

# Phase Equilibrium Study in Supercritical Fluid Extraction of Ethanol to Octane Mixture Using CO<sub>2</sub>

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Solubility data was measured for carbon dioxide with ethanol and octane using a phase equilibrium loading re-circulating high-pressure type apparatus at a pressure up to 100.75 bar and a temperature of 348.15K for ethanol and octane mixture involved with 25% ethanol and 75% octane. Experimental data was compared with the calculated regular solution theory data. A procedure is employed to each phase by applying activity coefficient expressions based on regular solution theory. Calculations along these lines are described and the physical bases for applying this method under the relevant conditions are discussed. The regular solution theory approach has been found to be encouraging for the prediction of phase equilibria solubilities though the interaction parameters must be regarded as pressure dependent.

**Keywords:** Activity coefficient, CO<sub>2</sub> solvent, ethanol and octane, phase equilibria, regular solution theory, and supercritical extraction.

## INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have proven that carbon dioxide is chemically reactive toward alcohols and general oxygen-containing compounds and it also produces weak complexation in condensed mixtures of these substances (Hildebrand and Scott 1964; Gupta, Lesslie, and King 1973; Kassim and Davarnejad 2006a,b; Kassim,

Davarnejad, and Zainal 2008; Davarnejad et al. 2008a).

However, percentage of octane and ethanol extraction by high pressure CO<sub>2</sub> solvent increases with a decrease of pressure in the binary systems of CO<sub>2</sub>-octane and CO<sub>2</sub>-ethanol, respectively, but extraction percentage of ethanol is more than octane at the same conditions (Kassim, Davarnejad, and Zainal 2008). Furthermore, the

azeotrope of the ethanol-octane systems occurs at around a ratio of ethanol: octane = 84:16 (Kassim and Davarnejad 2006), similar to the chosen ethanol-octane ratio in this study.

Recently some researchers have theoretically studied mutual solubilities of some natural hydrocarbons from petroleum production as a function of pressure (Pires, Mohamed, and Mansoori 2001, Benmekki and Mansoori 1987). They predicted equilibrium data for binary water-hydrocarbon, alcohol-hydrocarbon, and other complex mixture systems by applying associating fluid equations of state.

In addition, Browarzik (2004) theoretically studied vapor-liquid equilibrium for ethanol-octane system and the other binary systems containing alkane-alkanol. The research for the case of ethanol-octane system was conducted at temperatures of 75°C and 45°C.

According to this case, two closed loops were observed at temperatures of 45°C and 75 °C. The former was at a pressure less than 0.2 bar whereas the later was at pressure between 0.2 bar and 0.9 bar. An azeotrope point was observed at the ethanol mole fraction of 0.864 for this mixture in both of the loops. On the other hand, these results were supported by experimental data reported by Goral et al. (1998).

Gupta, Lesslie, and King (1973) have studied the solubilities of ethanol in compressed CO<sub>2</sub> at pressures ranging from 10 to 60 bar and at temperatures of 25, 50, and 75 °C. They clearly showed that temperature increased ethanol solubility in CO<sub>2</sub>. Furthermore, solubility decreased with increasing pressure of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The solubilities of octane in CO<sub>2</sub> at temperatures of 17 °C and 38 °C and pressures up to 36.7 bar were studied by Wang, Lang, and Guo (1996). They concluded that solubility decreased with increasing pressure. Furthermore, temperature increased octane solubility in CO<sub>2</sub> at similar pressures.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to predict mutual solubilities for a system consisting of 0.33 mole ratio of octane to ethanol as heavy component with supercritical and slightly

subcritical carbon dioxide solvent. The data was then calculated from regular solution equations. The equations are described in details by King et al. (1983). The main reason for using the regular solution theory is that the estimation of some of the parameters required for these calculations would be difficult to obtain if the solute was a complex substance; furthermore, little information was known apart from its structural formula.

Hence, an alternative procedure which, apart from these objectives, was to apply the activity coefficient expressions of the regular solution equations type to each phase. Calculations along these lines were described and the physical bases for applying these methods under the relevant conditions were discussed. Some of the interaction parameters required for the calculation of activity coefficients can be calculated from the experimental data for some equilibria systems mentioned in the literature (Francis 1954, Schneider et al. 1967). The other information regarding these equations can be obtained from another reference (Fredenslund, Gmehling, and Rasussen 1977). These parameters are independent of temperature and related to the pressure (Smith and Van Ness 1987, Kassim and Davarnejad 2006a,b, Davarnejad et al. 2008). The method of extracting the parameters has been described in Kassim and Davarnejad (2006a,b) and King et al.(1984). By putting together all the information obtained from the aforementioned references and applying the regular solution equations for activity coefficients to calculate Gibbs function relationships, the mutual solubility data for the phases will be calculated eventually.

In this study, two-phase equilibrium data was experimentally obtained and was theoretically modeled using regular solution theory equations.

## **EXPERIMENTAL**

### **Materials**

A solution of ethanol (99.9 %, J.T. Baker) and octane (99.8 %, J.T. Baker) containing

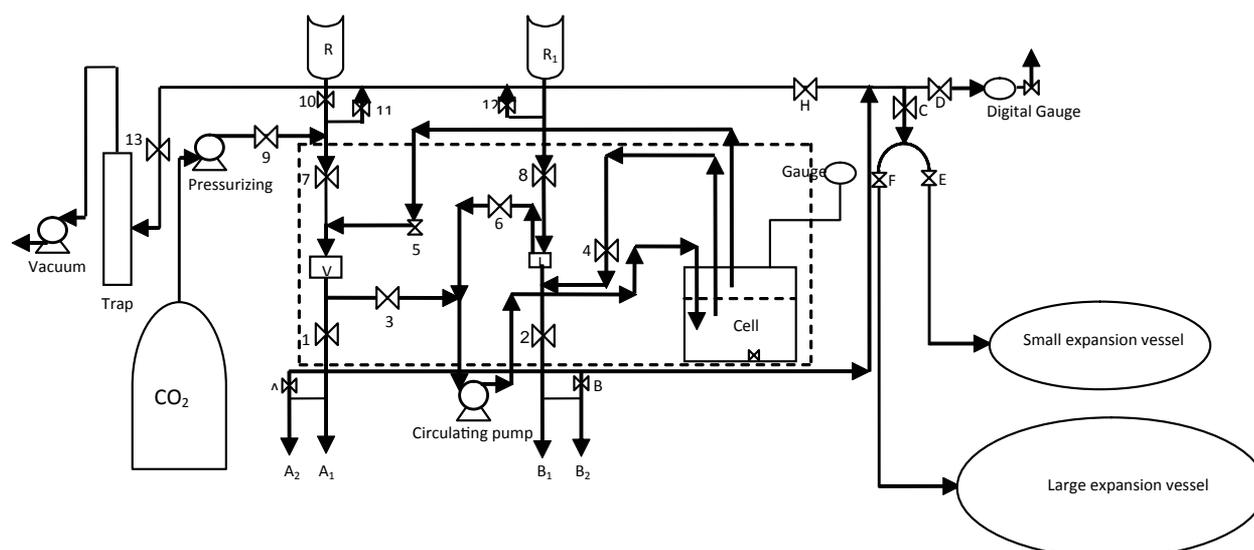


Figure 1. Supercritical Fluid Extraction Equilibria Apparatus

25% ethanol and 75% octane was utilized for the supercritical extraction process using CO<sub>2</sub> (99.99%) purchased from MOX Factory. The extracted samples from the apparatus were analyzed by gas chromatography (GC).

### Experimental Procedure

The equipment used was the phase equilibrium re-circulation high-pressure type apparatus as shown in Figure 1 (fabricated by Alpha Dynamic Sdn. Bhd).

In this apparatus, the attainment of equilibrium was further assisted by magnetic stirrer which was installed in the equilibrium vessel. All units of the apparatus—that is, the equilibrium cell (volume 500cm<sup>3</sup>), the joining tubes, vapor and liquid sample bombs (volume 50 and 40 cm<sup>3</sup>), couplings, and valves—were made of stainless steel and designed to withstand a working pressure of 500 bar. The part of the equipment shown within the dash line was immersed in an air bath. The temperature in the equilibrium cell was measured using a digital thermocouple.

When the cell and the circuit were under vacuum, the heavy component under study (ethanol-octane as feed) was fed into the equilibrium cell. This was accomplished by first

filling the reservoir (R<sub>1</sub>) with about 120cm<sup>3</sup> of this liquid. The liquid heavy component was then allowed to go directly into the cell by turning on valve 8 and turning off valve 6. Having charged the cell with the heavy component, CO<sub>2</sub> at cylinder pressure was admitted to the cell. A high pressure pump connected between the cylinder containing the contacting CO<sub>2</sub> and the cell was then switched on to pressurize the cell. In the filling process, the heaters for the cell, the air bath, and also the bath fan were switched on. As the cell was brought to the desired pressure, valves 6 and 3 were turned off, and the cell was carefully brought to the desired temperature. This was accomplished using a fine control on the heater outputs, which were gradually increased to obtain the required temperature.

Equilibration and sampling would be achieved when the required temperature (by controlling and observing the temperature indicator) and pressure (by controlling and observing the pressure gauge) were reached and remained constant (equilibrium condition); the pneumatic re-circulating pump and the magnetic stirrer were turned on at the same time. Then, valve 6 was opened and, after a few seconds, valve 3 was also opened. The reason for this was to avoid any droplets of solvent passing through the vapor sample bomb flow section. The

pump and stirrer were left on for about 30min, to ensure that equilibrium would be achieved. When equilibrium was resumed, the pump and stirrer were turned off and internal valves 3, 5, 4, and 6 were kept open. The phases were then allowed to stand in contact with each other for about 30min to allow the bubbles in the liquid to become disengaged. After the 30-min period, the vapor sample bomb and the liquid sample bomb were isolated by turning off valves 3 and 5 (for the vapor sample bomb) and valves 4 and 6 (for the liquid sample bomb). Samples of the gas and liquid phases were then extracted from the vapor bomb and the liquid bomb through valves 1 and 2, respectively.

The samples taken from A and B were the vapor and liquid samples which were analyzed by GC (Perkin Elmer) equipped with a capillary GC column (length × I.D. 30m × 0.32mm, d<sub>f</sub> 1.00 μm, Supelco brand).

In terms of uncertainty, the validity of the experimental data was already proposed by King et al. (1983). The experimental data were

produced based on the average of the two repeat runs performed for each data point. The repeat runs ensured that the experiments could be repeated within an experimental error of ±2%.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mutual solubility of CO<sub>2</sub>-ethanol-octane ternary system was studied at temperature of 75 °C and at various pressures. The composition of the equilibrium phases was noted at each pressure. The mole fractions of ethanol in the liquid and vapor phases on a carbon dioxide free basis were calculated by applying a set of equations which were developed by Davarnejad et al. (2008 a,b). The results obtained are found in Table1.

## THERMODYNAMIC MODEL

The regular solution theory was adopted as a model for this system based on the activity coefficients. The applied model with fundamental

**Table 1. CO<sub>2</sub>-Ethanol-Octane System, Composition of the Equilibrium Vapor and Liquid Phase for an Ethanol/Octane Feed Ratio of 25:75 at 75°C and at Various Pressures**

Pressure (bar)	Vapor phase, ethanol mole fraction on CO <sub>2</sub> free basis	Liquid phase, ethanol mole fraction on CO <sub>2</sub> free basis	Vapor phase, CO <sub>2</sub> mole fraction	Liquid phase, CO <sub>2</sub> mole fraction
100.75	0.4450	0.2496	0.9725	0.9175
100.00	0.4450	0.2497	0.973	0.9120
97.00	0.4525	0.2496	0.9729	0.8911
92.75	0.4650	0.2498	0.9728	0.8522
85.00	0.4860	0.2497	0.9733	0.7805
75.00	0.5150	0.2496	0.9732	0.7011
60.00	0.5575	0.2498	0.9720	0.5521
50.00	0.5900	0.2498	0.9707	0.4811
31.50	0.655	0.2496	0.9658	0.2851

Table 2. Interaction Parameters Based on the Experimental Data Extracted from Literature (Schneider et al. 1967, King et al. 1984) at 25°C

P (bar)	$a_{CH_3/CO_2}$	$a_{CO_2/CH_3}$	$(x_{CO_2}^E)^{model}$	$(x_{CO_2}^S)^{model}$
100.75	640.5753	89.4743	0.9516	0.8348
100.00	640.3018	89.5782	0.9519	0.8344
97.00	639.1897	89.9994	0.9751	0.6282
92.75	637.5649	90.6118	0.9754	0.6287
85.00	634.4533	91.7773	0.9570	0.8248
75.00	630.1543	93.3783	0.9600	0.8184
60.00	623.1058	95.9983	0.9642	0.8091
50.00	618.0068	97.9008	0.9667	0.8031
31.50	607.7301	101.7784	0.9710	0.7922

$a_{CO_2/OH} = 855.51$  calculated from CO<sub>2</sub>-heptyl alcohol system (Francis, 1954).  
 $a_{OH/CO_2} = 3000$  calculated from CO<sub>2</sub>-heptyl alcohol system (Francis, 1954).

thermodynamic roots have been described in detail in the literature (Davarnejad et al. 2008 a; Davarnejad et al. 2008 b).

Interaction parameters as function of pressure were calculated by using the procedure and equations mentioned in the literature (Davarnejad et al. 2008a,b). These data were

used to predict the mutual miscibility of the CO<sub>2</sub>-ethanol-octane system at a temperature of 75°C and at various pressures as shown in Table 2.

Two-phase equilibrium data based on the experiment and model related to the pressure and at temperature of 75°C are shown in figures 2 and 3, respectively.

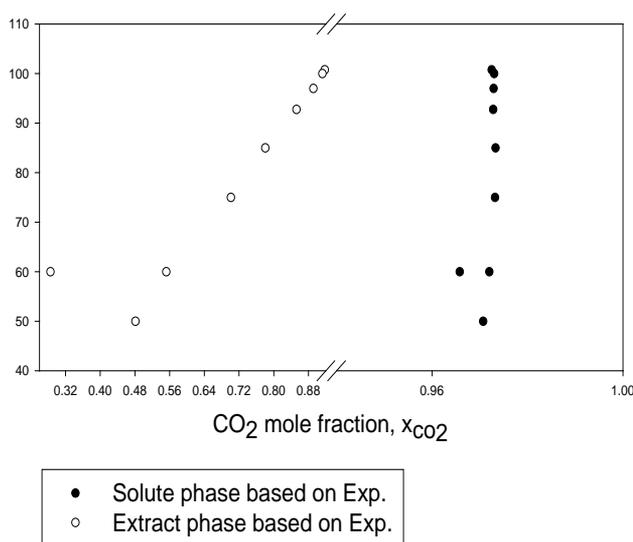


Figure 2. Two-Phase Equilibrium Data Based on the Experiment for CO<sub>2</sub> Component

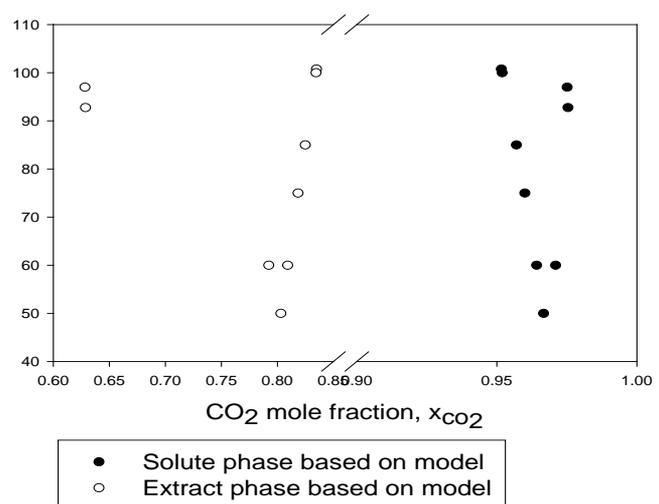


Figure 3. Two-Phase Equilibrium Data Based on Regular Solution Model for CO<sub>2</sub> Component

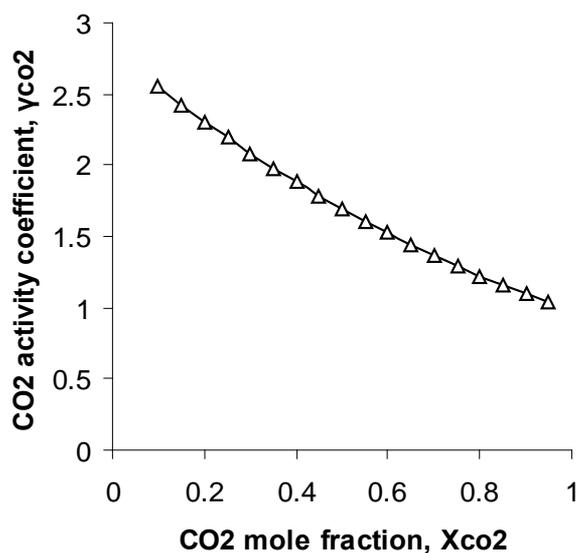


Fig. 4. CO<sub>2</sub> activity coefficient ( $\gamma_{CO_2}$ ) against CO<sub>2</sub> mole fraction ( $x_{CO_2}$ ) at constant temperature of 75 °C and at pressure of 100 bar

Figure 4 shows the CO<sub>2</sub> activity coefficient,  $\gamma_{CO_2}$ , against CO<sub>2</sub> mole fraction,  $x_{CO_2}$ , at a constant temperature of 75°C and at a pressure of 100 bar. Activity coefficients for the other pressures are shown in Table 3. Figure 5 shows that the molar Gibbs function of CO<sub>2</sub>,  $G^{mixing}_m$ , against CO<sub>2</sub> mole fraction,  $x_{CO_2}$ , at constant temperature of 75°C and at pressure of 100 bar.  $G^{mixing}_m$  varies similarly to a function having a parabolic profile and marks its maximum at  $x_{CO_2} = 0.35$ .

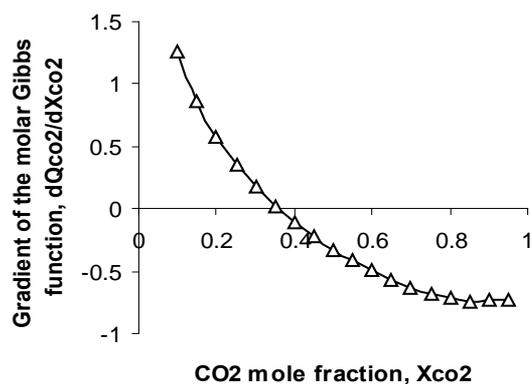


Figure 6. Gradient of the Molar Gibbs Function for CO<sub>2</sub> ( $dG^{mixing}_m/dx_{CO_2}$ ) against CO<sub>2</sub> Mole Fraction ( $x_{CO_2}$ ) at Constant Temperature of 75°C and at Pressure of 100 bar

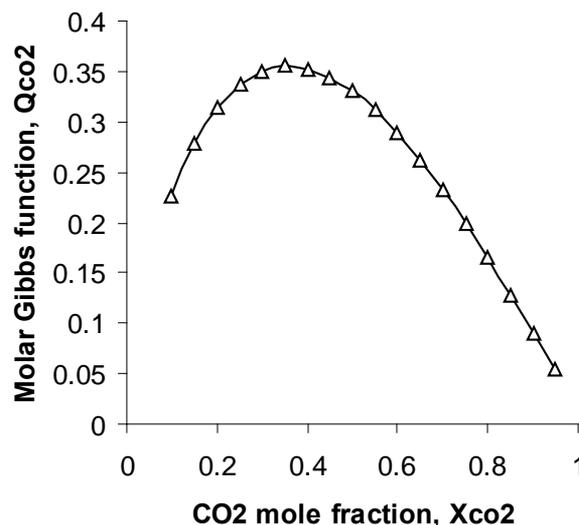


Fig. 5. Molar Gibbs function for CO<sub>2</sub> ( $G^{mixing}_m$ ) against CO<sub>2</sub> mole fraction ( $x_{CO_2}$ ) at constant temperature

Meanwhile, Figure 6 shows that the first derivative of the  $G^{mixing}_m$  curve which has a logarithmic profile. It decreases continuously when the CO<sub>2</sub> mole fraction increases up to 1. Of course, this derivative is null at  $x_{CO_2} = 0.35$ .

Figure 7 shows the solubility parameter,  $d^2Q_{CO_2}/dx^2_{CO_2}$ , (second derivative of the molar Gibbs function) against CO<sub>2</sub> mole fraction,  $x_{CO_2}$ , at constant temperature of 75°C and at pressure of 100 bar. It clearly shows the partial miscibility

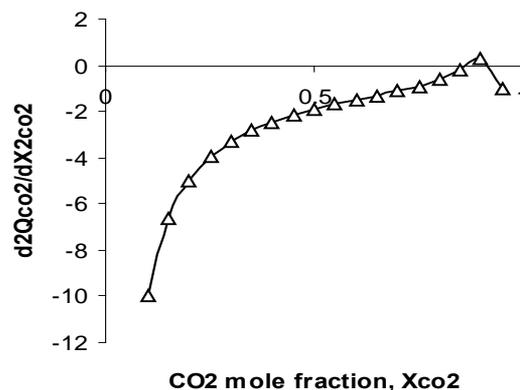


Figure 7. Second Derivative of the Molar Gibbs Function for CO<sub>2</sub> ( $d^2G^{mixing}_m/dx^2_{CO_2}$ ) against CO<sub>2</sub> Mole Fraction ( $x_{CO_2}$ ) at Constant Temperature of 75°C and at Pressure of 100 bar

Table 3. CO<sub>2</sub> Activity Coefficient ( $\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ ) against CO<sub>2</sub> Mole Fraction ( $x_{\text{CO}_2}$ ) at a Constant Temperature of 75°C and at Various Pressures

$x_{\text{CO}_2}$	$\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ 31.5 bar	$\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ 50 bar	$\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ 60 bar	$\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ 75 bar	$\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ 85 bar	$\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ 92.75 bar	$\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ 97 bar	$\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ 100 bar	$\gamma_{\text{CO}_2}$ 100.75 bar
0.1	2.4210	2.4626	2.4833	2.5122	2.5298	2.5425	2.5491	2.5537	2.5548
0.15	2.3189	2.3531	2.3701	2.3937	2.4080	2.4184	2.4237	2.4274	2.4283
0.20	2.2197	2.2475	2.2613	2.2802	2.2916	2.2999	2.3041	2.3070	2.3077
0.25	2.1236	2.1456	2.1565	2.1714	2.1803	2.1867	2.1900	2.1923	2.1928
0.30	2.0303	2.0474	2.0557	2.0671	2.0739	2.0787	2.0812	2.0829	2.0833
0.35	1.9398	1.9525	1.9587	1.9671	1.9720	1.9755	1.9773	1.9785	1.9788
0.40	1.8521	1.8610	1.8654	1.8712	1.8745	1.8769	1.8781	1.8789	1.8791
0.45	1.7669	1.7727	1.7755	1.7791	1.7812	1.7827	1.7834	1.7839	1.7840
0.50	1.6842	1.6875	1.6889	1.6908	1.6919	1.6926	1.6929	1.6931	1.6932
0.55	1.6040	1.6051	1.6055	1.6060	1.6062	1.6063	1.6063	1.6063	1.6063
0.60	1.5259	1.5254	1.5251	1.5245	1.5241	1.5237	1.5235	1.5233	1.5233
0.65	1.4500	1.4483	1.4474	1.4460	1.4451	1.4445	1.4441	1.4438	1.4438
0.70	1.3760	1.3735	1.3722	1.3704	1.3692	1.3684	1.3679	1.3676	1.3675
0.75	1.3038	1.3009	1.2995	1.2974	1.2961	1.2952	1.2947	1.2943	1.2943
0.80	1.2332	1.2303	1.2289	1.2269	1.2257	1.2247	1.2242	1.2239	1.2238
0.85	1.1643	1.1618	1.1605	1.1588	1.1577	1.1570	1.1566	1.1563	1.1562
0.90	1.0976	1.0958	1.0949	1.0937	1.0930	1.0924	1.0922	1.0920	1.0919
0.95	1.0364	1.0357	1.0353	1.0348	1.0345	1.0342	1.0341	1.0340	1.0340

zone. The sign of the second derivative of  $G_m^{\text{mixing}}$  changes at  $x_{\text{CO}_2} = 0.9$ . The solubility parameter data for the other pressures is shown in Table 4 and the interaction parameters are obtained from Table 2 and also from the literature (Fredenslund, Gmehling, and Rasussen 1977).

The solubility parameter shows a negative range for a completely miscible system. If the system is partially miscible, this parameter shows a positive range. Hence, the results based on the regular solution model predict that the studied system is completely miscible in the whole of CO<sub>2</sub> mole fractions except at  $x_{\text{CO}_2}=0.9$  to which the

current system is partially miscible for all of the operating pressures. Furthermore, this system is miscible partially at  $x_{\text{CO}_2}=0.95$  and at pressure of 31.5 bar.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the solubility data based on the regular solution theory with the differing shapes of the molecules and random mixing assumption was obtained and compared with the experimental data. The model used in the present work was one of the fundamental

Table 4. Solubility Parameter,  $d^2O_{CO_2}/dx^2_{CO_2}$ , for CO<sub>2</sub> against CO<sub>2</sub> Mole Fraction ( $x_{CO_2}$ ) at Constant Temperature of 75°C and at Various Pressures

$x_{CO_2}$	31.5 bar	50 bar	60 bar	75 bar	85 bar	92.75 bar	97 bar	100 bar	100.75 bar
0.10	-10.1591	-10.1056	-10.0786	-10.0408	-10.0175	-10.0005	-9.9916	-9.9855	-9.9840
0.15	-6.8220	-6.7682	-6.7411	-6.7033	-6.6801	-6.6631	-6.6543	-6.6482	-6.6467
0.20	-5.1505	-5.0964	-5.0693	-5.0315	-5.0083	-4.9915	-4.9826	-4.9766	-4.9751
0.25	-4.1442	-4.0899	-4.0627	-4.0251	-4.0020	-3.9853	-3.9765	-3.9706	-3.9691
0.30	-3.4693	-3.4149	-3.3878	-3.3504	-3.3275	-3.3109	-3.3023	-3.2963	-3.2949
0.35	-2.9823	-2.9280	-2.9011	-2.8639	-2.8413	-2.8249	-2.8164	-2.8106	-2.8091
0.40	-2.6108	-2.5569	-2.5302	-2.4935	-2.4713	-2.4552	-2.4468	-2.4411	-2.4397
0.45	-2.3138	-2.2606	-2.2344	-2.1984	-2.1767	-2.1610	-2.1529	-2.1473	-2.1459
0.50	-2.0655	-2.0134	-1.9879	-1.9530	-1.9320	-1.9169	-1.9091	-1.9037	-1.9024
0.55	-1.8476	-1.7974	-1.7730	-1.7397	-1.7197	-1.7054	-1.6979	-1.6929	-1.6917
0.60	-1.6450	-1.5979	-1.5750	-1.5441	-1.5256	-1.5124	-1.5056	-1.5010	-1.4999
0.65	-1.4426	-1.4004	-1.3800	-1.3527	-1.3365	-1.3250	-1.3191	-1.3151	-1.3141
0.70	-1.2216	-1.1871	-1.1708	-1.1491	-1.1365	-1.1276	-1.1231	-1.1201	-1.1194
0.75	-0.9535	-0.9323	-0.9226	-0.9102	-0.9033	-0.8988	-0.8965	-0.8951	-0.8947
0.80	-0.5908	-0.5929	-0.5949	-0.5988	-0.6021	-0.6049	-0.6065	-0.6078	-0.6081
0.85	-0.0532	-0.1003	-0.1245	-0.1594	-0.1816	-0.1983	-0.2073	-0.2136	-0.2151
0.90	0.7205	0.5765	0.5046	0.4038	0.3412	0.2951	0.2706	0.2537	0.2495
0.95	0.2458	-0.1477	-0.3417	-0.6102	-0.7751	-0.8956	-0.9591	-1.0028	-1.0136

thermodynamic theories. In this treatment, the interaction between the individual groups constituting the molecules was considered. From this work, a table of group interaction parameters was generated, together with the parameters, which described the size and shape of the molecules that proves possible to predict the vapor-liquid equilibria from a knowledge of the structural formula of the constituent molecular species. From the separations point of view, considerable separation was not achieved in this ratio of ethanol and octane mixture using supercritical carbon dioxide.

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