UJEAS

UNIZIK JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCES

UNIZIK Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences 2(2), September (2023), 319-331
Journal homepage: https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/index.php/ujeas
PRINT ISSN: 2992-4383 || ONLINE ISSN: 2992-4391

# Azadirachta Indica's adsorptive behavior on mild steel in a sulfuric acid medium

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**Abstract**
This research investigated the corrosion of mild steel by exploring the anti-corrosion potentials of Azadirachta Indica leaf extract in 1.5 M of $H_2SO_4$ acid medium. Assessment was made using weight loss, fourier transform infrared spectroscopy, optical microscopy, and potentiodynamic polarization method. Measurements revealed that on the first four days, samples with 4g/l, 5g/l, and 6g/l extract showed the best inhibitory efficiency of 72.03%, 71.89%, and 71.33%, respectively. While in general, inhibition efficiency was found to decrease as exposure time increases. The computed $\Delta G_{ads}$ values for the extract ranged from -6.993 to -9.675 kJ $mol^{-1}$, while the adsorption isotherm data fitted well into the Temkin isotherm, confirming a physisorption interaction between the extract molecules and the surface of the mild steel coupons. Going by the results obtained, the extract can be applied against corrosion attack on mild steel and other metals in acidic media.

**Keywords:** Adsorption, concentration, inhibition efficiency, organic extract, weight loss.

## 1. Introduction

Among all the classes of engineering material, it is a common knowledge that metals are the least resistant to corrosion. This is because despite the fact that ceramics are considered as an important class of material with great attractive features like corrosion resistant, yet they are not as easy to design with when compared to metals since they have no ductility, low tolerance for stress concentrations (i.e., cracks or holes), but ductile metals accommodate stress concentrations by deforming in a way which redistributes the load more evenly; and by so doing, they can be used under static loads no matter how little the yield strength of the material (Ashby, 1999). In as much as good designs exploits the superior properties of metals, time to time investigation of the corrosion rate of metals is paramount.

Mild steel is less expensive than other forms of steel and metals, this led to its applicability as a structural material. Also known as simple carbon steel, mild steel has numerous applications due to its unique characteristics (Kumar et al., 2016). But because of its low corrosion resistance in a neutral and acidic environment, it is regarded a considerable difficulty. Severe corrosion attacks are known to happen in the acidic environment (Kanayo, Joseph, & Tomi, 2015; Nwigwe et al., 2019; Tanwer, & Shukla, 2022). Corrosion is associated with loss of metal caused by corrosive substances (Salman et al., 2019). Therefore, corrosion prevention in mild steel is important both conceptually and practically (Melchers, 2019), since corrosion results to safety problems as well as huge financial loss (Verma, Ebenso, & Quraishi, 2021). Because it is impossible to completely eradicate corrosion, corrosion

science and engineering must focus on regulating instead of preventing it (Oyedeko, Lasisi, & Akinyanju, 2022). The use of corrosion inhibitors is an appealing method of fighting corrosion (Okiongbo, & Ogobiri, 2013). Corrosion inhibitors are chemicals that, when used in small amounts in a corrosive medium, reduce the rate of corrosion by providing a barrier through creating an adsorbed film or by slowing the cathodic and/or anodic reaction (Sastri, 2011; Bilgiç, 2022).

Due to the toxicity and/or high cost of several chemical inhibitors now in use, it is vital to create environmentally friendly and low-cost alternatives (Miralrio, & Vázquez, 2020; Nwigwe, Mbam, & Umunakwe, 2019). Several authors have examined and documented the ability of extracts of several plants, such as Azadirachta indica, carica papaya, ceratonia silique, vernonia amygdalina, thymus algeriensis, eruca sativa, beta vulgaris, jatropha curcas, camellia sinensis, aquilaria crassna, justicia secunda, spirulina platensis, elaeis guineensis, xanthan gum, gingko biloba, chamaerops humilis, rhizophora apiculate, allium cepa, citrus aurantium and others, to minimize metal dissolution in various strong acids for use as green inhibitors (Oyedeko, Lasisi, & Akinyanju, 2022), (Nwigwe, Mbam, & Umunakwe, 2019; Kamal, & Sethuraman, 2012; Asaad et al., 2013; Mobin, & Rizvi, 2016; Singh et al., 2015; Fekkar et al., 2020; Asaad et al., 2017; Aiboudi et al., 2019; Hassan, Khadom, & Kurshed, 2016; Helen et al., 2014; Peter, & Sharma, 2017; Abro, Abro, & Assad, 2020; Ghazi, Siniti, & Elattari, 2022; Khadraoui et al., 2015; Alrafai, 2022; Joycee et al., 2022; Ajayi, Odusote, & Yahya, 2014; Loto, & Loto, 2016; Iroha, & Maduelosi, 2021). The extract of these plants, as well as the efficiency of their corrosion inhibition properties, varies greatly depending on the plant's part and geographical area.

The leaves of Azadirachta indica extract has not been adequately explored to combat the corrosion of mild steel in acidic environments. Different techniques such as potentiodynamic polarization, optical microscopy, fourier transform infrared spectroscopy, and weight loss were used for the experiment and to analyze results. It is believed that the results will be relevance to corrosion experts and other professionals in this field.

## 2.0 Experimental

### 2.1 Materials

The mild steel sheet used for this study was of the composition (wt %) C (0.15), Mn (0.6), P (0.36), and Si (0.03) and Fe (balance). The sheet was marked and press cut with hand sharer to produce many coupons with same dimension of 2cm × 2cm × 2mm. Before the corrosion test, the coupons were immersion into undiluted sulfuric acid for pickling so as to remove the black oxide that formed on the surface of the sheet due to long exposure to the atmosphere. This was done to properly expose the main coupons bodies for direct corrosion attack. Pickling is preferred to ordinary polishing using emery papers to ensure equal removal of the oxide surface layer and it is faster. Hence, samples were pickled for 10 minutes in sulfuric acid, removed and placed into distilled water, followed by degreasing with absolute ethanol and dried using acetone. All of the chemicals used were of Analar grade and double-distilled water was used for 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ preparation.

### 2.2 Preparation of the leaf extract

Leaves of Azadirachta indica used for this study were collected as required from plants from the city around the Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Nigeria. These were dried under the Varanda using room temperature and the scorching heat from the sun, crushed into powder form using laboratory mortar and pestle. 500g of the power was soaked in a 2 litre solution of ethanol for five days, the resultant solution was filtered with Whatman Grade 1 filter paper with 10mm hole size. The filtrate was concentrated into a thick syrup using a Thermostatic Water Bath (model No: Dk-420, S.N: 31660). The thick syrup was spread in a laboratory pan and allowed for 48 hours to dry through the evaporation of the excess ethanol and stored. From the stock solution, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6g concentrations were measured and dissolved into five different 200ml of 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ test solution, excluding the control that was not with the extract.

**Table 1: Phytochemical components of Azadirachta indica leaf extract (Madaki, Kabiru, & Mailafiya, 2016):**

| Phytochemical | Result |
|---|---|
| Cardiac glycosides | + |
| Saponins | + |
| Steroids | + |
| Flavonoids | + |
| Alkaloids | + |
| Tannins | + |
| Phenols | + |
| Terpenes | + |
| Anthraquinones | - |
| Carbohydrates | - |
| Reducing sugar | + |

Absent -, present +

## 3.0 Results and Discussions

### 3.1. Weight loss measurements

Immersed samples were first allowed for two days to enable the inhibitor to get properly absorbed on the coupons. And after that, coupons were subsequently removed at every 2 days interval due to the high acidity nature of the medium, as it was observed that longer exposure time may not be favourable to the unprotected (control) samples. At every removal, coupons were placed into distilled water, followed by degreasing with ethanol and dried using acetone before their weight loss were taken.

### 3.2 Calculation of the corrosion rate by weight loss

By weight loss technique, the corrosion rates of mild carbon steel coupons were calculated using the formula (Ovri, Okeahialam, & Onyemaobi, 2013),

$$CR = \frac{534W}{DAT} \qquad (1)$$

where, CR = corrosion rate in mile per year (mpy), W = weight loss in grams (g), D = density of steel (7.87 g/cm$^3$), A = the total surface area (cm$^2$), and T = exposure time in hours (hrs). Inhibition efficiency is calculated as represented in equation (2) below.

$$Inhibition\ efficiency = \left[\frac{CR_{0g/l} - CR_{inh}}{CR_{0g/l}}\right] \times 100\ \% \qquad (2)$$

where $CR_{0g/l}$ and $CR_{inh}$ are the corrosion rate in the absence and presence of the plant extract. The results as calculated are shown in table 2.

The dimensions of the coupons used which are rectangular in shape is as given below.
Length = L = 20 mm = 2 cm
Breath = B = 20 mm = 2 cm
Thickness = T = 2 mm = 0.2 cm
$D_h$ = diameter of holes = 5 mm = 0.05 cm
The total surface area, A, of the rectangular steel coupons used in this investigation was calculated using the following relationship (Ovri, Okeahialam, & Onyemaobi, 2013),

$$A = 2\left([LB + BT + LT] - 2\left(\pi\left({D_h}^2\right)/4\right)\right) \qquad (3)$$

Therefore, A = 2(2 × 2 + 2 × 0.2 + 2 × 0.2) – 2(3.142 × (0.5)$^2$/4) = 9.6 – 2(0.07) = 9.207 cm$^2$

**Table 2: Acidic (1.5 M of $H_2SO_4$) medium**

| 0g/l concentration of extract | | | | | | | 2g/l concentration of extract | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time (days) | Initial weight (g) | Final weight (g) | Weight loss (g) | Corrosion rate (mpy) | | | Time (days) | Initial weight (g) | Final weight (g) | Weight loss (g) | Corrosion rate (mpy) | Inhibitor Efficiency (%) |
| 4 | 4.384 | 2.516 | 1.868 | 0.1434 | | | 4 | 4.283 | 3.674 | 0.609 | 0.0467 | 67.43 |
| 6 | 4.202 | 2.076 | 2.126 | 0.1088 | | | 6 | 4.658 | 3.733 | 0.925 | 0.0473 | 56.52 |
| 8 | 4.353 | 2.243 | 2.110 | 0.0809 | | | 8 | 4.774 | 3.651 | 1.123 | 0.0431 | 46.72 |
| 10 | 4.539 | 2.245 | 2.294 | 0.0704 | | | 10 | 4.480 | 3.091 | 1.389 | 0.0426 | 39.48 |
| 12 | 4.333 | 2.299 | 2.034 | 0.0520 | | | 12 | 4.479 | 3.019 | 1.460 | 0.0373 | 28.26 |
| 14 | 4.787 | 2.554 | 2.233 | 0.0489 | | | 14 | 4.450 | 2.975 | 1.475 | 0.0323 | 33.94 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3g/l concentration of extract | | | | | | | 4g/l concentration of extract | | | | | |
| Time (days) | Initial weight (g) | Final weight (g) | Weight loss (g) | Corrosion rate (mpy) | Inhibitor Efficiency (%) | | Time (days) | Initial weight (g) | Final weight (g) | Weight loss (g) | Corrosion rate (mpy) | Inhibitor Efficiency (%) |
| 4 | 4.247 | 3.636 | 0.611 | 0.0469 | 67.29 | | 4 | 4.087 | 3.564 | 0.523 | 0.0401 | 72.03 |
| 6 | 4.705 | 3.771 | 0.934 | 0.0478 | 56.06 | | 6 | 4.541 | 3.605 | 0.936 | 0.0479 | 55.97 |
| 8 | 4.611 | 3.378 | 1.233 | 0.0473 | 41.53 | | 8 | 4.566 | 3.370 | 1.196 | 0.0459 | 43.26 |
| 10 | 4.825 | 3.469 | 1.356 | 0.0416 | 40.90 | | 10 | 4.599 | 3.279 | 1.320 | 0.0405 | 42.47 |
| 12 | 4.318 | 2.809 | 1.509 | 0.0386 | 25.76 | | 12 | 4.247 | 2.836 | 1.411 | 0.0361 | 30.57 |
| 14 | 4.534 | 3.035 | 1.499 | 0.0328 | 32.92 | | 14 | 4.750 | 2.925 | 1.825 | 0.0400 | 18.20 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5g/l concentration of extract | | | | | | | 6g/l concentration of extract | | | | | |
| Time (days) | Initial weight (g) | Final weight (g) | Weight loss (g) | Corrosion rate (mpy) | Inhibitor Efficiency (%) | | Time (days) | Initial weight (g) | Final weight (g) | Weight loss (g) | Corrosion rate (mpy) | Inhibitor Efficiency (%) |
| 4 | 4.176 | 3.650 | 0.526 | 0.0403 | 71.89 | | 4 | 4.105 | 3.569 | 0.536 | 0.0411 | 71.33 |
| 6 | 4.694 | 3.773 | 0.921 | 0.0471 | 56.70 | | 6 | 4.225 | 3.473 | 0.752 | 0.0384 | 64.70 |
| 8 | 4.352 | 3.331 | 1.021 | 0.0391 | 51.66 | | 8 | 4.440 | 3.455 | 0.985 | 0.0378 | 53.27 |
| 10 | 4.981 | 3.564 | 1.417 | 0.0435 | 38.21 | | 10 | 4.626 | 3.378 | 1.248 | 0.0383 | 45.59 |
| 12 | 4.333 | 2.976 | 1.357 | 0.0347 | 33.26 | | 12 | 4.286 | 3.004 | 1.282 | 0.0328 | 36.92 |
| 14 | 4.543 | 3.057 | 1.486 | 0.0325 | 33.53 | | 14 | 4.777 | 2.954 | 1.823 | 0.0399 | 18.40 |

The results on table 2 shows that the samples in all experienced varying amounts of weight loss in all the concentrations they were subjected to. But the presence of uniform corrosion attack dominated in each coupon's surface, though the 0g/l specimens suffered minor pitting corrosion which is believed to be due to lack of inhibitor with appreciable uniform corrosion. The uniform attack was fairly and evenly distributed over the surface area of the coupons, which resulted to an almost even reduction in thickness. Usually, homogeneous materials like the kind used in this investigation that shows little or no reasonable likelihood for passivation in their current environment are pruned to suffer this kind of corrosion attack. And among the methods known for combating uniform corrosion attack is the use of inhibitors (Fontana, 1987; Bardal, 2004). 0g/l specimens suffered the highest weight loss which is responsible for the highest corrosion rate it also recorded. Samples in 4g/l, 5g/l and 6g/l concentrations indicated the best inhibition efficiencies (72.03%, 71.89%, and 71.33%) on their first 4 days respectively. In general, inhibition efficiency was observed to be decreasing with increase in exposure time. The least inhibition efficiencies of 18.20% and 18.40% were recorded by 4g/l and 6g/l concentrations of extract on their last day, respectively.

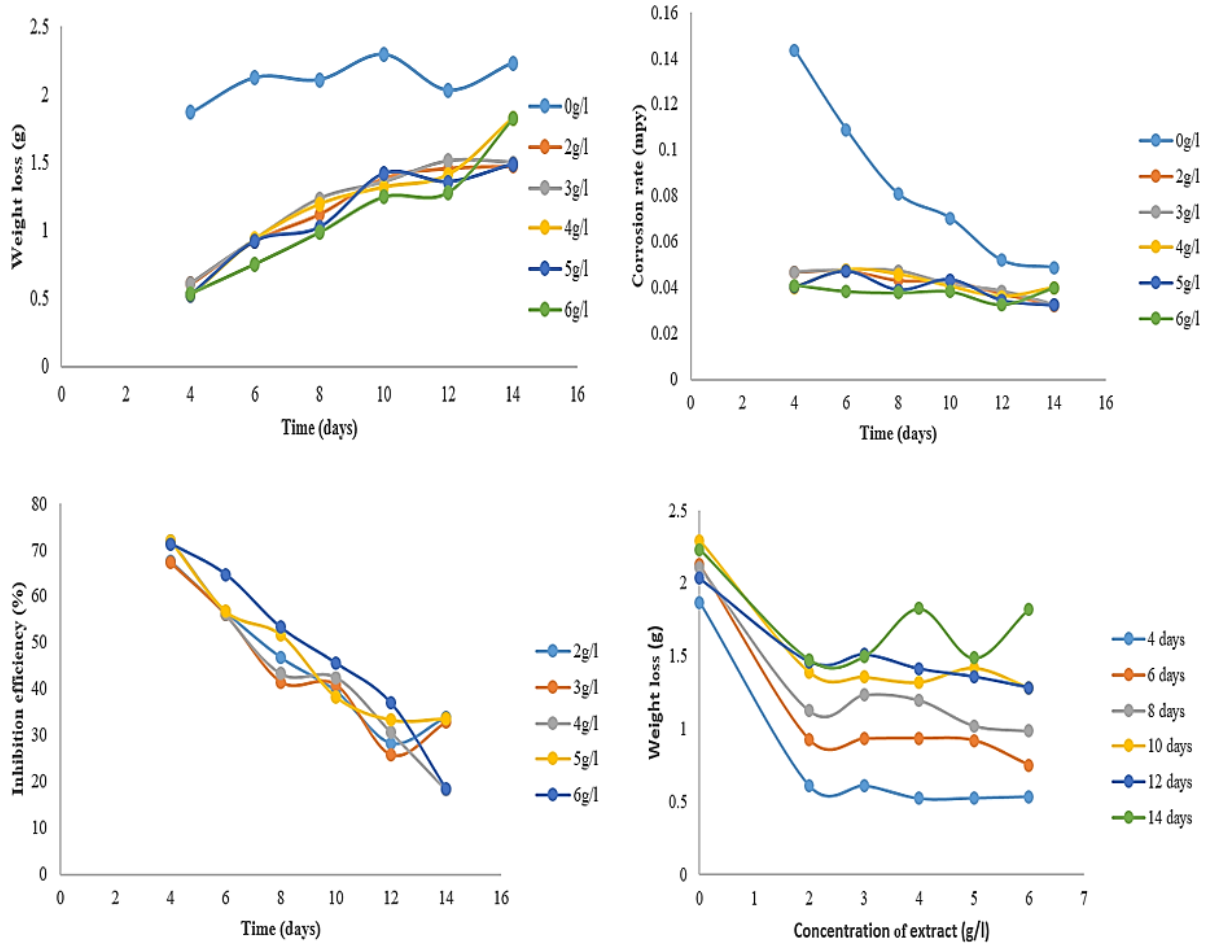



**Figure 1: Plots of different variables of mild steel surface exposed to 1.5M of $H_2SO_4$ medium without/with Azadirachta indica extract**

Figure 1 is the plots of weight loss, corrosion rate, inhibition efficiency and concentration of extract for 0g/l to 6g/l extract concentrations. The weight loss increases with increase in time, while the corrosion rate and the inhibition efficiency both decreases with increase on time of exposure for the different concentrations of extract used. "The behavior is attributed to a higher adsorption level of active inhibitor molecules from the extracts on the metal surface forming a thin film on metal surface to prevent further attack from the corrosive environment" (Oyedeko, Lasisi, & Akinyanju, 2022).

### 3.3 Fourier transform infra-red (FTIR) analysis

The Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) was done with Cary 630 FTIR machine, a product of Agilent Technologies at the Chemical Engineering laboratory, Alex-Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Ebonyi state, Nigeria. The test was able to evaluate the nature of the film formed on the surface of the metal. The figure 2 shows the FTIR spectra of the Azadirachta indica extract on the coupons in the as-received form, blank and different inhibition concentrations respectively. To have a better understanding of the probable interactions between the adsorbed inhibitor and the mild steel surface in the sulfuric medium, FTIR measurements were performed. However, the effectiveness of an inhibition is determined by the inhibitor's molecular structure (Hassan, Khadom, & Kurshed, 2016). Since the stock solution was extracted using ethanol, it justifies the presence of ethanol band in the spectra. However, the properties of ethanol are responsible for the stretching vibrations of the hydroxyl group (-OH) which are seen at the peaks of every stretching vibration at 3906.3 $cm^{-1}$, 3855.9 $cm^{-1}$, 3891.3 $cm^{-1}$, 3837.3 $cm^{-1}$, and 3872.7.21 $cm^{-1}$ for sample B to F respectively as inhibited. Figure 2 shows the presence of cardiac glycosides, saponins, steroids, flavonoids, alkaloids, tannins, phenolic compounds, terpenes, anthraquinones, carbohydrates and reducing sugar in all the samples with extract.

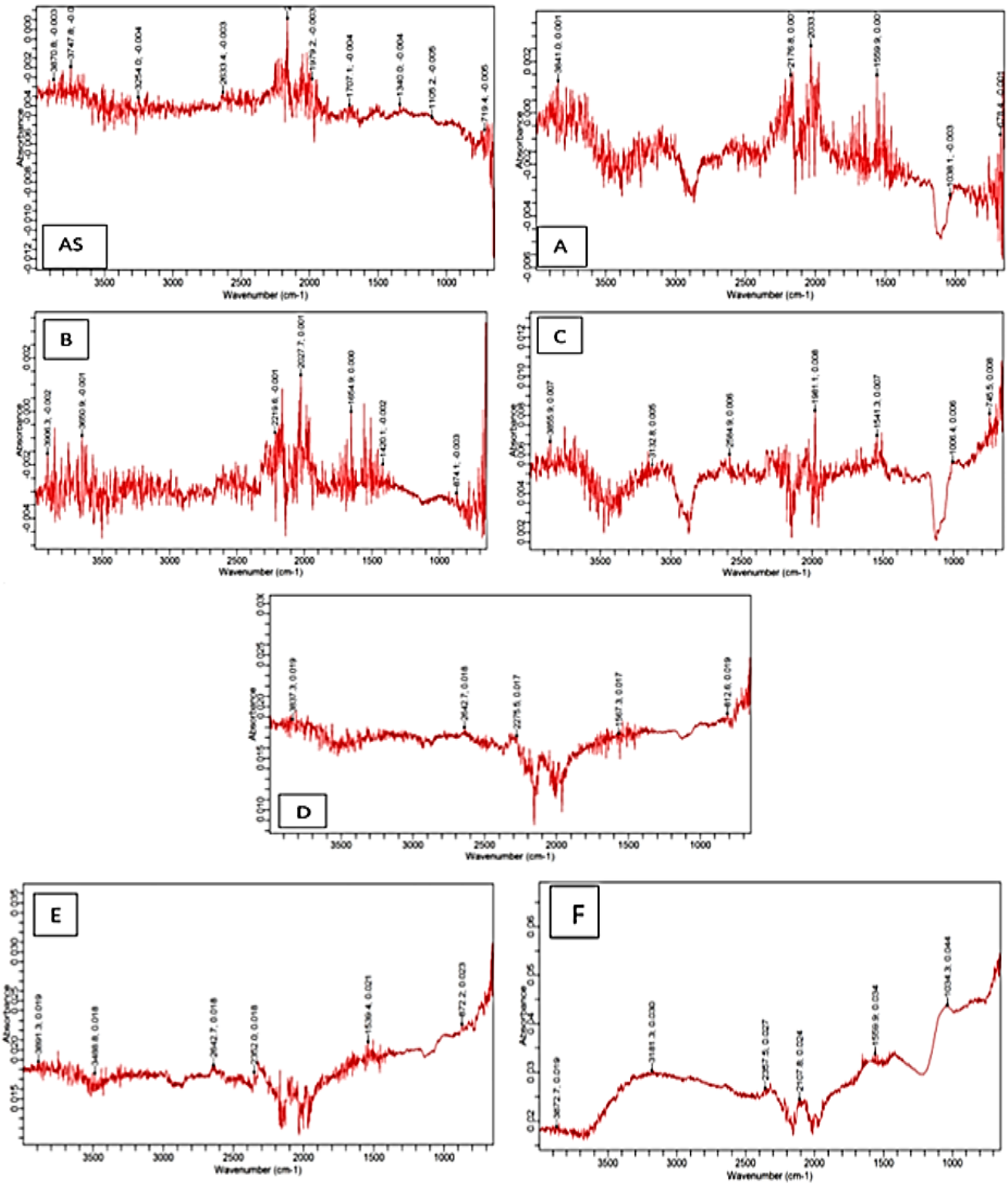



**Figure 2: Mild steel FT-IR spectra, (AS) for As-received, (A) after 12 days immersion in 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ test solution with 0g/l (blank), (B) after 12 days immersion with 2g/l plant extract, (C), after 12 days immersion with 3g/l plant extract, (D) after 12 days immersion with 4 g/l plant extract, (E) after 12 days immersion with 5g/l plant extract, and (F) after 12 days immersion with 6g/l plant extract concentration in 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ test solution**

However, it is considered that the presence of tannins in the extract is one of the major factors accountable for the inhibitory property of the extract (Oyedeko, Lasisi, & Akinyanju, 2022; Hassan, Khadom, & Kurshed, 2016). While the peak vibrations of sample AS and A without extract are seen at location 3870.8 $cm^{-1}$ and 3841.0 $cm^{-1}$ respectively. In summary, the peaks are in the range of 4000 – 650 $cm^{-1}$ signifying the presence of different functional groups. For instance, sample B which has its peaks at 3906.3, 2219.6, 1654.9 and 874.1 ($cm^{-1}$) represents -OH stretching, -C=O stretching, -C-O stretching and -C-O stretching respectively.

### 3.4 Preparation of coupons for optical metallography

Coupons were prepared and analyzed at the Materials and Metallurgy laboratory, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo state, Nigeria. The instrument used for the investigation of the microstructures of the coupons was Keyence Digital Microscope, model VH-Z450 with high magnification lens. A sample from the as-received was mounted and ground with different grades of emery paper sizes in the order of 220, 400, and 600-grits under running water till a smooth surface was obtained, and thereafter, they were polished with cloth covered with a solution of silicon carbide until a mirror-like smooth surface was obtained. Finally, etching was done with 2% nitric acid and after which the surfaces were immediately observed with the metallurgical microscope. While the immersed samples were simply viewed without mounting and etching so as not to remove the thin film protective effect formed on the surface of specimens by the extract.

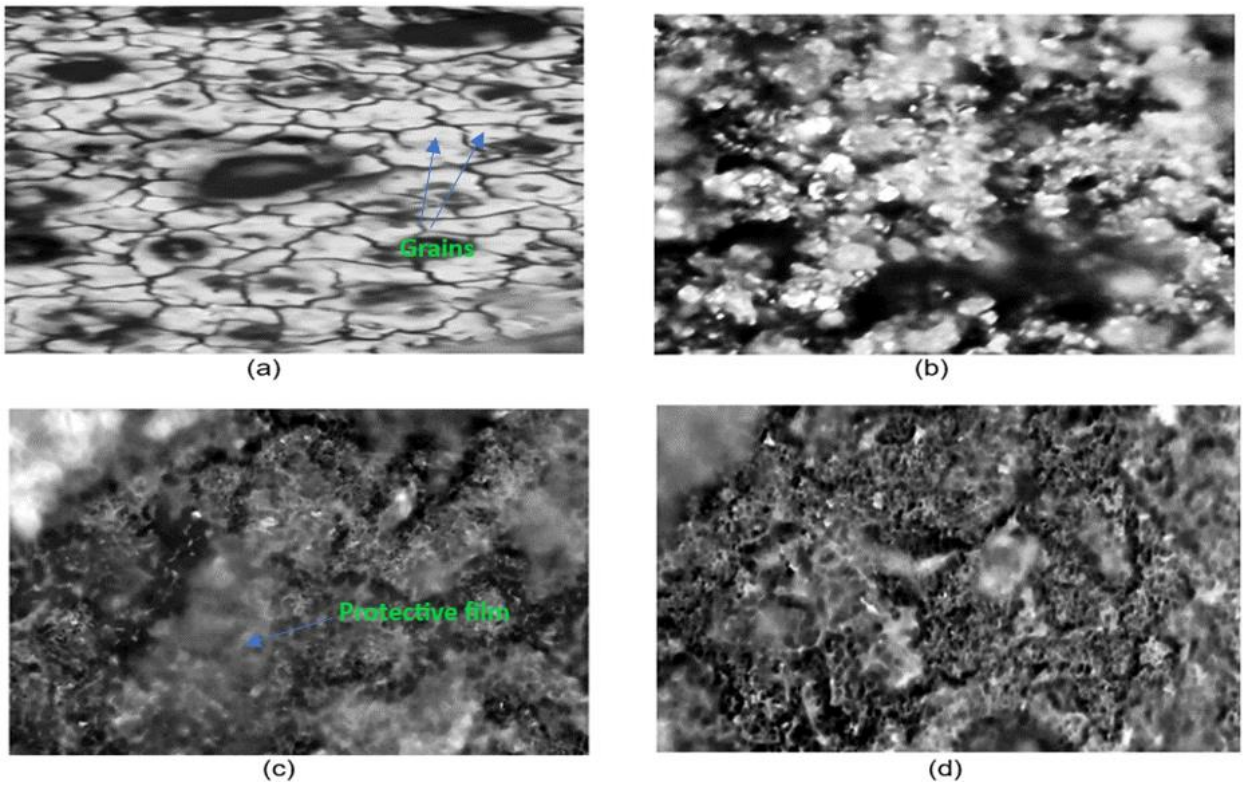



**Figure 3: Optical micrographs of samples, (a) for as-received, (b) 0g/l (blank) after 12 days immersion in 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ test solution, (c) after 12 days immersion with 5g/l plant extract, and (d) after 12 days immersion with 6g/l plant extract in 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ test solution**

The micrograph on figure 3 (a) for as-received sample displays clearly the grains and their boundaries since the sample was not immersed, that of (b) which was the control sample has no inhibitor and only the grains could be seen, while that of (c) and (d) with inhibitors has areas exposed and areas covered by a shadow-like images which is believed to be the protective film form by the extract to protect the surface of the mild steel from corrosion attack.

### 3.5 Applicability of the adsorption isotherms

Adsorption on the metal surface is generally agreed to be the vital process in the action of inhibitors in acid solution. This assumes that corrosion attacks are prevented from occurring on the area of the metal surface covered by adsorbed inhibitor species, whilst they occur normally on the inhibitor-free area (Yaro, Khadom, & Wael, (2013). Adsorption isotherms are very useful for determining the nature of the relationship and/or interaction between inhibitor molecules and metal substrate surfaces (Mistry, & Jauhari, 2014; Alaneme, Olusegun, & Adelowo, 2016). Langmuir, Frumkin, Temkin, and Flory-Huggins are some of the most commonly utilized adsorption isotherms (Iroha, & Maduelosi, 2021).

**Table 4: Adsorption parameters**

| **Weight loss values** | | | | | | | **2g/l concentration of extract** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Time (days)** | **0g/l Weight loss (g)** | **2g/l Weight loss (g)** | **3g/l Weight loss (g)** | **4g/l Weight loss (g)** | **5g/l Weight loss (g)** | **6g/l Weight loss (g)** | $\theta$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{C_{inh}}{\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{C_{inh}}\right]$ | $[1-\theta]$ | $C_{inh}\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ |
| 4 | 1.868 | 0.609 | 0.611 | 0.523 | 0.526 | 0.536 | 0.673 | 2.058 | 2.971 | 0.336 | 0.327 | 4.116 |
| 6 | 2.126 | 0.925 | 0.934 | 0.936 | 0.921 | 0.752 | 0.564 | 1.293 | 3.546 | 0.282 | 0.436 | 2.586 |
| 8 | 2.110 | 1.123 | 1.233 | 1.196 | 1.021 | 0.985 | 0.467 | 0.876 | 4.282 | 0.233 | 0.533 | 1.752 |
| 10 | 2.294 | 1.389 | 1.356 | 1.320 | 1.417 | 1.248 | 0.394 | 0.650 | 5.076 | 0.197 | 0.606 | 1.3 |
| 12 | 2.034 | 1.460 | 1.509 | 1.411 | 1.357 | 1.282 | 0.282 | 0.392 | 7.092 | 0.141 | 0.718 | 0.784 |
| 14 | 2.233 | 1.475 | 1.499 | 1.825 | 1.486 | 1.823 | 0.513 | 1.053 | 3.898 | 0.256 | 0.487 | 2.106 |
| **3g/l concentration of extract** | | | | | | | **4g/l concentration of extract** | | | | | |
| **Time (days)** | $\theta$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{C_{inh}}{\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{C_{inh}}\right]$ | $[1-\theta]$ | $C_{inh}\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ | $\theta$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{C_{inh}}{\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{C_{inh}}\right]$ | $[1-\theta]$ | $C_{inh}\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ |
| 4 | 0.672 | 2.048 | 4.464 | 0.224 | 0.328 | 6.144 | 0.720 | 2.571 | 5.555 | 0.180 | 0.28 | 10.284 |
| 6 | 0.560 | 1.272 | 5.357 | 0.186 | 0.44 | 3.816 | 0.559 | 1.267 | 7.155 | 0.139 | 0.441 | 5.068 |
| 8 | 0.415 | 0.709 | 7.228 | 0.138 | 0.585 | 2.127 | 0.433 | 0.763 | 9.237 | 0.108 | 0.567 | 3.052 |
| 10 | 0.408 | 0.689 | 7.352 | 0.136 | 0.592 | 2.067 | 0.424 | 0.736 | 9.433 | 0.106 | 0.576 | 2.944 |
| 12 | 0.258 | 0.347 | 11.627 | 0.086 | 0.742 | 1.041 | 0.306 | 0.440 | 13.071 | 0.076 | 0.694 | 1.76 |
| 14 | 0.328 | 0.488 | 9.146 | 0.109 | 0.672 | 1.464 | 0.182 | 0.222 | 21.978 | 0.045 | 0.818 | 0.888 |
| **5g/l concentration of extract** | | | | | | | **6g/l concentration of extract** | | | | | |
| **Time (days)** | $\theta$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{C_{inh}}{\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{C_{inh}}\right]$ | $[1-\theta]$ | $C_{inh}\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ | $\theta$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{C_{inh}}{\theta}\right]$ | $\left[\frac{\theta}{C_{inh}}\right]$ | $[1-\theta]$ | $C_{inh}\left[\frac{\theta}{1-\theta}\right]$ |
| 4 | 0.718 | 2.546 | 6.963 | 0.149 | 0.282 | 12.73 | 0.713 | 2.484 | 8.415 | 0.118 | 0.287 | 14.904 |
| 6 | 0.566 | 1.304 | 8.833 | 0.113 | 0.434 | 6.52 | 0.646 | 1.824 | 9.287 | 0.107 | 0.354 | 10.944 |
| 8 | 0.516 | 1.066 | 9.689 | 0.103 | 0.484 | 5.33 | 0.533 | 1.141 | 11.257 | 0.088 | 0.467 | 6.846 |
| 10 | 0.382 | 0.618 | 13.089 | 0.076 | 0.618 | 3.09 | 0.455 | 0.834 | 13.186 | 0.075 | 0.545 | 5.004 |
| 12 | 0.332 | 0.497 | 15.06 | 0.066 | 0.668 | 2.485 | 0.369 | 0.584 | 16.26 | 0.061 | 0.631 | 3.504 |
| 14 | 0.334 | 0.501 | 14.97 | 0.066 | 0.666 | 2.505 | 0.183 | 0.223 | 32.786 | 0.030 | 0.817 | 1.338 |

The degree of surface coverage ($\theta$) at different concentrations of the extract in 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ medium from the gravimetric techniques was used to evaluate the best isotherm that fits into the experimental data obtained using the equation below:

$$\theta = \left[\frac{W_{0g/l} - W_{inh}}{W_{0g/l}}\right] \quad (4)$$

where $W_{0g/l}$ and $W_{inh}$ are the weight loss values in the presence and the absence of inhibitor, respectively. At any given time, the inhibitor molecules cover a fraction ($\theta$) of the metal surface, and the uncovered fraction (1- $\theta$ ) reacts with acid medium as it would in the absence of the inhibitor [41].

$$\frac{C_{inh}}{\theta} = \frac{1}{K} + C_{inh} \qquad (Langmuir\ isotherm) \quad (5)$$

$$exp(-2a\theta) = KC_{inh} \qquad (Temkin\ isotherm) \quad (6)$$

where $\theta$ is the degree of surface coverage of the inhibitor, $C_{inh}$ is the concentration of the extract, and K is the adsorption equilibrium constant. For Langmuir isotherm, the plots of $C_{inh}/\theta$ against $C_{inh}$ are shown in figure 4 (a)

below with the intercepts of the plots equated to $1/K$. The linear plots obtained, could not show good regression coefficients ($R^2$), this suggests that the inhibitor's adsorption does not follows Langmuir adsorption isotherm. In Temkin expression, a is an interaction parameter that is related to the molecules of the extract that is been adsorbed on the surface of the coupons (also known as molecular interaction parameter). K is the intercept parameter. The plots of $\theta$ against $C_{inh}$ has the best fitted straight lines since it is evident that all the linear correlation coefficients are almost equal to unity, with the slope values also very close to 1, indicating the extract adsorption on the mild steel surface obeys Temkin adsorption isotherm.

The values for equilibrium constant of adsorption (K) for Langmuir and Temkin isotherms were used to calculate the $\Delta G_{ads}$ for concentrations 2g/l, 3g/l, 4g/l, 5g/l and 6g/l, respectively. The equilibrium constant of adsorption (K) is related to the standard free energy of adsorption ($\Delta G_{ads}$) as given below (Vimala, Leema, & Raja, 2011):

$$\Delta G_{ads} = -2.303RT\ log\ (55.5K) \quad (7)$$

Where R is the gas constant (8.314 J. $K^{-1}mol^{-1}$), T is absolute temperature (K), and 55.5 is the water concentration in solution expressed in mol $L^{-1}$.

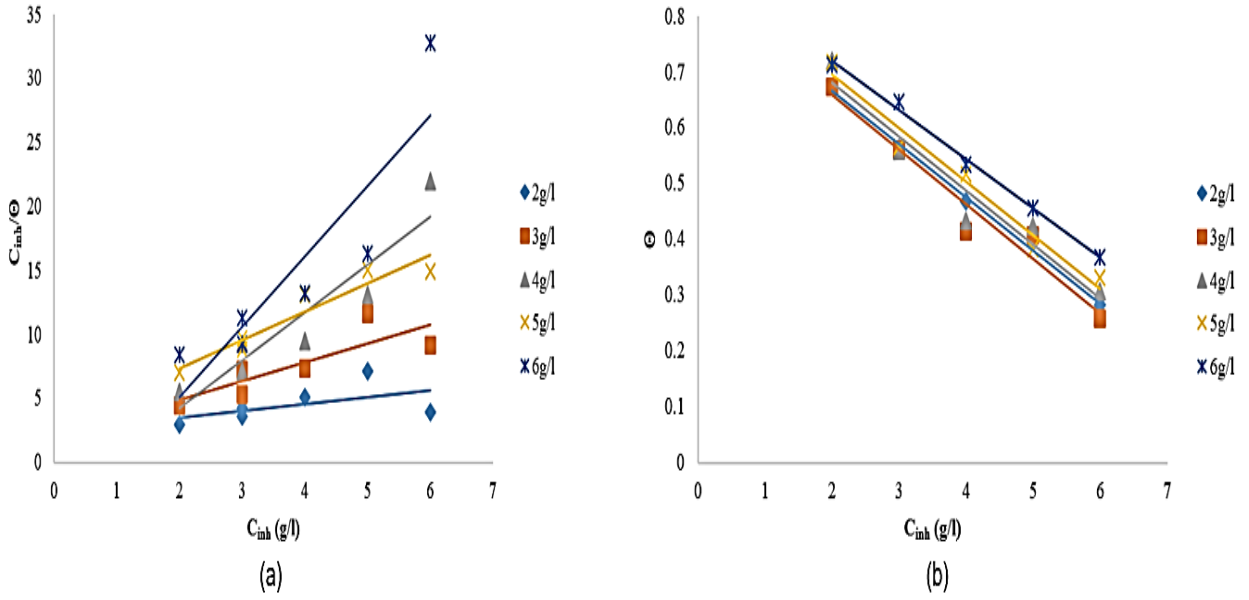



**Figure 4: Adsorption isotherm plots of (a) Langmuir, and (b) Temkin for mild steel in the presence of azadirachta indica extract in sulfuric acid medium.**

**Table 4: Azadirachta indica extract adsorption thermodynamic parameters onto mild steel in 1.5 M of $H_2SO_4$, at 25 $^0$C (298 K) room temperature, from Langmuir and Temkin adsorption isotherms**

| Adsorption isotherm | Concentration of extract (g/l) | Slope | Intercept | Regression | $\Delta G_{ads}$ (KJmol$^{-1}$) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Langmuir | 2 | 0.516 | 2.497 | 0.27 | -7.682 |
| | 3 | 1.470 | 1.890 | 0.696 | -8.374 |
| | 4 | 3.747 | 3.293 | 0.870 | -6.993 |
| | 5 | 2.214 | 2.946 | 0.912 | -7.272 |
| | 6 | 5.506 | 5.917 | 0.799 | -5.547 |
| Temkin | 2 | -0.095 | 0.885 | 0.996 | -9.649 |
| | 3 | -0.098 | 0.854 | 0.956 | -9.561 |
| | 4 | -0.096 | 0.873 | 0.935 | -9.616 |
| | 5 | -0.095 | 0.885 | 0.969 | -9.649 |
| | 6 | -0.087 | 0.894 | 0.995 | -9.675 |

The calculated values of standard free energy of adsorption process ($\Delta G_{ads}$) as shown on Table 4 were all negative for both Langmuir and Temkin Isotherms as applied. Therefore, the negative values of $\Delta G_{ads}$ shows that the adsorption of the extract on the mild steel surfaces was spontaneously. Values of standard free energy values less than −20 kJ mol$^{-1}$ confirms physisorption process, which is associated with charge interaction between the charged molecules of the extract and charged molecules from the mild steel surface, while those from negative –40 kJ mol$^{-1}$ or more are indicative of chemisorption process, which implies sharing of electrons from the extract molecules and those from the mild steel surface to form a chemical bond between them. Hence, in this presence study with Azadirachta indica leaf extract, the $\Delta G_{ads}$ values for the inhibitor as found between the range of −6.993 to −9.675 kJ mol$^{-1}$, indicates that the method of adsorption of extract on the mild steel surface is by physical adsorption (physisorption) process (Ayuba, & Abdullateef, 2012; Fathabadi et al., 2021).

### *3.6. Potentiodynamic Measurement*

The anodic potentiodynamic polarization technique was done following the same procedure as detailed in article (Nwigwe et al., 2012).

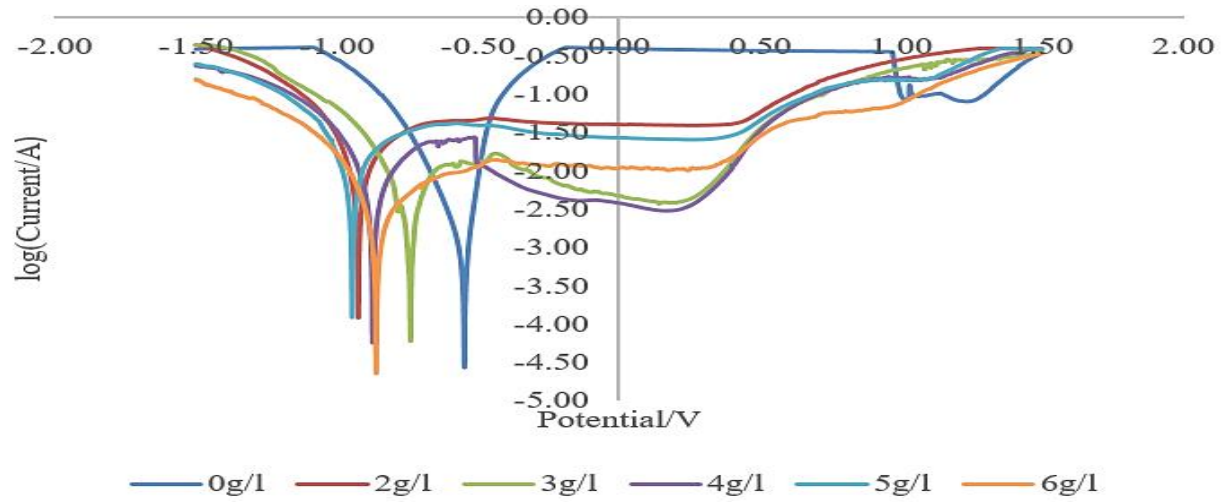



**Figure 5. The Tafel plots of corrosion potentials verses corrosion currents as obtained from potentiodynamic polarization test of coupons in 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$**

The polarization curves for the mild steel coupons gave corrosion rates of 9.871e$^{+002}$, 5.883e$^{+003}$, 1.820e$^{+003}$, 2.358e$^{+003}$, 5.748e$^{+003}$, and 3.684e$^{+003}$ in miles per year (mil/yr.), respectively for the different concentration of inhibitor between 0 to 6g/l in that ascending order in the 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ at room temperature as can been seen on figure 4 above.

### 3.7. The proposed corrosion inhibition mechanism

The inorganic inhibitor as used was able to control mild steel corrosion by physisorption and chemisorption process. This two corrosion inhibition mechanisms were predicted or arrived at based on the possible corrosion reactions of the mild steel in the 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ medium. The corrosion inhibition mechanism was a result of the inhibitive properties of the neem extract which contains some phytochemicals, whose molecules are capable of adsorbing themselves on a mild steel surface to form a thin layer which reduces the contact of the mild steel with the corrosive agents in the 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ solution.

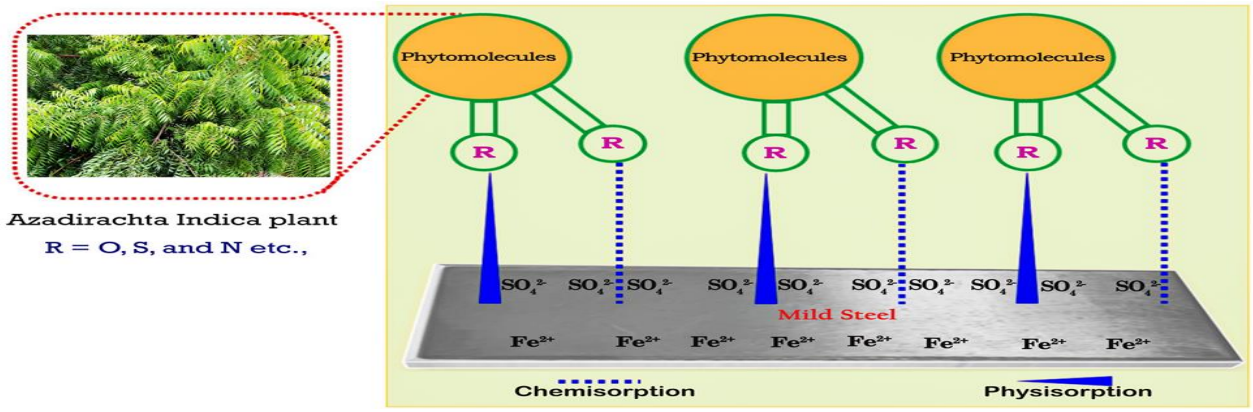



**Figure 6: The schematic representation of the proposed corrosion inhibition mechanism.**

## 4.0 Conclusions

Extract from Azadirachta indica leaves has been effectively tested in this study as a potent corrosion inhibitor. It was determined that:

1. The Azadirachta indica leaf extract was able to inhibit the corrosion of mild steel in sulfuric solution to significant extent. The inhibition efficiencies of the extract increased with increase in concentration of the extract and decreased with increase in exposure time.
2. The corrosion inhibition could be rightly attributed to physical adsorption of the phytochemical constituents of the plant extract onto the surface of the immersed mild steel coupons.
3. The adsorption isotherm data fitted well into the Temkin isotherm which is suggestive of physical adsorption interaction between the extract molecules and the surface of the mild steel samples, since the calculated $\Delta G_{ads}$ values for the inhibitor were between the range of −6.993 to −9.675 kJ mol$^{-1}$.
4. Going by the results obtained through the polarization curves, corrosion rate of the mild steel sample in the 1.5 M of $H_2HO_4$ at 0g/l concentration was the highest followed by that 2g/l, while that of 3g/l concentration gave the best corrosion resistance.

The results obtained, shows that the extract can be usefully applied by researchers in corrosion field against corrosion attack on metallic materials. Finally, it is recommended that more research be done using this extract as a corrosion inhibitor for mild steel in different acidic settings.

## Funding

This research received no external funding.

## Acknowledgement

The authors of this research paper are grateful to the colleagues in the department of Materials and Metallurgical Engineering, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria and as well as to the colleagues in the Chemistry Laboratory, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria for their encouragement and support respectively.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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