

## Photodegradation of Real Pharmaceutical Wastewater with Titanium Dioxide, Zinc Oxide, and Hydrogen Peroxide During UV Treatment

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**Abstract:**-This paper presents the photocatalytic degradation of real pharmaceutical wastewater from Abbot Laboratories (Private) Limited, Karachi, Pakistan, using TiO<sub>2</sub>, ZnO, and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. The pretreated sample wastewater was used for degradation experiments and tests were carried out at 38 °C under pH of 9 and 4 in a stirrer bath reactor equipped with eight ultraviolet tubes. The use of this technique is common in removal of the organic, inorganic pollutants and pathogens. Optimal conditions were selected from reported results of the researchers on advanced oxidation processes (AOPs) for removal of residual pharmaceuticals from real pharmaceutical wastewater. The three catalysts (Titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, and TiO<sub>2</sub>/ H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) used in this study are effective catalysts in photocatalytic degradation of real pharmaceutical wastewater. The maximum degradation achieved was 45.11% by combined use of TiO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> at 38 °C and pH. The degradation improved at higher pH with Zinc oxide and Titanium oxide. The results indicate that for real pharmaceutical wastewater, combined use of TiO<sub>2</sub>/ H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is comparatively more effective than ZnO and TiO<sub>2</sub> alone. The degradation of the pharmaceutical wastewater followed pseudo-first-order kinetics. The reaction rate constant was 0.00148/min for TiO<sub>2</sub>/ H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. This study demonstrates that for real pharmaceutical wastewater reacts differently to catalyst than synthetic pharmaceutical wastewater, or formulated wastewater.

**Keywords:**-Hydrogen peroxide, Pharmaceutical wastewater, Photocatalytic degradation, Titanium dioxide, Ultra violet light, Zinc oxide

### I. INTRODUCTION

The pharmaceuticals are found in drug manufacturing wastewater, hospital wastewater, and industrial wastewater of pharmaceutical origin. The pharmaceutical usually consist of biologically active substances designed as lipophilic and are resistant to biodegradation. In aquatic media these substances if discharged to the environment, have potential for accumulation and persistence in the environment. Though they appear at low concentrations, but still may impose serious effects on the environment. During last two decades researchers have focused their attention in searching suitable technologies to destroy the xenobiotic substances and recently been able to report advanced oxidation processes (AOPs) as highly efficient treatment process for pharmaceutical wastewater.

Among many processes the ozone oxidation is adapted as part of the treatment at several water production plants. Treatment of pharmaceutical wastewater by AOPs is expensive, hence photocatalysis is an option considered widely by researchers. In recent years photocatalytic degradation of pharmaceutical wastewater has received attention of the scientific community. The results of past research carried out on real pharmaceutical effluent are comparable to this study; however, the results of studies on aqueous solution, synthetic wastewater, formulation effluent, synthetic wash-water from antibiotics packaging distilled water, industrial wastewater of pharmaceutical origin, hospital wastewater, synthetic wash-water from medium scale drug manufacturing plant, biologically pre-heated pharmaceutical wastewater, actual wash-water from ointment manufacturing plant, effluent from bulk drug manufacturing plant, municipal wastewater, and secondary treated domestic effluent are worth considering. The previous findings on aqueous system indicate degradation of wastewater by TiO<sub>2</sub> and UV alone is negligible [1] and that coupling of TiO<sub>2</sub> with UV greatly enhance degradation rates [2-4]. Only UV processes require long irradiation time [5] and only TiO<sub>2</sub> require high catalyst loading [6]. The variables affecting the degradation rates are catalyst loading, pH and temperature of solution/wastewater, irradiation time and intensity, and use of additional catalyst like H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> with and without Fe<sup>2+</sup>. The particle size and surface area/BET of the catalyst (TiO<sub>2</sub>) is an important parameter too [3]. The total organic carbon (TOC) removal rate depends on refractory character of the organic-inorganic wastewater content.

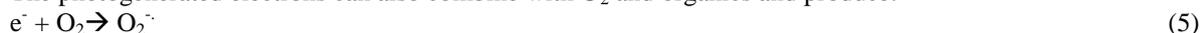
Fatemeh reports high degradation of analgesics in water at pH 12 and 50 °C [7] whereas, Liming found degradation between pH of 3.5 and 9.5 [1]. The synthetic wastewater made from human and veterinary antibiotics show that degradation increases with increasing pH (pH range 7-12), H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> enhance performance [8,9]. The results of Kaniou et al on Sulfamethzine in distilled water indicate higher removal performance of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and ZnO was more active than TiO<sub>2</sub> [10]. 90% removal of Diclofenac from distilled water is reported by TiO<sub>2</sub> after 60 minutes of irradiation [11]. 55% COD removal from industrial wastewater of pharmaceutical origin is reported by San Sebastian by using H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> at pH 4 [12]. Xing et al found 94% color and 73% COD removal with Fe<sup>2+</sup>/ H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> at pH 5 from biologically pre-heated pharmaceutical wastewater [13]. Kulik et al reports 87%-96% COD removal from actual wash water from ointment manufacturing plant with Fe<sup>2+</sup>/ H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> [14]. Augmentation of TiO<sub>2</sub> by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is reported by many researchers [15-18] and now it is believed that presence of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> enhances degradation performance of the catalyst [9]. The generation of the OH radicals in the UV/ H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> occurs via reaction (1) [19].



The photogenerated electrons can recombine and make their ways to the surface of TiO<sub>2</sub>, where they can react with species adsorbed onto the catalyst surface.



The photogenerated electrons can also combine with O<sub>2</sub> and organics and produce:



The produced hydroxyl radicals (·OH) and superoxide radical anion (O<sub>2</sub><sup>-·</sup>) can mineralize organics to water and CO<sub>2</sub> (end products):



Only a few studies have been conducted on industrial wastewater of pharmaceutical origin employing TiO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> as the catalysts with varying degradation results. It is still unclear that how real pharmaceutical wastewater would respond to photocatalytic activity of widely used catalysts. This paper reports the findings of the research work employing TiO<sub>2</sub>, ZnO, and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and the performance of photocatalytic reactor for degradation of a real pharmaceutical wastewater. The results of this study would aid to the application of nano photocatalyst particles for removal of contaminants from pharmaceutical wastewater.

## II. EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

### 2.1 material

In this study titanium dioxide powder (anatase) form and Zinc oxide (Dentam) were used as supplied. These chemicals are supplied by BDH with purity of 99.99% with the average particle size of 25 ± 4 nm and specific surface of 55 ± 8 m<sup>2</sup> g<sup>-1</sup>. The 30% Aqueous Solution of Hydrogen peroxide was also supplied by BDH. The pH of the sample in the reaction vessel was adjusted with calculated volume/weight of 1N HCl or 1N NaOH. The standard solution and reagents were used for measuring the COD in closed reflux colorimeter as proposed by APHA [20]. These catalysts are known for optimal catalytic efficiency and good interparticle contacts in water [21].

### 2.2 ultraviolet energy

The selection of ultraviolet (UV) energy depends on the absorption capacity of the molecules of the contaminant in the sample water. The UV energy not only advances the oxidation process but sterilizes the wastewater by destroying five major groups of micro-organisms. The photodegradation efficiency depends on UV dosage [22]. Previous research [10,15,23] has indicated that UV light at wavelength 254-579 nm, and 50-150 W is adequate for synthetic and real pharmaceutical wastewater with an irradiation time of 1-4 hours. However, occurrence of most degradation is reported within the first hour of treatment. Hence is the reason for selecting of the parameters for this study.

### 2.3 experimental setup

The UV lamp selected for this study was 8.0 inches long with an UV output of 11 W. A total number of eight UV lamp tubes, manufactured by Jiangsu Shen Xing Photoelectricity Apparatus Co., Ltd. China, were submerged in the specially designed reaction vessel (diameter 8 inches, volume 5 liter) to produce 88 W of energy. The pretreated sample wastewater was placed in a 5 liter glass cylinder vertical reactor acting as a photoreaction cell. The catalyst powder was suspended in the sample and the solution in the cell was kept homogeneous by constant stirring with a top mounted stirrer and aeration by using an air pump as shown in the Fig. 1 (actual experimental rig). The schematic diagram of the

experimental setup is shown in Fig. 2. The aerial view of the geometrical arrangement of the UV tube is shown in Fig. 3. The passing of the air facilitated the wastewater circulation around the reaction vessel in order to maintain the reaction temperature at the desired value. This cell was placed in a constant temperature bath. The pH meter and temperature probe was inserted into the cell to monitor pH and temperature of the wastewater. The photocatalytic degradation was carried out over suspension of Titanium Oxide, Zinc Oxide and  $\text{TiO}_2/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  under ultraviolet irradiation.

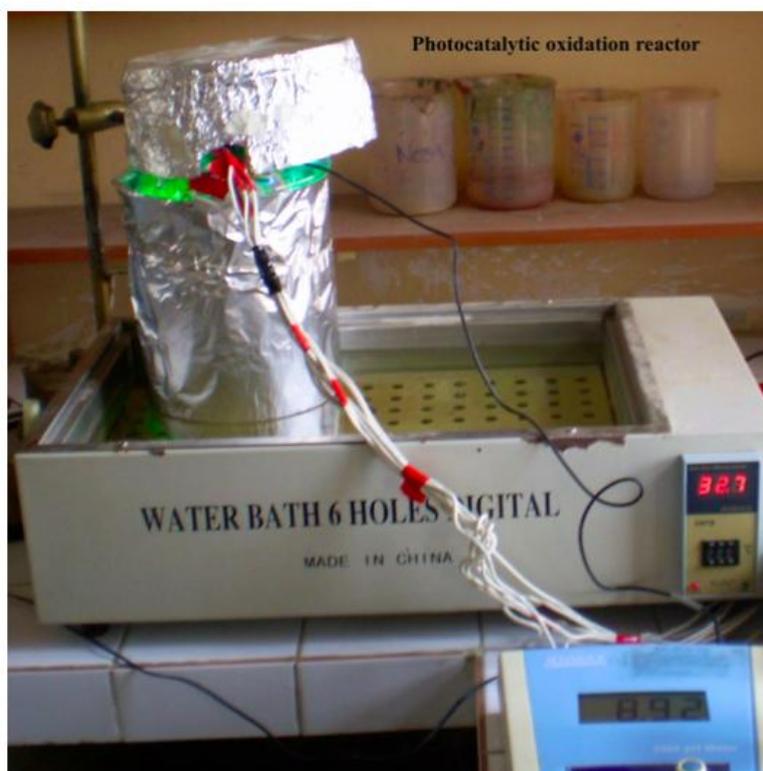


Fig. 1 photocatalytic oxidation reactor

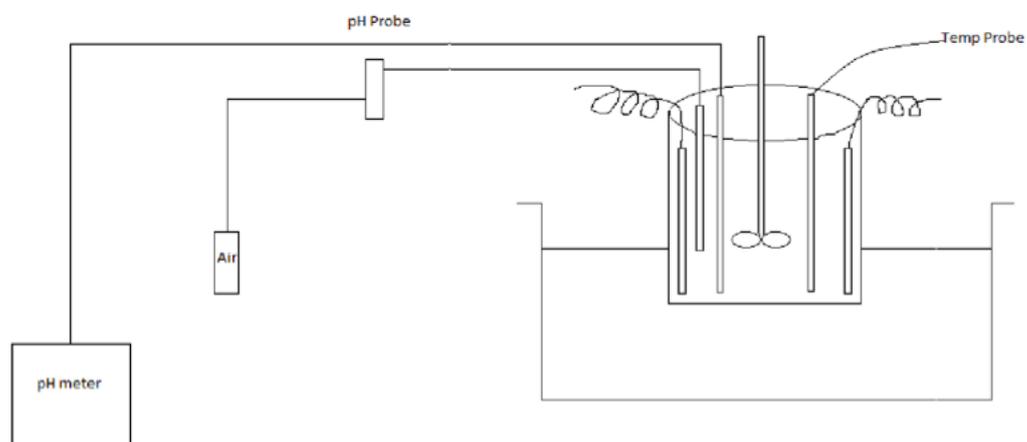


Fig. 2 schematic diagram of the experimental set-up

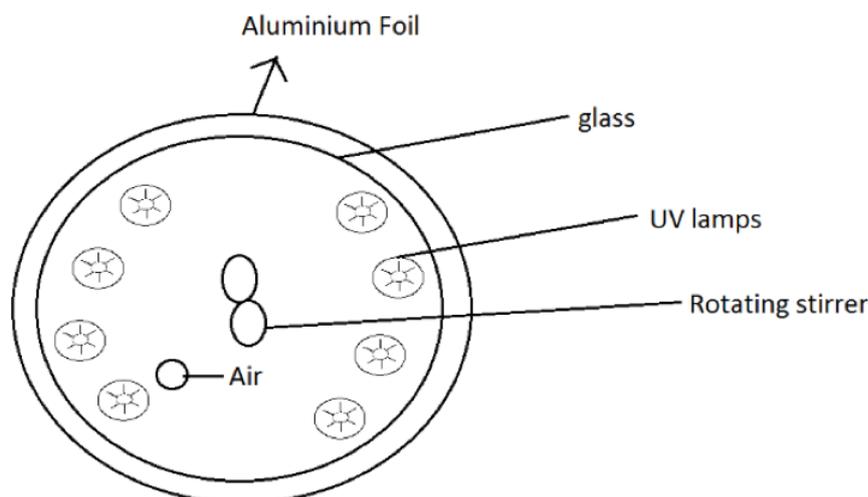


Fig. 3 the aerial view of the geometrical arrangement of the uv tubes in the reactor

The Spectronic “Genesys 20” Spectrophotometer with wavelength range 325 to 1100 nm, accuracy  $\pm 2.0\text{nm}$  was used to measure absorbance at  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  of 625 nm. The rate of photodegradation is calculated in percentage with time of irradiation. Tests were conducted for variables such as pH of sample wastewater, type of catalyst, and exposure time of UV light.

**2.4 procedure**

The optimum concentration of  $\text{TiO}_2$  reported by Almudena [18,24] was between 1.5 and 2.5 g/l, hence in all experiments 6 g of titanium dioxide or 4 g of zinc oxide was suspended in 5 liter of the real pharmaceutical wastewater which is placed in a photoreaction cell. For experiments with hydrogen peroxide, 2.4 ml  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  30% purity was added to sample wastewater. The suspension was subjected to irradiation under UV light for 2 hour. The suspension was stirred and aerated throughout the experiment.

At regular time intervals, the  $2\text{cm}^3$  of irradiated sample was taken out from the reaction vessel with the help of microsyringe, and then filtered through Millipore filter of  $0.45\mu\text{m}$  to separate the solid catalyst. Using cuvettes the absorbance of the supernatant liquid is measured at  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  of 625 nm.

The antibacterial activities of the wastewater before and after the photocatalysis were measured by Abbot Laboratories using HPLC to determine the remaining concentration of the parent antibiotics (Sulfonamide, Fluoroquinolones, Bacteriostatics, and Penicillin group); analgesics (Acetaminophen); parent anti-inflammatory drugs (Diclofenac and Ibuprofen); and CNS stimulant (Caffeine). TABLE 1 lists the characteristics of sampled pharmaceutical wastewater from Abbot Laboratories, and TABLE 2 shows the minimum standard discharge limits for pharmaceutical effluents [25].

Table 1. Characteristics of Sampled Pharmaceutical Wastewater from Abbott Laboratories Limited

Characteristics	Name of Drug	Value
COD ( $\text{mgx}l^{-1}$ )	-----	168-240
Antibiotics ( $\text{mgx}l^{-1}$ )	Sulfonamide	0.02-0.52
	Fluoroquinolones	5-43
	Bacteriostatic	0.08-0.33
	Penicillin group	0.002-0.022
Analgesics/Antipyretics	Acetaminophen	10-28.55
	Anti-inflammatory drugs	Diclofenac
		Ibuprofen
CNS Stimulant	Caffeine	2.8-10.56
TDS ( $\text{mgx}l^{-1}$ )	-----	980-1240
TSS ( $\text{mgx}l^{-1}$ )	-----	105-200
$\text{P}^{\text{H}}$ (dimensionless)	-----	7.4-7.8
Temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )	-----	24-30

Table 2. Minimum Standard Discharge Limits for Pharmaceutical Effluents [25]

Parameter	Composition (mgxl <sup>-1</sup> )
COD	250
BOD (3 days, 27 °C)	10-40
Oil & Grease	10
TSS	100
P <sup>H</sup> (dimensionless)	6.0-
Mercury	0.01
Arsenic	0.20
Chromium (Cr <sup>6+</sup> )	0.10
Lead	0.10
Cyanide	0.10
Phenolics (C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>5</sub> OH)	1.00
Chromium (Cr <sup>6+</sup> )	0.10
Sulphides (as S)	2.10
Phosphates (as P)	5.0

Each culture tubes were incubated for 12 hours at 38 °C. After the incubation, the bacterial growth was measured using the optical density at 625 nm. All bio-assessment tests were repeated for accuracy. The optical density value was converted to growth inhibition, I, and, was calculated in terms of changes in absorption spectra. The degradation efficiency I (%) was calculated as:

$$I = [A]_o - [A]_t / [A]_o \times 100 \tag{8}$$

Where [A]<sub>o</sub> is the initial value and [A]<sub>t</sub> after any irradiation time. All experiments were carried out at two pH of sample with different photo catalyst. For accuracy of results the absorbance at a given time was compared with a calibration curve. The calibration plot was obtained by using a known percentage of real pharmaceutical wastewater. The calibration of spectrophotometer was done using manual procedure outlined in Spectronic “Genesys 20” and solutions were prepared from BDH products.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1 Effect of Catalyst Type

The results presented in Fig. 4 shows effect of catalyst as an oxidant on degradation of real pharmaceutical wastewater by photoxidation process at constant pH 9 and Fig. 5 show effect of pH on degradation of wastewater with TiO<sub>2</sub>. The wastewater was effectively degraded using titanium dioxide or zinc oxide under pH of 9. The maximum degradation achieved within 120 minutes of irradiation time, was about 33.23% by using TiO<sub>2</sub> and 40.23% by using ZnO at 38 °C. There are limited research findings on the use of catalyst like ZnO. Most researchers have focused on the use of TiO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, Fe<sup>2+</sup>/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, and Fe<sup>2+</sup>/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>/UV. The results of this study are not directly comparable to reported findings due to variations in the parameters studied. However, the effectiveness of the catalyst can be discussed due to similar trend in COD and TOC removal efficiency. Kaniou reports that ZnO is more active than TiO<sub>2</sub> [10]. They achieved 90% degradation in 60 minutes when TiO<sub>2</sub> was combined with SiO<sub>2</sub>. Whereas, Liming found more than 90% pollutant's (paracetamol in aqueous solution) degradation in 80 minutes at pH 9.5 by TiO<sub>2</sub> alone [1]. This trend is comparable to our findings. The effectiveness of ZnO was higher than TiO<sub>2</sub> at given pH and temp. Reduced effectiveness of TiO<sub>2</sub> is due to medium pH and lower reaction temperature. Fatemeh found higher degradation at 50 °C. At high pH formation of OH radicals is enhanced [7]. The higher reactivity of ZnO is attributed to the geometry and working conditions of the photo reactor. The saturation level of ZnO under given operating conditions is lower than TiO<sub>2</sub>.

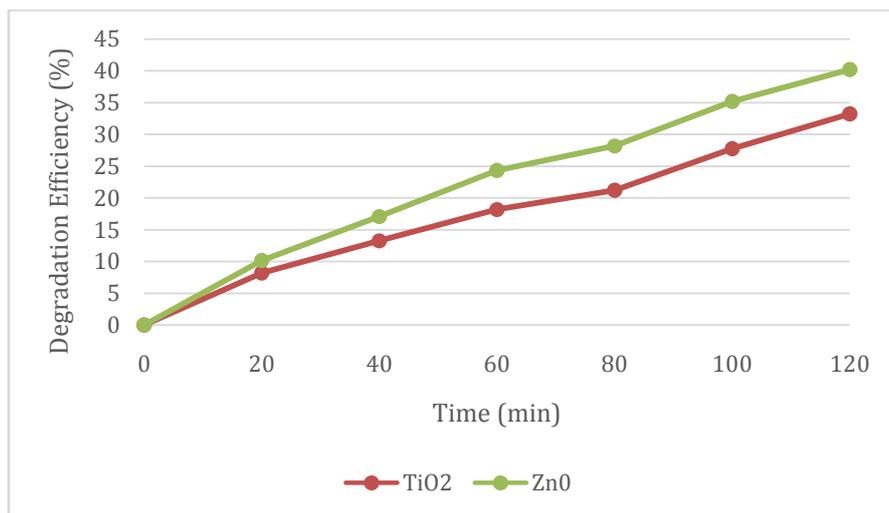


Fig.

4. The effect of catalyst on degradation of pharmaceutical waste water at pH 9.0, T=38°C

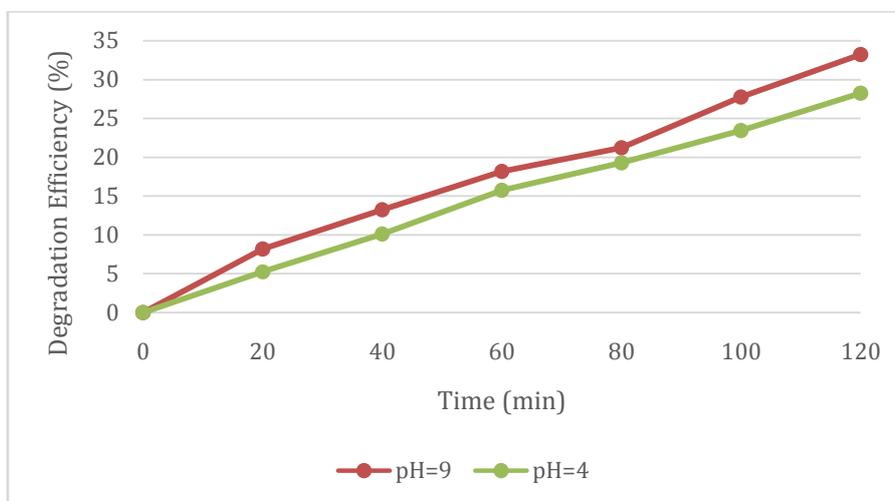


Fig. 5. The effect of pH on degradation of waste water with TiO<sub>2</sub> (Temperature = 37°C)

### 3.2 Effect of pH with additional catalyst H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>

The effect of pH on degradation of pharmaceutical wastewater by TiO<sub>2</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is shown in Fig. 6. The maximum degradation achieved within 120 minutes of irradiation time, at pH 9 was about 45.11%. By adding the catalyst H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> to TiO<sub>2</sub>, the degradation was increased by 12%. It has been reported by many researchers that H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> addition increases degradation efficiency of the catalyst [22,26-30]. Yeon [30] found more than 99% removal of amoxicillin from a aqueous solution in the presence of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. Xiang-Rong reports that Fenton process is more efficient than UV/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in the absence of TiO<sub>2</sub> [6] as rate of reaction increases with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. It is proved that more than 90% degradation can be achieved in a aqueous solution but not in real pharmaceutical wastewater. As real wastewater characteristics and chemistry of pollutants are significantly different than synthetic wastewater or a aqueous solution, it is expected that degradation would vary widely. Fig. 7 and 8 show performance of catalyst at constant pH 9 and 4 respectively. At pH 4 the maximum degradation achieved within 120 minutes of irradiation time, was about 40.18%. It indicated that pH played an important role and the moderate photocatalysis in the presence of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is due to enhanced absorbance of UV light capacity by the compound; which is similar to the findings of many other researchers [12,14, 31]. Even with Fenton oxidation process with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, the maximum COD removal from industrial wastewater of pharmaceutical origin was 55%. Hence it is not surprising to achieve a maximum degradation of 45% using real pharmaceutical wastewater. A possible explanation for lower degradation could be that photocatalytic reaction in real wastewater

produces several intermediate products and these products do not transform into CO<sub>2</sub> to the extent transformed in an aqueous solution.

the extent

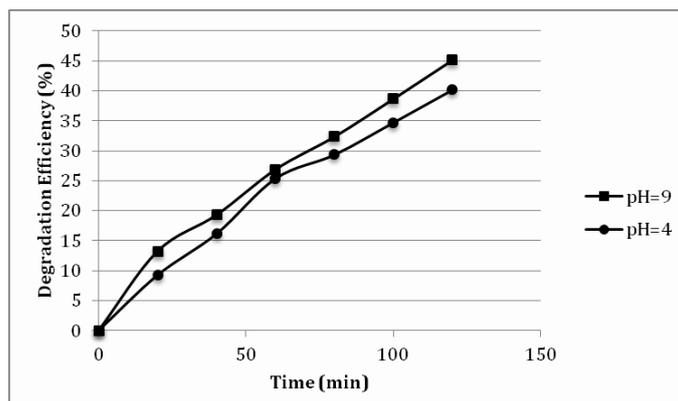


Fig. 6 The effect of pH on degradation of wastewater by TiO<sub>2</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>

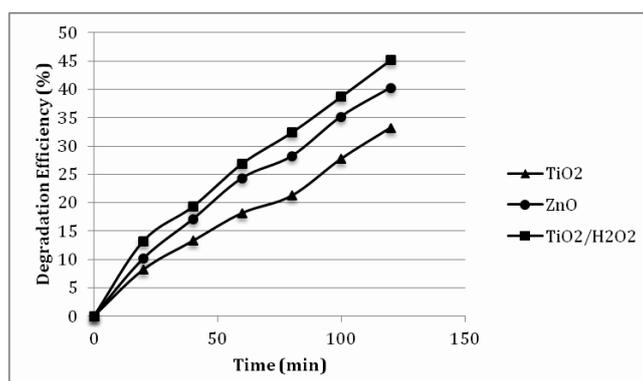


Fig. 7 The performance of catalyst at constant pH of 9

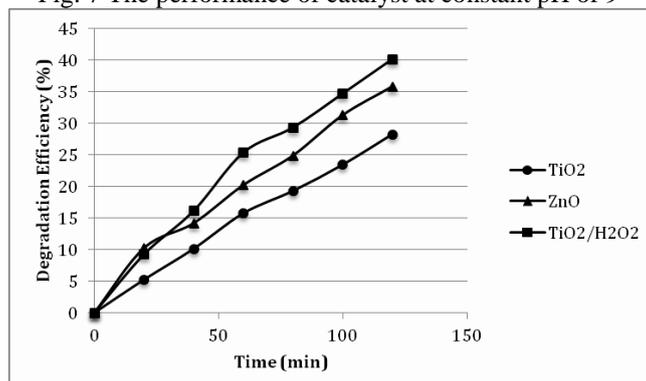


Fig. 8 The performance of catalyst at constant pH of 9

### 3.3 Effect of reaction time

A linear relationship as shown in Fig. 9 was observed between irradiation time and COD removal. The results show that in oxidation process, the reaction rate plays an important role than adsorption rate. The OH<sup>-</sup> radicals can degrade organic pollutants to intermediates and then the intermediates are further degraded to CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O [7]. The reaction rate attains a maximum value at high pH; and the generation of OH<sup>-</sup> radicals by the effect of irradiation on the TiO<sub>2</sub> of the composite may be another factor for increasing reaction rate in basic environment [1]. The maximum COD removal efficiency in 120 min was obtained at pH of 9, which corresponds with the findings of San Sebastian [12,22]. The comparability of reported work on treatment of pharmaceutical in water and wastewater by AOPs with current study is given in TABLE 3.

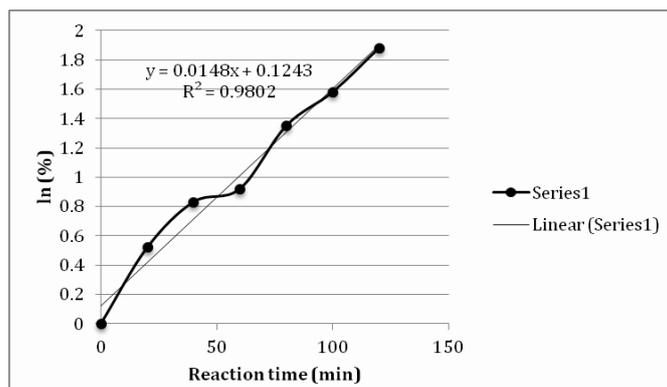


Fig. 9 The linear regression of degradation of pharmaceutical wastewater at pH 9 and temperature 38 °C

Table 3. Reported Work on Treatment of Pharmaceutical in Water and Wastewater by AOPS

	AOPfeature	Scale	Measureof	Comparability	Reference
Synthetic wastewater	O <sub>3</sub> aloneorO <sub>3</sub> /H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> ;	Bench	COD,TOC,	Yes	[8, 9, 16]
Municipal	O <sub>3</sub> alone	Pilot	TOC	No	Notlisted
Formulation Effluent	O <sub>3</sub> alone,UValone, orO <sub>3</sub> /H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> ; Fe <sup>2+</sup> /H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	Bench	COD,TOC, BOD <sub>5</sub>	Yes	[9, 15, 16]
Syntheticwash-waterfromantibiotic packagingdistilled	O <sub>3</sub> alone,O <sub>3</sub> /MnSO <sub>4</sub>	Bench	COD,BOD <sub>5</sub>	No	Notlisted
Industrial wastewaterof pharmaceutical origin	UVonly,Fe <sup>2+</sup> /H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> , UV/H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	Bench	COD,BOD	Yes	[5, 12]
Hospitalwastewater	Fe <sup>2+</sup> /H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	Bench	COD,BOD <sub>5</sub> ,	Yes	[31]
Syntheticwash-waterfrommedium scaledrug	Fe <sup>2+</sup> /H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	Bench and Full	COD,BOD <sub>5</sub>	Yes	[17]
Biologicallypre-treated pharmaceutical wastewater	Fe <sup>2+</sup> /H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	Bench	COD	Yes	[13]
Actualwash-water fromointment manufacturingplant	Fe <sup>2+</sup> /H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	Bench	COD,BOD <sub>7</sub>	Yes	[14]
Effluentfrombulk drugmanufacturing plant	TiO <sub>2</sub> asanode, Graphiteascathode, Cl <sup>-</sup> aselectrolyte	Bench	COD,TOC	No	Notlisted
Distilled water/Deionized Water	O <sub>3</sub> alone,UValone, UV/Fe <sup>2+</sup> ,UV/Cu <sup>2+</sup> , TiO <sub>2</sub> /UV,	Bench	TOC	No	Notlisted

### 3.4 Kinetic analysis

The linear regression analysis of degradation of pharmaceutical wastewater with TiO<sub>2</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> at pH 9 is shown in figure 9. The plotted data produced a straight line that indicates that the degradation of the pharmaceutical wastewater can be described by the following first-order kinetic model equation.

$$\ln(C_0/C_t) = k_1t \tag{9}$$

Where C<sub>0</sub> is the initial concentration value, k<sub>1</sub> is the reaction rate, and t is the time. The equation (9) presents kinetic expression and the correlation between ln(C<sub>0</sub>/C<sub>t</sub>) and reaction time t was linear with R<sup>2</sup> = 0.9802 for TiO<sub>2</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. The value of determination coefficient R<sup>2</sup> clearly indicates that this degradation process follows pseudo-first-order kinetics. The figure 9 also shows the rate constant (0.0148/min). These results are very close to the findings of Sun Jian Hui [28]. Similar to previous studies [13, 21, 32]. More precise rate of reaction can be calculated if effects of photon absorption are included to the kinetic model equation.

### 3.5 Pharmaceutical Wastewater and Mineralization Study

The composition of pharmaceutical wastewater is complex and may contain different types of organic pollutants. At the time of study, Abbot Laboratories were processing formulations for antibiotics, analgesics, anti-inflammatory drugs and CNS stimulants as listed in TABLE 1. Hence it is assumed that the same group of compounds would be present in wastewater. The HPLC results confirmed the concentration of these compounds listed in TABLE 1.

During the degradation process, some intermediate products are formed which may be more difficult to degrade. The measurement of COD is related to total concentration of organic compounds in the waste and treated water. Hence the change in COD before and after treatment reflects degree of mineralization. The COD of sampled wastewater was in the range of 168 to 240 mg/l, which is within the standard discharge limits. However, the composition of the treated water suggests that nearly all of the intermediates were mineralized by photocatalysis under given conditions. It is most likely that the treated water is free from toxic compounds. This study confirms that photocatalytic degradation can completely mineralize pharmaceutical wastewater but still lacks in comprehensive study that encircles the comparison of the effect of  $\text{TiO}_2$ ,  $\text{ZnO}$ , and other catalysts under different operating parameters. Therefore, in order to commercialize the photocatalytic wastewater technology, several key parameters like catalyst development, reactor design and process optimization need to be further investigated.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

All three catalysts namely Titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, and  $\text{TiO}_2/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  used in this study are effective catalysts in photocatalytic degradation of real pharmaceutical wastewater. However, the maximum degradation achieved was 45.11% by combined use of  $\text{TiO}_2$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  at  $38^\circ\text{C}$  and pH of 9, within 120 minutes of irradiations. With the same catalyst at pH of 4 the degradation decreased to 35.82%. The degradation at higher pH supports the notion that pH is one of the most important operating parameters that affect the photocatalytic reactivity of the catalyst. The maximum degradation with  $\text{ZnO}$  was 40.23% and with  $\text{TiO}_2$  was 33.23% at pH 9. The degradation of the pharmaceutical wastewater followed pseudo-first-order kinetics. The reaction rate constant was 0.0148/min for  $\text{TiO}_2/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ . The results indicate that for real pharmaceutical wastewater, combined use of  $\text{TiO}_2/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  is comparatively more effective than  $\text{ZnO}$  and  $\text{TiO}_2$  alone. This study demonstrates that real pharmaceutical wastewater reacts differently to catalysts than synthetic pharmaceutical wastewater, or formulated wastewater.

The results of this study indicated that photocatalytic degradation can be used for the real pharmaceutical wastewater contaminated by different inorganic-organic pollutants. In order to achieve more than 90% degradation, pretreated effluent is more suitable for AOP treatment. Due to low consumption of chemicals and energy, heterogeneous photocatalysis seems to be a promising method under modern technology with broad application in treating wastewater from pharmaceutical industry, hospitals and municipalities. However, further studies are required for i) identifying the bioactivity of unknown intermediate products and by-products, ii) inhibition of photocatalytic activity by natural organic matter present in the wastewater, and iii) comparison of the effect of  $\text{TiO}_2$ ,  $\text{ZnO}$ , and other catalysts under different operating parameters.

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