



# Kinetics and Equilibrium Studies of the Detoxification of Aqueous Solutions of Phenolic Derivatives using Activated Carbon

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## Authors' contributions

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

## Article Information

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.9734/irjpac/2024/v25i4869>

## Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/121078>

**Original Research Article**

**Received: 02/06/2024**  
**Accepted: 05/08/2024**  
**Published: 09/08/2024**

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the kinetics and equilibrium of phenolic derivative detoxification from aqueous solutions using activated carbon derived from coconut husk (CHAC). Phenolic compounds, prevalent in industrial wastewater, are highly toxic to humans and aquatic life. The removal efficiency of 4-Nitrophenol (PNP) and 4-Chlorophenol (PCP) was examined using batch adsorption experiments under varying conditions including adsorbent dose, contact time, initial concentration, and temperature. Coconut husk was chemically activated and characterized for its

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**Cite as:** Tochi, Nkwocha Stephen, Isaac Adebayo Akinbulu, Oke Temidayo Joseph, and Medubi Kayode Michelle. 2024. "Kinetics and Equilibrium Studies of the Detoxification of Aqueous Solutions of Phenolic Derivatives Using Activated Carbon". *International Research Journal of Pure and Applied Chemistry* 25 (4):99-115. <https://doi.org/10.9734/irjpac/2024/v25i4869>.

adsorption properties. The optimal adsorbent dose for PNP removal was determined to be 0.2 g, achieving a maximum adsorption capacity of 64.65 mg/g after 120 minutes. Adsorption data were fitted to pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order kinetic models to understand the adsorption mechanism. The results indicated that the adsorption of PNP onto CHAC followed the pseudo-second-order kinetic model, suggesting chemisorption as the dominant process. The findings demonstrate that activated carbon from coconut husk can be an effective and sustainable adsorbent for removing phenolic derivatives from wastewater, offering a potential solution for environmental detoxification. Further studies on isotherm models and thermodynamics are recommended to optimize the adsorption process for large-scale applications.

**Keywords:** Activated carbon; p-nitrophenol; p-chlorophenol; kinetic measurements; chemical activation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Phenolic Derivatives

Phenol is widely used for the commercial production of various resins [1], including phenolic resins which are used as construction materials for automobiles and appliances, epoxy resins and adhesives, and polyamide for various applications [2,3]. "Phenolic compounds may be present in our environments, plant seeds like Almonds" [4,5]. "Phenolic pollutants occur in wastewater from several industries, such as high-temperature coal conversion, petroleum refining, resin, and plastics" [6]. "At certain concentrations, aromatic hydroxyl compounds are considered priority pollutants since they harm organisms, especially humans and aquatic life" [7]. "Phenolic compounds are classified as highly toxic to humans and aquatic life" [8]. "Para-Nitro phenol (P-Nitro phenol) is one of the many phenol derivatives known to be persistent, bioaccumulative, and highly toxic" [9]. "It can enter the human body through all routes, and its toxic action is similar to aniline" [10].

P-nitro phenol aids the conversion of hemoglobin to methemoglobin [11]; it causes the oxidation of iron (II) to iron (III), which makes hemoglobin unable to transport oxygen in the body [12]. Therefore, the complete removal of p-Nitro phenol and other derivatives or, in some cases, the reduction of its concentration in wastewater to an acceptable level has become a significant challenge [13]. In the following sections, I will briefly describe the phenolic derivatives studied in this work.

**Nitrophenols:** "Para-nitrophenol (PNP) irritates the eyes, skin, and respiratory tract. It has a delayed interaction with blood and forms methemoglobin, which is responsible for methemoglobinemia. This can potentially cause

cyanosis, confusion, and unconsciousness" [14]. "When ingested, it causes abdominal pain and vomiting. Prolonged contact with the skin may cause an allergic response" [15]. "Nitrophenols, particularly 2-nitrophenol and 4-nitrophenol, are formed when phenol reacts with nitrite ions in water" [16]. "The reactions proceed under the influence of UV irradiation (sunlight) and in a wide range of pH values" [17,18]. "Nitrophenols in the atmosphere are usually determined in low concentrations of some ng /dm<sup>3</sup>; however, intense pollution of air due to industrial emissions leads to an increase of Nitrophenols concentrations up to 320 ng/dm<sup>3</sup>" [19].

Nitrated phenols are used in dyes, solvents, plastics, and explosives production [20] and are formed due to electric, electronic, and metallurgical industrial activities [21].

"MonoNitrophenols, 3-methyl-4-nitrophenol, and 4-nitro-3-phenylphenol reach the environment through vehicular emissions" [22]. The kinetic study of how these substances are absorbed gives us a better understanding of how to reduce or even eliminate the amount of PNP people consume using cheap absorbents available in the environment [23].

**Chlorophenols:** "Chlorophenols (CPs) are harmful toxic substances because they easily penetrate the skin and epithelium, leading to damage and necrosis" [24]. "Chlorophenols are found in the environment from a variety of sources such as industrial waste, pesticides, and insecticides, or by degradation of complex chlorinated hydrocarbons" [25].

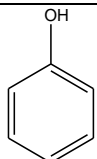
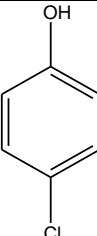
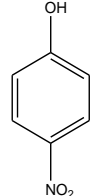
"Chlorophenols are the most widespread and significant phenols group" [26]. "They are formed in the environment by chlorinating mono- and poly-aromatic compounds present in soil and water. Exposure to chlorophenols may occur via

ingestion, inhalation, or dermal absorption” [27]. “The general population is thought to be exposed mainly through the ingestion of food and drinking water. However, non-occupational exposure by inhalation may be significant if chlorophenols are used for extensive treatment of the interior of houses” [28].

“Para-chlorophenol (PCP) is a white crystal with a strong phenol odor, slightly soluble to soluble in water, it is non-combustible. It is used as an intermediate in the organic synthesis of dyes and drugs. Inhalation causes headache, dizziness, and weak pulse. Ingestion causes irritation of mouth and stomach; headache, dizziness, weak pulse. Contact with eyes causes severe irritation and burning; if absorbed, causes same symptoms as inhalation” [29]. Due to the hazardous nature of 4-Chlorophenol and its ease of diffusion into the skin, it has become imperative that a faster and efficient method of detoxification is identified [30].

Table 1 illustrates the structure and chemical formula of the compounds under investigation which are derivatives of the first structure i.e. phenol.

**Table 1. Phenol and its derivatives studied in this work**

Phenolic derivatives	Structure	Chemical formula
Phenol		$C_6H_6O$
4-chlorophenol		$C_6H_5OCl$
4-Nitrophenol		$C_6H_5NO_3$

In removing these phenolic derivatives from aqueous solutions, it is necessary that a good adsorbent of these compounds is employed. Activated carbon materials are effective in

removing pollutants (both gaseous and liquid). The advantage of activated carbon materials as adsorbents is that the treated effluent is of high quality, the design of the process is simple, and the operation of the process developed or adopted is easy [31]. A coconut shell based activated carbon will have a predominance of pores in the micropore range and this account for 95% of the available internal surface area [32]. Such a structure has been found ideal for the adsorption of small molecular weight species and applications involving low contaminant concentrations.

In this research, the choice of coconut shell is due to its internal surface area which is between micropore and mesopore and is found to be ideal for the adsorption of small molecular weight species such as p-chlorophenol (Molecular weight. 128.5 g/mol) and p-Nitrophenol (Molecular weight. 139g/mol) in contrast to that of wood.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Materials

Sodium Hydroxide, Potassium Hydroxide, Hydrochloric acid were obtained from Merck. P-Nitrophenol 99.9% was obtained from BDH England. The chlorophenol was obtained from Merck. All the reagents were of analytical grade and were used as received from the suppliers without further purification.

Coconut husk used was obtained locally.

### 2.2 Equipment

Boss Multi-purpose Pulveriser, analytical balance, electric stirrer, electric oven, electric furnace, thermostat water bath, UV-visible spectrometer Genesis10-S model, volumetric flasks, glass rod, 2 ml micro pipette and measuring cylinders.

### 2.3 Preparation and Activation of Activated Carbon from Coconut Husk

The chemical activation of coconut husk was done following the method already reported by Sujiono et al., [33]. The coconut husk was cut into small sizes and dried in an oven overnight at 100 °C. It was then pulverized into tiny particles and sieved. Washing was done with dilute hydrochloric acid and distilled water to remove

materials adhering to these particles and oven-dried for six hours. These materials were impregnated with KOH solution (1.5 M) with an impregnating ratio (w/w) of 4:1(KOH: char) after soaking for about 4 hours. It was dried before carbonization, and activation was carried out simultaneously at 550 °C for about 1 hour. The resulting material was allowed to cool after about 12 hours, washed with 0.05 M dilute HCl, followed by distilled water, and dried for about 6 hours. The sample was stored in an airtight container for further use.

## 2.4 Preparation of Solutions

The methods used in preparing the solutions used in this research work are reported below. 0.1 M HCl was prepared by diluting 9.0 ml of concentrated Hydrochloric acid (S.G 1.18, 36%) in 200 ml of distilled water and made up to 1000 ml in a 1 L volumetric flask. 1.5M solution of Potassium Hydroxide was prepared by dissolving 79.5g of KOH pellets in 200 ml of distilled water and made up to 1000 ml in a 1 L volumetric flask. 0.05 M solution of Sodium Hydroxide was prepared by dissolving 0.2 g of NaOH pellet in 100 ml of distilled water.

### **Preparation of test solution of 4-Nitrophenol:**

The test solutions were prepared by diluting a stock solution of 4-Nitrophenol to the desired concentrations. A stock solution of 4-Nitrophenol was obtained by dissolving 1.0 g of 4-Nitrophenol (obtained from BDH, England), in distilled water and diluted to 1000 ml. Several dilutions of stock solution were made to obtain specific concentrations required for the adsorption study.

### **Preparation of test solution of 4-Chlorophenol:**

The test solutions were prepared by diluting a stock solution of chlorophenol to the desired concentrations. A stock solution of chlorophenol was obtained by dissolving 1.0 g of 4-chlorophenol (obtained from Merck, India), in distilled water and diluted to 1000 ml. Serial dilutions of stock solution were made to obtain specific concentrations required for the adsorption study.

**Analytical measurement of the phenolic derivatives:** The standard calibration curve of known concentrations of P-Nitrophenol and P-chlorophenol was plotted by finding out the absorbance at the characteristic wavelength of  $\lambda_{\max} = 226$  nm for 4-chlorophenol and  $\lambda_{\max} = 361$  nm for P-Nitrophenol. A spectrophotometer

(Genesis10-s UV/Vis) was used for the calibration plot, which showed a linear variation of absorbance up to 20 mg/l concentration. Therefore, the samples with higher concentration of phenol were diluted with distilled water.

## 2.5 Batch Adsorption Procedure

All the batch adsorption experiments were performed in a electrical stirrer and a thermostat water bath 250 ml conical flasks containing 50 ml each of the test solutions whose concentrations are dependent on the parameter under investigation. Experiments were performed at room temperature (30 °C). The pH of the solution was maintained natural for all the parameters investigated, i.e. adsorbent doses, temperature, contact time and concentration. All solution samples post adsorption was filtered through Whatman No 1 (with diameter 110 mm X 125 mm) filter paper and centrifuged for five (5) minutes. The concentrations of 4-Nitrophenol and 4-Chlorophenol in the treated samples were determined by UV spectrophotometer.

The amount of the phenolic derivative adsorbed per unit mass of the adsorbent was evaluated by using the following equation,

$$q_e = C_o - C_e \quad (\text{Scheme 1})$$

Where

$q_e$  = amount of phenol adsorbed at equilibrium

$C_o$  = initial concentration of the phenolic derivative

$C_e$  = equilibrium concentration of the phenolic derivative

The percentage removal of phenolic derivative was calculated by the following equation.

$$\%R = \left[ \frac{C_o - C_t}{C_o} \right] \times 100 \quad (\text{Scheme 2})$$

## 2.6 Kinetics Models

Kinetics models are used to examine the rate of the adsorption process and potential rate controlling step. In the present work, the kinetic data obtained from batch studies have been analyzed by using pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order models. The first order equation of Lagergren is generally expressed as follows,

$$\frac{dq}{dt} = k_1 (q_e - q_t) \quad (\text{Scheme 3})$$

Where  $q_e$  and  $q_t$  are the amounts of phenolic derivative adsorbed at equilibrium and

at time  $t$  (min), respectively, and  $k_1$  is the rate constant of pseudo-first-order sorption ( $\text{min}^{-1}$ ). The linearized form of above equation is given as,

$$\ln(q_e - q_t) = \ln q_{ce} - k_1 t \quad (\text{Scheme 4})$$

$q_{ce}$  is the calculated equilibrium adsorption capacity

A plot of  $\ln(q_e - q_t)$  against  $t$  should give a linear relationship with the slope  $k_1$  and intercept of  $\ln q_{ce}$ .

The pseudo-second-order kinetic rate equation is expressed as follows,

$$\frac{dq}{dt} = k_2 (q_e - q_t)^2 \quad (\text{Scheme 5})$$

Where  $k_2$  is the rate constant of pseudo-second-order sorption ( $\text{g mg}^{-1} \text{min}^{-1}$ ). The linearized form of above equation becomes,

$$\frac{t}{q_t} = \frac{1}{k_2 q_e^2} + \frac{1}{q_{ce}} t \quad (\text{Scheme 6})$$

If the second order kinetic equation is applicable, the plot of  $t/q_t$  against  $t$  should give a linear relationship. The  $q_{ce}$  and  $k_2$  can be determined from the slope and intercept of the plot.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Adsorbent (CHAC) Preparation

The desired adsorbent i.e. CHAC was prepared by following standard methodologies reported in the previous section. The percentage yield was calculated using scheme 7 below;

$$\text{Percentage yield (\%R)} = \frac{W_{char}}{W_{raw}} \times 100 \quad (\text{Scheme 7})$$

Where,

$W_{CHAR}$  Weight of char produced after carbonization and

$W_{RAW}$  Weight of raw material before carbonization

$$\text{Percentage yield (\%R)} = \left( \frac{17.447}{31.753} \right) \times 100 = 54.95\%$$

Therefore, the yield of **CHAC** obtained was 54.95%.

#### 3.2 Study of the Effects of Various Parameters on Adsorption of Phenolic Derivatives onto CHAC

Adsorption in liquid phase is affected by various chemical and physical parameters such as concentration, type of specie being adsorbed, adsorbent dose, pH, contact time and temperature. This work investigates the effect of adsorbent dose, concentration, contact time and temperature on the adsorption of phenolic derivatives onto CHAC.

##### **Effect of adsorbent (CHAC) dose on**

**adsorption:** This study was done in order to find out the optimal adsorbent dose of CHAC. The effect of CHAC on the amount of 4-Nitrophenol solution removed was investigated by contacting 20 ml of 4-Nitrophenol solution, of initial concentration of 100 ppm with different weighed amounts (0.02 g, 0.05 g, 0.1 g, 0.12 g, and 0.2 g) of CHAC in stoppered conical flasks. Each sample was then agitated for 1h at the natural pH of solution. The supernatants were then filtered using Whatman filter paper 1 grade and subsequently centrifuged for 5mins and analyzed.

The result obtained are shown in Table 2.

The result from the Table 2 shows increase in the amount adsorbed as the amount of adsorbent increases.

A plot of  $q_e$  and % of adsorbent removed was plotted on same axis against adsorbent dose. The plot is shown in Fig. 1.

**Table 2. Effect of adsorbent dose on adsorption PNP**

Mass of CHAC, g	Initial conc. Ppm	absorbance	Final conc. $q_e$ (ppm)	Amount adsorbed (ppm)
0.02	100	1.343	55.95	44.05
0.05	100	1.321	55.00	45.00
0.10	100	1.357	56.36	43.64
0.12	100	1.309	47.85	52.15
0.20	100	1.237	44.96	55.04

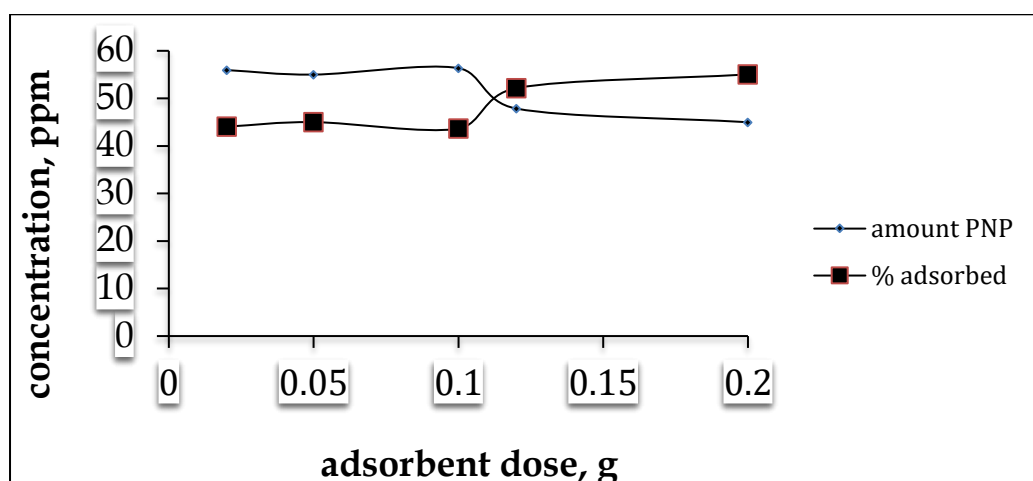


Fig. 1. Effect of adsorbent (CHAC) dose on adsorption

In the graph above, the percentage removal of phenol increased with the increase in adsorbent dosage. This can be attributed to increased adsorbent surface area and availability of more adsorption sites resulting from the increase adsorbent dosage. But the amount of 4-Nitrophenol adsorbed per unit mass of CHAC decreased with increase in adsorbent dosage, because for the same 4-Nitrophenol concentration, a large number of adsorption sites with the increment of CHAC dose.

**Effect of Contact time for adsorption of phenolic derivatives (PNP and PCP) onto CHAC:** To investigate the effect of contact time on adsorption of PNP and PCP ( $C_0 = 100$  ppm),

batch experiments were carried out in a series of conical flasks with a constant CHAC dose of 0.2 g in 50 ml of 100 ppm. These flasks were agitated in electric stirrer for 20, 40, 60, 80, 100 and 120 minutes at the natural pH in all the samples. The supernatants were then filtered using Whatman filter paper No 1 grade and centrifuged for 5 minutes. The concentration of 4-Nitro-phenol in supernatant was measured for all the samples. The results obtained are shown in Table 3a and 3b.

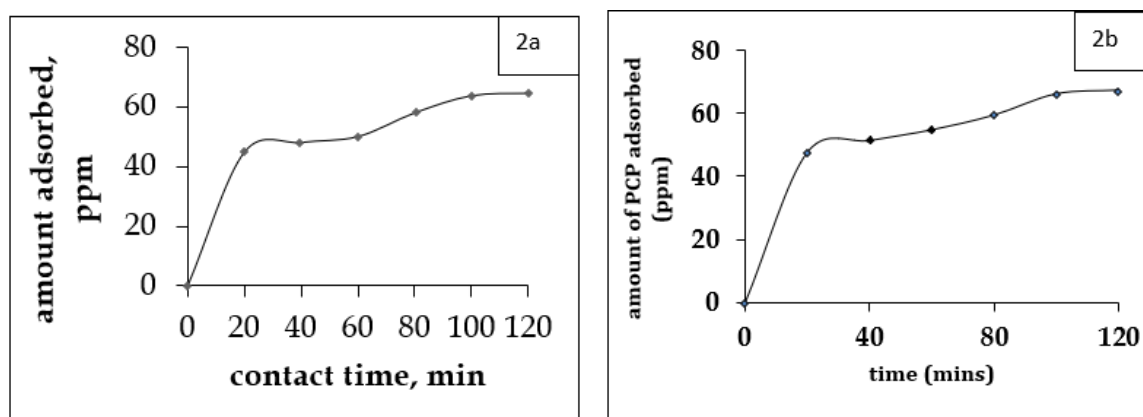
The  $q_e$  was evaluated for all the samples and the graph of  $q_e$  versus time is shown in Fig. 2a and 2b.

Table 3a. Table Effect of contact time on adsorption of PNP

Time, mins	Initial conc. Ppm	Absorbance	Final conc. $C_e$ (ppm)	Amount adsorbed $q_e$ (ppm)
20	100	1.371	55.05	44.95
40	100	1.349	51.89	48.11
60	100	1.246	49.92	50.08
80	100	1.217	41.80	58.20
100	100	1.155	36.16	63.84
120	100	1.129	35.35	64.65

Table 3b. Effect of contact time on adsorption of PCP

Time, Mins	Initial conc. Ppm	Absorbance	Final conc. ppm	Amount adsorbed, ppm	Percentage adsorbed %
20	100	2.832	52.35	47.65	47.65
40	100	2.361	48.67	51.33	51.33
60	100	2.282	45.26	54.74	54.74
80	100	2.188	40.58	59.42	59.42
100	100	1.887	33.85	66.15	66.15
120	100	1.763	32.69	67.31	67.31



**Fig. 2. Plot of effect of Contact time for adsorption of (2a) PNP and (2b) PCP onto CHAC**

From the Fig. 2a and 2 b, it was found that at the initial stage, the rate of adsorption of PNP and PCP rises sharply, indicating that there are plenty of readily accessible sites. Thereafter, amount of adsorption reduces gradually. As time proceeds this percentage gradient is reduced due to the accumulation of PNP and PCP particles in the vacant sites, leading to a decrease in the sorption rate at the later stages. Equilibrium was observed after 120 minutes as the amount of PNP adsorbed was approximately the same after 100 minutes.

**Effect of concentration on adsorption of phenolic derivatives:** The experiment was carried out in different conical flasks with a fixed adsorbent dose of 0.2 g at varying

concentrations of the phenolic derivatives of 50 ppm, 100 ppm, 150 ppm, and 200 ppm taking 50 ml of each solution at room temperature. The conical flask was agitated for 2 hours. Post adsorption, the supernatant was collected and filtered using Whatman filter paper No 1 grade and then centrifuged for 5 minutes. Filtered supernatant was analyzed using spectrophotometer and a graph was plotted with  $q_e$  versus time. The adsorption data for the uptake of derivatives versus initial concentrations is represented in Table 4a and 4b.

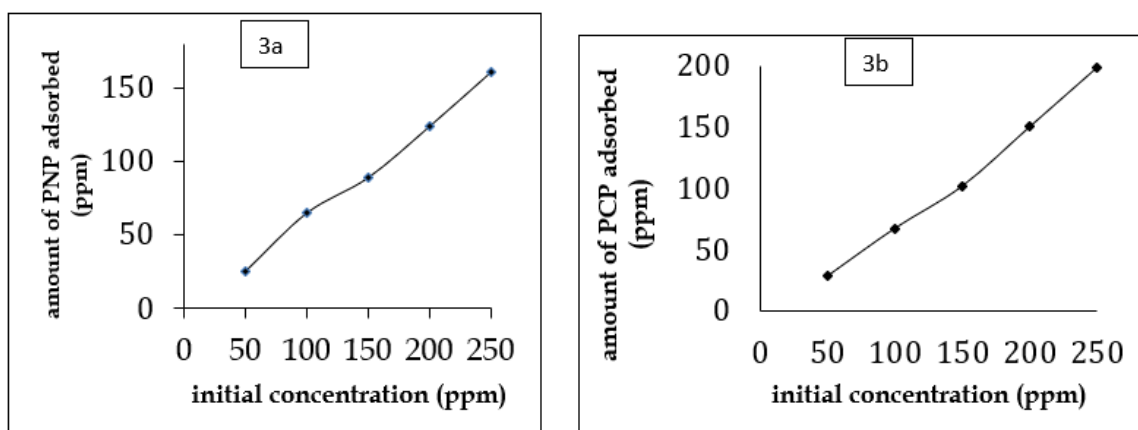
The graphical illustration of the uptake of PCP versus initial concentrations is represented in Fig. 3a and 3b.

**Table 4a. Effect of concentration on adsorption of PNP**

Initial conc. ppm	Absorbance	Final conc. ppm	Amount adsorbed, ppm	Percentage adsorbed %
50	0.555	24.89	25.11	50.22
100	1.129	35.35	64.65	64.65
150	1.423	61.35	88.65	59.10
200	1.778	76.55	123.45	61.72
250	1.972	89.45	160.55	64.22

**Table 4b. Effect of concentration on adsorption of PCP**

Initial conc. (ppm)	absorbance	Final conc. (ppm)	Amount adsorbed (ppm)	Percentage adsorbed %
50	1.164	21.59	28.41	56.82
100	1.763	32.69	67.31	67.31
150	2.363	48.27	101.73	67.82
200	2.664	49.40	150.06	75.03
250	2.781	51.61	198.39	79.36



**Fig. 3. Plot of effect of initial concentration on adsorption of (3a) PNP and (3b) PCP onto CHAC**

From the above graphs', increase in adsorbate concentration result in an increase in adsorption process. This trend could also suggest that increase in adsorbate concentration results in increase in number of available molecules per binding site of the adsorbent thus bringing about a higher probability of binding of molecules to the adsorbent (i.e. the probability of chemical interaction between the adsorbent and the adsorbate is enhanced by reason of the high availability of molecules of adsorbate).

**Effect of temperature on adsorption of phenolic derivatives:** To elucidate the effect of

temperature on adsorption, 50 ml each of 100 ppm of each solution was transferred into various 250 cm<sup>3</sup> flask containing 0.2 g each of the adsorbent, corked and labeled for different temperatures 30 °C, 40 °C, 50 °C, and 60 °C respectively. The mixture was stirred for 1 hour and heated in a thermostat water bath to the appropriate temperature in a water bath. At the right temperature, the content of the each of the flask was removed, filtered using Whatman filter paper No 1 grade and then centrifuged for 5 minutes and the concentration of the PNP was determined using UV-VIS spectrometer. The results obtained are shown in Table 5 a and 5b.

**Table 5a. Effect of temperature on adsorption of PNP**

Temperature, K	Initial conc. ppm	absorbance	Final conc. Ppm	Amount adsorbed ppm
303	100	1.100	49.36	50.64
313	100	1.191	49.77	50.23
323	100	1.411	63.05	36.95
333	100	1.722	70.65	29.35

**Table 5b. Effect of temperature on adsorption of PCP**

Temperature, K	Initial conc. (ppm)	absorbance	Final Conc. (ppm)	Amount adsorbed, ppm
303	100	1.482	27.48	72.52
313	100	1.582	29.35	70.65
323	100	1.796	33.35	66.65
333	100	1.983	36.77	63.23

The graph below shows the relationship between temperature in Kelvin and amount adsorbed.



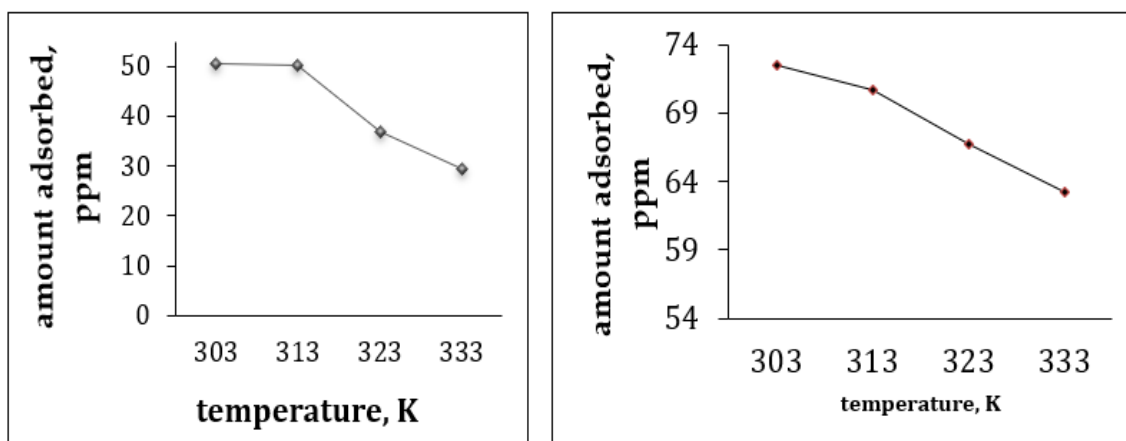


Fig. 4. Plot of effect of temperature on adsorption of PNP (4a) and PCP (4b) onto CHAC

It is evident from Fig. 4a and 4b that the amount of PNP and PCP adsorbed decreases with temperature thus suggesting that adsorption is favored at lower temperatures. At high temperature kinetic energy of adsorbate (PNP) is so high that they do not bind with the active sites available on the CHAC surface. This suggests that the process of adsorption is exothermic.

### 3.3 Adsorption Equilibrium Study

Equilibrium study on adsorption provides information on the capacity of the adsorbent. An adsorption isotherm is characterized by certain constant values, which express the surface properties and affinity of the adsorbent and can also be used to compare the adsorptive capacities of the adsorbent for different pollutants.

Equilibrium study was investigated using Langmuir adsorption model.

**Langmuir isotherm:** The most widely used isotherm equation for modelling of the adsorption

data is the Langmuir equation, which is valid for monolayer sorption onto a surface with a finite number identical site and is given by following equation,

$$q_e = \frac{q_0 K_L C_e}{1 + K_L C_e} \quad (\text{Scheme 8})$$

Where  $q_0$  and  $K_L$  are Langmuir parameters related to maximum adsorption capacity and equilibrium constant of adsorption, respectively.  $C_e$  is the equilibrium concentration in the aqueous solution and  $q_e$  is the equilibrium adsorption capacity of adsorbent. The linearized form of Langmuir equation can be written as,

$$\frac{1}{q_e} = \frac{1}{q_0} + \frac{1}{K_L q_0} \times \frac{1}{C_e} \quad (\text{Scheme 9})$$

The Langmuir constant  $q_0$  and  $K_L$  can be calculated by plotting  $1/q_e$  versus  $1/C_e$ .

**Adsorption equilibrium study for PCP-CHAC system:** The data obtained for the adsorption study of 4-chlorophenol is shown in the Table 6.

Table 6. Langmuir adsorption study of 4-chlorophenol on CHAC

Initial conc. Ppm	Final conc. $C_e$ , ppm	Amount adsorbed, $q_e$ , ppm	$1 / C_e$	$1 / q_e$
50	21.59	28.41	0.0463	0.0352
100	32.69	67.31	0.0306	0.0149
150	48.27	101.73	0.0207	0.0098
200	49.40	150.06	0.0202	0.0067
250	51.61	198.39	0.0194	0.0050

The graphical illustration of the above result is presented in Fig. 5

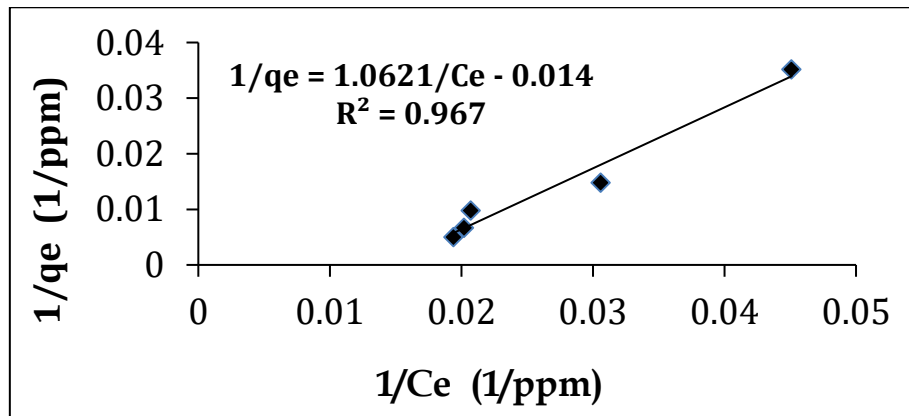


Fig. 5. Langmuir isotherm plot of PCP-CHAC adsorption system at 298K

From above plot,

$$\frac{1}{q_e} = \frac{1}{q_0} + \frac{1}{k_1 q_0} \times \frac{1}{C_e} \quad (\text{Scheme 10})$$

$1/q_0 = -0.014 = \text{intercept}$   
 $|q_0| = 71.43 \text{ ppm}$

The above result represents the magnitude of the maximum Langmuir adsorption capacity of the adsorbent.

Also,  $1/(q_0 k_1) = 1.062 = \text{slope}$

$$k_1 = \frac{1}{q_0} \times \frac{1}{1.062}$$

$$k_1 = 0.014 \times 0.942 \quad \text{hence, } k_1 = 0.013 \text{ ppm}^{-1}$$

The above result shows that Langmuir constant of adsorption  $k_1$  is  $0.013 \text{ ppm}^{-1}$

**Adsorption equilibrium study for PNP-CHAC system:** The Langmuir adsorption data of 4-Nitrophenol on CHAC is represented in the Table 7.

Table 7. Langmuir adsorption study of 4-Nitrophenol on CHAC

Initial conc. Ppm	Final conc., $C_e$ , ppm	Amount Adsorbed. $q_e$ , ppm	$1/q_e$	$1/C_e$
50	24.89	25.11	0.0398	0.0402
100	35.35	64.65	0.0155	0.0283
150	61.35	88.65	0.0113	0.0163
200	76.55	123.45	0.0081	0.0131
250	89.45	160.55	0.0062	0.0112

Graphically, the result is highlighted below (Fig. 6), the plot of  $1/q_e$  against  $1/C_e$  gave a straight line graph whose slope and intercept can be used to evaluate  $q_0$ , the maximum adsorption capacity and  $k_1$ , Langmuir constant of adsorption.

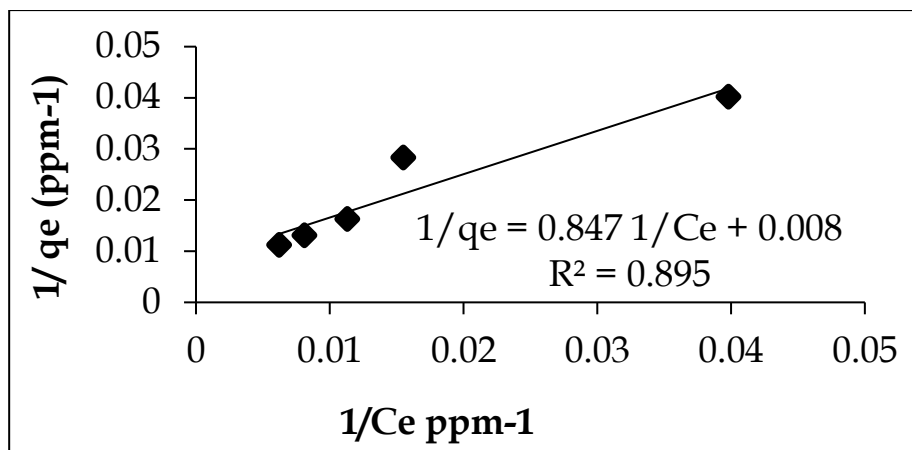


Fig. 6. Isotherm plot of PNP-CHAC adsorption system at 298K

From the above graph,

$$\frac{1}{q_e} = \frac{1}{q_0} + \frac{1}{k_1 q_0} \times \frac{1}{C_e}$$

$1/q_0 = 0.008 = \text{intercept}$

$q_0 = 125 \text{ ppm}$

The above result represents the maximum Langmuir adsorption capacity of the adsorbent.

Also,

$1 / (q_0 k_1) = 0.847 = \text{slope}$

$$k_1 = \frac{1}{q_0} \times \frac{1}{0.847}$$

$k_1 = 0.008 \times 1.1806$

$k_1 = 000944 \text{ ppm}^{-1} = 9.44 \times 10^{-3} \text{ ppm}^{-1}$

The above result shows that Langmuir constant of adsorption  $k_1$  is  $9.44 \times 10^{-3} \text{ ppm}^{-1}$

The Summary of Langmuir isotherm parameters for sorption of PNP and PCP onto CHAC are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8. Summary of Langmuir adsorption study**

Adsorbate system	Max. adsorption capacity, $q_0$ (ppm)	Adsorption energy, $K_L$ , $\text{ppm}^{-1}$	Regression coefficient $R^2$
PNP-CHAC	125	000944	0.895
PCP-CHAC	71.43	0.013	0.968

From the Table 8 it is clear that the equilibrium data for 4-chlorophenol were very well fitted to Langmuir isotherm as reported by Ekpete et al., [34] and Gbatbandhe *et al.*, [35]. 4-Nitrophenol also fitted well in the Langmuir isotherm. The correlation coefficient values for Langmuir isotherms are also high. The best fit of equilibrium data observed in the Langmuir isotherm expression predicts a monolayer coverage of 4-chlorophenol and 4-nitrophenol onto CHAC, with the maximum sorption capacity of 71.43 ppm and 125 ppm for 4-nitrophenol respectively.

### 3.4 Adsorption Kinetics Study

For the kinetics study, pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order models were considered.

The various results obtained from this study are represented below.

**Pseudo-first-order kinetics of PNP-CHAC system:** The linearized form of the pseudo-first-order kinetics equation is reported in 2.4 From that equation it is clear that, a plot of  $\ln(q_e - q_t)$  against  $t$  (mins) should give a linear relationship with the slope  $k_1$  and intercept of  $\ln q_e$ . The  $q_e$  value for PNP was taken as 64.65 ppm, the amount of PNP adsorbed at equilibrium as previously reported. The Pseudo-first-order kinetics of PNP-CHAC system is given below,

**Table 9. Pseudo first order kinetics of PNP-CHAC system  $q_e = 64.65$  constant for all the data: the amount of PNP adsorbed at equilibrium**

t(mins)	Adsorption capacity of PNP in time t, $q_t$ , ppm	$q_e - q_t$	$\ln(q_e - q_t)$
20	44.950	19.70	2.980
40	48.112	16.54	2.805
60	50.080	14.45	2.671
80	58.200	6.45	1.864
100	63.160	0.81	-0.210

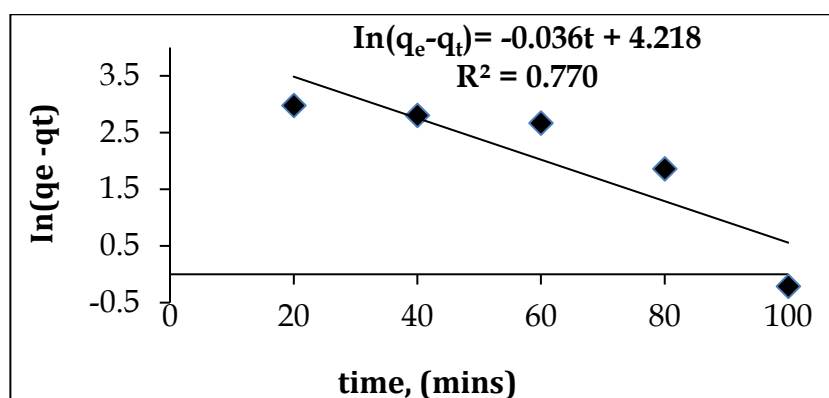


Fig. 7. Pseudo first order kinetics of PNP on CHAC

From the Fig. 7, comparing the two linear equations,

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(q_e - q_t) &= \ln q_{ce} - k_1 t \\ \ln(q_e - q_t) &= -0.036t + 4.218 \\ -k_1 &= -0.036 \\ k_1 &= 0.036 \text{ ppm/min} \\ \text{Also,} \\ \ln q_{ce} &= 4.218, \text{ hence, } q_{ce} = e^{(4.218)} \\ q_{ce} &= 67.90 \text{ ppm} \end{aligned}$$

The result above shows a pseudo-first order rate constant  $K_1 = 0.036$  ppm/min; while the

calculated equilibrium adsorption,  $q_{ce} = 67.90$  ppm and correlation coefficient value  $R^2 = 0.770$

**Pseudo-second-order kinetics of PNP-CHAC system:** The linearized form of pseudo-second-order kinetics equation is also reported in section 2.

From that equation, the plot of  $t/q_t$  against  $t$  should give a linear relationship. The  $q_{ce}$  and  $k_2$  can be determined from the slope and intercept of the plot. The Pseudo-second-order kinetics results of PNP-CHAC system are given in Table 10.

Table 10 pseudo second order kinetics of PNP-CHAC system  $q_e = 64.65$  constant for all the data: The amount of PNP adsorbed at equilibrium

t(mins)	Adsorption capacity of PNP in time t, $q_t$ , ppm	$q_e - q_t$	$\ln(q_e - q_t)$	$t/q_t$
20	44.950	19.70	2.980	0.444
40	48.112	16.54	2.805	0.831
60	50.080	14.45	2.671	1.198
80	58.200	6.45	1.864	1.375
100	63.160	0.81	-0.210	1.583

The graphical representation of the Table 10 is shown in Fig. 8. A plot of  $t/q_t$  against  $t$  mins gave a linear relationship whose slope and intercept are used to calculate  $q_{ce}$  and  $k_2$  respectively.

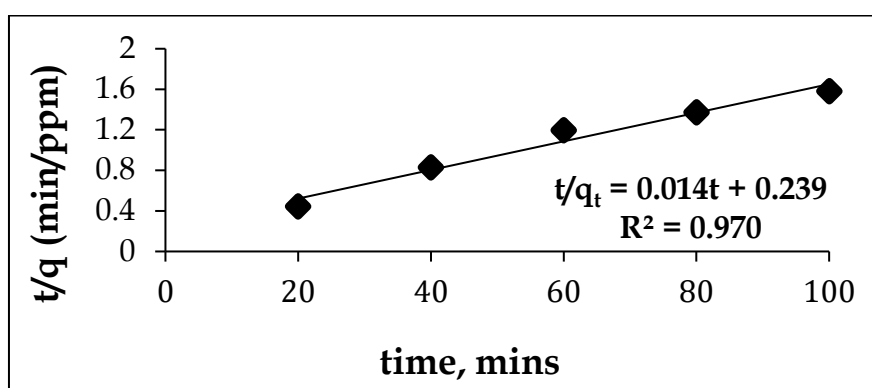


Fig. 8. Pseudo-second order kinetics of PNP on CHAC

From the plot above,

$$\frac{t}{q_t} = \frac{1}{k_2 q_{ce}^2} + \frac{1}{q_{ce}}t$$

$$t/q_t = 0.014t + 0.239$$

Comparing the above equations,

$$1/q_{ce} = 0.014, \text{ hence,}$$

$$q_{ce} = 71.42 \text{ ppm}$$

$$1/(k_2 q_{ce}^2) = 0.239 \quad k_2 = 1/(q_{ce}^2 \times 0.239)$$

$$k_2 = 0.00082 = 8.2 \times 10^{-4} \text{ ppm/min}$$

From result of the above graph, it was observed that the experimental second order rate constant is  $K_2 = 8.2 \times 10^{-4} \text{ ppm/min}$ ,  $R^2$  is 0.970 and calculated equilibrium adsorption amount,  $q_{ce}$ , is 71.42 ppm. The adsorption process of 4-Nitrophenol on CHAC favors a second order mechanism as to first order, in respect to the above kinetic parameters.

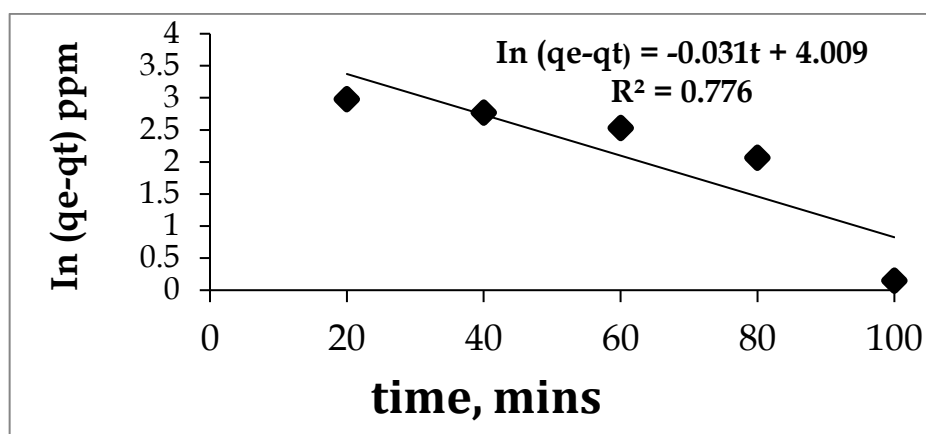
**Pseudo first order kinetics of PCP on CHAC:**

The linearized form of pseudo-first-order kinetics equation is reported in 2.4 From that equation it is clear that, a plot of  $\ln(q_e - q_t)$  against  $t$  (mins) should give a linear relationship with the slope  $k_1$  and intercept of  $\ln q_{ce}$ . The  $q_e$  value for PNP was taken as 67.31 ppm, the amount of PCP adsorbed at equilibrium as previously reported in Table 3. The results of Pseudo-first-order kinetics of PCP-CHAC system is given below (Table 11).

The graphical illustration of the Table 11 is presented in Fig. 9. The plot of  $\ln(q_e - q_t)$  on the vertical axis against time (mins) on the horizontal axis gives a linear relationship. The linear equation can be compared to that of the linearized pseudo-first order kinetics equation. The pseudo first order constant and the amount of adsorbate adsorbed at equilibrium can be calculated from the slope and intercept respectively.

**Table 11. Pseudo first order kinetics of PCP onto CHAC  $q_e = 67.31$  constant for all the data: the amount of PCP adsorbed at equilibrium.**

Time, mins	$q_t$ , ppm	$q_e - q_t$	$\ln(q_e - q_t)$
20	47.65	19.66	2.979
40	51.33	15.98	2.771
60	54.74	12.57	2.531
80	59.42	7.89	2.066
100	66.15	1.16	0.148



**Fig. 9. Pseudo- first order kinetics of PCP on CHAC**

$$\ln(q_e - q_t) = \ln q_{ce} - k_1 t$$

$$\ln(q_e - q_t) = -0.031t + 4.009$$

Comparing both equations

$$\ln q_{ce} = 4.009 \quad q_{ce} = e^{(4.009)}$$

$$q_{ce} = 55.09 \text{ ppm}$$

Also,

$$-K_1 = -0.031,$$

$$k_1 = 0.031 \text{ ppm/min}$$

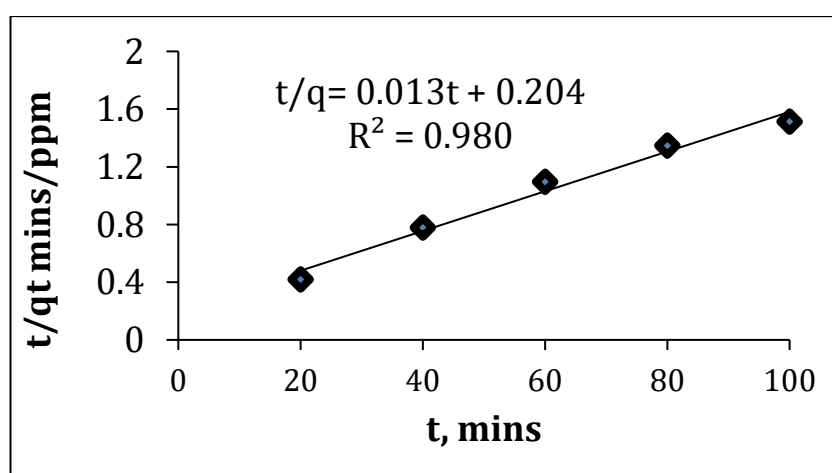
The result from the graph above shows first order rate constant  $K_1 = 0.031$ , the experimental first order calculated equilibrium concentration,  $q_{ce} = 55.09$  ppm and correlation coefficient  $R^2 = 0.776$ .

**Pseudo-second-order kinetics of PCP-CHAC system:** The linearized form of pseudo-second-

order kinetics equation is reported in 2.4 From the equation, the plot of  $t/q$  against  $t$  should give a linear relationship. The  $q_e$  and  $k_2$  can be determined from the slope and intercept of the plot The Pseudo-second-order kinetics of PCP-CHAC system is given in Table 12.

**Table 12. Pseudo-second order kinetics data of PCP onto CHAC  $q_e = 67.31$  constant for all the data: the amount of PCP adsorbed at equilibrium**

Time, mins	$q_t$ , ppm	$q_e - q_t$	$\ln(q_e - q_t)$	$t/q_t$
20	47.65	19.66	2.979	0.419
40	51.33	15.98	2.771	0.779
60	54.74	12.57	2.531	1.096
80	59.42	7.89	2.066	1.346
100	66.15	1.16	0.148	1.512



**Fig. 10. Pseudo-Second order kinetics of PCP on CHAC**

From the above graph, the linear relationship can be compared to the linearized form of pseudo-second order kinetics equation

$$\frac{t}{q_t} = \frac{1}{k_2 q_{ce}^2} + \frac{1}{q_{ce}} t = t/q_t = 0.013t + 0.204$$

Comparing the above equations,

$$\begin{aligned} 1/q_{ce} &= 0.013, \text{ hence,} \\ q_{ce} &= 76.92 \text{ ppm} \\ 1/(k_2 q_{ce}^2) &= 0.204 \quad k_2 = 1/(q_{ce}^2 \times 0.204) \\ k_2 &= 0.0008285 \text{ ppm/min} = 8.285 \times 10^{-4} \text{ ppm/min} \end{aligned}$$

The result from the graph above shows pseudo-second order rate constant  $K_2 = 8.285 \times 10^{-4}$  ppm/min, the experimental second order calculated equilibrium concentration,  $q_{ce} = 76.92$  ppm and correlation coefficient  $R^2 = 0.980$ .

The summary of the kinetic studies for PCP and PNP on CHAC is shown in Table 13.

$R^2_2$  = correlation coefficient for pseudo second order kinetics  
 $R^2_1$  = correlation coefficient for pseudo first order kinetics

**Table 13. Summary of kinetic studies of phenolic derivatives on CHAC**

	$q_e$ , ppm	$q_{ce1}$ ppm	$q_{ce2}$ , ppm	$k_1$ (ppm/min)	$k_2$ ppm/min	$R^2_1$	$R^2_2$
<b>PCP-CHAC system</b>	67.31	55.09	76.92	0.031	$8.285 \times 10^{-4}$	0.776	0.980
<b>PNP-CHAC system</b>	64.65	67.90	71.42	0.036	$8.20 \times 10^{-4}$	0.770	0.970

From the results of kinetic studies shown in Table 13, PCP fitted slightly better than PNP in the pseudo first order and second order kinetics plot. Also PCP has a higher second order rate constant than PNP, the experimental and calculated equilibrium concentrations for second order for PCP were also higher than that of PNP and this could be attributed to the lower molecular weight of PCP with respect to PNP.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The kinetics and equilibrium studies of detoxifying aqueous solutions of p-nitrophenol and p-chlorophenol on activated carbon from coconut husk have been investigated Sujiono et al., [33]. In each case, the adsorbate adsorbed increased with the adsorbent dose. However, adsorption was optimal at an adsorbent dose of 0.2 g in each case. The adsorption capacity of the adsorbent decreased with increased temperature in each case. This suggests that the adsorption is exothermic. Results of equilibrium analysis show that PNP has a higher maximum adsorption capacity,  $q_0 = 125$  ppm, compared to PCP, which has a maximum adsorption capacity of  $q_0 = 71.43$  ppm. Langmuir constant of adsorption was  $k_1 = 9.44 \times 10^{-3}$  ppm<sup>-1</sup> for PNP and  $k_1 = 0.013$  ppm<sup>-1</sup> for PCP. The results above suggest that the adsorption process is consistent with the Langmuir isotherm model, which indicates monolayer adsorption of each of the adsorbates on the adsorbent. Kinetics studies show  $R^2 = 0.980$  for the pseudo-second-order PCP-CHAC system and  $R^2 = 0.970$  for the second-order PNP-CHAC system, indicating a good fit kinetic model for pseudo-second-order compared to the pseudo-first-order kinetic model in which  $R^2 = 0.776$  and  $R^2 = 0.770$  for PCP and PNP respectively. The pseudo-second-order suitably describes the kinetic system of the adsorbates on the adsorbent. The rate constants  $k_2 = 8.285 \times 10^{-4}$  ppm/min for the PCP-CHAC system and  $k_2 = 8.20 \times 10^{-4}$  ppm/min for the PNP-CHAC system show that adsorption of PCP onto CHAC is faster than PNP onto CHAC and this could be attributed to the lower molecular weight of PCP.

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As per international standards or university standard, patient(s) written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

#### ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standards or university standard written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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