UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

ADSORPTION OF METHYLENE BLUE BY COCONUT (*Cocos nucifera*) LEAVES AND ITS CHEMICALLY TREATED DERIVATIVES WITH KOH AND H₃PO₄

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science (Applied Chemistry)

Faculty of Applied Sciences

March 2018

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research

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Thesis Title : Adsorption of Methylene Blue by Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) Leaves and Its Chemically Treated Derivatives with KOH and H_3PO_4

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ABSTRACT

Fallen coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) leaves (CL) are agricultural wastes largely available in Malaysia. In this study, CL was utilized as a low-cost adsorbent and the precursor to prepare activated carbon by pyrolysis using KOH and H_3PO_4–activation method for adsorptive removal of methylene blue, a cationic dye from aqueous solution. The physical properties of the prepared coconut leaves powder (CL), coconut leaves–KOH activated carbon (KAC) and coconut leaves–H_3PO_4 activated carbon (PAC) were calculated through bulk density, ash content, moisture content and iodine test. The characterization of CL, KAC and PAC were carried out using Elemental analyser (CHNS-O), The Brunauer-Emmet-Teller (BET) surface area, Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM), Fourier Transform Infra-Red Spectrometer (FTIR) and point of zero charge (pH_{pzc}) method. Batch adsorption experiments were performed to assess the influence of the adsorbent dosage (0.02–0.25 g), initial pH (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11), initial dye concentration (30, 50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 350 and 400 mg/L), contact time (1–300 min) and temperature (303, 313 and 323 K) on the adsorption of the methylene blue. The results showed that the percentage removal of methylene blue was the highest at dosage of 0.2 (CL), 0.1 (KAC) and 0.06 g (PAC) under unadjusted pH (5.6). The Langmuir model describes the adsorption behaviour at equilibrium. The maximum adsorption capacities of CL are 133.33 (303 K), 138.89 (313 K) and 135.14 mg/g (323 K). Meanwhile, the adsorption capacities of KAC increased with temperature where q_{max} varied as follows; 147.1 (303 K), 151.5 (313 K) and 151.5 mg/g (323 K). Lastly, q_{max} of PAC obtained are 357.14, 370.37 and 370.37 mg/g at temperature of 303, 313 and 323 K respectively. The adsorption kinetics for CL, KAC and PAC followed the Pseudo-Second-Order model. BET surface area and total pore volume of CL corresponded to 2.17 m^2/g and 0.002 cm^3/g. Meanwhile, KAC had shown the BET surface area of 682.86 m^2/g and total pore volume of 0.45 cm^3/g. As for PAC, the BET surface area was 981.79 m^2/g and the total pore volume of 1.37 cm^3/g. Thermodynamic parameters such as standard enthalpy ($\Delta H°$), standard entropy ($\Delta S°$) and standard free energy ($\Delta G°$) showed that the adsorption of methylene blue onto CL, KAC and PAC was spontaneous and endothermic in nature under examined conditions. The results showed the potential use of activated carbon developed from waste coconut leaves for the removal of methylene blue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Assalamualaikum W.B.T

First and above all, I praised to Allah S.W.T for providing me this opportunity and granting me the capability to proceed successfully. This thesis appears in its current form due to the guidance and assistance of several people. I would therefore like to offer my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Ali H. Jawad Al-Taie, whose encouragement, excellent guidance, invaluable suggestions, and support from the initial to the final level enable me to develop an understanding of the subject, and without him this thesis would not have been completed. I am heartily thankful to my co-supervisor, Associate Prof. Dr. Mohd Azlan Bin Mohd Ishak, for his assistance, help and advices during my period of study.

Great appreciation goes to members of Fossil, Biomass and Energy Research Group (FBERG), Prof. Dr. Haji Khudzir Bin Ismail, Dr. Wan Izhan Nawawi Bin Wan Ismail and Mr. Mohd Fauzi Bin Abdullah for their support. Not to forget Mr. Zaidi Bin Ab Ghani and Miss Nasulhah Binti Kasim, Doctoral candidates who always advice and give suggestions regarding my research. In my daily work, I have been blessed with the encouragement and support from my dearest friends, Nur Shazwani Binti Abdul Mubarak, Nur Izzati Binti Mohd Anuar, Muhammad Saifuldin Bin Mohd Azami, Muhammad Safwat Bin Mohammed Yahya and Nur Farah Hanani Binti Mamat. Finally, I warmly thank and appreciate my parents for their support in all aspect in my life. I also would like to thank my siblings for always provide assistance in numerous ways.

Ramlah Binti Abd Rashid

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