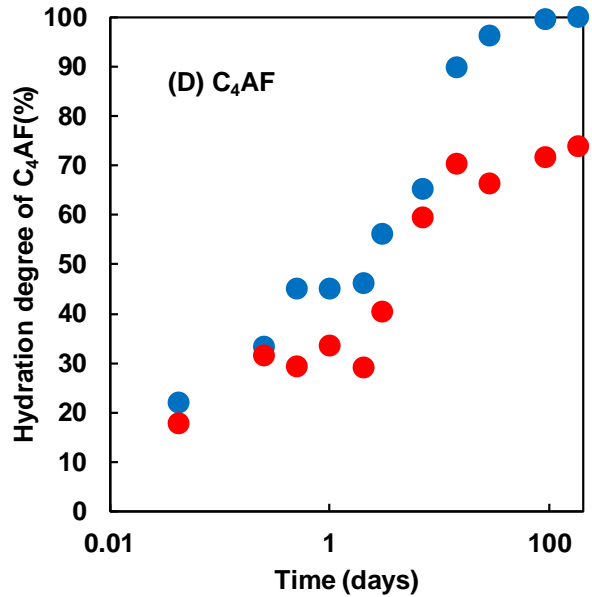
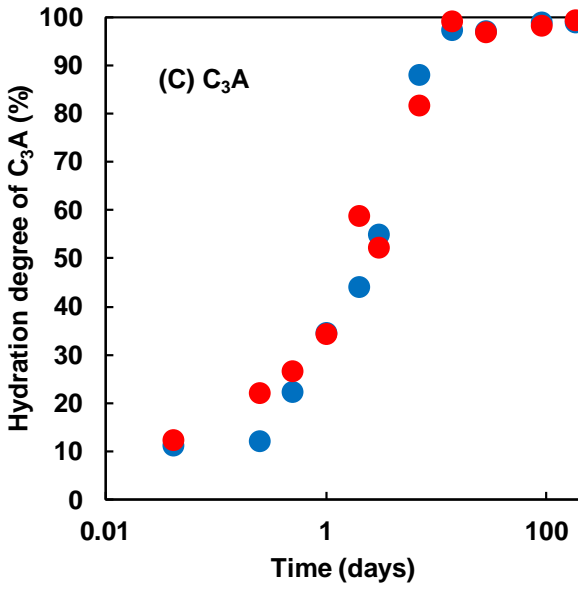
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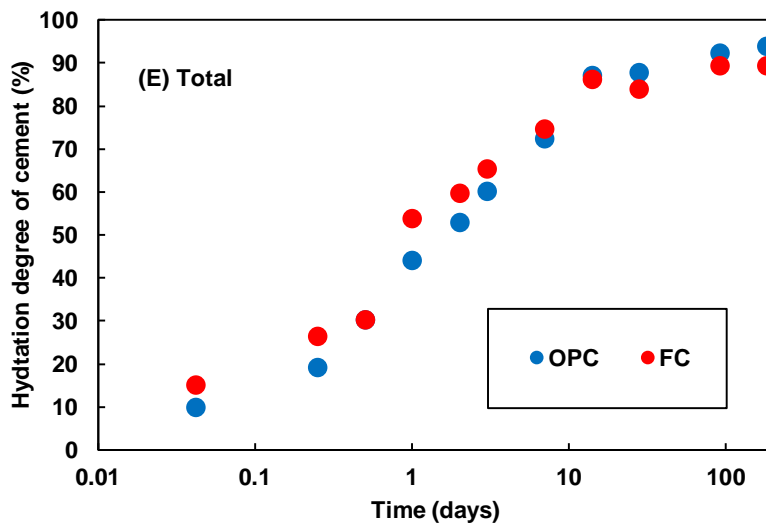
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Fig. 1. Hydration of clinkers and cements as a function of time from the XRD/Rietveld analysis

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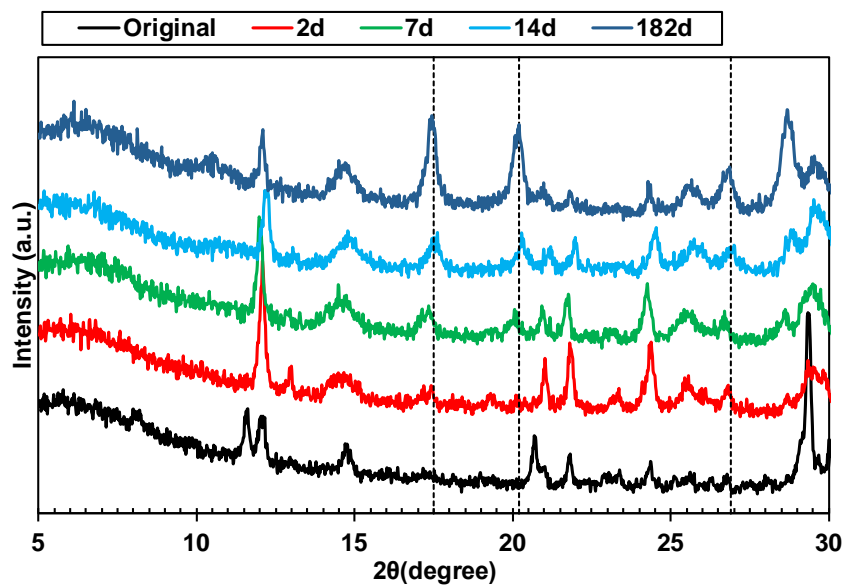
174 Lothenbach et al. have reported that Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet is the only Fe-containing phase
175 expected to form during the hydration of Portland cements; thus, the presence of other Fe-containing
176 phases in the hydrated cement system can be negligible [24]. To quantify the formed Fe-siliceous
177 hydrogarnet, the selective dissolution was conducted. **Fig. 2** shows the XRD pattern of the sample
178 after the selective dissolution treatment. The peak of siliceous hydrogarnet at approximately $17.5^\circ/2\theta$
179 and additional peak at $20.2^\circ/2\theta$ and $26.9^\circ/2\theta$ indicated by dotted line can be observed after 7 days of
180 hydration. However, the poor crystallinity of siliceous hydrogarnet makes it difficult to quantify by
181 Rietveld analysis. Therefore, TG/differential thermal gravimetry (DTG) was used to quantify the
182 formed siliceous hydrogarnet. **Fig. 3** shows the TG/DTG curves before and after the selective
183 dissolution treatment of FC hydrated for 28 days. The mass reduction and the remaining phases can
184 be observed after selective dissolution. In particular, the portlandite peak at approximately 400°C to
185 450°C disappears, and the peak of siliceous hydrogarnet is confirmed at approximately 200°C to
186 300°C . These results are consistent with those reported by Dilnesa et al. [13] and proved that the
187 selective dissolution is an effective method to quantify the Fe-containing phases in the hydrated
188 cement. As shown in XRD and DTG results, the peak of C-S-H and AFm phases remain after the
189 selective dissolution, but they do not overlap with the peak of siliceous hydrogarnet to quantify. From
190 the mass loss, the amount of formed siliceous hydrogarnet was calculated, and the results are shown
191 in **Fig. 4** as a function of hydration time. For the calculation, it was assumed that the chemical
192 composition of Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet as $\text{Ca}_3\text{FeAl}(\text{SiO}_4)_{0.84}(\text{OH})_{8.64}$. Approximately 10–12% of Fe-
193 siliceous hydrogarnet was formed in the hydrated cements, primarily at the early stages of hydration.
194 The hydration degree of ferrite correlates to the formation of Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet, and the high
195 content of ferrite in FC leads to the formation of a high amount of Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet at the
196 same hydration time. As reported in ref. [13, 16-17], the cement hydration produces iron hydroxides
197 during the first hours and then siliceous hydrogarnet after 1 day and longer. The results (**Fig. 4**)

198 showed that the amount of formed Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet is almost constant after 14 days of
199 hydration.

200

201 The measured porosity and pore size distribution for hydrated cement are shown in **Fig. 5**. OPC and
202 FC hydrated for 7 and 182 days are shown in **Fig. 5** as an example. At an early age, FC has a lower
203 amount of pore volume and large amount of smaller pore compared to OPC, but this trend is reversed
204 at the later stages of hydration. Furthermore, the porosity of both cements is similar in the hydration
205 period of 14–28 days. The hydration degrees of clinker minerals, mainly C_2S and C_4AF , affect the
206 microstructure of the hydrated cement paste. The late hydration reaction of high-content C_2S in OPC
207 contributes to the lesser and denser pore structure compared with that of FC. This difference will
208 contribute to the change in mechanical properties of the hydrated cement paste.

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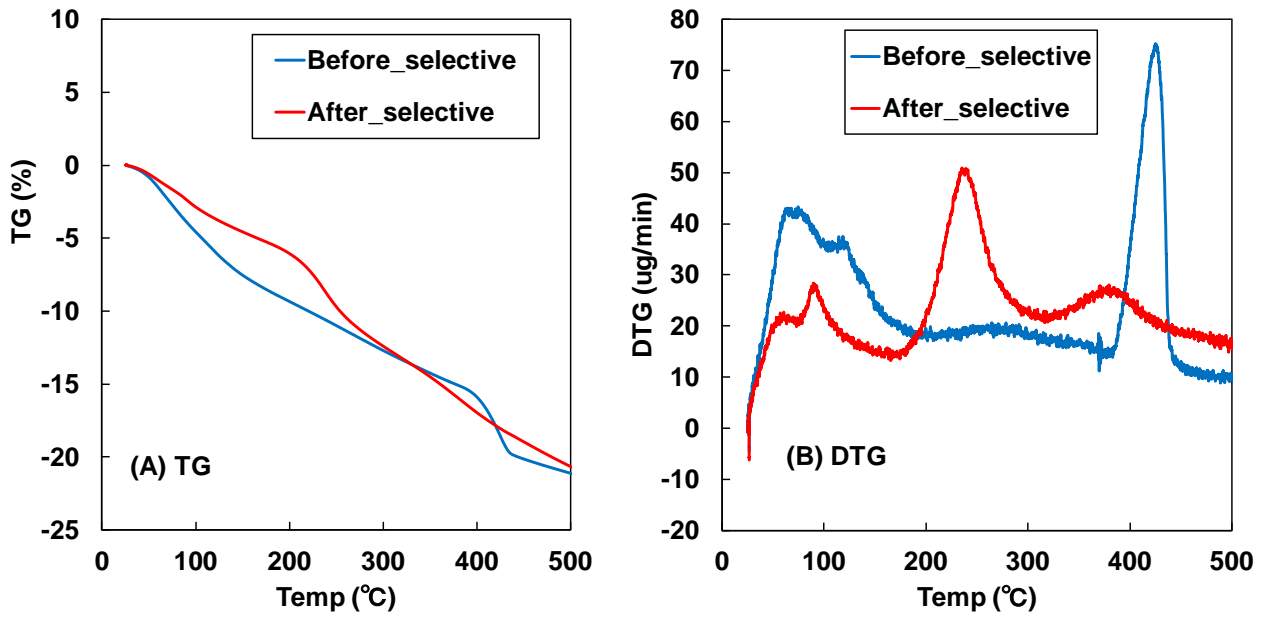


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Fig. 2. XRD patterns of OPC after selective dissolution

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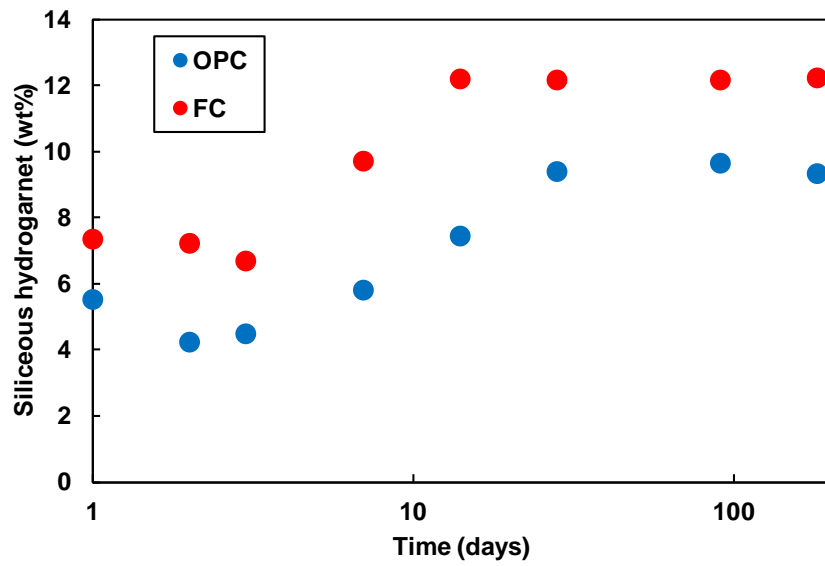


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Fig. 3. Effect of selective dissolution after 28 days of hydration of FC. (A) TG; (B) DTG

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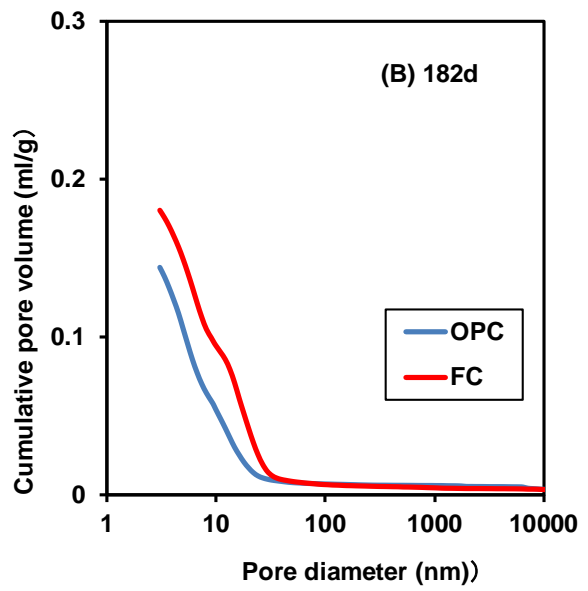
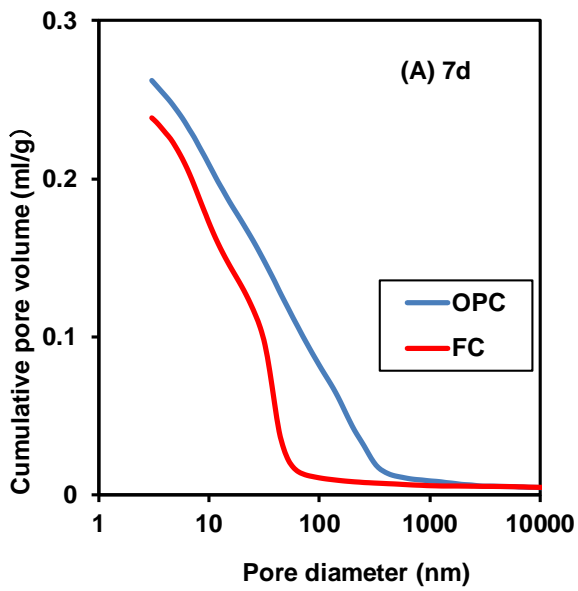
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Fig. 4. Amount of siliceous hydrogarnet in the hydrated cements

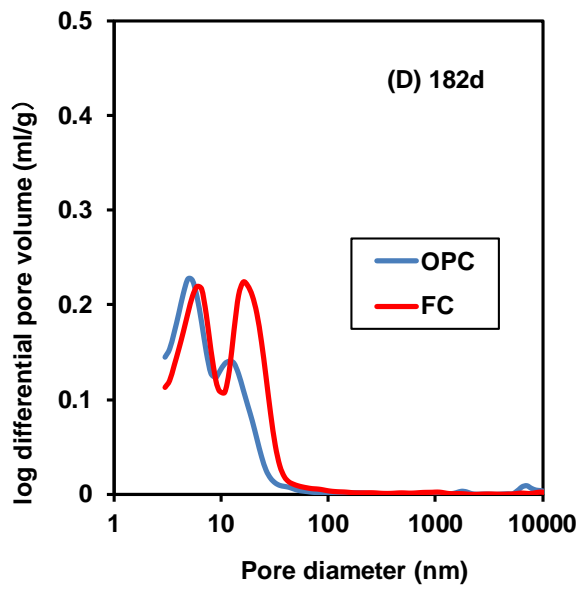
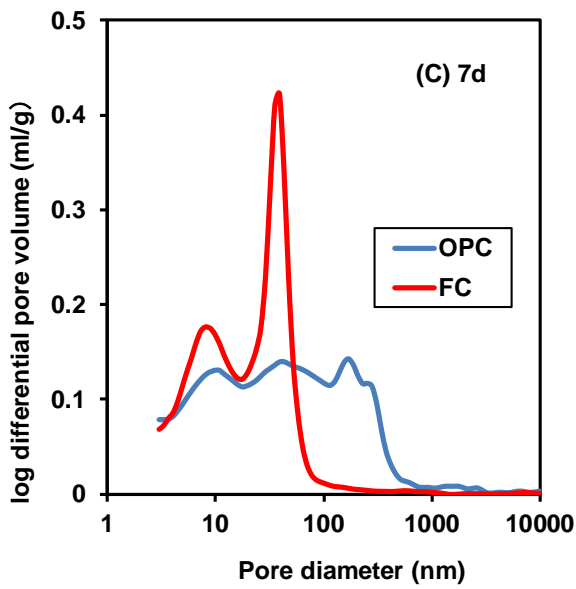
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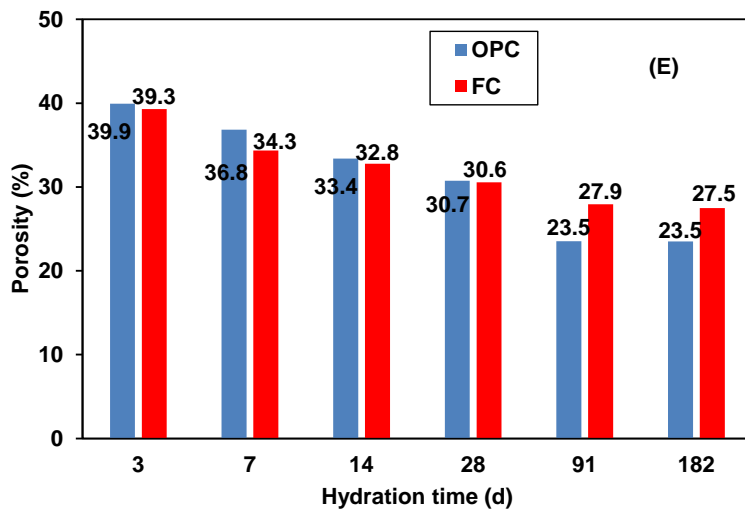
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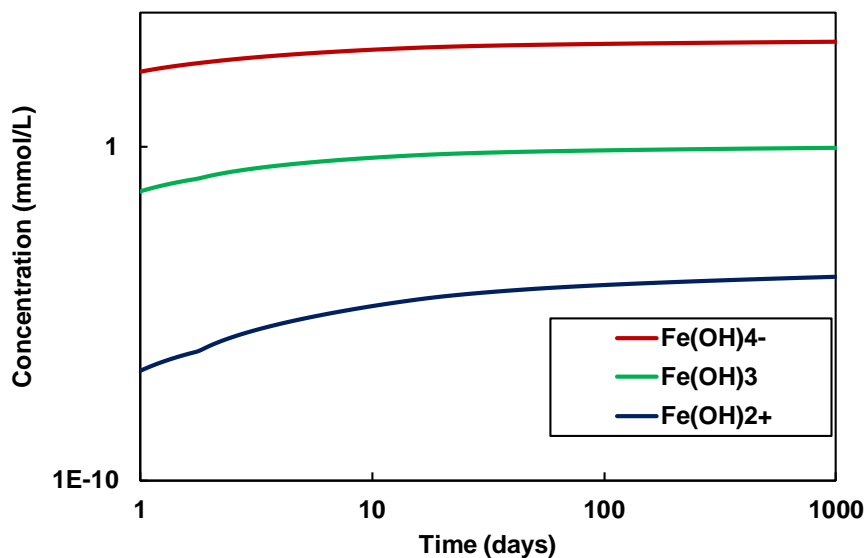
Fig. 5. Cumulative pore volume, pore size distribution and total porosity of OPC and FC

226 3.2 Incorporation of Fe in C-S-H

227 The recent research on Fe uptake has been focused on the synthetic C-S-H [19], and there is a lack of
228 results or report on Fe incorporation in C-S-H in the hydrated cement. Many studies have shown that
229 the amount of Fe ions in the pore solution is negligible [15, 22]. To find the state of Fe ions in the
230 pore solution after the hydration of C_4AF , a thermodynamic calculation was performed considering
231 various Fe ions and complexes and without considering any Fe-containing hydrate formation. The
232 results show that $Fe(OH)_4^-$ is primarily found in the high-pH pore solution of the hydrated cement
233 (**Fig. 6**), similar to producing $Al(OH)_4^-$ in high-pH solution [19]. Therefore, Fe ions released from the
234 hydration of C_4AF form $Fe(OH)_4^-$ and produce Fe-containing phases or incorporate into C-S-H.
235 Therefore, with the results shown in **Fig. 4**, the amount of Fe taken by C-S-H can be calculated as

$$237 M_{C-(F-)S-H} = M_{Fe\ dissolved} - M_{Siliceous-Hydrogarnet} \quad (2)$$

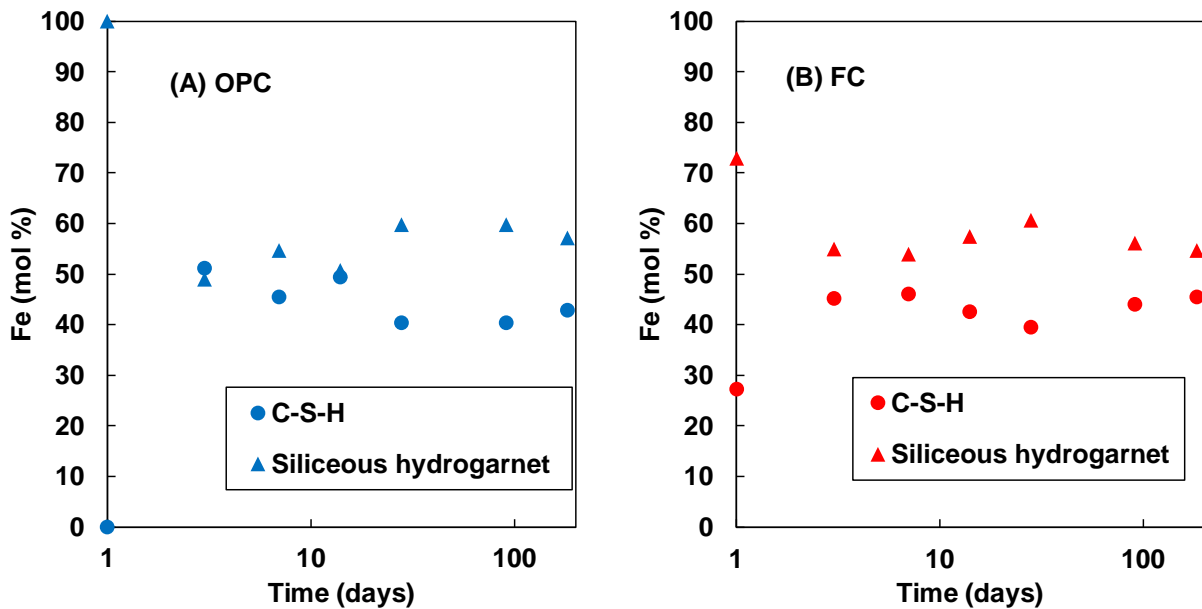
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239 where $M_{C-(F-)S-H}$ is the Fe uptake by C-S-H (mol), $M_{Fe\ dissolved}$ is the amount of Fe released from the
240 hydration of C_4AF (mol), and $M_{Siliceous-Hydrogarnet}$ is the Fe in Fe-Siliceous hydrogarnet (mol).



241
242 **Fig. 6.** Calculated concentrations of Fe complexes as a function of hydration time in OPC

243

244 The calculated mol percentages of Fe in C-S-H and Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet as a function of
 245 hydration time for both cements are shown in **Fig. 7**. Initially, the released Fe from C₄AF forms as
 246 Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet, and then the released Fe incorporates into C-S-H. Both cements show a
 247 nearly equal amount of Fe uptake by C-S-H. The Fe incorporation into C-S-H was considered by the
 248 distribution ratio, R_d , together with thermodynamic calculations. The calculated R_d values as a
 249 function of Fe concentration is shown in **Fig. 8**. The distribution coefficient decreases with increase
 250 of Fe concentration and follows power approximation, as proposed for alkalis [28]. In the construction
 251 of the model, it is desirable to have a single equation for adsorption irrespective of cement type.
 252 Therefore, in **Fig. 8**, R_d values of both cements have been used to drive the equation. The results
 253 indicate the decrease of Fe uptake by C-S-H with the increase in Fe concentration. Mancini et al. have
 254 reported a relationship between sorbed Fe and aqueous solution Fe from the sorption experiment on
 255 synthesised C-S-H with Ca/Si ratio of 0.8 and 1.5, and their results showed that R_d depends neither
 256 on the composition of C-S-H nor the pH of the solution [19]. In this study, R_d does not depend on
 257 cement type, but it relates to the equilibrated Fe concentration in the pore solution.
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Fig. 7. State of Fe in (A) OPC; (B) FC

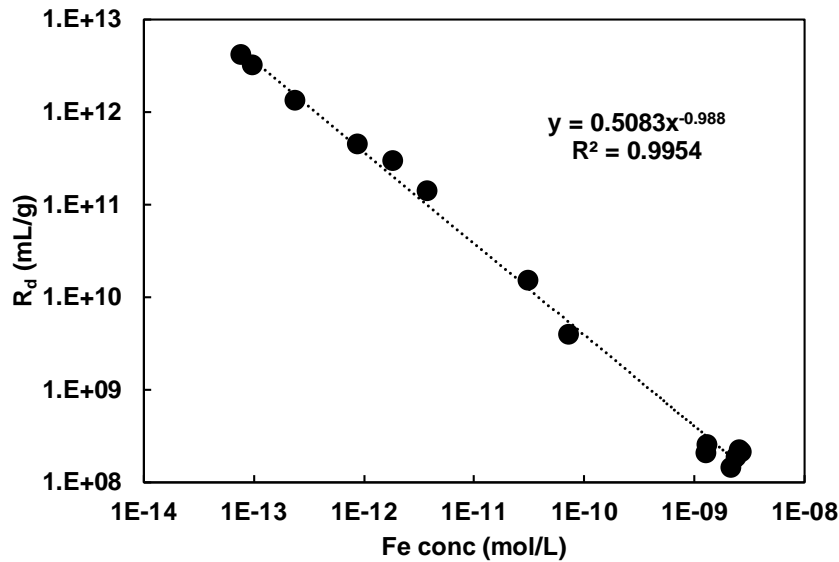


Fig. 8. Relationship between distribution coefficient and concentration of Fe

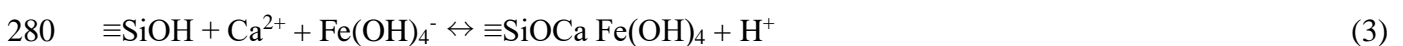
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265 Various mechanisms have been proposed for aluminium incorporation into C-S-H, including the
 266 substitution of Si atom at bridging sites (Q²B) of the aluminosilicate chains or cross-linked sites (Q³),
 267 exchange with interlayer calcium ions, and surface complexation reactions [29-30]. A similar
 268 mechanisms can be considered for the uptake of Fe by C-S-H. Mancini et al. have analysed the uptake
 269 mechanism based on ²⁹Si NMR and EXAFS data and showed that the coordination of Fe into C-S-H
 270 depends on its Ca/Si [19]. As shown in **Fig. 6.**, Fe (III) exists mainly as Fe(OH)₄⁻, and the possible
 271 exchange with interlayer calcium would not easily occur. Furthermore, the Fe sorption by C-S-H
 272 depends on the equilibrium concentration, and therefore, the surface complexation is the main
 273 mechanism for the uptake of Fe by C-S-H. Hass et al. have proposed surface complexation
 274 mechanism for aluminium uptake through Al(OH)₄⁻ [31], and Fe(OH)₄⁻ can adsorb on C-S-H in a
 275 similar way as aluminium. The hydrated cement pore solution has a high-pH and high Ca
 276 concentration, which is responsible for the positive surface charge on C-S-H through a high
 277 concentration of calcium adsorbed surface specie, ≡SiOCa⁺ [31-32]. It is believed that Fe(OH)₄⁻ can
 278 adsorb on ≡SiOCa⁺ as follows:

279



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282 **3.3 Thermodynamic model and verification**

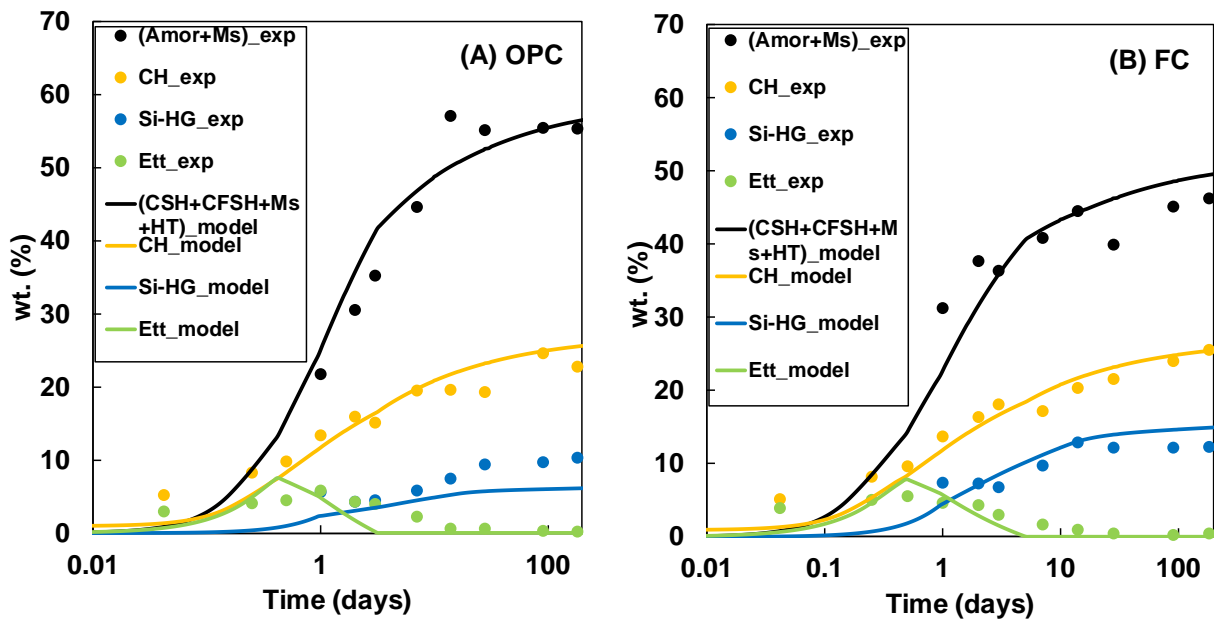
283 The coupled thermodynamic model developed in our previous study was used to predict the hydrate
284 assemblage as a function of hydration time [10, 22]. The relationship derived in **Fig. 8.** was
285 incorporated into the model to account for Fe uptake by C-S-H in the hydration of cement. The
286 chemical composition of $(\text{CaO})_{1.667}(\text{SiO}_2): 2.1\text{H}_2\text{O}$ with known thermodynamic properties [24-25]
287 was assumed for C-S-H. The model predictions were compared with the experimental results in **Fig.**
288 **9** for Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet and other products. It should be noted that experimental results of
289 amorphous and poorly crystalline monosulfate [33] were compared with the addition of the modelling
290 results of C-S-H, Fe incorporated C-S-H, monosulfate, and hydrotalcite which was very small
291 quantity in the hydration product and difficult to quantify accurately by XRD/Rietveld analysis.
292 Despite some variation in OPC, the modelling results of Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet and other hydrates
293 reproduced well the experimental data of both types cement. Both cements produce nearly the equal
294 amount of portlandite and ettringite, but the higher proportion of belite produces more C-S-H in OPC
295 than in FC, and more ferrite in FC produces high Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet. The composition of
296 calculated phase assemblage in terms of weight percentage for both cements are shown in **Fig. 10.**
297 Approximately 2 % of Fe incorporated C-S-H [C-(F)-S-H] was produced in the matured hydrated
298 cement. The amount of formed C-(F)-S-H is very small relative to the ferrite hydration product of Fe-
299 siliceous hydrogarnet and thus, its effect in the physical properties of the paste could be negligible.

300

301 The molar volume of each hydration products including Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet helps to estimate
302 the porosity of cement paste. The capillary porosity was calculated by deducting the volume of
303 hydration products and un-hydrated cement, and chemical shrinkage from the initial volume of paste
304 [34]. In the thermodynamic model, the C-S-H was divided into low density (LD) and high density
305 (HD) C-S-H, and the porosity associated with the C-S-H was calculated as gel porosity [34]. As
306 shown in **Fig. 5**, the MIP technique measures the porosity for the pore diameter above 3 nm, which

307 includes capillary porosity and a part of gel porosity. Therefore, it is appropriate to compare MIP
 308 results with the summation of capillary porosity and LD C-S-H gel porosity. The comparison is shown
 309 in **Fig. 11** for both cements as a function of hydration period. The modelling results show a relatively
 310 good agreement with the measured data.

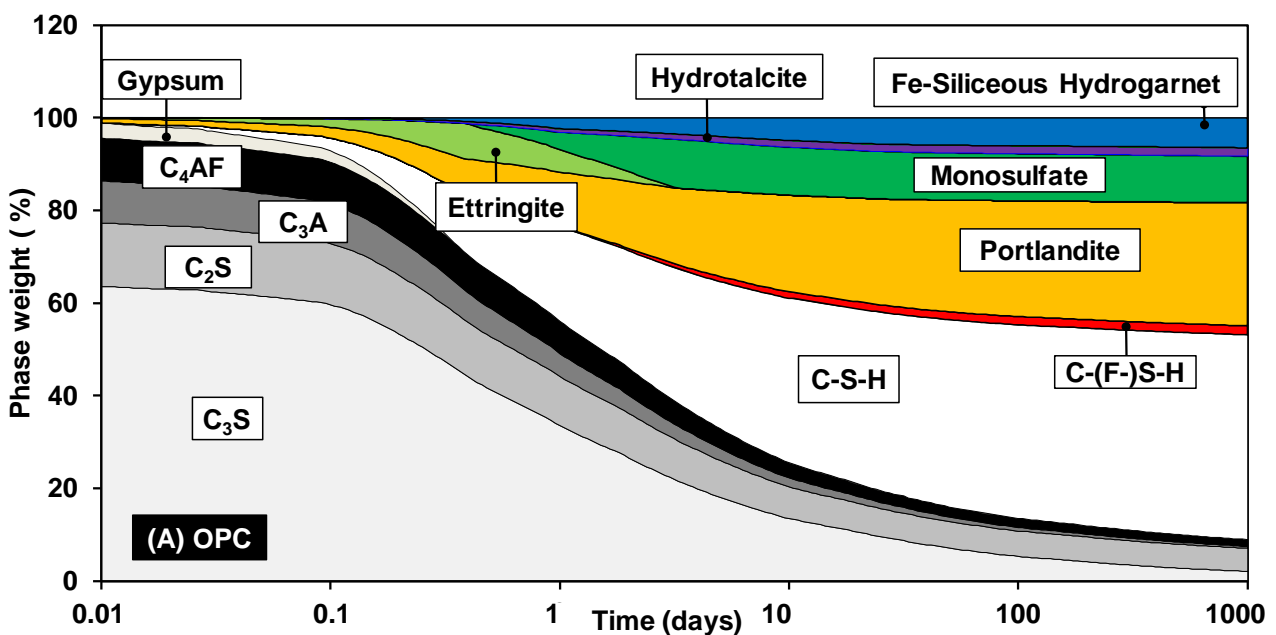
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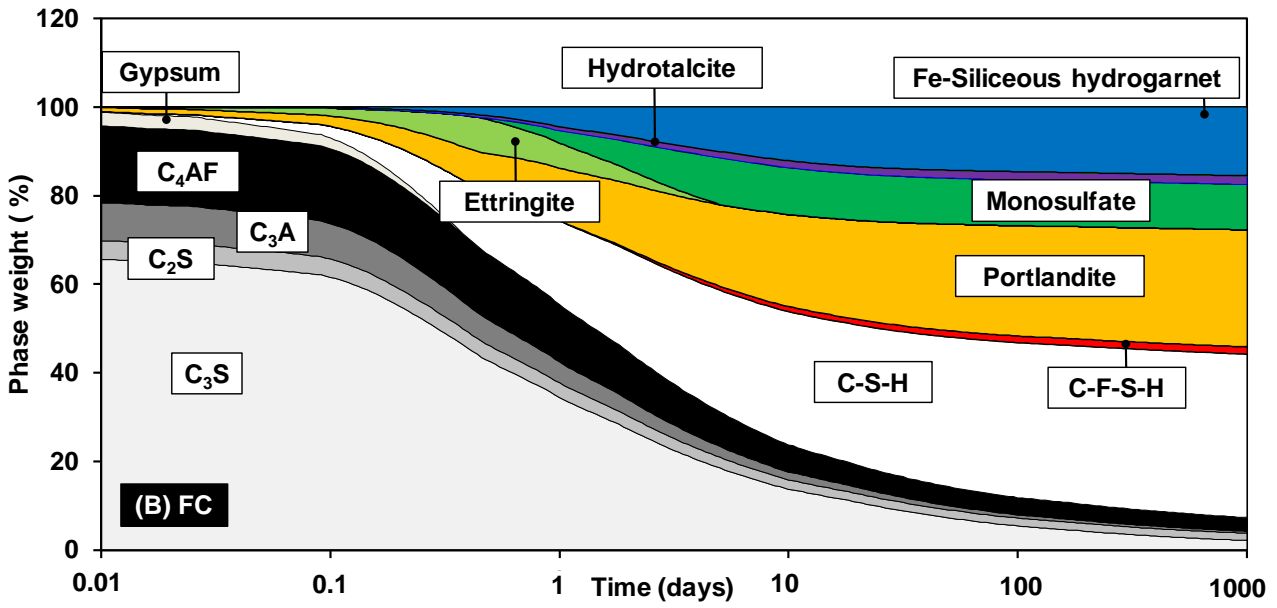
312

313 **Fig. 9.** Comparison of calculated hydrates with the quantitative values determined by XRD Rietveld
 314 analysis and TG/DTA for (A) OPC and (B) FC

315



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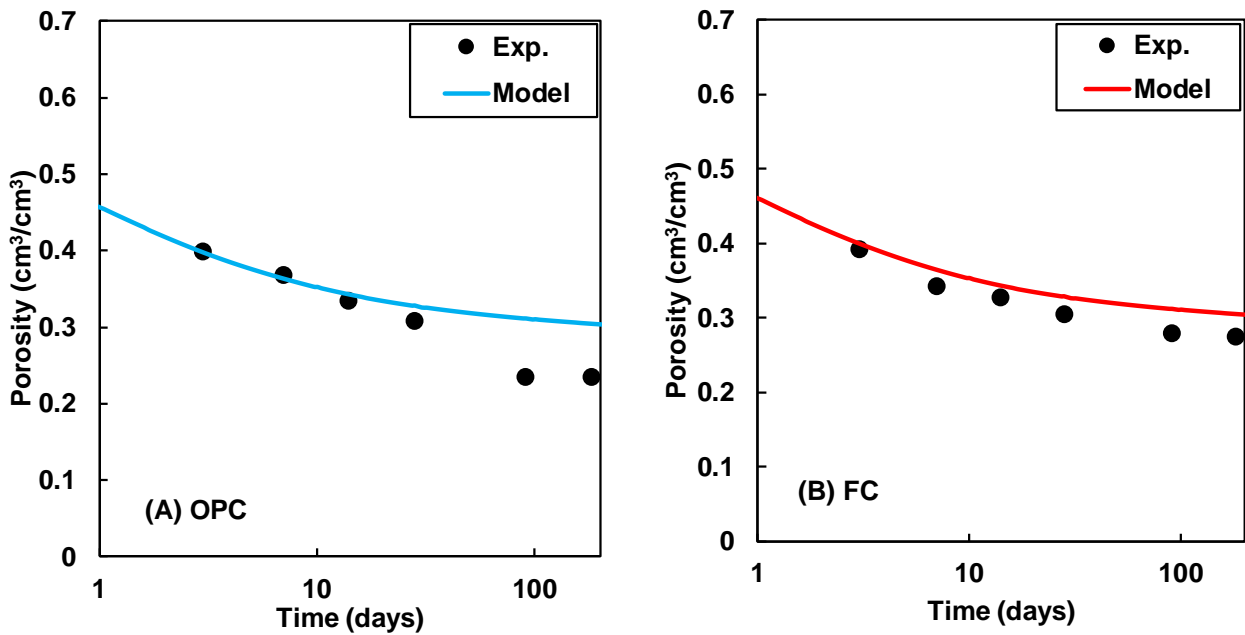


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318

Fig. 10. Calculated mass of hydrates as a function of hydration time for (A) OPC and (B) FC

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Fig. 11. Comparison of porosity for (A) OPC and (B) FC

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323 4. Conclusions

324

High proportion of ferrite and low of belite in ferrite-rich cement lower their individual hydration

325

degree compared to those in OPC, but not the total hydration of cements. Moreover, their proportions

326

influence the microstructure of the hydrated cement: FC produces denser microstructure at an early

327 age compared to OPC, whereas it is the opposite at a later age. Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet was the main
328 Fe-containing phase in the hydration of the ferrite phase and was quantified by selective dissolution
329 approach. Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet was formed starting from the initial stages of hydration and
330 reached a steady state in approximately 14 days. A high amount of ferrite present in FC enhances the
331 formation of Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet. Fe uptake by C-S-H was estimated from the hydration of
332 ferrite and the amount of formed Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet. A distribution coefficient (R_d) was
333 calculated for the uptake and was related to the equilibrium concentration of Fe ions in the pore
334 solution. Fe(III) ions exist as $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_4^-$ in the high-pH pore solution of the hydrated cement, and C-
335 S-H uptakes $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_4^-$ via surface complexation reactions. The distribution coefficient (R_d) equation
336 was incorporated into the thermodynamic model to predict the hydration products. The
337 experimentally determined Fe-siliceous hydrogarnet and other hydration products agree well with the
338 predicted results for both types of cements. Furthermore, the thermodynamic model predicted that
339 approximately 2 wt.% of Fe was incorporated in C-S-H. Finally, the model efficiently predicted
340 porosity development, and the predicted results were compared with the experimental MIP data.

341

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