



## Adsorptive Treatment of Abattoir Wastewater using Biosorbent Prepared from *Raphia hookeri* Seed

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### Abstract

Industrial activities and urbanisation in Nigeria have gradually increased the problem of wastewater disposal. Breweries, textile factories, abattoirs, and other industries that discharge effluents into nearby water bodies cause pollution that renders these waters unusable unless treatment is carried out. In this research, a local waste material (*Raphia hookeri* Seed) was prepared through carbonisation (at 600°C), chemical impregnation (using sodium hydroxide), and thermal activation (at 700°C) to serve as a biosorbent for removing pollutants from abattoir wastewater, measured as Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), and Salinity. Batch experiments were conducted under different conditions, including biosorbent dosage, pH, and contact time. The results show maximum pollutant adsorption from the abattoir wastewater with BOD<sub>5</sub> of 1448 mg/l, COD of 4018 mg/l, and TDS of 1640 mg/l, achieved at an optimum biosorbent dosage of 1 g/100 ml of wastewater. This dosage was used consistently in other experimental conditions. The findings indicate that the optimal contact time is 60 minutes, with removal efficiency increasing as contact time extends. Additionally, the results reveal that the removal efficiency of BOD decreases when the amount of adsorbent increases. In conclusion, the *Raphia hookeri* seed biosorbent demonstrates a high affinity and capacity for adsorbing particulate pollutants, which can contribute to elevating BOD/COD levels in abattoir wastewater.

**Keywords:** *Raphia hookeri*; Biosorption; Abattoir wastewater treatment; Activated carbon; Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD)

### 1. Introduction

Water pollution is a major global problem which requires evaluation and revision of water resource policy at all levels (international, down to individual aquifers and wells). It is suggested to be the leading cause of deaths and disease worldwide (Robina *et al.*, 2017; Sasakova *et al.*, 2018). Water pollution contributes to the increased chemical oxygen demand (COD) and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) by increasing the amount of particulate matter present in water bodies, with organic waste containing nitrates and phosphates (additional nutrients), leading to death of plants (excess plants fight for space to grow), which will in turn affect aquatic life (Sivashanmugam, 2007; Tammin *et al.*, 2014). Water pollution causes bio-magnification through the improvement in concentration of various toxic substances along the biological food chain.

Industrial activities and urbanisation in Nigeria have gradually led to the increased problem of waste disposal (Ogbu *et al.*, 2016). Previous literature reviews have identified various causes and sources of water pollution in the global environment. These include the indiscriminate disposal of waste into water bodies, industrial effluent discharges into rivers, human activities near water sources, metal deposits in rivers and lakes, domestic waste and effluents, agricultural runoff into ponds, and the release of unwanted chemicals into waterways (Omoleke, 2004; Ademiluyi *et al.*, 2009). Reports showed that all these activities harm humans, aquatic animals, wildlife, agricultural products, processing equipment, and the general environment by making the water unsuitable for beneficial use and purposes.

To mitigate these effects, abattoir wastewaters must undergo significant treatment before discharge (Bustillo-Lecompte *et al.*, 2017). Past reports have shown that there are three general phases of wastewater treatment, which are primary, secondary, and tertiary. During primary treatment, a large percentage of the suspended solids and inorganic material is removed from the sewage. The focus of secondary treatment is reducing organic material by accelerating natural biological processes. Tertiary treatment is necessary when water is to be reused; 99 percent of solids are removed, and various chemical processes are employed to ensure the water is as free from impurities as possible. (Ademiluyi *et al.*, 2009). Primary treatment involves physical separation of floatable and settleable solids. Secondary treatment involves biological removal of dissolved solids. Tertiary treatment involves physical, chemical, and biological treatment (Robina Farooq & Zaki Ahmad, 2017).

Secondary treatment usually involves a biological process where microorganisms transform non-settleable solids into settleable solids. It includes methods such as activated sludge, tertiary filters, and lagoons. The tertiary treatment includes physical and chemical methods. Physical processes involve electro-dialysis, reverse osmosis, carbon adsorption, and centrifugation. The chemical process includes hydrolysis, ozonation, precipitation, coagulation, and

flocculation.

The treatment methodology employed in this study involves the utilisation of a biosorbent to address wastewater issues. The research focuses on using a biosorbent derived from *Raphia hookeri* to evaluate its adsorptive capacity in the treatment of abattoir wastewater, employing activated carbon prepared from the biosorbent of *Raphia hookeri* seed. Given the challenge of maintaining water purity in both local and large communities, this research is anticipated to provide a viable solution to the human concerns associated with wastewater treatment.

### 2. Materials and Methods

#### 2.1 Equipment and Instruments Used

In this investigation, a comprehensive range of laboratory equipment and materials was systematically used to ensure accurate sample preparation and analysis. Solid samples were first dried after pretreatment in a laboratory oven to eliminate moisture content before further processing. Following oven-drying, the samples underwent high-temperature treatment in a Carbolite furnace, which allowed complete volatilisation of organic matter for ashing procedures. Sample homogenisation and thorough mixing were achieved with the Stuart SSL2 reciprocating shaker, ensuring uniformity before and after processing. Particle size distribution was assessed using Fisherbrand test sieves, while water quality parameters such as pH, electrical conductivity, and total dissolved solids were quantitatively measured with the Hanna HI991300 pH/EC/TDS meter. Laboratory safety and control of volatile emissions were maintained using the ESCO laboratory fume hood during sample digestion and chemical reactions. For tests needing temperature stability, like BOD incubation, the Lovibond thermostat Schrank served as the controlled-temperature chamber.

Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) analyses were conducted using the Hach BODTrak II system along with BOD Trak II bottles, and Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) digestion was performed using the Hach DRB200 COD reactor. Absorbance readings for these analyses were taken on the Hach LANGE DR 2800 and DR/2 Spectrophotometers, ensuring precise quantification of analytes. Thermometers were used to confirm appropriate temperatures during various procedures, and a high-precision weighing balance provided accurate mass determination for both reagents and samples. Volumetric measurements were carried out using graduated cylinders, volumetric pipettes with fillers, burettes, and volumetric flasks (100, 200, and 250 mL). Mixing, reactions, and heating steps involved beakers (100, 200, and 500 mL) and borosilicate test tubes with covers, supported by racks for organisation during processing. Separation of solids from liquids was efficiently achieved using funnels and 110 mm filter paper. Other laboratory essentials included foil paper for handling hot samples, gloves and nose masks for personal protection, spatulas for sample transfer, plastic containers for storage, stirrers for mixing, and wash bottles for cleaning



(25.3–26.3°C). However, there was a steady increase in conductivity (3133–3521  $\mu\text{s}/\text{cm}$ ), total dissolved solids (TDS) (1640–1836 mg/l), and salinity (645–705 mg/l) with higher dosages, with both TDS and salinity exceeding WHO recommended limits (TDS: 500–1500 mg/l, salinity: 200–600 mg/l). Additionally, chemical oxygen demand (COD) and biological oxygen demand (BOD) remained high or increased with higher dosage, indicating persistent organic pollution. Overall, while the process kept pH stable, it was ineffective at reducing salinity, TDS, COD, and BOD to safe levels.

3.3.2 Effect of Adsorption Dose on Total Dissolved Solids

Figure 2 shows the effect of adsorption dosage on total dissolved solids. It shows that as the concentration of the adsorbent dosage increases; more dissolved solids are being added to the sample. From this, the adsorbent dosage that was able to adsorb some of the dissolved solids in the wastewater sample was the dosage of 1g/100 ml because it shows a decline in the number of dissolved solids on comparison with the raw total dissolved solid of 1701 mg/l. So, a lower amount of adsorbent dosage yields higher adsorption of dissolved solids in the wastewater sample (Mohan et al., 2002).

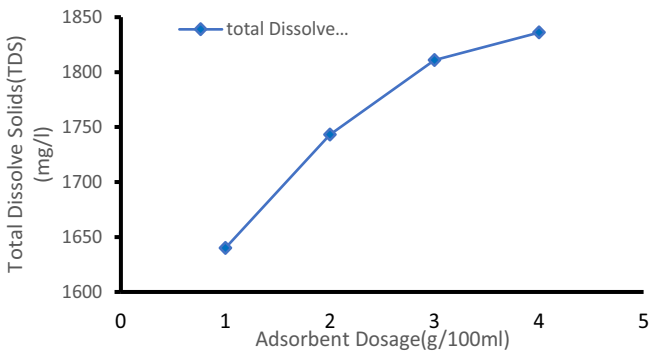


Figure 2 - Effect of dosage size on Total Dissolved Solids

3.3.3 Effect of Adsorption Dosage on Salinity

Figure 3 shows the effect of dosage on the Salinity. The concentration of chloride ions across the various doses of adsorbent does not follow any gradual trend. Still, on comparison with the initial salinity value of the raw sample, it shows a steep increment in concentration of chloride ion from a raw value of 89.3 mg/l to a range value of 645 mg/l upon treatment of the raw sample with various doses of the adsorbent.

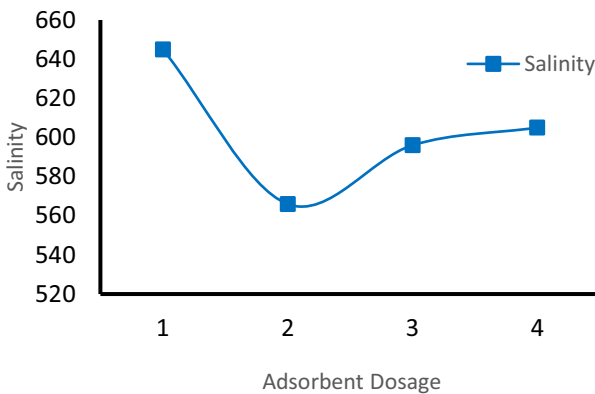


Figure 3: Effect of dosage size on Salinity

3.3.4 Effect of Adsorbent Dosage on Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD)

Figure 4 illustrates how changing the adsorbent dosage affects the Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) of abattoir wastewater after biosorbent treatment. Initially, COD increases from 4020 mg/L to 4280 mg/L as the biosorbent dose rises from 1 g/100 ml to 2 g/100 ml, likely due to poor dispersion or more organic substances being released at lower doses. When the dosage reaches 3 g/100 ml, COD decreases to approximately 4160 mg/L, reflecting improved adsorption as more active sites become available. At 4 g/100 ml, COD increases again to 4300 mg/L, possibly because of particle agglomeration or desorption, which reduces adsorption efficiency. This non-linear trend reveals an optimal dose around 3 g/100 ml for effective COD removal, underscoring the importance of precise dosing in biosorbent-based wastewater treatment. Ibaraj et al. (2012) also showed a similar report on the effect of dosage, which agrees with these results in this study.

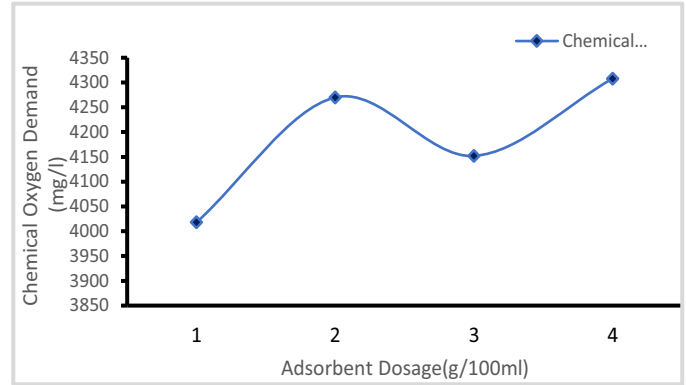


Figure 4: Effect of dosage size on Chemical Oxygen Demand

3.3.5 Effect of Adsorbent Dosage on Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD)

Figure 5 illustrates a clear non-linear relationship between adsorbent dosage and BOD<sub>5</sub> in abattoir wastewater, with BOD<sub>5</sub> rising from about 1450 mg/L at 1 g/100 ml to roughly 1620 mg/L at 2 g/100 ml, then decreasing to around 1550 mg/L at 3 g/100 ml, and sharply increasing again to approximately 1720 mg/L at 4 g/100 ml. Recent studies, such as Ogundolie et al (2024) and (Shan et al. (2022), similarly indicate that optimal biosorbent dosages maximise the removal of organic pollutants, while under- or over-dosing can diminish efficiency due to the addition of extra organic matter or particle aggregation limiting active site availability. This highlights that precise optimisation of biosorbent dosage is crucial for effective BOD<sub>5</sub> reduction in complex wastewaters and supports trends observed both within this research and in broader recent studies literature.

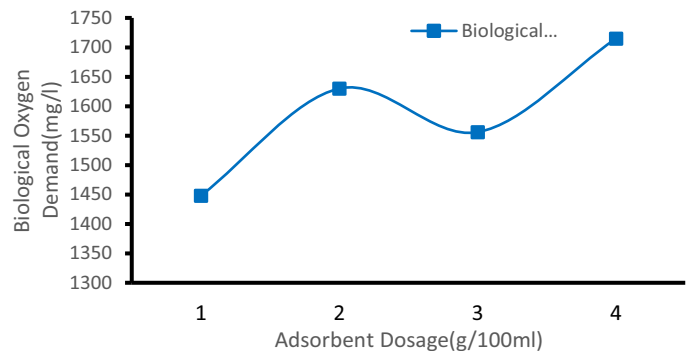


Figure 5: Effect of dosage size on Biological Oxygen Demand

3.4. Effect of pH Adjustment

The effect of pH adjustment studied in this work is about COD, BOD and salinity.

3.4.1 The effect of pH on Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD)

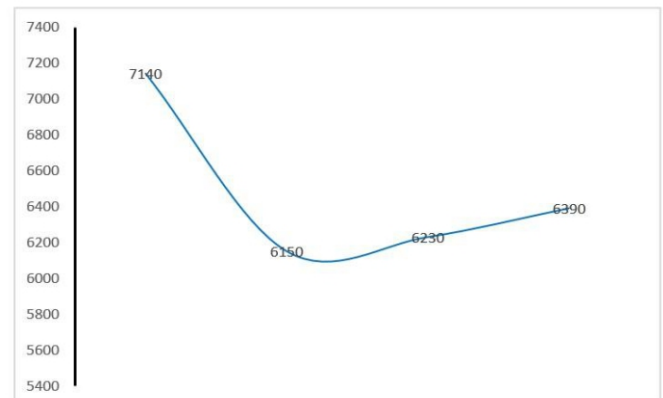


Figure 6 - Effect of pH on Chemical Oxygen Demand

Figure 6 illustrates that the adsorption performance of *Raphia hookeri* biosorbent for COD removal from abattoir wastewater is strongly pH-dependent (Inyinbor et al., 2024). COD levels were highest (~7140 mg/L) at acidic pH (~4), indicating low adsorption efficiency, likely due to excessive competition between hydrogen ions and COD-causing organics for active sites (Sun et al., 2024). Optimal removal occurred at pH 5–6, where a higher concentration of H<sup>+</sup> ions helps neutralise the negatively charged adsorbent surface, reducing electrostatic

repulsion and enhancing diffusion of organics. Beyond pH 6, COD levels gradually increased, with reduced adsorption capacity at higher pH values—possibly due to the abundance of OH<sup>-</sup> ions, which introduce repulsive forces and hinder the diffusion of organics, leading to less effective adsorption (Aluyor & Badmus, 2008).

3.4.2 Effect of pH on Biological Oxygen Demand

Figure 7 shows that as pH increases, Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) in abattoir wastewater rises steadily from 1,450 mg/L to 1,580 mg/L. This pattern indicates that higher pH levels decrease the effectiveness of *Raphia hookeri* seed biosorbent in removing biodegradable organics, likely due to unfavourable changes in surface charge and reduced interaction between the biosorbent and wastewater pollutants. Recent research by Inyinbor et al. (2024) confirms that *Raphia hookeri*-based adsorbents perform better at mildly acidic pH, with significant drops in efficiency as pH becomes more alkaline, due to hindered adsorption caused by less favourable electrostatic conditions and lower access to active sites. This emphasises the importance of optimising pH for maximum BOD reduction when using *Raphia hookeri* biosorbents in wastewater treatment.

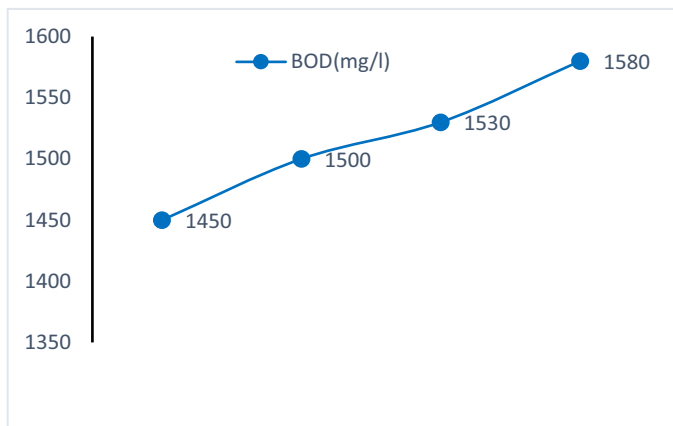


Figure 7: Effect of pH on Biological Oxygen Demand

3.5 Effect of Contact Time

The effect of time studied in this work is centred on BOD and COD, respectively.

3.5.1 Effect of Contact Time on Biological Oxygen Demand

From Figure 8, the time intervals show a gradual reduction of the biological oxygen demand as the period of adsorption increases. At 60 minutes, the adsorption records a low biological oxygen demand, which shows that some pollutants have been adsorbed during the batch equilibration period and at 15 minutes, many changes were not observed when compared to the sample. This could be a result of excess pollutants which have not been adsorbed during this period. From the graph, there is a continuous reduction in the BOD values as the batch adsorption period increases without reaching an optimum within the range of periods used in these batch experiments.

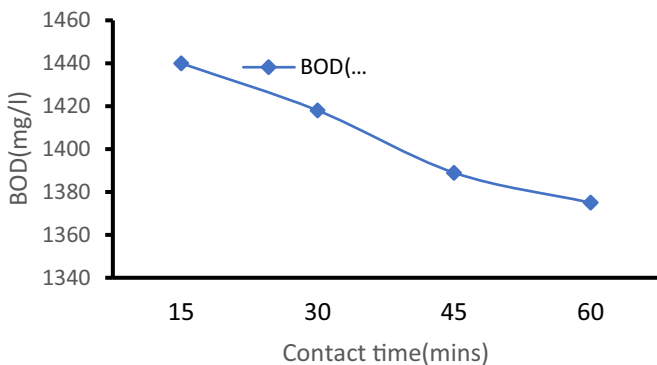


Figure 8: Plot of the Effect of Contact Time on BOD

3.5.2 Effect of Contact Time on Chemical Oxygen Demand

Figure 9 illustrates the effect of contact time on COD. The impact of contact time on the COD of abattoir wastewater does not follow a smooth trend; at a batch experiment period of 30 minutes, there was a sharp decrease from the raw abattoir wastewater values, followed by a gradual reduction in COD levels as the experiment proceeded, without reaching an optimal period within the range of 15 to 60 minutes used for the study. Wartelle et al. (2001) and Toles et al. (2000) observed a similar outcome in their previous research.

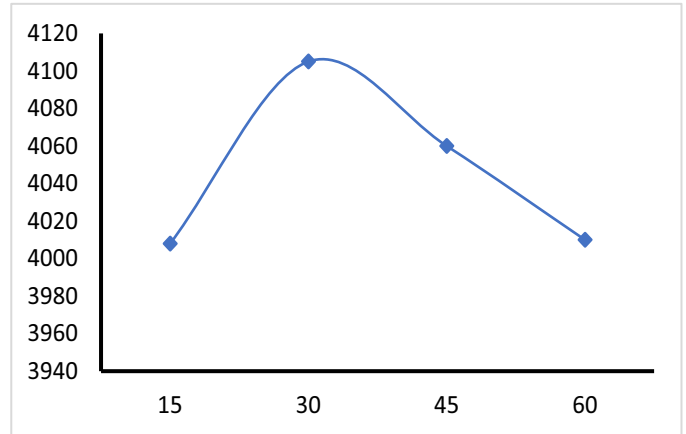


Figure 9: Effect of contact time on COD removal

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that activated carbon produced with *Raphia hookeri* precursors is an effective and sustainable biosorbent for abattoir wastewater treatment. The adsorptive performance was evaluated using key water quality parameters such as Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), salinity, electrical conductivity, and pH. Experiments show that the biosorbent performs optimally at lower dosages (1 g/100 mL), achieving significant pollutant reduction with minimal input. The adsorbent exhibits a strong affinity for contaminants, both organic and inorganic, so that after treatment, if the process parameters are correctly set, it effectively reduces pollutant levels. However, the study also observed a rise in BOD and COD values under certain conditions, possibly due to the release or desorption of biodegradable components from the adsorbent surface. This highlights the importance of further optimisation, especially in stabilising the biosorbent post-treatment. Overall, the findings underscore the potential of *Raphia hookeri*-based activated carbon as a cost-effective and environmentally friendly solution for treating organic-rich wastewater, particularly in decentralised or resource-limited settings.

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