

MECHATRONICS BOOK SERIES SYSTEM DESIGN AND SIGNAL PROCESSING VOLUME 1

Editors

**Asan G. A. Muthalif
Amir Akramin Shafie
Siti Fauziah Toha
Iskandar Al-Thani Mahmood**



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CONTENTS

Editorial Notes	v
About the Editors	vi
Contents	vii
1 Energy Harvesting For Wide Area Sensor Networks.....	1
<i>Nahrul Khair Alang Md Rashid and Mohamad Ghazali Ameer Amsa</i>	
2 Design And Development Of Automatic Paper Box Folding Machine.....	8
<i>Md Mozasser Rahman, Anwar Hussain bin Mohamed Rasied and Ahmad Zulkamal Ismail</i>	
3 Intelligent Shoe Guard System.....	20
<i>M. J. E. Salami, A. M. Aibinu, Siti Sarah binti Mohd Sufian</i>	
4 Applications of Mechatronics Engineering In Modern Agriculture.....	29
<i>Nahrul Khair Alang Md Rashid</i>	
5 Mathematical Modeling of Counter Flow Scrubber Using Eulerian-Lagrangian Approach.....	34
<i>Bashir Ahmed Danzomo and Momoh Jimoh E. Salami</i>	
6 Auto Landmarks Generation For SLAM Algorithm.....	42
<i>Nahrul Khair Alang Md Rashid and Imama Karim Manba Usama</i>	
7 Automatic Intelligent Ordering System Design and Tools Selection.....	46
<i>Siti Fauziah Toha and Rosdiazli Ibrahim</i>	
8 Design And Development of a Sorting Machine Using Multiple Sensory System.....	52
<i>Md Mozasser Rahman1, Siti Fatimah binti Abdul Rahim</i>	

9	Design And Development Of Intelligent Wiper For Vehicle Windshield: Mechanical Design	58
	<i>Shahrul Na'im Sidek, Abd Rahman Ibrahim</i>	
10	Design and Development of Intelligent Wiper for Vehicle Windshield: Electrical Design	63
	<i>Shahrul Na'im Sidek, Mohammad Afhamuddin Ab Aziz</i>	
11	Design and Development of Intelligent Wiper for Vehicle Windshield: Final Assembly And Results.....	68
	<i>Shahrul Na'im Sidek, Mohammad Afhamuddin Ab Aziz</i>	
12	Design and Prototyping of Inertia Wheel.....	73
	<i>W. Astuti, A. R. Kasim, M. I. Solihin, A.M. Aibinu, Momoh Jimoh E.Salami and Wahyudi</i>	
13	Design and Implementation of Instant Noodles Vending Machine.....	80
	<i>M.M.Rashid</i>	
14	Mathematical Model for Three Tank System.....	88
	<i>W. Astuti, R. Alimuddin, A.M. Aibinu, Momoh Jimoh E.Salami and Wahyudi Martono</i>	
15	Design of Software Tool to Detect QRS Complex from ECG Signal.....	98
	<i>Wahju Sediono</i>	
16	Development of a Jet Powered Floating Platform (In Air).....	104
	<i>M. Zharif, Raisuddin Khan and Masum Billah</i>	
17	Development of Experimental Station for Earthquake Prediction.....	109
	<i>A. M. Aibinu, M. J. E. Salami, Asan Gani Muthalif, Sumaiyah Mior Badri, Sarah Khalidah and Nuruleeman Saat</i>	
18	Development of Robotic Manipulator to Assist Human by Using Brain Signal.....	117
	<i>Rodhiah, Raisuddin Khan and Masum Billah</i>	
19	Development of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle – Part 1.....	123
	<i>Shahrul Na'im Sidek, M. Ismail Mohtar, A Mushawwir M Khalil</i>	

20	Development of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle – Part 2.....	129
	<i>Shahrul Na'im Sidek, A Mushawwir M Khalil, M. Ismail Mohtar</i>	
21	Earthquake Prediction And Monitoring Using Unusual Animal Behavior.....	134
	<i>A. M. Aibinu, W. Astuti, M. J. E. Salami, R. Akmelawati and Asan Gani Muthalif</i>	
22	Development of Automatic Rocking Baby Cradle.....	141
	<i>W. Astuti, N. F. Azlan, A.M. Aibinu, Momoh Jimoh E.Salami and Wahyudi Martono</i>	
23	Electrooculography (EOG)-Controlled Wheelchair.....	149
	<i>Shahrul Na'im Sidek, M. Iqbal Zakaria and A. Ridwan A.Aziz</i>	
24	Conceptual Design of an Intelligent Coconut Dehusking.....	155
	<i>M. J. E. Salami, A. M. Aibinu</i>	
25	An Electrooculogram (EOG) Signal for Wheelchair Motion Control.....	163
	<i>Salmiah Ahmad, Nurul Muthmainnah Mohd Noor</i>	
26	A conceptual Paper on Intelligent Car Battery Monitoring System.....	171
	<i>Abdul Hafiz Bin Sahar, Khairul Azhar Bin Muhamat, M. J. E. Salami, and A. M. Aibinu</i>	
27	GIS-Based Vehicle Traffic Simulation.....	177
	<i>Wahju Sediono</i>	
28	Intelligent Postal Mails Sorter.....	183
	<i>Mohd Arif Faiz Bin Omar, Mohd Zain Bin Ismail, M. J. E. Salami, A. M. Aibinu</i>	
29	Intelligent Wet Scrubber System for Industrial Air Pollution Control.....	188
	<i>Bashir Ahmed Danzomo and Momoh Jimoh E. Salami</i>	
30	Leveraging on Nature for Systems Design.....	194
	<i>Nahrul Khair Alang Md Rashid and Safinaz Kader Mohideen</i>	
31	Natural Ventilation of Yam Storage System.....	199
	<i>Murtala Abdulazeez, M.J.E. Salami, Md. Raisuddin Khan</i>	
32	Self-Repair Capability in Engineering Systems.....	208
	<i>Nahrul Khair Alang Md Rashid and Aous Naji Rasheed</i>	

33	Simulation of Airflow and Temperature Distribution in Yam Storage System	213
	<i>Murtala Abdulazeez, M.J.E. Salami, Md. Raisuddin Khan, Nabeel Adeyemi</i>	
34	Sound Identification in Noisy Environment.....	218
	<i>Nahrul Khair Alang Md Rashid, Nor Hidayati Diana Nordin and Alim Sabur Ajibola</i>	
35	Intelligent CCTV-Based Monitoring System for Kulliyah of Engineering, IIUM.....	225
	<i>M. J. E. Saslami,, A. M. Aibinu and Nur Syahrain binti Mohd Jahini</i>	
36	Virtual Modeling of Two-Wheeled Wheelchair using Msc Visual Nastran 4D.....	231
	<i>Salmiah Ahmad, M. O. Tokhi</i>	

CHAPTER 31

Natural Ventilation of Yam Storage System

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31.1 Introduction

A typical atmospheric air consists of 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, 0.03% carbon dioxide and other composition of gases that make up the atmospheric air. The flow of air is therefore indispensable for the metabolic activity of yam tuber in order to guarantee its preservation. At the same time the yam tuber discharges water vapour and carbon dioxide. Therefore, if the composition of the atmosphere in the storage system deviates from the normal condition of the atmospheric air as a result of the metabolic activity, this can have a poor effect on the condition of the stored produce.

The excessive air moisture which can condense if the temperature of storage system falls, promotes the formation of rot and a very low concentration of oxygen prevents respiration and promote an undesired fermentation of the tubers in store. Therefore, the increased carbon dioxide and ethylene concentrations where yam tubers are stored are not desired. Increased carbon dioxide concentrations cause destruction of the tuber cell structure. Ethylene is a growth hormone which promotes germination [1].

Consequently it becomes clear that changes in the composition of the atmosphere in yam storage system are not desirable as these can have some negative effects on yam tubers. To alleviate these problems, the yam storage system must be sufficiently ventilated. Ventilation is not only for the purpose of gas exchanges between the store and the environment but it also affects the temperature in the yam storage system. Controlling ventilation is not simple as it can easily have counterproductive effects. Suppose the store is ventilated during the day, this can raised the temperatures and lead to undesirable heating of the stored produce. Inadequate ventilation at very low humidity promotes drying out of the tubers in storage. The store should consequently be ventilated at night as much as possible since temperatures are lower during this time and the relative humidity is normally higher than any other time [2]. Consequently, the air in storage system should have a humidity rate at which the exchange of water vapour is minimal. At a storage temperature of 26 - 28 °C which can be assumed typical for West Africa, a relative humidity of 70 - 80% leads to an equilibrium, in which the exchange of air between the tuber and its surroundings is very low [3]. With these storage conditions, the tuber retains the properties which define its quality like colour, aroma, flavour and chemical composition.

31.2 Theoretical Study of Natural Ventilation in a Yam Storage System

Natural ventilation in building has been studied theoretically and experimentally for a long time. The main driving force of air exchange in natural ventilation is the thermal buoyancy and the wind induced forces. In order to have a better understanding of the ventilation mechanism, these driving forces have been treated separately and two particular single span yam storage systems are investigated: the single sided longitudinal roof opening case and the case of a roof opening with a longitudinal side window opening.

In yam storage system, a few studies for predicting ventilation rate were available for roof ventilation or for both roof and side openings. From these studies one can conclude that the proposed calculations are restricted within narrow ranges for particular houses with special vent.