

The Process Development of Glass Cullet and Recycled Glass Aggregate for Improving Recycling Rate

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Research

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1 The process development of glass cullet and recycled glass
2 aggregate for improving recycling rate

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9

10 **Abstract**

11 Due to depletion of resources and the spread of environmental pollution, the
12 sustainability of raw materials is emerging as an important issue. Glass bottles are one
13 of the products that are easy to recycle, and many studies have been conducted to
14 improve the recycling rate. In this study, we attempted to develop the waste glass bottles
15 process that can be recycled into a glass cullet and recycled glass aggregate. To produce
16 a cullet from waste glass bottles(WGBs), color quality standards must be satisfied.
17 Therefore, we applied a multistage color sorter to the experiment. The recycled
18 aggregate glass must adjust the particle size. Thus, we experimented with the optimum
19 crusher selection test when applying the crushing process. And, we confirmed the
20 appropriateness of process by aspect ratio analysis of product. In addition, we
21 confirmed the trends in the data required to set the optimum design and operating
22 conditions of the selected vertical shaft impact(VSI) crusher using discrete element
23 method(DEM) simulations.

24 **Keywords:** waste glass bottles, cullet, color sorting, recycled glass aggregate,
25 crushing, discrete element method

26 **1. Introduction**

27 Increasing consumption patterns globally are resulting in depletion of resources and
28 the spread of environmental pollution; therefore, the sustainability of raw materials is
29 emerging as an important issue. Various studies have been conducted on the
30 sustainability of raw materials; nevertheless, many products are disposed in landfills
31 or incinerated due to economic constraints. Landfill and incineration can cause many
32 problems, such as air pollution and heavy metal leaching; a better future-oriented
33 method should be suggested [1-3].

34 In 2019, the amount of waste glass bottles (WGB) generated was about 615,000
35 tons in Korea. The associated recycling rate is reported to be approximately 79.0% and
36 486,000 tons [4]. Since 2010, the recycling rate of WGBs of over 75% has been
37 achieved, but is about 10% lower compared with Germany and Japan, countries with
38 advanced recycling systems and strategies. In addition, since only manufacturers with
39 an annual delivery of more than 10 tons, sales of more than 1 billion won, and annual
40 imports of more than 300 million won in the previous year are obligated to recycled
41 producers, it is difficult to confirm an accurate amount of WGBs [5]. Furthermore, glass
42 bottles are easily broken and the recycling of mixed glass bottles is difficult, hence over
43 200,000 tons of WGBs have been dumped in landfills.

44 Various studies have been conducted to recycle landfill-WGBs. For example, the
45 foam glass production study [6-9], the cement replacement study [10-13], the aggregate
46 replacement study in concrete [14-19], and the waste glass utilize study in mortar [20-
47 24] are published. In the above studies, they have assessed that the alkali-silica reaction
48 (ASR) generated when WGB and concrete are mixed can be controlled with additives
49 and by adjusting the particle size. In addition, we found that the pozzolanic reaction
50 caused by the hydration reaction of glass and cement improves the physical properties
51 of concrete. Hence, we believe that the WGBs can be recycled into a construction
52 material. Most of the studies on WGBs have focused on recycling methods, but studies
53 on the treatment process are minimal. It is very important to study the optimum
54 treatment process because the economic aspect is essential to the WGB-recycling
55 process. Therefore, in this study, the optimum process design, which can be recycled
56 as a glass cullet and recycled glass aggregate, was investigated.

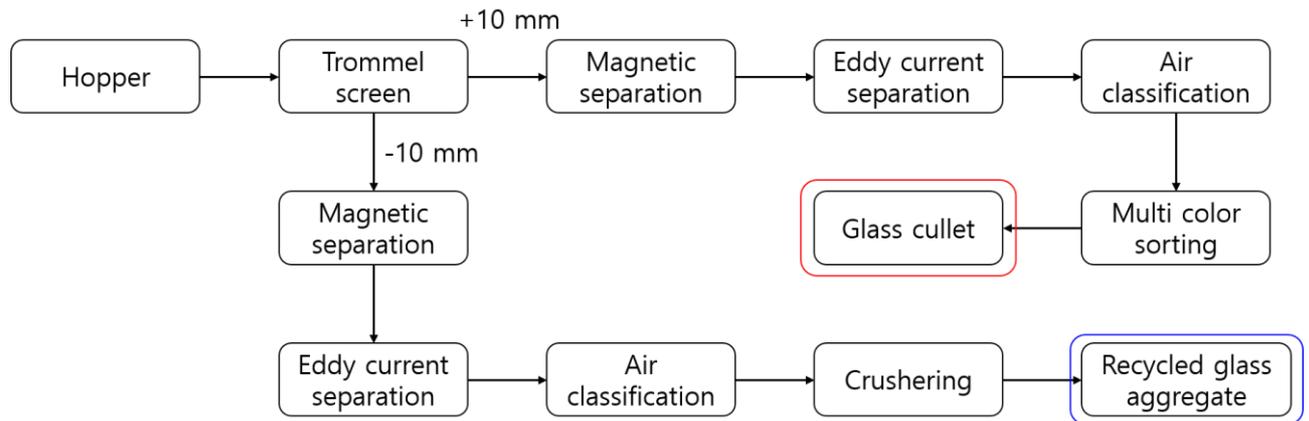
57 To produce a cullet from WGBs, color quality standards must be satisfied.
58 Therefore, we applied a multistage color sorter to the experiment. The recycled
59 aggregate glass must adjust the particle size. Thus, we experimented with the optimum
60 crusher selection test when applying the crushing process. A shredder, hammer crusher,

61 roll crusher, and vertical shaft impeller (VSI) crusher were used in the experiment, and
62 the particle size and aspect ratio of the product were confirmed. Subsequently, we ran
63 an EDEM simulation based on DEM to identify data trends needed to establish
64 optimum design and operating conditions. The results obtained satisfy all standards and
65 we believe that this study contributes to increasing the WGB recycling rate.

66 **2. Waste glass bottle recycling process**

67 In Korea the WGBs used domestically and commercially have collected by both
68 local governments and private enterprises. The hand-picked WGBs have cleaned and
69 then delivered to an intermediate-treatment enterprise. Fig. 1 shows the WGB recycling
70 process that were applied with the various separation methods, in this study. The
71 recycling process produces a glass cullet or a recycled glass aggregate, according to the
72 intended use. The collected WGBs were divided using a trommel screen and particles
73 of 10 mm or larger were for recycling into a glass cullet, and under 10 mm for the
74 recycled glass aggregate. The iron and non-iron impurities were removed using
75 magnetic and eddy-current separation, while light materials such as paper were
76 eliminated by air separation. A multi-stage color sorter was used because the glass
77 cullet can be produced in a single color only. In addition, the crushing process was

78 applied to adjust particle size of recycled glass aggregate.



79

80

Figure 1. Waste glass bottle recycling process

81 3. Experiment

82 3.1. Materials

83 The sample used in this study was supplied by Indong GRC, which is a WGB
84 intermediate treatment enterprise in Korea. Most of the foreign substances were
85 removed by hand separation, magnetic separation, eddy current separation and air
86 separation. The sample was a mixture of three colors, green, amber, and clear with a
87 weight ratio of 4:4:2. As confirmed in the process in Fig 1, the sample was tested by
88 size, with particles 10 mm or over 10 mm for the glass cullet(Fig. 2a) and under 10 mm
89 for the recycled glass aggregate(Fig. 2b).



90

(a)

(b)

91 **Figure 2.** a) Sample of glass cullet(+10 mm) b) Sample of recycled glass aggregate(-

92

10 mm)

93 We analyzed the samples to confirm the physical and chemical attributes. First, we

94 analyzed the particle size distribution of the samples using a dry sieve. The glass cullet

95 does not have a standard particle size distribution; therefore, only samples used for the

96 recycled glass aggregate, was analyzed. The particle size distribution analysis

97 progressed through sieve sizes of 10.0 mm, 5.0 mm, 2.5 mm, 1.2 mm, 0.6 mm, 0.3 mm,

98 0.15 mm as per the KSF 2527 experimental method [25]. Table 1 shows the results of

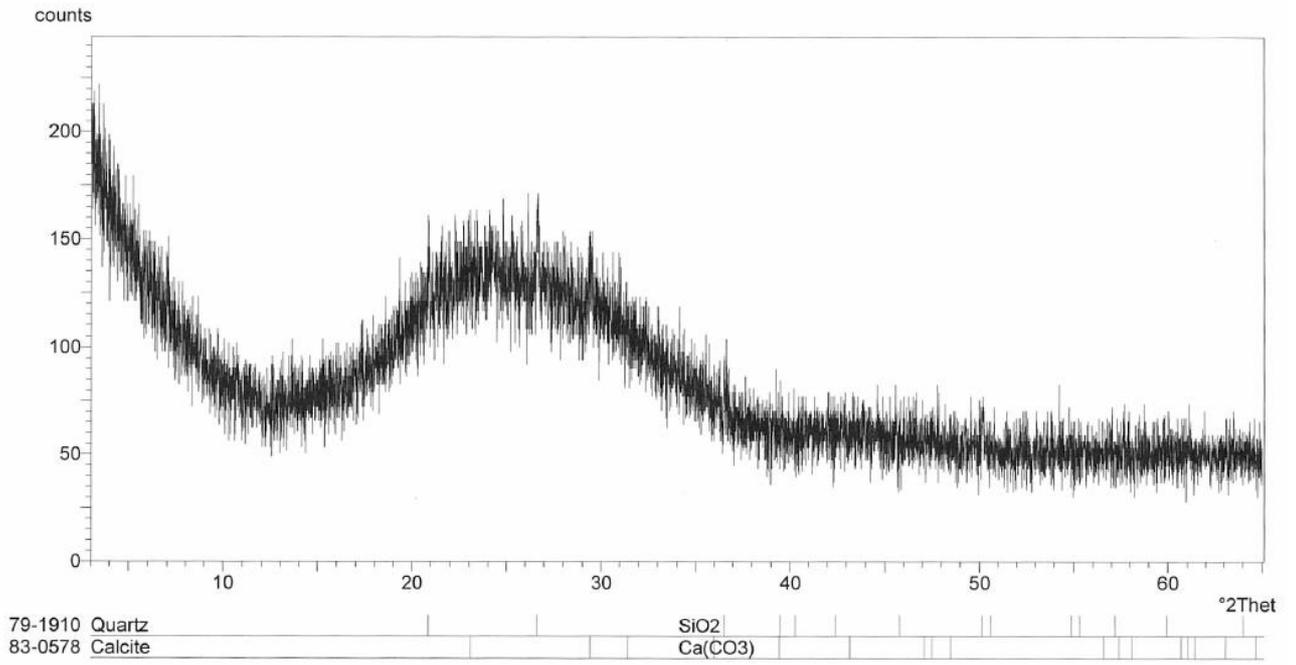
99 the particle size distribution analysis. Based on this we determined that an additional

100 crushing process is needed to satisfy the standard quality particle size distribution of

101 the recycled aggregate.

102 To identify constituent and mineralogical attributes, we conducted XRD (X-ray
103 diffraction), XRF (X-ray fluorescence), SEM-EDS (Scanning electron microscope -
104 Energy dispersive X-ray spectrometer) analyses. Table 2 contains the information of
105 the equipment used in this study. According to the results of the XRD analysis shown
106 in Table 3, the sample was amorphous and presented calcite and quartz peaks. As per
107 the XRF analysis (Table 3), the sample was composed of approximately 72% SiO₂,
108 12% Na₂O, and approximately 8% CaO. Fig. 4 shows the results of the SEM-EDS
109 analysis, and Si, O, Na, and Ca were identified as major constituents, displaying the
110 same trend as the XRD and XRF. The various analyses identify the sample used in this
111 study as soda glass, which consists of Na₂CO₃, SiO₂, CaO, and not borosilicate glass or
112 lead glass. Furthermore, the difference in results was not according to the particle size
113 for any of the analyses.

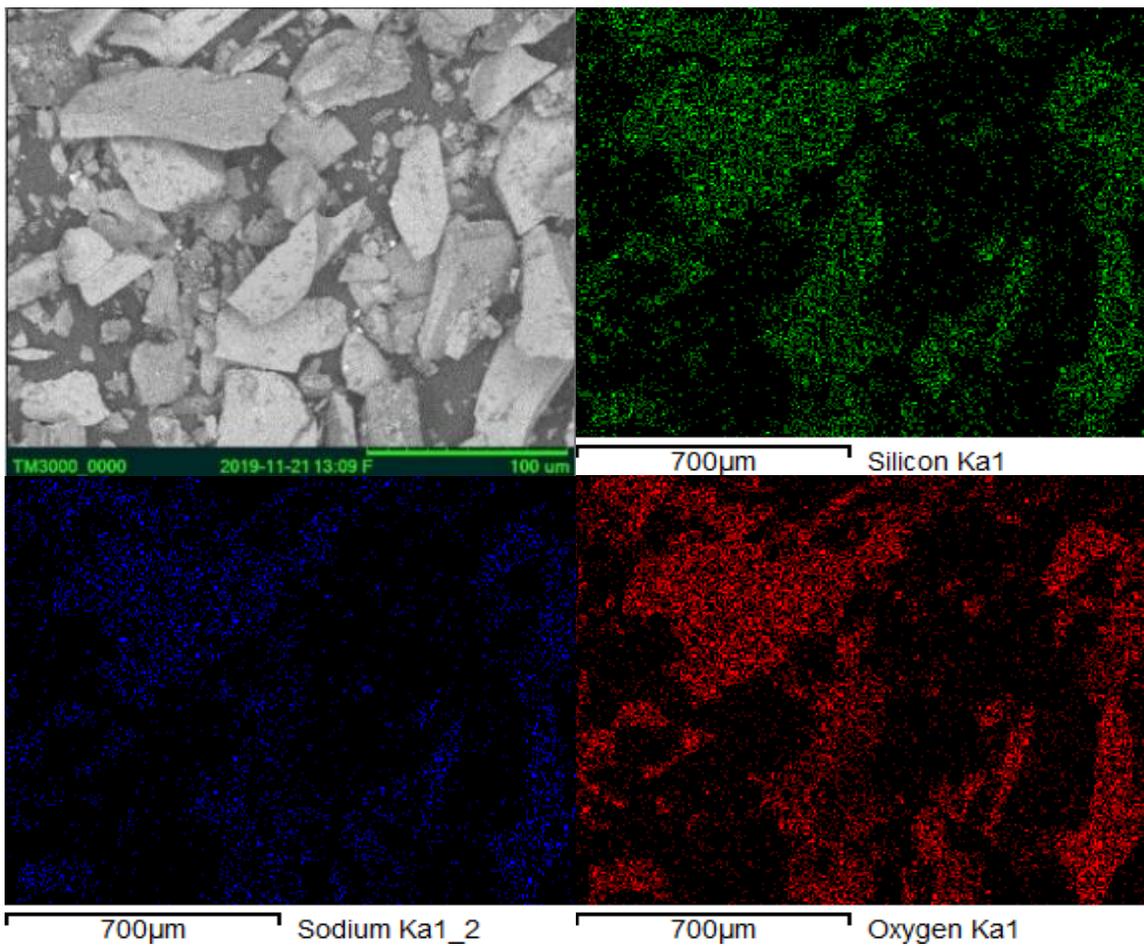
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Figure 3. XRD analysis result of sample



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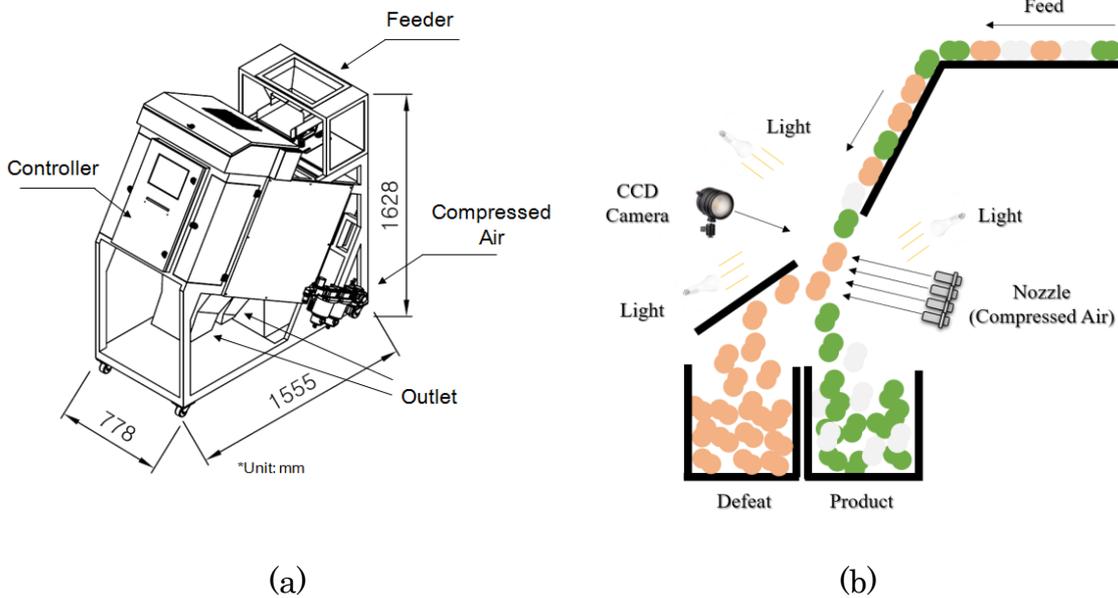
Figure 4. SEM image of sample

118 *3.2.Experiment equipment*

119 *3.2.1. Color sorter*

120 Recycling WGBs into cullet is the most economical method, however, color
121 classification is essential for this process. To achieve the quality standard, an
122 experiment was conducted by applying an optical sorter which was manufactured to
123 identify the different color mixing rates for each color. The color sorter is
124 compartmentalized according to the supply method of the feed: as chute and belt types.
125 Fig. 5a presents a schematic diagram of the chute type color sorter used in this study
126 [26]. Fig. 5b shows the fundamental structure of the chute-type color sorter. The color
127 sorter supplies the sample uniformly using a vibration feeder, the quantity of light
128 transmitted is measured by a high-resolution CCD line camera, and then the color data
129 of the samples are collected in a color sorter. Based on the collected data, the product
130 that is not the designated input color for the sorter is separated into a ‘defeat box’ by an
131 air nozzle. The major experimental conditions for the color sorter are color separation
132 order, color sensitivity, feed rate, air pressure, and particle size. In this study, we
133 referred to the study by Lee [27], to maintain a consistent experimental environment

134 and all the conditions except for the color selection order were fixed and tested.



135

(a)

(b)

136

Figure 5. Schematic of the color sorter.

137 3.2.2. Crusher

138 For recycling WGB under 10 mm into a recycled glass aggregate, satisfying the
139 recycled aggregate particle size standard is essential. In this study, an experiment was
140 conducted using four types of equipment: a hammer crusher, a shredder, a roll crusher,
141 and a VSI crusher, which characteristically show the main force applied to the particles
142 (Fig. 6). The key specifications and experimental conditions of the crusher used in this
143 study are listed in Table 4. The shredder and hammer crusher were tested using the
144 crusher specifications, and a roll crusher was used at a rotation speed of 280 rpm and a
145 roll gap of 2.5 mm, which is obtained from the equation of Mineral Processing Design

146 and Operations (Second Edition) [28]. The rotation speed of the VSI crusher can be
147 controlled by a control box, and 1,000 rpm was used to test the WGB, which is more
148 easily crushed than ores.



149 **Figure 6.** Crusher used in this study.

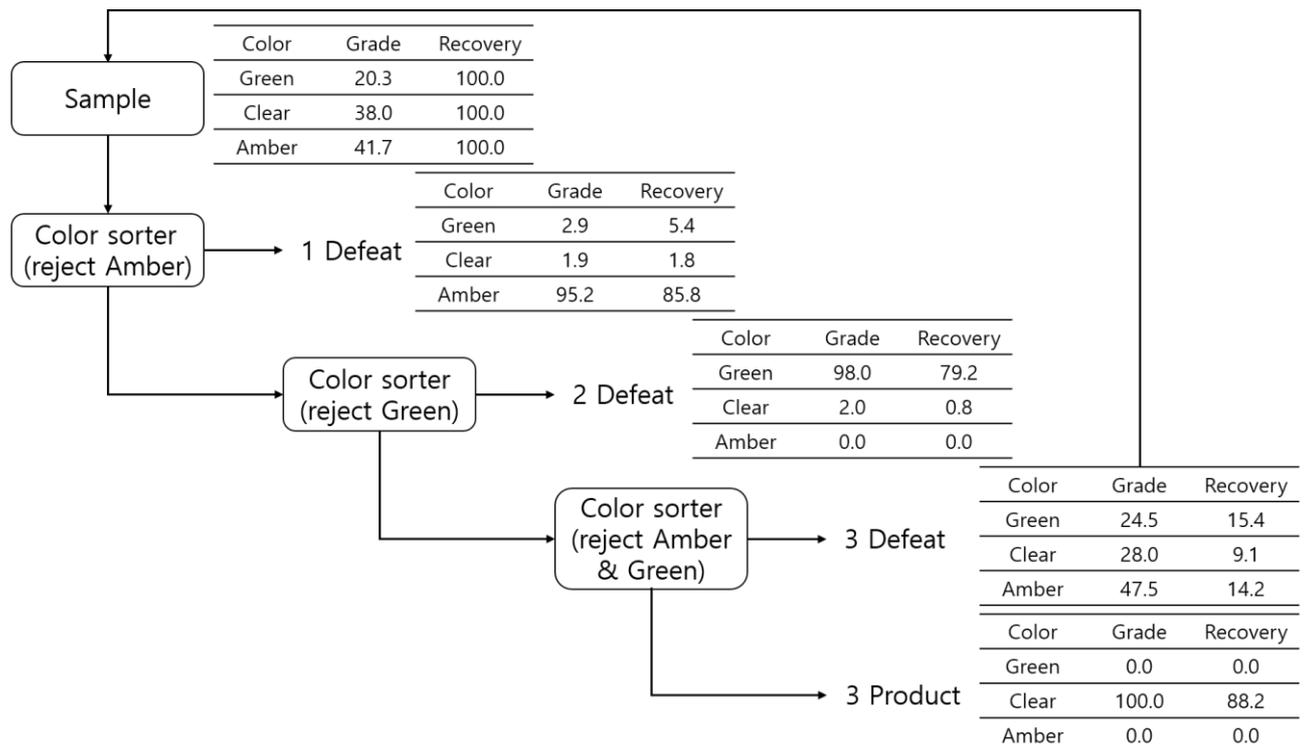
150 **4. Results & discussion**

151 *4.1. Color sorting experiment result*

152 To recycle mixed color WGB into a glass cullet, the color quality standard must be
153 satisfied. The color quality standard, in terms of difference color rates, is under 5% for
154 amber and green and is under 1% for clear. Since clear has the most stringent quality

155 standards, it was fixed to the end of the sorting order, which has the least amount of
156 WGBs to be removed. The order of green and amber were changed and tested as
157 condition A and B. The condition A involves the removal in the following sequence:
158 first amber, second green, third amber and green, while condition B is sequenced as
159 first green, second amber, third amber and green. The general color sorting experiment
160 removes the defeat color, which is usually a small portion. However, the sample used
161 in this study contained the desired color at a lower rate, therefore we removed the
162 desired color, instead. Fig. 7 presents the grade and recovery of each color according
163 to the conditions, and we judged the possibility of recycling WGBs. The results for the
164 condition A were as follows: amber grade at 95.2%, had a recovery of 85.8%, green
165 grade at 98.0%, recovery of 79.2%, clear grade at 100.0%, and a recovery of 88.2%.
166 We confirmed that the result of condition A satisfied the color quality standard for all
167 colors. The results for the condition B showed green grade at 80.3%, with a recovery
168 of 75.0%, amber grade at 96.2%, recovery of 75.5%, clear grade at 99.8%, and recovery
169 of 91.5%. The condition B achieved the color quality standard for amber and clear
170 products, but did not satisfy them for, green. In addition, the recoveries from condition
171 B, has a lower value than A for all colors except clear. Because the RGB values of

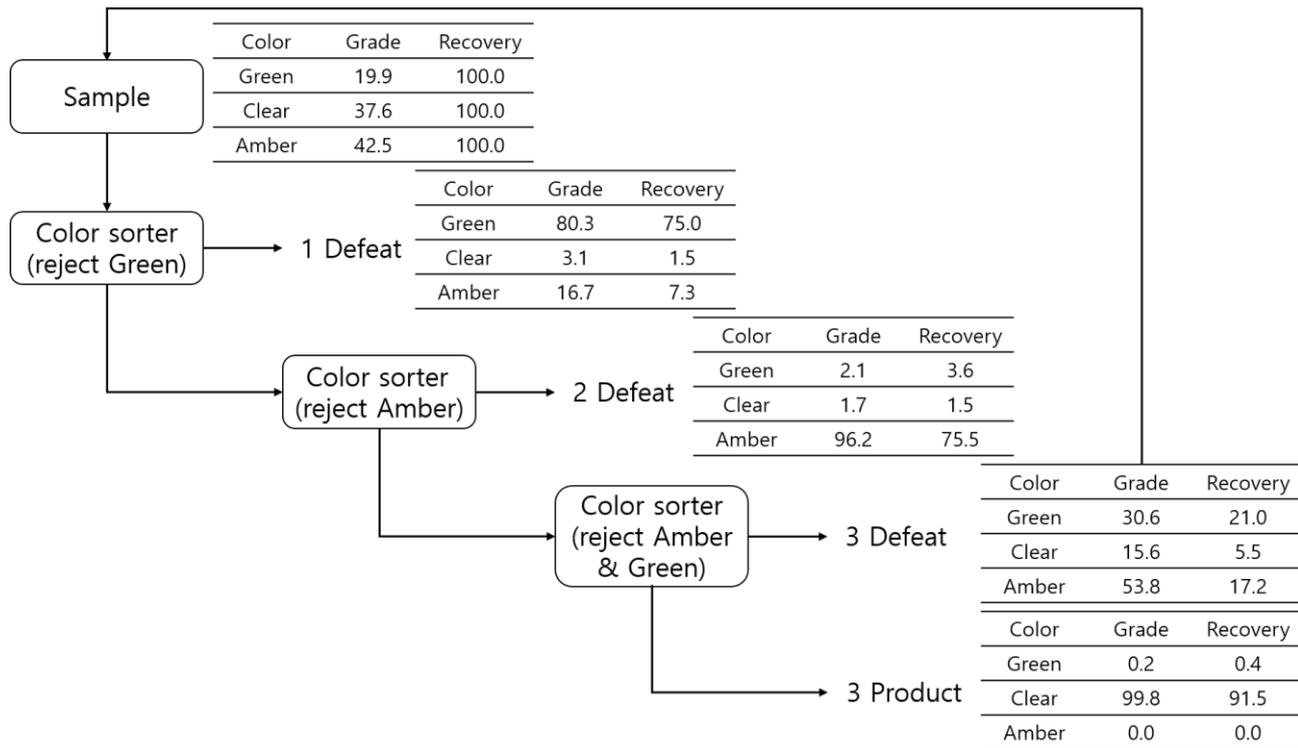
172 green and clear measured in color sorter were distributed similarly, the removal of green
 173 as the first action (as in condition B), also affected the clear, so we assessed that to be
 174 of a low grade. Therefore, the color quality standard of the glass cullet can be satisfied
 175 when separating the mixed-color WGB using condition A in the color sorter.



176

177

(a)



178

179

(b)

180

Figure 7. The results of color sorter experiment according to condition A and B.

181

4.2. Optimum crusher selection for recycled glass aggregate

182

4.2.1. Crushing experiment result

183

Recycling WGB into recycled glass aggregate must satisfy foreign substances and

184

size distribution quality standard. According to KS F2576, the content of organic

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foreign substances such as plastic, wood, paper, and vinyl must be under 1% of the

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aggregate volume. In addition, the aggregate must not emit an odor or contain or

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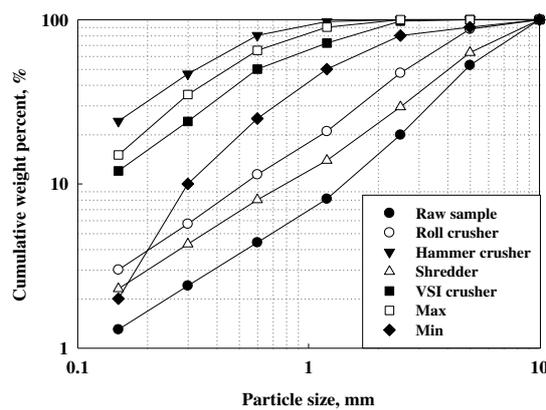
chemical substances harmful to the environment. The majority of the foreign substances

188

in the samples used in this study were removed by hand, eddy-current separation,

189 magnetic separation, and air separation in the pre-treatment process, as we aimed to
190 satisfy the foreign substance quality standard. The particle size distribution of recycled
191 glass aggregate must satisfy the prescribed KS F2527 standard [25], displayed in Table
192 5. We conducted crushing experiments on WGBs less than 10 mm in size using a
193 shredder, roll crusher, hammer crusher, and VSI crusher, and presented the particle size
194 distribution of the crushed product in Fig 8. The particles smaller than 2.5 mm were
195 99.9%, 98.0%, 47.3% and 29.4% for the hammer crusher, VSI crusher, roll crusher,
196 and shredder respectively. Under 0.3 mm, the percentage of particles crushed were, was
197 a 46.7%, 24.3%, 5.7%, and 4.3% for the hammer crusher, VSI crusher, roll crusher, and
198 shredder, respectively. As comparison with the prescribed particle size distribution,
199 indicated that the products of the roll crusher and shredder did not meet the minimum
200 particle size distribution standard because they were not adequately crushed. Shredder
201 is generally applied to the dismantling of ductile and composite materials, and it was
202 judged that the shredder was not suitable for crushing brittle materials such as glass.
203 The roll crusher crushes by delivering a single compressive force, because of which the
204 crushing of the WGBs, which have plate-shaped particles, was not accomplished. The
205 over-crushing was observed in the hammer crusher, because the hammer impacts

206 directly into sample. Furthermore, owing to the abrasion of the hammer, we decided
 207 that the hammer crusher was not suitable for crushing the WGBs. The VSI crusher is
 208 equipment that crushes particles based on an impact force, similar to a hammer crusher,
 209 but does not over-crushing the sample, since the force is delivered to the inner wall
 210 using an impeller. We, therefore, determined that the crushing occurred optimally only
 211 with the use of the VSI crusher which satisfied the particle size distribution quality
 212 standard of recycled glass aggregate.



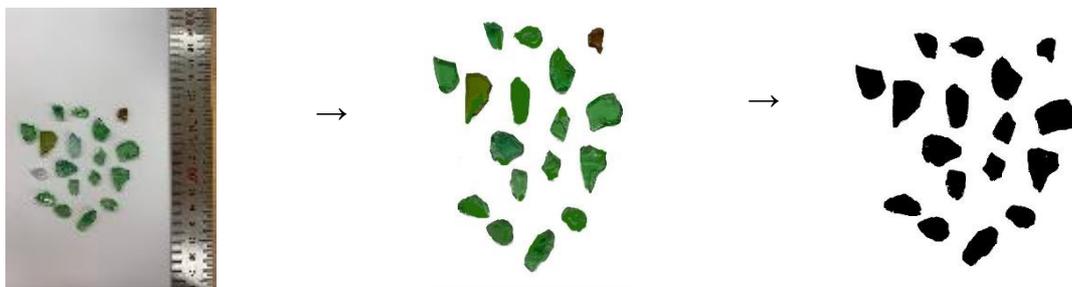
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214 **Figure 8.** The particle size distribution of crushed product according to crusher

215 *4.2.2. Aspect ratio analysis result*

216 According to BS 812 [29], in the case of using crushed mix color WGBs as recycled
 217 glass aggregate, the angularity or absence of round aggregate particles is a very
 218 important attribute since it affects the convenience of handling the mixture of the
 219 aggregate and binder. In Zingg's classification system [30], when the aspect ratio of the

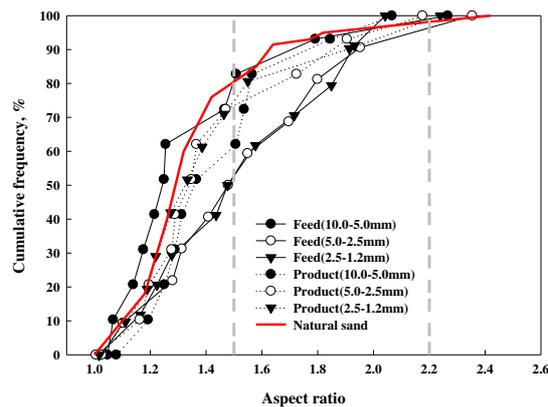
220 particle exceeds approximately 1.5, it is mentioned that the mixture was significantly
221 influenced by a rolling motion and the associated traction. In addition, BS 812 defined
222 elongated particles as those with an aspect ratio greater than 2.2. Consequently, in this
223 study, we measured the aspect ratios of the WGBs before and after crushing and
224 confirmed them on a graph of cumulative frequency. The aspect ratio was measured
225 using the *ImageJ* program, which can measure and analyze length, area, and
226 circumference. After capturing the image of the sample, it is imported to Image J and
227 the shadow is removed, and the clarity enhanced using a contrast function. Then, to
228 demarcate and divide the particle boundary accurately, it was measured and analyzed
229 in the binary mode. Fig 9 presents the *ImageJ* process.



230 **Figure 9.** Aspect Ratio measurement using *ImageJ*

231 Fig. 10 shows the aspect ratio results of the feed and VSI crusher product for each
232 particle size. From Fig 10, it can be seen that approximately 20% of the natural sand
233 particles had an aspect ratio value over 1.5. In the case of the feed, the aspect ratio of
234 over 1.5 for 10.0-5.0 mm, which is a relatively large particle, was about 18% similar to

235 that of natural sand, but the 5.0-2.5 mm and 2.5-1.2 mm particles were confirmed to be
 236 about 50%. In the case of the product, the aspect ratio over of 1.5 for 10.0~5.0 mm
 237 increased by about 22% compared to feed particles, but the 5.0~2.5 mm and 2.5~1.2
 238 mm particles decreased by about 20%. In addition, we confirmed the aspect ratio of
 239 over 2.2, which was defined by BS 812 as an elongated particle standard, was lower
 240 than that of natural sand for all particle sizes. The box plot in Fig. 11 shows that the
 241 aspect ratio of the product had a low value with an average distribution as compared
 242 with natural sand for all particle sizes. Thus, an aspect ratio higher than that of natural
 243 sand could be obtained through crushing by VSI crusher, so we ascertained that the
 244 WGB was appropriate for recycling into a glass aggregate.

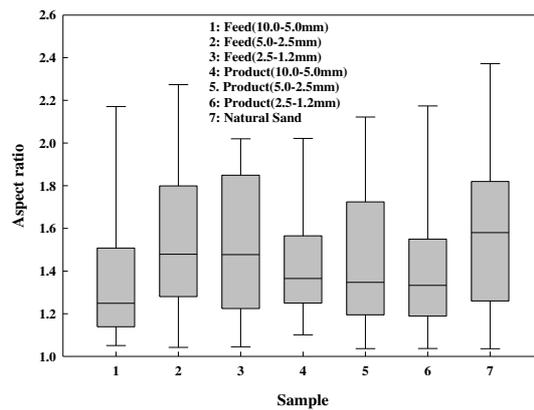


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246

Figure 10. Cumulative frequency of aspect ratio

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248

249

Figure 11. Aspect ratio box plot

250 *4.3.VSI crusher DEM simulation*

251 The crushing process uses the most energy in the recycling process can be improved

252 through optimal design and operating conditions, increasing the economic feasibility.

253 We confirmed the trends in the data required to set the optimum design and operating

254 conditions of the selected VSI crusher using DEM simulations. We replicated the VSI

255 crusher using CAD, and then conducted simulations after importing it into EDEM,

256 which is a 3D particle dynamics interpretation program based on DEM. In this

257 simulation, we set the length and rotation speed of the impeller as experimental

258 parameters, and the experimental conditions are presented in Table 6. In addition, the

259 physical properties of the WGB and VSI crusher and the aspect ratio of 1.5 of the

260 particles were applied through the aspect ratio analysis.

261



262

263

(a)

(b)

(c).

264

Figure 12. EDEM simulation of VSI crusher(a: 0.3 m, b: 0.5 m, c: 0.7 m,

265

rotation speed: 100 rpm).

266

We measured the force applied to the particle and the total particle numbers in the

267

domain through simulation. The number of particles was measured based on the

268

particles existing in the domain of equal size during the simulation and is presented in

269

Fig 13. The total number of particles in all the conditions reached in a steady state after

270

7 seconds. In addition, it was found that the greater the length and rotation speed of the

271

impeller, the greater the number of particles in the domain. Among these, the number

272

of particles was more affected more by the length of the impeller than the rotation speed.

273

Based on the above results, we measured the tendency of the force applied to the

274

particle in the simulation results 7 to 10 s. Fig 14 shows the results of the force applied

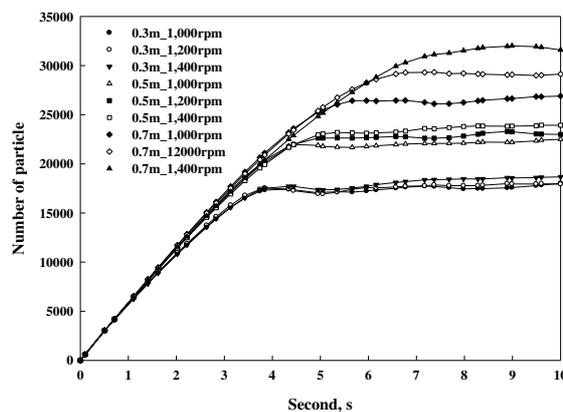
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to the particle as particle to particle and particle to the inner wall. In all conditions, the

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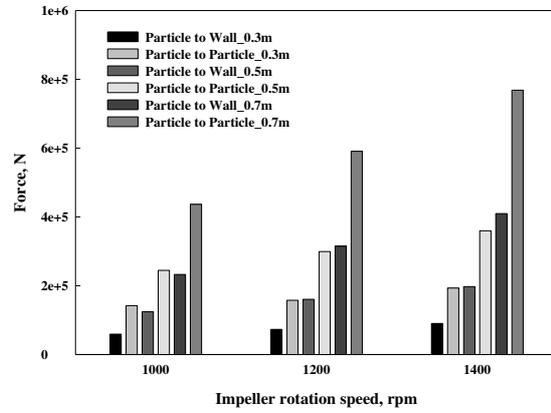
added force from the particle to the particle was higher than the force added through

277 the inner wall to the particle. Thus, the VSI crusher helps evaluate that the crushing rate
 278 for collisions among particles is higher than that between particles and inner walls. Fig
 279 15 presents the results of the force applied to the particle according to the length and
 280 rotation speed of the impeller. The length of impeller increased from 0.3, 0.5 to 0.7 m,
 281 and correspondingly the force applied to the particle increased. The rotation speed of
 282 impeller also increased from 1,000, 1,200 to 1,400 rpm, and the force applied to the
 283 particle increased accordingly. The greater the length and rotation speed of the impeller,
 284 the greater the force applied to the particle, but the length of the impeller was more
 285 affected by the force than the rotation speed. Consequently, we confirmed that the VSI
 286 crusher is more influenced by the impeller length than by the rotation speed. We
 287 assessed the trends in the data obtained in this study to be meaningful. However, in the
 288 future, to establish optimum design and operating condition settings, further studies
 289 should be conducted.



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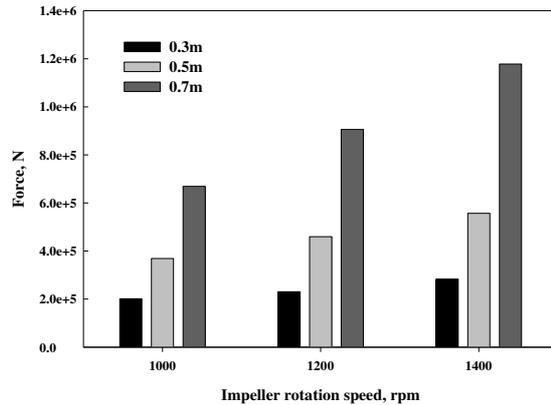
291 **Figure 13.** The number of particle in existing domain according to simulation time.



292

293 **Figure 14.** The force applied to the particle according to the method of delivery

294 (Particle to Particle, inner wall to particle).



295

296 **Figure 15.** The force applied to the particle according to the length and rotation speed

297 of the impeller.

298 5. Conclusion

299 In summary, we presented the optimum process for recycling WGBs into a glass

300 cullet and recycled glass aggregate. To produce a glass cullet, we tested the optimum

301 operating condition selection experiment using a color sorter. For recycling WGB as

302 recycled glass aggregate, we conducted optimum crusher selection, aspect ratio
303 measurements, and a DEM simulation experiment. The findings of this study are
304 summarized as follows. As per various analyses, the sample used in this study was soda
305 glass, which consists of Na_2CO_3 , SiO_2 , and CaO . To produce glass cullet, the color
306 sorting is essential and removing the glass in the order of amber – green – amber, green
307 is the optimal condition to satisfy the color quality standard. This result indicates that
308 because the RGB value of green and clear inputs were distributed similarly, when green
309 was removed preferentially, the ratio that needs to be removed is increased. The VSI
310 crusher was selected to be the best suited for producing recycled glass aggregate
311 through a crushing experiment. As a result of the aspect ratio analysis, an aspect ratio
312 higher than that of natural sand could be obtained through crushing, and therefore the
313 WGB is suitable for recycling into a glass aggregate. The trend of the number of
314 particles and force of the VIS crusher had a linear relationship with the length and
315 rotation speed of the impeller; of these, the length of the impeller was more affected by
316 the. We assessed that the simulation results provided useful information for establishing
317 the optimum design and operating conditions. In conclusion, this study provides
318 information on the WGB recycling process, and we believe that this result will

319 contribute to increasing the rate of recycling.

320 **Availability of data and materials**

321 All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this article and its
322 supplementary materials file. The raw data are available from the corresponding author
323 upon reasonable request.

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327 **Authors' contributions**

328 The corresponding author Hoon Lee has designed the study, and supervised in
329 manuscript. The first author Hansol Lee have conducted lab experiment as well as to
330 write manuscript. The authors read and discussion and approved the manuscript.

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402

403

404 **Table 1** Particle size distribution used raw sample in this study

Sieve size(mm)	10.0	5.0	2.5	1.2	0.6	0.3	0.15
Cumulative weight percent, %	100.0	52.8	19.9	8.1	4.4	2.4	1.3

405

406 **Table 2** Analysis equipment information

Analysis	Company	Model
X-ray diffraction	PHILIPS	X'Pert MPD
X-ray fluorescence	Shimadzu	XRF-1800
Scanning electron microscope	HITACHI	TM3000
Energy dispersive X-ray spectrometer	OXFORD	SwiftED3000

407

408 **Table 3** The major chemical component of sample(wt %)

Component Sample	SiO ₂	Al ₂ O ₃	Fe ₂ O ₃	CaO	MgO	K ₂ O	Na ₂ O	TiO ₂	MnO	P ₂ O ₅	Ig.Loss
1	72.33	1.84	0.30	8.92	1.54	0.69	12.84	0.07	0.02	0.02	0.44
2	72.41	1.94	0.36	8.69	1.68	0.71	12.85	0.07	0.01	0.03	0.41

409

410 **Table 4** The key specifications and experiment conditions of crusher

Shredder	Rotation speed	Capacity	Motor power
	30 rpm	0.0 Ton/h	1.5 kW
Roll crusher	Rotation speed	Capacity	Roll diameter
	280 rpm	2 Ton/h	254 mm
Hammer crusher	Rotation speed	Capacity	Motor Power
	2,800 rpm	0.25 Ton/h	2.2~3.7 kW
VSI crusher	Rotation speed	Capacity	Motor power
	1,000 rpm	100 Ton/h	150 kW

411

412 **Table 5.** Recycled glass aggregate particle size distribution quality standard

Particle size, mm	10 mm	5 mm	2.5 mm	1.2 mm	0.6 mm	0.3 mm	0.15 mm
Percentage of mass through sieve, %	100	90~100	80~100	50~90	25~65	10~35	2~15

413

414 **Table 6.** VSI crusher simulation conditions

Impeller speed	Impeller length		
	0.3 m	0.6 m	0.9 m
1,000 rpm	1	4	7
1,200 rpm	2	5	8
1,400 rpm	3	6	9

415