

# Design and synthesis of a new recyclable nanohydrogel based on chitosan for Deltamethrin removal from aqueous solutions: Optimization and modeling by RSM-ANN

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, a new magnetic biocompatible hydrogel was synthesized as an adsorbent for Deltamethrin pesticide removal. The optimal conditions and adsorption process of Deltamethrin by chitosan/polyacrylic acid/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel was studied by Response Surface Methodology by Central Composite Design (RSM-CCD) and Artificial Neural Network (ANN). This adsorbents were synthesized, and then characterized and investigated using FT-IR, XRD, FE-SEM, EDX, Map, VSM, and TGA methods. The results of these analyses showed that the nanocomposite hydrogel was well synthesized and has the ability to adsorb the Deltamethrin pesticide. The results obtained through analysis using response surface methodology showed that the maximum amount of adsorption was 99.79 % at 26 °C, while pH, initial concentration, contact time, and adsorbent dose were 7, 22 ppm, 90 min, and 1.3 g/L respectively. Comparison between results obtained from CCD modeling and artificial neural network proved that both methods had high ability to predict the adsorption process but the CCD method had higher coefficient of determination and lower error. The equilibrium and kinetic study of the process showed that the Toth isotherm model, pseudo-second-order is all suitable for expressing the adsorption process. In addition, the adsorption mechanism followed double-exponential model that combines external and internal diffusions. Results of Thermodynamic study suggested that the Deltamethrin adsorption on CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was a spontaneous and exothermic process. The results of the equilibrium process study revealed that the adsorption process was physical and desirable, therefore, the adsorption-desorption process was performed which showed that the composite was reusable up to 10 cycles.

## 1. Introduction

Polymers are made up of a large number of monomers. Today, it is difficult to imagine an advanced world without polymeric materials, because these materials have become part of our lives, and in the construction of various objects, complex medical, scientific, and industrial tools are used [1]. Polymers are divided into three groups in terms of source, which are natural, semi-synthetic, and synthetic polymers. Natural polymers are obtained from nature and include plant and animal sources [2,3]. Natural polymers such as cellulose families, proteins, polysilicates, nucleic acids, and polysaccharides are divided [4]. Chitosan is a natural polysaccharide with structural properties similar to glycosaminoglycans, non-toxic and biodegradable [5]. Hydrogels are composed of cross-linked and hydrophilic polymer networks [6]. In

addition, hydrogels based on natural polymers are reinforced with nanoparticles. Therefore; their tension to tensile and compressive stresses is higher than other hydrogels [7,8]. Polymer nanocomposite hydrogels is a group of hydrogels has a composite structure and hydrogels together and have mechanical, physical, chemical, electrical, thermal, and biological properties that are very suitable [9]. Because acrylic acid has a negative charge and chitosan has a positive charge with amine groups, it is thought that a proper interaction occurs between them [10]. Moreover, magnetic nanocomposites based on natural polymer materials are used due to their accessibility, low expense, and high capability to adsorb pesticides [11]. Pesticides have a detrimental effect on humans and the environment [12,13] and are known as the most common and dangerous water pollution [14,15]. Pyrethroid insecticides are one of the most common pesticides effective in the

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pesticide industry [16,17]. Deltamethrin is one of the most potent and widely used types of Pyrethroid insecticides and are used to control and protect a wide range of crops, fruits, vegetables and aquatic animals against pests and parasites [18,19]. Due to the presence of the CN group in the structure of Deltamethrin, making it an insecticide that is stable to air, moisture, and light [20]. Owing to its widespread use, the concentration of Deltamethrin in surface waters is high, owing to the lipophilicity of pyrethroids. They are difficult to remove from living organisms that endanger human health and the environment [21,22]. Deltamethrin can cause chronic diseases and has harmful effects on the nervous system, safety, and cardiovascular system, and cause genetic disorders, therefore, it has a long-term effect on mammals [23,24]. Today, the development of cost-effective, simple and rapid methods is an important challenge for the detection and removal of water-soluble contaminants [25]. There are various methods for removing pesticides from aqueous solutions, including biological treatments [26], membrane bioreactors [27], coagulation flocculation [28], catalytic reduction [29], photocatalytic degradation [30,31], and adsorption [32]. But many of these methods have constraint such as low flexibility in various conditions, high cost, low efficiency and harmful by-products. Adsorption is useful approach for decontamination of contaminated media [33,34]. Adsorption method is one of the methods used to remove various pesticides due to high efficiency and low cost [35–37]. The efficiency and cost of the adsorption process are strongly influenced by the adsorbent used, among the affordable adsorbents used are various adsorbents based on natural polymers such as chitosan, sodium alginate and carboxymethyl cellulose, because of their special factor groups they have are always considered [38–40]. On the other hands, magnetic nanoparticles high active surface is a very effective method can meliorate the efficiency of the adsorption process [41]. An important advantage is the use of magnetic nanoparticles in addition to improving the adsorbent efficiency, they can facilitate the separation of the adsorbent from aqueous solutions [42]. Therefore, in this study an adsorbent based on magnetic chitosan and polyacrylic acid (PAA) in the hydrogel format was synthesized and used for removal Deltamethrin from aqueous solution. So far, this adsorbent has not been investigated in any study for the removal of pesticides. In addition, the optimum condition for adsorption Deltamethrin by this adsorbent was investigated by used Response Surface Methodology. Hence, artificial neural networks are used to model intricate processes and validate the response surface model. Several isotherm and kinetic models were used to study the equilibrium, rate, and mechanism of the Deltamethrin pesticide adsorption process by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel. Its thermodynamic study and the reusability of the adsorbent were studied to evaluate its potential for commercialization.

## 2. Material and methods

Chitosan(CS) with molecular weight: 100,000-300,000, iron (III) chloride(FeCl<sub>3</sub>.6H<sub>2</sub>O), Iron (II) chloride (FeCl<sub>2</sub>.6H<sub>2</sub>O), Acrylic acid(AA), Methylenebisacrylamide (MBA) and Potassium persulfate (KPS), NaOH, Nitrate, Copper, and HCl were purchased from Merck Co (Germany). Deltamethrin (2/5 %) produced by Mahan Co was obtained from Iran. The pesticide Deltamethrin was diluted with distilled water to prepare a contaminant solution as the adsorption solution.

### 2.1. Synthesis of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>

Synthesis of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel was performed by copolymerization AA on the surface of CS-coated Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. Magnetic nanoparticles were synthesized by co-precipitation method Synthesis of magnetic nanoparticles was done by co-precipitation method using Fe<sub>3</sub>Cl<sub>3</sub>.6H<sub>2</sub>O and Fe<sub>3</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>.4H<sub>2</sub>O in 2: 1 ratio, according to this study [43]. First, 0.5 g of CS to 25 mL of distilled water, then 255  $\mu$ L of acetic acid was added to the solution to accelerate the dissolution of chitosan in water. Then 0.3 g of Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was added to the solution and placed on a

magnetic stirrer for 10 min until completely dispersed. Then, 1 mL of AA as a monomer and 0.024 g of MBA as a crosslinker were added to the solution simultaneously and stirred for 15 min. Finally, under a nitrogen atmosphere the polymerization and crosslinking were commenced by KPS at 70 °C for 60 min. The magnetic nanocomposite hydrogel obtained was isolated using an external magnetic field [44].

### 2.2. Characterization of magnetic nanocomposite hydrogel

Various analyzes have been used to investigate the surface properties and characteristics of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel. FT-IR analysis (Broker victor 22) was used to identify CS/PAA, CS/PAA-delt, CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>-delt functional groups. XRD analysis to investigate the properties and crystal structure of the compounds synthesized materials were used (Philips PW 1730). Vibration sample magnetometer (VSM) analysis was used to investigate the magnetic properties of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel and Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanoparticles. Thermal analysis (TGA) was performed on TGA instrument (TA, model Q600) at heating rate of 10 °C/min, from 25 to 1000 °C and argon atmosphere, in which changes in substance weight against temperature increase were measured to evaluate the structure and thermal stability of CS/PAA hydrogel and CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel. EDX, FE-SEM, and Map analysis were performed to investigate the structure, surface properties of the samples and to determine the composition of the elements in their structure, respectively.

### 2.3. Study of effective adsorption parameters

In this study, all adsorptions were performed discontinuously in 30 mL containers. To optimize the adsorption process to the situation pH parameters (3 to 11) (this range of pH includes acidic; alkaline and neutral.), initial concentration of Deltamethrin (20 to 100 mg/L) (the concentration of Deltamethrin in the environmental is more in this range.), time (30 to 150 min) (the time range was chosen so that the necessary opportunity for pesticide adsorption by the adsorbent is provided.), temperature (25 to 45 °C) (when the pesticides are used, the temperature of the aquatic environments under their influence is basically in this range.) and The amount of composite (0.5 to 2.5 g/L) (adsorbent dosage was selected according to the pesticide concentration range and other studies conducted.) on adsorption efficiency was checked to evaluate the adsorption process of Deltamethrin pesticide with CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel. The levels of the variables in the central composite design must be same intervals; in this study  $\alpha$  value equal to 2 was considered for all variables. After each adsorption step, the adsorption of the magnetic composite is separated from the Deltamethrin solution using a magnet. Behind drying, its weight was measured. The adsorption capacity and efficiency of Deltamethrin pesticide were calculated by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel adsorbent using the obtained results Eqs. (1), and (2).

$$q_e = (C_i - C_e) \times \frac{V}{m} \quad (1)$$

$$R(\%) = \left( \frac{C_i - C_e}{C_i} \right) \times 100 \quad (2)$$

Where R is adsorption percentage,  $q_e$  is the amount of adsorption at equilibrium (g/kg),  $C_e$  and  $C_i$  are the initial and equilibrium concentration of Deltamethrin (mg/L), respectively, V is the liquid volume (L) and m is the amount of adsorbent was used (g).

### 2.4. Designing experiments using (RSM-CCD)

Response Surface Methodology (RSM) was used to evaluate the optimal conditions for Deltamethrin removal [10,45]. RSM is a statistical method that is suitable for multifactorial experiments shows the

communication between different parameters for optimal effective situations [46,47]. In order to investigate the five parameters in 5 levels, the central composite design (CCD) was used Table 1. The number of experiments for the parameters of pH, elementary concentration of Deltamethrin temperature, adsorbent contact time, and the amount of composite consumed at the desired levels was obtained using the relation  $(2k + 2k + 4 = 46)$  where (k) the number of variables is independent using Design Expert 11 software. In this model, the variables are set at  $(-\alpha, -1, 0, 1, +\alpha)$  with four iterations at the center point.

The relationship between independent and dependent variables was obtained using Design Expert software. Then, using analysis of variance and *P*-value, significant and non-significant effects of independent variables determined was after removing the meaningless sum from the model and after modification, it was re-examined. The correlation coefficient ( $R^2$ ) of the experimental results was compared with the results obtained from the RSM-CCD. Other suitable statistics such as (AP) adequate accuracy, (DF) desirability function, (CV %) coefficient of variation, and (SD) standard deviation were calculated by the software to evaluate the quality and efficiency of the model.

## 2.5. Adsorption and desorption of magnetic nanocomposite hydrogel

To reduce the costs of the Deltamethrin adsorption process by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> magnetic nanocomposite, adsorption and desorption of the adsorbent were studied. For this purpose, the adsorption process of Deltamethrin by the mentioned nanocomposite hydrogel was performed under optimal conditions. In desorption processes, solutions with different pHs are used. In the present study, the Britton-Robinson buffer was used for pH 1 to 13. Then, an adsorption test was performed and after separating the adsorbent from the solution and drying the adsorbent, desorption was performed in these buffers. Also, based on the percentage of desorption, the optimal pH was selected and the adsorption-desorption process under optimal conditions in the appropriate Britton-Robinson buffer was performed for up to 10 cycles and the percentage of desorption was calculated from Eq. (3).

$$\% \text{of Desorption} = \left( \frac{\text{amount of pesticide desorbed}}{\text{amount of pesticide adsorbed}} \right) \times 100 \quad (3)$$

## 2.6. Description of artificial neural network (ANN)

ANN nonlinear analytical method with unique performance is used to investigate different and complex models [48]. This study was used to model the adsorption of Deltamethrin by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel for validation and comparison with the RSM-CCD artificial neural network method [49,50]. The output layer shows the percentage of adsorption. Eq. (4) was used to determine the number of hidden layers. In this Eq. (4), the upper bound and the lower bound are the numbers of variables and, the relationship is empirical respectively [51].

$$2(n_i + n_o) < n_1 < \frac{m(n_i + n_o) - n_o}{n_i + n_o + 1} \quad (4)$$

In this Eq. (4)  $n_i$ ,  $n_o$ ,  $n_1$  and  $m$  are the numbers of inputs, outputs, hidden layer neurons, and available data, respectively. As well, error values of both using Eqs. (5) and (6) for Comparison of network

performance with RSM equation were used.

$$MAE = \sum_{i=1}^m |y_i - \hat{y}_i| / m \quad (5)$$

$$MAPE = \frac{100}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \left( |y_i - \hat{y}_i| / y_i \right) \quad (6)$$

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^m (|\hat{y}_i - y_i|)^2 / m} \quad (7)$$

MAPE and MAE are average absolute percentand average absolute error, alThereforeRMSE is the root mean square error,  $\hat{y}_i, y_i$  are the prediction and actual performance.

## 3. Result and discussion

### 3.1. Investigation of nanocomposite hydrogel

To investigate the chemical interaction and to identify functional groups in the CS/AA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel before and after Deltamethrin adsorption FT-IR analysis was used (Fig. 1-a). The FT-IR spectrum of the synthesized CS/AA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel has peaked at 1735 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 1559 cm<sup>-1</sup>, which corresponds to the C = O in the amide group and the N—H flexural vibrations, respectively. The peak of the 1066 cm<sup>-1</sup> region belongs to the C—O tensile vibration group. In the area of 2850–3000 cm<sup>-1</sup> corresponds to aliphatic C—H peaks, which appear here in the area of 2924 cm<sup>-1</sup>, due to the large number of carbon atoms on the surface of chitosan. There is a strong adsorption peak in the 3438 cm<sup>-1</sup> region due to the tensile vibrations of the O—H and N—H bonds in the chitosan structure in all FT-IR spectra [44]. AlThereforein the spectra where Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> is present, there is a peak of Fe—O in the region of 583 cm<sup>-1</sup>, which indicates the peak of the magnetite index in the nanocomposite [52]. However, as can be seen in the spectra of CS/PAA and CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogels, very different peaks are not visible after adsorption of Deltamethrin CS/PAA-delt, CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>-delt. According to FT-IR analysis and the obtained results, it can be concluded that the synthesis of nanocomposite hydrogel has been successful. VSM analysis was used to investigate the magnetic properties of Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanoparticles and synthesized CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> magnetic nanocomposite hydrogel nanocomposite (Fig. 1-b). According to the diagram, no magnetic residues are observed in any of the curves. Furthermore; the diagrams of both materials are completely symmetric and pass through the origin of the coordinates, which indicates the lack of coercion and survival in the samples. These results indicate that Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanoparticles and CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> magnetic nanocomposite hydrogels are superparamagnetic, therefor reusability and magnetic segregation are conceivable [53,54]. The magnetic saturation values of Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanoparticles and CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> magnetic nanocomposite hydrogel are 84.36 emu/g and 11.33 emu/g, respectively. Placement of non-magnetic chitosan and polyacrylic acid matrices on the surface of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> magnetic nanocomposite hydrogel has reduced its magnetic saturation, which confirms the successful synthesis of this material [55]. Thermal analysis (TGA) was performed to evaluate the thermal properties of CS/PAA and CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite

**Table 1**  
Independent variables in the experiments.

| Independent variables      | Coded          | Unit | Factorial and center level |            |           | Axial level |              |
|----------------------------|----------------|------|----------------------------|------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
|                            |                |      | Low (−1)                   | Center (0) | High (+1) | Lowest (−α) | Highest (+α) |
| pH value                   | X <sub>1</sub> | —    | 5                          | 7          | 9         | 3           | 11           |
| Deltamethrin concentration | X <sub>2</sub> | mg/L | 40                         | 60         | 80        | 20          | 100          |
| time                       | X <sub>3</sub> | min  | 60                         | 90         | 120       | 30          | 150          |
| dosage                     | X <sub>4</sub> | g/L  | 1                          | 1.5        | 2         | 0.5         | 2.5          |
| Temperature                | X <sub>5</sub> | °C   | 30                         | 35         | 40        | 25          | 45           |

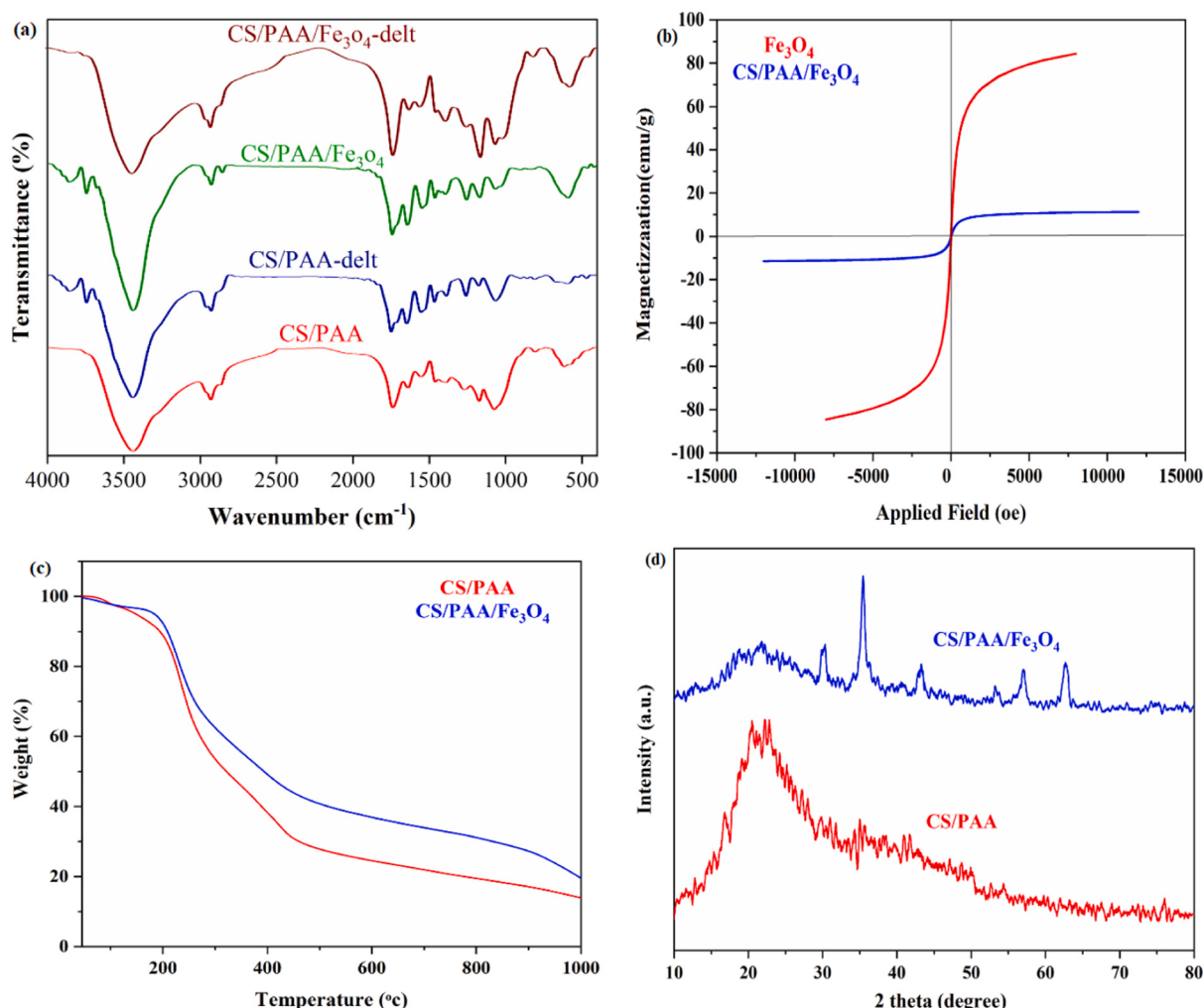


Fig. 1. (a) FTIR spectrum, (b) VSM analysis of  $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  and  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$ , (c) TGA curve of the  $\text{CS/PAA}$  and  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  and, (d) XRD pattern.

hydrogels (Fig. 1-c). As can be seen, in the temperature range of 40 to 1000 °C, three different weight loss stages can be seen in the diagram related to both samples. In the temperature range of approximately 40 to 200 °C, 10 % and 15 % for  $\text{CS/PAA}$  and  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  are observed in the graphs for both materials, respectively, which are related to the loss of water in their structure at this temperature. The second stage of severe weight loss of 45 % and 40 % by weight for  $\text{CS/PAA}$  and  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanocomposites in the temperature range of 200 to 400 °C, respectively, is related to the degradation of chitosan polymer and polyacrylic acid carboxylate groups [52,56]. The third stage of weight loss due to temperature increase and finally weight loss of  $\text{CS/PAA}$  and  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  in the temperature range of 400 to 850 °C is related to the failure of polyacrylic acid polymer chains and hydroxylation of  $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanoparticles at high temperatures [52,57]. Also, the temperature resistance and burnt residue for  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  are higher than  $\text{CS/PAA}$ , which can be due to the thermal stability of magnetite nanoparticles up to 596 °C [52]. XRD analysis was performed to investigate the structure of  $\text{CS/PAA}$  and  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanocomposite hydrogels in the range of 20 to 80 degrees and the results are shown in (Fig. 1-d). As can be seen in the XRD spectrum of  $\text{CS/PAA}$  hydrogels a wide peak is observed at  $2\theta$  values of 36.22° which is produced by polyacrylic acid which indicates that  $\text{CS/PAA}$  is amorphous [58]. It is also observed that the existing wide peak has two peaks which are due to chitosan in the structure of the mentioned hydrogel [59]. This spectrum generally indicates that the hydrogel has an almost amorphous structure [52]. In the XRD spectrum of the  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanocomposite hydrogel, a wide peak is observed,

which is also reversible in the  $\text{CS/PAA}$  structure. Also, in the  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanocomposite hydrogel structure, other peaks are observed in the regions  $2\theta$  (°) equal to 30.34, 35.44, 43.26, 53.18, 57.02, and 62.68. This corresponds to crystal planes with Miller index equal to (220), (311), (400), (422), (511) and (440), respectively [53]. The six peaks discussed are due to  $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanoparticles in the  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanocomposite hydrogel structure. In addition, the presence of these peaks indicates the semi-crystalline structure of  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanocomposite hydrogel. Therefore, the size of the crystals for the mentioned nanocomposite hydrogel was calculated using the Debye Scherrer relationship. The results show that the distance between the crystal plates and the size of the crystals is 0.253 nm and 43.2 nm, respectively.

Fig. 2 compares  $\text{CS/PAA}$  hydrogel with  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanocomposite hydrogel. This confirms the successful placement of  $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanoparticles on the surface of the relevant nanocomposite hydrogel. As can be seen, the surface of the hydrogel is uneven and has cavities that are covered by  $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  particles in the nanocomposites hydrogel. In other words, iron nanoparticles were placed on the surface of the  $\text{CS/PAA}$  hydrogel. This confirms the successful synthesis and prosperous placement of  $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanoparticles on the surface of the respective nanocomposite hydrogel.

FE-SEM, EDX, and Map analyses to investigate the nanoparticle morphology, percentage of elements and dispersion of nanoparticles related to  $\text{CS/PAA/Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  nanocomposite hydrogel before and after Deltamethrin adsorption are shown in Fig. 3, respectively. FE-SEM analysis shows the surface of the nanocomposite hydrogel before

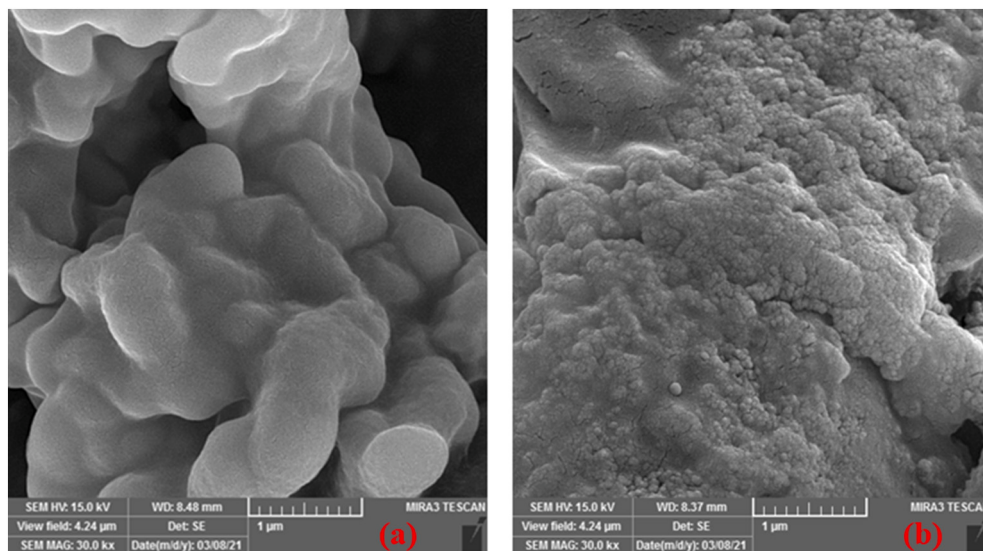


Fig. 2. Analysis FE-SEM CS/PAA hydrogel (a) and CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel (b).

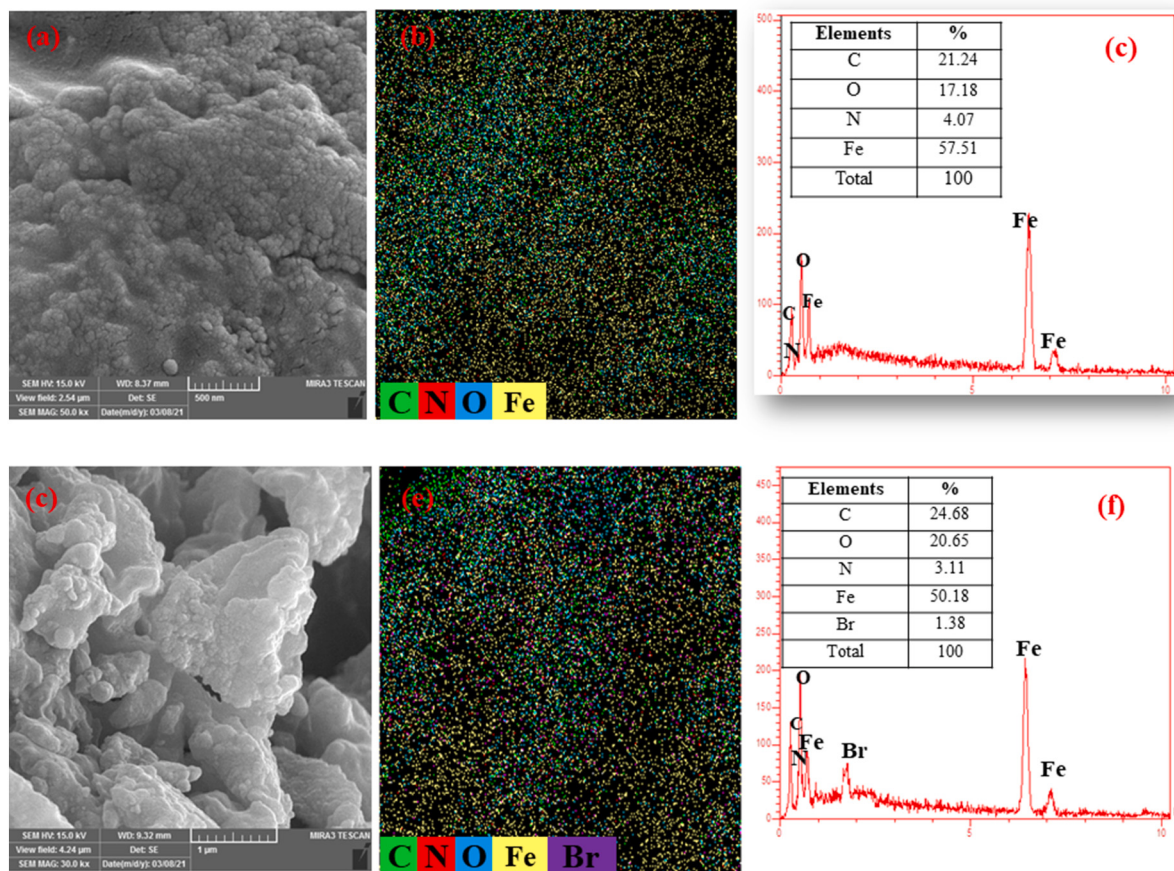


Fig. 3. FE-SEM test for a) CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, b) CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>-delt and Map-EDX test for CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (b,c) and CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>-delt (e,f).

adsorption of Deltamethrin in addition to having a rough surface and cavities related to CS/PAA. Also, CS/PAA are covered with a coating of Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> that is fully visible (Fig. 3-a). In addition, the results of Map and EDX analysis show that iron nanoparticles are located on the surface of this hydrogel and are evenly distributed and the highest percentage of elements is related to Fe (Fig. 3-b, c). Also, after adsorption of

Deltamethrin by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, it is observed that the surface of the hydrogel is completely covered by the toxin particles (Fig. 3-d). The results of Map analysis and EDX alTherefore show the uniform placement of Deltamethrin on the surface of the nanocomposite hydrogel (Fig. 3-e, f).

### 3.2. Results of Response Surface Methodology (RSM-CCD)

In order to obtain a suitable model for predicting and optimizing experimental data and designing logical experiments and analyzing the interactions between the parameters, the response surface methodology (RSM) and central composite design (CCD) were used [46,47]. Experimental designs can have a significant impact on estimated accuracy as well as adsorption costs [60,61]. In the first step, the assumption of data normality was examined. For this purpose, the normal distribution diagram, residual value diagram versus the number of experiments, residual studentized diagram versus predicted values and box-cox were extracted. Due to the normal distribution diagram, most of the experimental data are concentrated around the line and are not the “S” pattern. The residual studentized diagram therefore has not the “>” pattern. On the other hand, in Box-Cox chart, the best lambda amount is 0.56, which is in the 95 % confidence range of 0.88 to 0.23, from these three graphs, it can be concluded that the data are normal [62].

In the second stage, the obtained model was examined and then the model was modified and meaningless sentences were removed (8). In

this equation variables,  $X_5$ ,  $X_4$ ,  $X_3$ ,  $X_2$ , and,  $X_1$  are equivalent to temperature, hydrogel value, contact time, the primary concentration of Deltamethrin, and pH respectively, and its  $R^2$  is equal to 0.988. Due to the proximity of the data to the average amount and their low dispersion, shows the validity of the data, alThereforebecause of the low value of the coefficient of variation ( $<10\%$ ), it can be concluded that the model is reproducibility [63]. On the other hand, the correlation coefficient related to the prediction of the model was 0.9987, as a result, the model has a high ability to predict data and the data from the experiments are very close to the data estimated by the model (Fig. 4).

The appropriate accuracy value (AP) indicates the noise signal rate, which was calculated to be 243.66, because the AP is much larger than 4, indicating the suitability of the model [64,65]. To design the connection between adsorption efficiency and selective factors, alThereforethe effect of changing the first and second power of the variable on the adsorption efficiency was investigated using Eq. (8). But this equation does not provide enough information about the nature and the intensity of the effect of each variable.

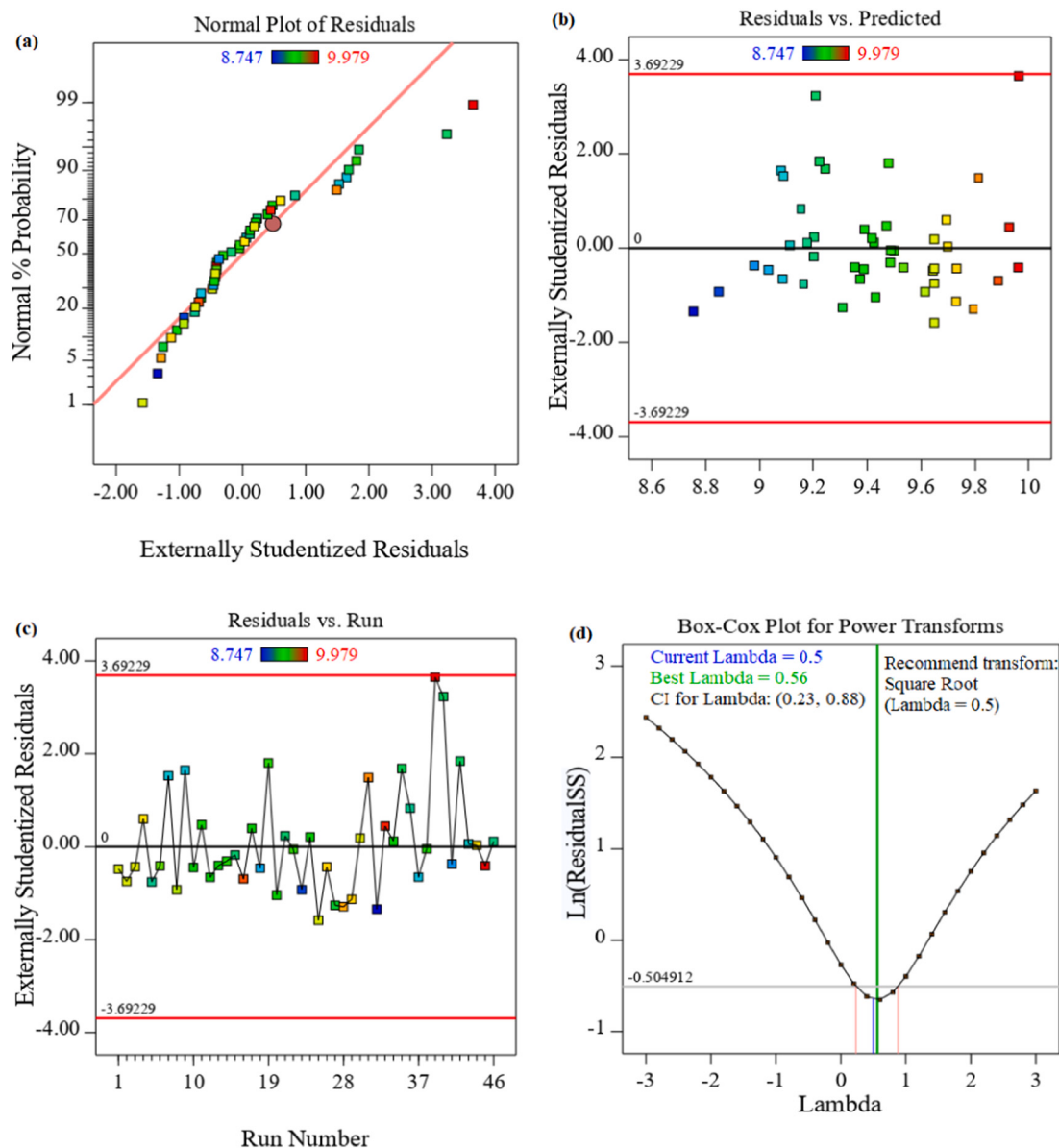


Fig. 4. a) Normal distribution diagram, b) Externally studentized against the foretoken amount, c) Residuals Residuals against run number, d) Box-Cox diagram.

$$\begin{aligned} R = & 6.25 + 0.46X_1 - 0.018X_2 - 0.006X_3 - 0.62X_4 + 0.05X_5 \\ & + 4.7 \times 10^{-5}X_1X_2 + 4.96 \times 10^{-4}X_1X_3 + 0.017X_1X_4 + 0.001X_1X_5 \\ & - 2.2 \times 10^{-5}X_2X_3 + 1.84 \times 10^{-4}X_2X_4 - 4.4 \times 10^{-5}X_2X_5 - 8.5 \times 10^{-5}X_3X_5 \\ & + 2.24 \times 10^{-3}X_4X_5 + 0.03X_1^2 + 1.01 \times 10^{-4}X_2^2 + 2.7 \times 10^{-5}X_3^2 - 0.078X_4^2 + 0.001X_5^2 \end{aligned}$$

(8)

After removing the Non-meaningful sentences, the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the Deltamethrin adsorption process by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel were studied (Table 2). According to the table (ANOVA), the *p*-value is <0.0001, indicating that the model is significant at the 99 % level. In addition, the lack-of-fit value is non-significance, which indicates that the obtained model has the ability to predict process efficiency. Variables that have a significant interaction are listed in Table 2 and Eq. (8). But this equation does not provide enough information about the nature and the intensity of the effect of each variable. For this reason, the Perturbation diagram (Fig. 5) in which the effect of each of the independent variables the following is explained.

In Fig. 5 As can be seen, CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel has an effect on pH, time, and temperature variables as a curve and In Eq. (8), there is a quadratic power of all of them [66]. The effect of increasing temperature alThereforereduces the adsorption efficiency, which can be due to increased mobility of Deltamethrin, shrinkage, and change in active sites at the nanocomposite surface at high temperatures. The reason for this is the tendency of the adsorbed toxins to separate from the active sites of the adsorbent and be released into the solution and reduce the active surface of the nanocomposite [67]. It is alThereforeobserved that with increasing contact time, the efficiency of the Deltamethrin adsorption process by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel increases due to having enough time to place Deltamethrin on

the surface of active nanocomposite sites, but it has remained stable due to the saturation of available empty sites [68,69]. The effect of increasing the primary concentration of Deltamethrin on the adsorption efficiency is decreased, which can be due to the increase in the initial concentration of Deltamethrin on the adsorbent surface, resulting in saturation of active sites in the surface becomes adsorbent, which reduces the adsorption efficiency of pesticides at high concentrations. As well as, the results showed that with incrementing the amount of nanocomposite hydrogel due to increasing the number of active sites on the adsorbent surface, the amount of adsorption efficiency increases. According to Fig. 5, the pH variable diagram is curved and shows the highest adsorption efficiency of Deltamethrin by the mentioned

Table 2  
Quadratic ANOVA analysis model for Deltamethrin removal.

| Source                        | Df <sup>a</sup> | SS <sup>b</sup>         | MS <sup>c</sup>          | F-value   | P-value |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Model                         | 19              | 4                       | 21.08 × 10 <sup>-2</sup> | 3720.17   | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>1</sub>                | 1               | 7.04 × 10 <sup>-2</sup> | 7.04 × 10 <sup>-2</sup>  | 1241.93   | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>2</sub>                | 1               | 38.55 × 10 <sup>2</sup> | 38.55 × 10 <sup>-2</sup> | 6803.52   | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>3</sub>                | 1               | 74.63 × 10 <sup>2</sup> | 0.7463                   | 13,171.54 | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>4</sub>                | 1               | 1.29                    | 1.29                     | 22,770.91 | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>5</sub>                | 1               | 0.8685                  | 0.8685                   | 15,328.18 | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>1</sub> X <sub>2</sub> | 1               | 0.0003                  | 0.0003                   | 4.55      | 0.0425  |
| X <sub>1</sub> X <sub>3</sub> | 1               | 0.0126                  | 0.0126                   | 222.1     | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>1</sub> X <sub>4</sub> | 1               | 0.0095                  | 0.0095                   | 168.11    | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>1</sub> X <sub>5</sub> | 1               | 0.0033                  | 0.0033                   | 57.67     | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>2</sub> X <sub>3</sub> | 1               | 0.0056                  | 0.0056                   | 99.65     | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>2</sub> X <sub>4</sub> | 1               | 0.0002                  | 0.0002                   | 4.3       | 0.0482  |
| X <sub>2</sub> X <sub>5</sub> | 1               | 0.0014                  | 0.0014                   | 24.33     | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>3</sub> X <sub>5</sub> | 1               | 0.0023                  | 0.0023                   | 40.36     | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>4</sub> X <sub>5</sub> | 1               | 0.001                   | 0.001                    | 17.66     | 0.0003  |
| X <sub>1</sub> <sup>2</sup>   | 1               | 0.4089                  | 0.4089                   | 7217.85   | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>2</sub> <sup>2</sup>   | 1               | 0.2303                  | 0.2303                   | 4064.36   | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>3</sub> <sup>2</sup>   | 1               | 0.0032                  | 0.0032                   | 56.8      | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>4</sub> <sup>2</sup>   | 1               | 0.0106                  | 0.0106                   | 187.83    | <0.0001 |
| X <sub>5</sub> <sup>2</sup>   | 1               | 0.0288                  | 0.0288                   | 187.83    | <0.0001 |
| Residual                      | 26              | 0.0015                  | 0.0001                   | —         | —       |
| Lack of Fit                   | 23              | 0.0014                  | 0.0001                   | 2.72      | 0.2233  |
| Pure Error                    | 3               | 0.0001                  | 0.0000                   | —         | —       |
| Cor Total                     | 45              | 4.01                    | —                        | —         | —       |

Model summary statistics

| Response | Std. Dev. (SD) | Coefficient of Variance (C. V. %) | R <sup>2</sup> | Adj-R <sup>2</sup> | Pred-R <sup>2</sup> | AP <sup>d</sup> |
|----------|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| R%       | 0.0075         | 0.0798                            | 0.9996         | 0.9994             | 0.9986              | 243.659         |

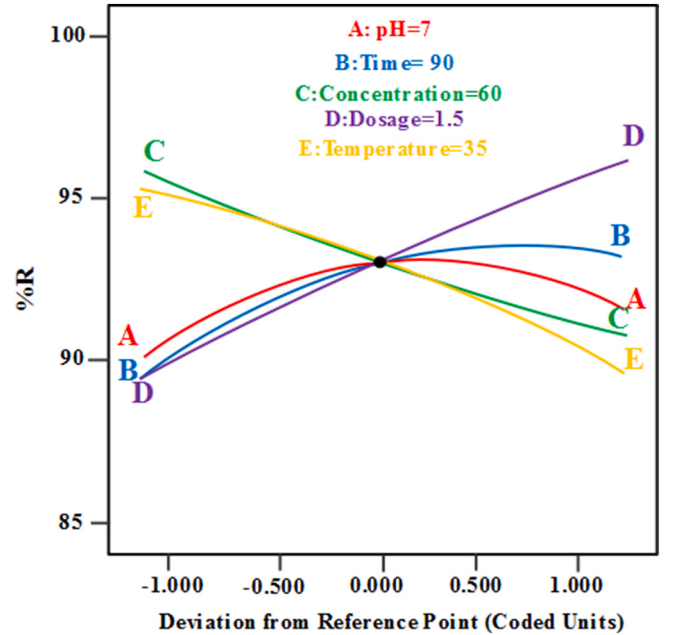


Fig. 5. Perturbation graph for all factors in center point.

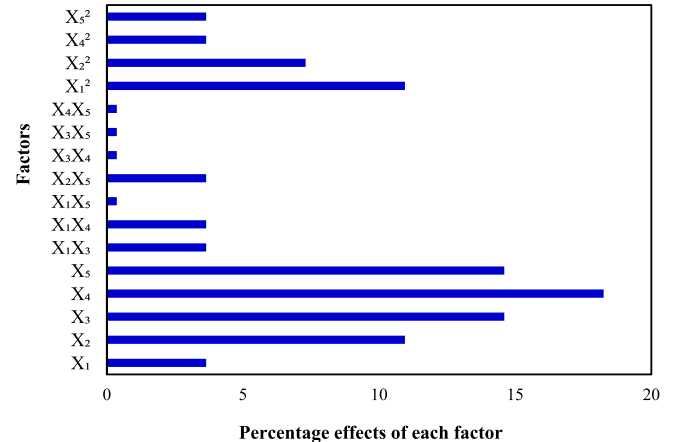


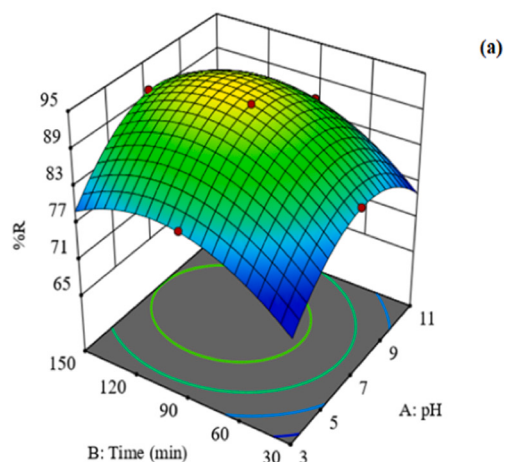
Fig. 6. Pareto chart for all significant factors.

hydrogel nanocomposite in neutral environments [70,71]. Due to the uncertainty of the effect of significant variables on each other and the sensitivity of its response is visible only to the independent variables and also, the extent to which the interactions are effective is not recognizable. Therefore a Pareto diagram was examined Fig. 6 [72]. The horizontal axle shows the percent effect of each parameter in the Parthenon diagram. According to Fig. 6, mixing pH with temperature has the least effect and the first power of the amount of nanocomposite hydrogel shows the greatest effect (Table 2).

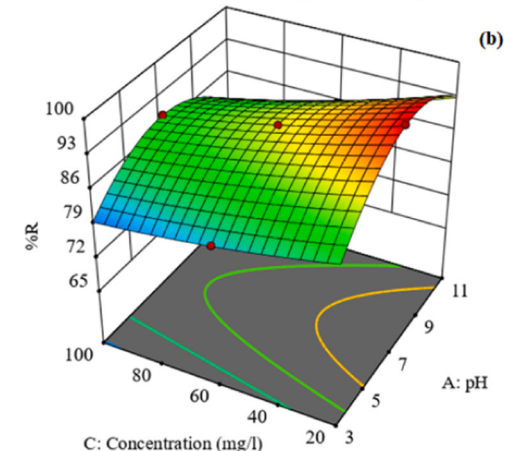
In the next step, three-dimensional graphs were used to investigate the simultaneous effect of two parameters in situations where other variables have a fixed value Fig. 7 [72]. Fig. 7a the effect of pH and time variables is investigated. The maximum adsorption efficiency is at pH 7 and the time efficiency is 90 to 120 min. The reason for the low adsorption efficiency at low pHs can be attributed to the presence of  $H^+$  ions at these pHs and their competition with the cationic charge in Deltamethrin molecules for placement on the adsorbent surface. Therefore, the lower the concentration of  $H^+$  or  $OH^-$  ions in the solution, the higher the rate of toxin removal in the solution, and alTherefore increases the adsorption amount by increasing the contact time of the adsorbent with the toxin ions. The increase in adsorption percentage occurs due to more contact of Deltamethrin with the adsorbent and eventually reaches the maximum value. However, with increasing contact time due to saturation of empty sites, the amount of adsorption

remains almost constant. Fig. 7b the effect of pH variables and primary concentration of Deltamethrin on it is adsorption efficiency shows that at pH equal to 7 and primary concentration of toxin approximately equal to 20 mg/L had the highest efficiency. Fig. 7c the interaction of two pH parameters and the amount of composite is investigated. The maximum efficiency at neutral pH and the amount of composite is 2.5 g/L, which increases the number of active adsorbent sites, and increases the adsorption of Deltamethrin. Fig. 7d the effect of temperature and pH variables on the efficiency of Deltamethrin uptake is shown. Which shows the highest efficiency at pH 7 and a temperature of 25 °C. Fig. 7e shows the interaction of primary Deltamethrin concentration and time, the highest adsorption rate at the primary concentration of 10 mg/L and a time of 100 min, which is called the equilibrium time, then remained constant due to the filling of active sites. Fig. 7f the interaction of the variables shows the amount of composite and contact time, in which the adsorption efficiency increases with the increase of these two variables. Fig. 7g examined the simultaneous effect of time and temperature, which shows the highest efficiency at 25 °C and 100 min. Fig. 7h indicates the interaction of primary concentration and temperature variables. These two variables are a plate with a negative slope for concentration and temperature, which decreases with increasing concentration due to the increase of pollutant molecules. Fig. 7i shows the interaction between the amount of composite and the temperature. As can be seen in the figure, the increase in temperature is inversely related

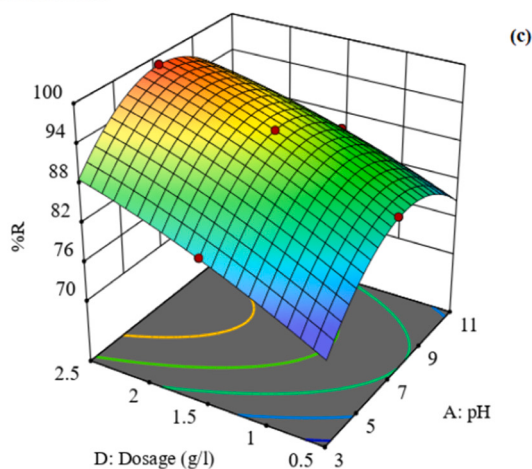
Actual Factors C: Concentration = 60 D: Dosage = 1.5 E: Temperature = 35



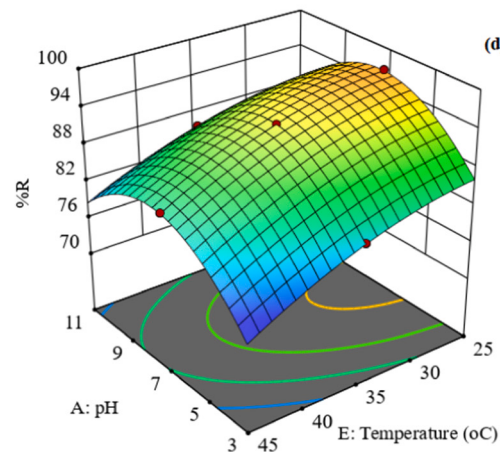
Actual Factors B: Time = 90 D: Dosage = 1.5 E: Temperature = 35



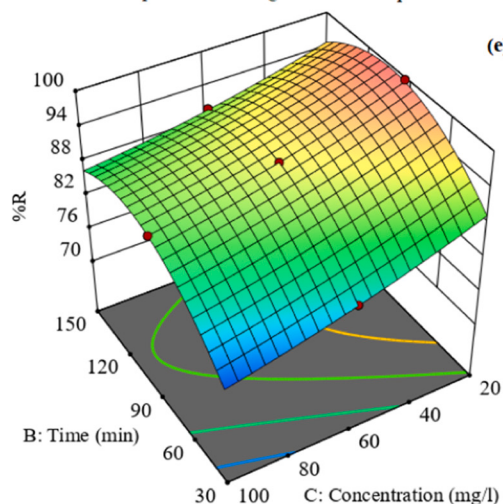
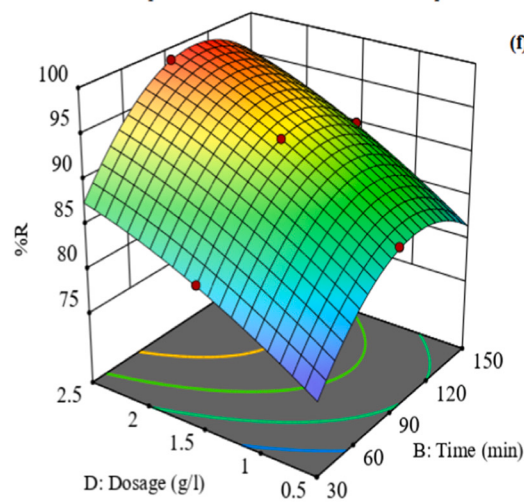
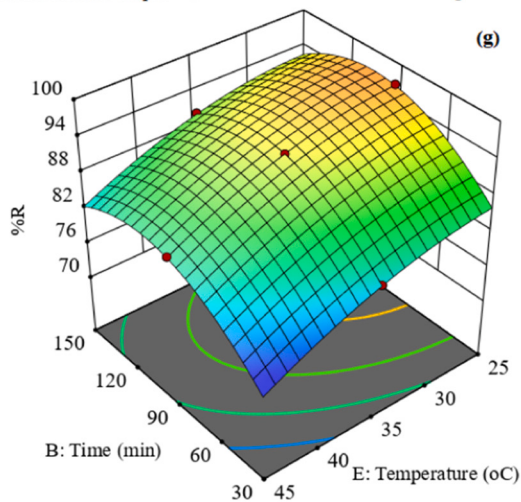
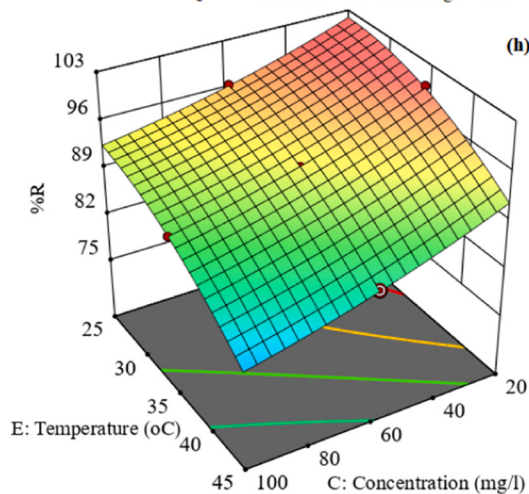
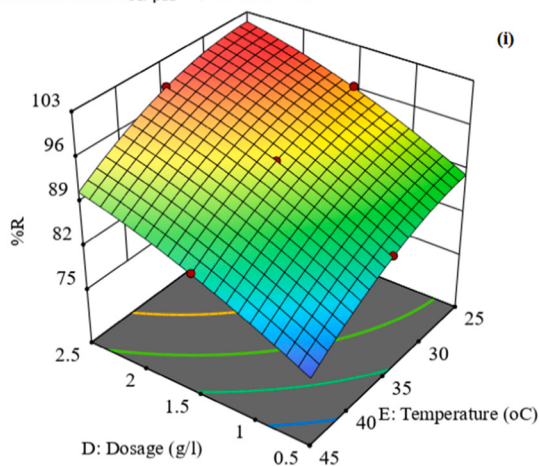
Actual Factors B: Time = 90 C: Concentration = 60 E: Temperature = 35



Actual Factors B: Time = 90 C: Concentration = 60 D: Dosage = 1.5



**Fig. 7.** Diagrams of interactions a) time and pH, b) concentration of Deltamethrin and pH, c) amount of composite and pH, d) Temperature and pH, e) time and concentration of Deltamethrin, f) time and amount of composite, g) time and Temperature, h) Temperature and concentration of Deltamethrin, i) Temperature and amount of composite.

**Actual Factors A: pH = 7 D: Dosage = 1.5 E: Temperature = 35****Actual Factors A: pH = 7 C: Concentration = 60 E: Temperature = 35****Actual Factors A: pH = 7 C: Concentration = 60 D: Dosage = 1.5****Actual Factors A: pH = 7 B: Time = 90 D: Dosage = 1.5****Actual Factors A: pH = 7 B: Time = 90 C: Concentration = 60****Fig. 7. (continued).**

to the percentage of adsorption, thus the maximum amount of adsorption at the initial temperature of 25 °C and the amount of composite is 2.5 g/L.

Since three-dimensional diagrams cannot have enough information

about the general optimal conditions, the optimization of variables was examined to determine the appropriate conditions for having the highest adsorption efficiency Fig. 8. As can be seen, the highest efficiency of Deltamethrin uptake by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel was

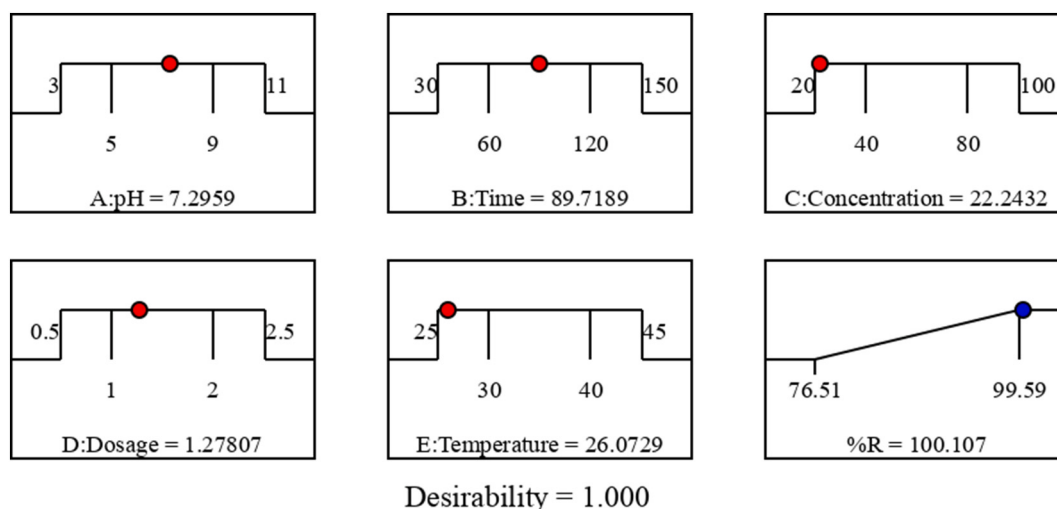


Fig. 8. Actual profiles with optimal performance prediction points for Deltamethrin removal by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel.

100.1 % at a temperature of 26/07 °C, initial concentration of 22/24 mg/L, contact time equal to 89.72 min, the adsorbent dose is 1.28 g/L and the neutral pH. This indicates the high ability of nanocomposite to adsorb Deltamethrin. To further investigate the optimal adsorption conditions, an experimental experiment was performed under these conditions and its efficiency was calculated to be equal to 99.79 %. The little difference between the maximum value of the experimental adsorption percentage and the model adsorption percentage indicates the CCD model's suitability for optimizing the Deltamethrin adsorption process by the CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel [73]. Also, the real sample of river water (COD: 198 mg O<sub>2</sub>/L) with 20 ppm of Deltamethrin was process in optimum condition. Removal percentage in the adsorption process of real sample is equal to 91.24 %. This result shows the high adsorption efficiency of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> in real samples. Also, the concentration of Fe<sup>3+</sup> ion in real sample after adsorption process was measured to evaluate the leaching value. The concentration of Fe<sup>3+</sup> ion is <1 ppm. The CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel is based on chitosan and the iron nanoparticles inside it are coated with chitosan, this material is stable in neutral environments and does not undergo leaching. Therefore, the concentration of Fe<sup>3+</sup> ion concentration in optimal conditions for the adsorption process is very low.

### 3.3. Equilibrium study

The equilibrium study reveals important information about the distribution of adsorbent molecules in the liquid phase at equilibrium [74].

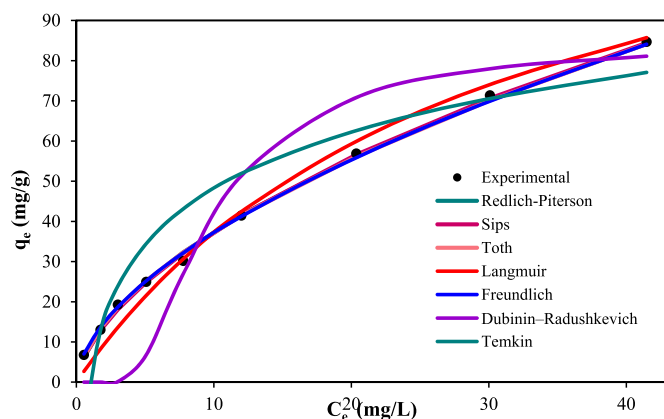


Fig. 9. Graphs of isotherm for CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel.

To examine the equilibrium study under optimal conditions where the parameters of pH, contact time, composite amount, and temperature are constant, isothermal models that show the connection between the amount of material adsorbed by the CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel and the residue in solution were examined. For this purpose, Two-parameter and three-parameter models such as Freundlich (used for adsorbents with uneven surfaces in the constant concentration range), Langmuir, Temkin, Dubinin-Radushkevich, and Sips, Toth and Redlich-Peterson respectively, were studied (Fig. 9 and Table 3). The model with the highest R<sup>2</sup> and the lowest mean root error will be suitable as a model. The values of R<sub>L</sub>, n, and E parameters were 0.824–0.189, 1.335, and (0.233KJ/mol) based on two-parameter models, which indicate the desirability and physicality of the adsorption process. On the other hand, the three-parameter models Toth, Sips, and Redlich-Peterson are more suitable models due to their higher R<sup>2</sup>. Among the three-parameter models, the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) and the root mean square error (RMSE) of all three models are equal. However, considering the values of a<sub>T</sub> and a<sub>S</sub> coefficients of the Toth and Sips models, these coefficients have very small values that can be ignored. Therefore the best model in the equilibrium study for the adsorption of deltamethrin using CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel is the Freundlich model [75].

### 3.4. Study of adsorption kinetics

To study the different times for the completion of the adsorption process and its speed to study the kinetics of the process. Also, adsorption kinetics provide useful information about understanding the mechanism of the adsorption process [76]. The kinetic study was performed at various times and at optimal pH, temperature, concentration, and adsorbent dose. In order to determine the appropriate kinetic model for Deltamethrin adsorption using CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel, the Elovich, pseudo-first and second-order kinetic models were investigated. The information obtained from the study of kinetic models can be used to design and model the adsorption processes based on the root mean square error of the coefficient of determination and the ability to explain the ability of each of these models Table 4. The results obtained from the study of these models showed that the adsorption process follows a second-order kinetic models. Therefore, it can be derived that the adsorption process using the nanocomposite hydrogel is based on chemical reactions Which expresses this there is an exchange of electrons between the adsorbent surface and the adsorbent [76]. The primary adsorption rate (h) was determined and its value was 4.17 (Fig. 10).

**Table 3**  
Different models and parameters of two-parameter and three-parameter isotherms.

| Models                                                                                      | Parameters                                             | Analyte                  | R <sup>2</sup> | RMSE  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------|
| Langmuir                                                                                    | q <sub>m</sub> (mg/g)                                  | 369.9                    | 0.975          | 7.27  |
| $q_e = \frac{q_m k_L C_e}{1 + k_L C_e}$                                                     | k <sub>L</sub> (L/mg)                                  | 0.0214                   |                |       |
| $R_L = \frac{1}{1 + k_L C_e}$                                                               | R <sub>L</sub>                                         | 0.824–0.189              |                |       |
| Freundlich                                                                                  | n                                                      | 1.335                    | 0.983          | 5.705 |
| $q_e = k_f C_e^{1/n}$                                                                       | k <sub>f</sub> ((mg/g).(L/mg) <sup>1/n</sup> )         | 11.6                     |                |       |
| Dubinin–Radushkevich (D-R)                                                                  | E (KJ/mol)                                             | 0.233                    | 0.867          | 16.14 |
| $q_e = q_m \exp\left(-\beta\left(RT \ln\left(1 + \left(1/C_e\right)\right)\right)^2\right)$ | q <sub>m</sub> (mg/g)                                  | 124.6                    |                |       |
| $E = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\beta}}$                                                               | βx10 <sup>-6</sup> (mol <sup>2</sup> /J <sup>2</sup> ) | 9.17                     |                |       |
| Temkin                                                                                      | B                                                      | 30.79                    | 0.556          | 29.49 |
| $q_e = B \ln(A_T C_e)$                                                                      | A <sub>T</sub> (L/g)                                   | 111.9                    |                |       |
| Redlich–Peterson                                                                            | k <sub>rp</sub> (L/g)                                  | 39,620                   | 0.983          | 6.1   |
| $q_e = \frac{k_{rp} C_e}{1 + \alpha_{rp} C_e^{\beta_{rp}}}$                                 | α <sub>rp</sub> (L/mg) <sup>β<sub>rp</sub></sup>       | 3.04                     |                |       |
| Sips                                                                                        | β <sub>rp</sub>                                        | 342                      |                |       |
| $q_e = \frac{k_s C_e^{m_s}}{1 + a_s C_e^{m_s}}$                                             | k <sub>s</sub> (L/mg) <sup>m<sub>s</sub></sup>         | 11.6                     | 0.983          | 5.705 |
| Toth                                                                                        | m <sub>s</sub>                                         | 0.75                     |                |       |
| $q_e = \frac{k_T C_e}{(a_T + C_e)^{1/T}}$                                                   | a <sub>s</sub> (L/mg) <sup>m<sub>s</sub></sup>         | 5.85 × 10 <sup>-11</sup> |                |       |
|                                                                                             | k <sub>T</sub> (mg/g)                                  | 11.6                     | 0.983          | 5.705 |
|                                                                                             | a <sub>T</sub> (mg/g)                                  | 5.83 × 10 <sup>-10</sup> |                |       |
|                                                                                             | T                                                      | 3.986                    |                |       |

q<sub>e</sub>: The amount of Deltamethrin adsorbed on the adsorbent (mg/g), k<sub>L</sub>: energy of adsorption, C<sub>e</sub>: concentration of Deltametrin in equilibrium time (mg/L), R<sub>L</sub>: separation factor, E: average free energy of adsorption, q<sub>m</sub>: Maximum adsorption capacity, K<sub>f</sub>: The amount of Deltamethrin adsorbed at a given concentration, A<sub>T</sub>: Equilibrium constant related to connection energy, β: Adsorption energy constant, n: measurement of adsorption severity, t, k<sub>T</sub> and a<sub>T</sub>: Toth isotherm constants.

**Table 4**  
kinetic model pseudo-first-order, pseudo-second-order, and Elovich kinetic diagrams.

| Kinetic model                             | Parameters                 | Analyte                 |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Pseudo-first- Order                       | q <sub>e, Cal</sub> (mg/g) | 7.342                   |
|                                           | k <sub>1</sub> (1/min)     | 0.1899                  |
| $q_t = q_e (1 - e^{-k_1 t})$              | R <sup>2</sup>             | 0.906                   |
|                                           | RMSE                       | 0.113                   |
| Pseudo-second-order                       | q <sub>e, Cal</sub> (mg/g) | 7.55                    |
|                                           | k <sub>2</sub> (g/mg.min)  | 0.73                    |
| $q_t = \frac{k_2 q_e^2 t}{1 + k_2 q_e t}$ | R <sup>2</sup>             | 0.967                   |
| $h = k_2 q_e^2$                           | RMSE                       | 0.0671                  |
|                                           | h(mg/g.min)                | 4.1673                  |
| Elovich                                   | α(mg/g.min)                | 6.39 × 10 <sup>+8</sup> |
|                                           | β(g/mg)                    | 0.312                   |
| $q_t = \beta \ln(\alpha \beta t)$         | R <sup>2</sup>             | 0.717                   |
|                                           | RMSE                       | 0.195                   |
|                                           | q <sub>e,exp</sub> (mg/g)  | 7.41                    |

q<sub>e</sub>: Adsorption valence equilibrium time (mg/g), t: contact time (min) and q<sub>t</sub>: Adsorption valence in t, k<sub>1</sub> and k<sub>2</sub>: Pseudo-first and second-order rate constant, β: adsorption constant, h and α: primary adsorption rate.

3.5. Study of adsorption mechanism for Deltamethrin removal

In order to study the adsorption mechanism of Deltamethrin by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel, models of intraparticle diffusion, double-exponential, and liquid film diffusion were investigated Fig. 11. Due to the fact that in the particle diffusion model, the width value is positive from the origin and does not have a good value, it indicates the effect of a mechanism other than intraparticle diffusion on the adsorption. Therefore, the intraparticle diffusion model is not suitable for expressing the adsorption process of Deltamethrin by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel [77]. That is, in addition to the intraparticle diffusion mechanism, another mechanism probably controls the toxin uptake process. The double-exponential model was recognized as a suitable model for describing the Deltamethrin adsorption process using the mentioned nanocomposite hydrogel due to having the highest

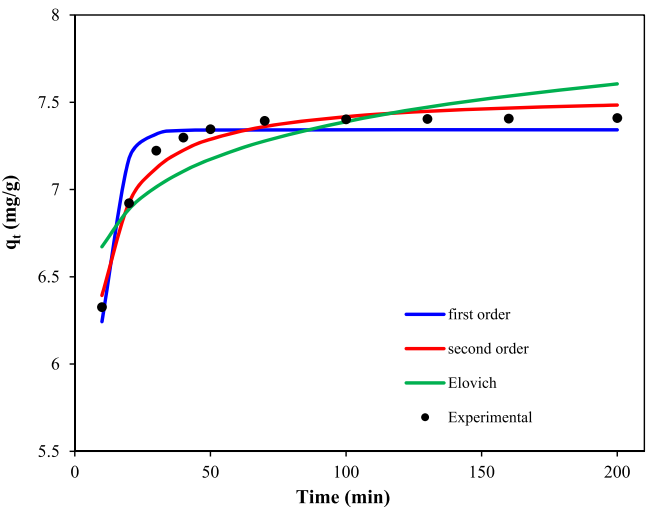


Fig. 10. Kinetic graphs Elovich, pseudo-first and second-order.

amount of R<sup>2</sup> and the lowest amount of RMSE (Table 5). This model includes two stages of fast and slow penetration; it is related to the diffusion of inter-particle and intra-particle penetration, respectively [75]. The speed values for the fast (k<sub>1</sub>) and slow (k<sub>2</sub>) stages are 10.55 and 0.083 per min, respectively.

3.6. Thermodynamics of adsorption

Thermodynamic studies are used to evaluate the desirability of the Deltamethrin adsorption process by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel. For this purpose, Thermodynamic parameters, including Gibbs free energy (ΔG°), enthalpy (ΔH°), and entropy (ΔS°) were examined; these three parameters have a very important impact on a better understanding of the adsorption process [78]. In this study, in optimal conditions, temperatures of 25 to 50 were used to determine the

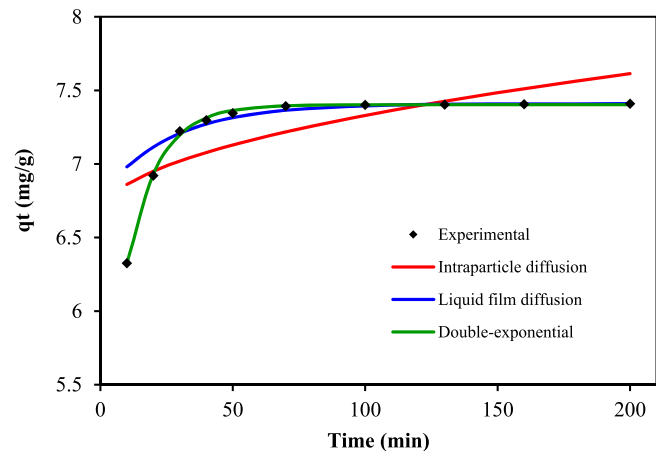


Fig. 11. Diagrams of the mechanism of adsorption related to the uptake of Deltamethrin by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel.

Table 5

Adsorption mechanism models and their parameters related to Deltamethrin adsorption.

| Mechanism model                                                                               | Parameters        | Concentration (mg/L) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Intraparticle diffusion<br>$q_t = k_{id}t^{1/2} + C$                                          | $k_{id}$ (1/m in) | 0.069                |
|                                                                                               | C (mg/g)          | 6.644                |
|                                                                                               | R <sup>2</sup>    | 0.524                |
|                                                                                               | RMSE              | 0.253                |
| Liquid film diffusion<br>$\ln(1 - (q_t/q_e)) = -k_{fd}t$                                      | $k_{fd}$ (1/min)  | 0.038                |
|                                                                                               | R <sup>2</sup>    | 0.896                |
|                                                                                               | RMSE              | 0.711                |
| Double-exponential<br>$q_t = q_e + \frac{D_1}{m_a} \exp(-k_1t) - \frac{D_2}{m_a} \exp(-k_2t)$ | $k_1$ (1/min)     | 10.55                |
|                                                                                               | $k_2$ (1/min)     | 0.083                |
|                                                                                               | R <sup>2</sup>    | 0.999                |
|                                                                                               | RMSE              | 0.018                |

$k_{id}$  and  $k_{fd}$ : rate constants of the interparticle diffusion model and film diffusion,  $D_1$  and  $D_2$ : adsorption speed parameters of the quick and slow steps (m mol/L).

thermodynamic parameters (Fig. 12), and also the Van Hoff's equations were used to determine the non-spontaneous and spontaneous processes (Table 6). As you can see, the values of  $\Delta H^\circ$ ,  $\Delta S^\circ$ , and  $\Delta G^\circ$  were negative, which indicates that the process is exothermic, the increase of irregularity, and also from the negative  $\Delta G^\circ$  value, it can be concluded that the adsorption process is spontaneous [79,80]. On the other hand, the negative  $\Delta S^\circ$  indicates that the changes in the structure of the adsorbent are not significant, or in other words, the adsorbent does not change structure during the adsorption process and the adsorption process is physical. Generally, the studied thermodynamic parameters indicate that the adsorption of Deltamethrin via CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel does not require energy input and is suitable for industrial use [74,81]. The thermodynamic parameters  $\Delta H^\circ$ ,  $\Delta G^\circ$ , and  $\Delta S^\circ$  were acquired negatively using Eqs. (9), (10) and (11).

$$\ln(k_c) = \frac{\Delta S^\circ}{R} - \frac{\Delta H^\circ}{R} \left( \frac{1}{T} \right) \quad (9)$$

$$\Delta G^\circ = -RT \ln(k_c) \quad (10)$$

$$k_c = m \frac{q_e}{C_e} \quad (11)$$

### 3.7. Adsorption-desorption and reusability study

In order to investigate the desorption of Deltamethrin after adsorption by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel, different Briton-Robinson buffer pHs were used to select the appropriate desorption

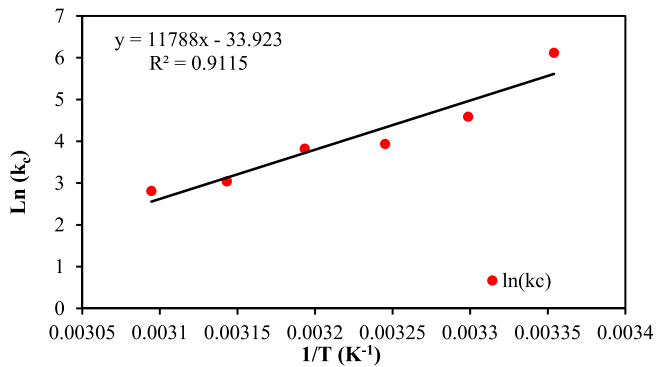


Fig. 12. Thermodynamic graph.

medium, the results are shown in Fig. 13-a. As can be seen, the maximum percentage of adsorption at pH is 2. Therefore, Adsorption-desorption were performed in a Briton-Robinson buffer medium at a pH of 2 up to 10 Cycles. The desorption results obtained from CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel show that with increasing the adsorption-desorption process steps, the adsorption capacity of the studied hydrogel is reduced; There are disparate factors such as injury to the adsorbent areas and filling the adsorbent sites with Deltamethrin [82]. In addition CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel up to ten cycles of the adsorption-desorption process as shown in (Fig. 13-b), the above adsorbent can adsorb >96 %, which indicates the synthesized composite has a good ability to adsorb and desorb Deltamethrin. This indicates that CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel can be used for both practical and industrial intention. The anion and cations effect on Deltamethrin removal was investigated and results was shown in Fig. 13-c. As can be seen, the removal percentage was decreased slightly in the presence of anions and cations, which is due to their competition with Deltamethrin to be placed on the adsorbent surface.

### 3.8. Results of artificial neural network

The neural network study was performed to compare and validate the (CCD-RSM) model. In an artificial neural network (ANN), experimental data is subdivided into training, validation, and experimental data, and finally, the general state in which all data is reviewed. The value of R<sup>2</sup> in all four data is higher than 0.92, also in the fourth part of the general data, the value of R<sup>2</sup> was 0.993, which shows that the artificial network has a high ability to process experimental data (Fig. 14-b). On the other hand showed the analysis of experimental data, for data modeling, the hidden layer of the 14th layer was chosen due to the low value of RMSE, which has the best performance for data modeling (Fig. 14-a). In order to assess the capabilities of the CCD model, the artificial neural network and the CCD method were compared, in this order; the evaluated data were compared with the data obtained from both models CCD, and ANN (Table 7). In the next step, the error values were examined and the error values show the difference between the accuracy of the data of the two CCD and ANN models with the real data (Table 8). Both models have low error values, indicating the high ability

Table 6

Thermodynamic parameters related to Deltamethrin adsorption by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel.

| T(°C) | $\Delta G^\circ$ (KJ/mol) | $\Delta H^\circ$ (KJ/mol) | $\Delta S^\circ$ (J/mol.K) |
|-------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 25    | -15.163                   | -98.005                   | -282.04                    |
| 30    | -11.56                    |                           |                            |
| 35    | -10.078                   |                           |                            |
| 40    | -9.95                     |                           |                            |
| 45    | -8.036                    |                           |                            |
| 50    | -7.552                    |                           |                            |

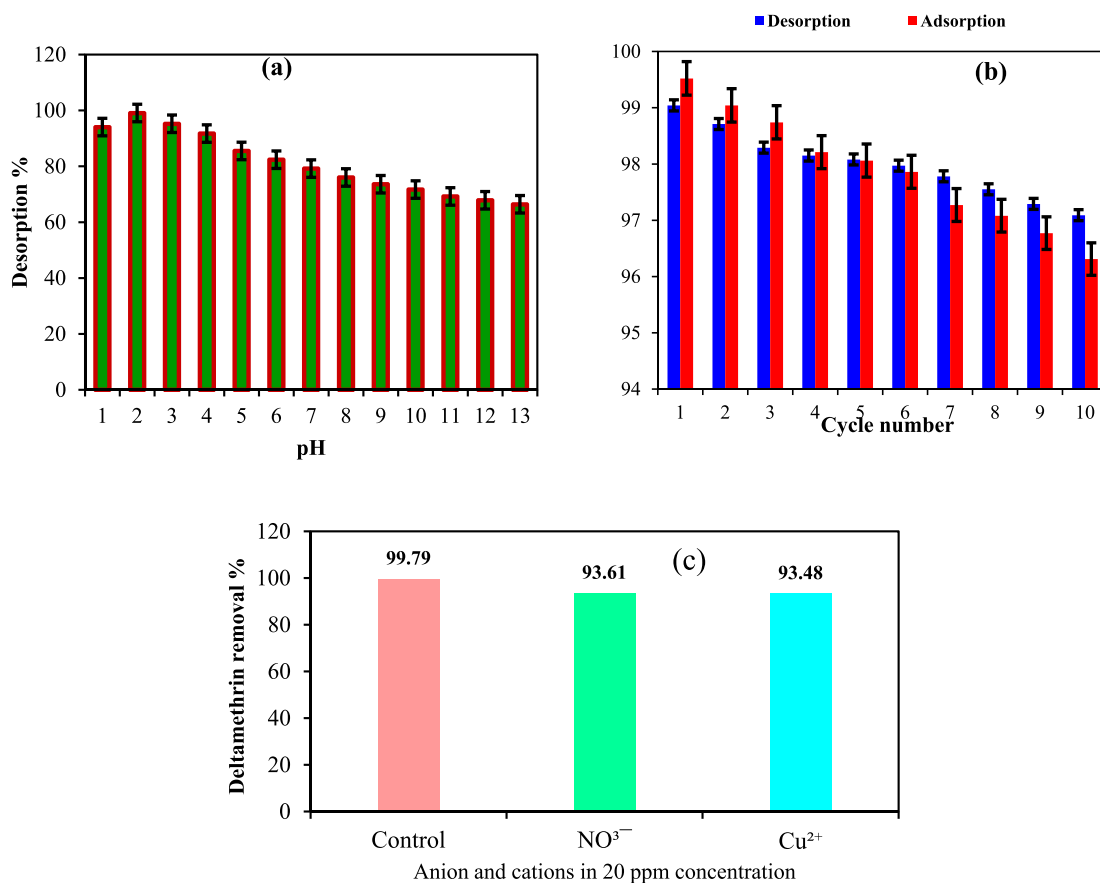


Fig. 13. a) Desorption diagram at different pHs, b) Adsorption and desorption charts, c) Anion and cations effects.

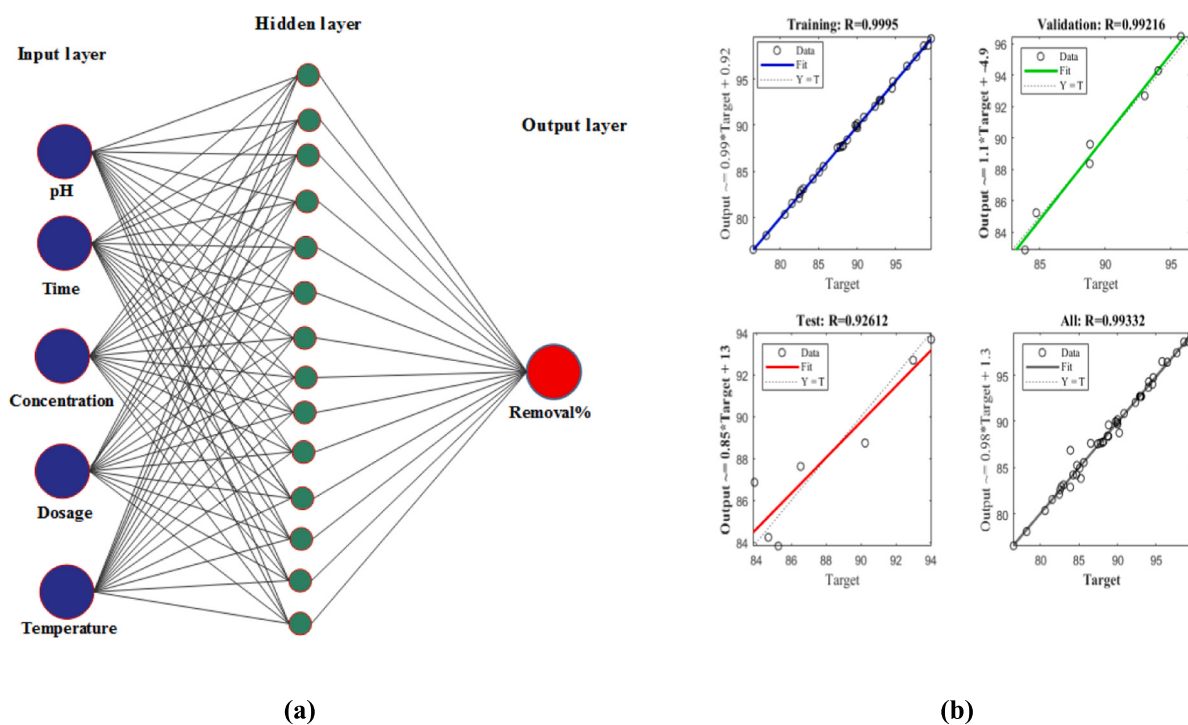


Fig. 14. The structural shape of the artificial neural network (ANN) and b) the regression diagrams for ANN.

**Table 7**  
Comparison of real data of two central composite composites (CCD) and ANN.

| No. | Actual | ANN   | CCD   | No. | Actual | ANN   | CCD   |
|-----|--------|-------|-------|-----|--------|-------|-------|
| 1   | 87.45  | 87.56 | 87.56 | 24  | 82.45  | 82.09 | 82.45 |
| 2   | 89.95  | 89.89 | 90.03 | 25  | 88.83  | 88.37 | 88.94 |
| 3   | 90.23  | 88.74 | 90.30 | 26  | 90.86  | 90.84 | 90.88 |
| 4   | 92.93  | 92.69 | 93.02 | 27  | 92.32  | 92.03 | 92.41 |
| 5   | 83.01  | 83.12 | 82.97 | 28  | 94.52  | 94    | 94.6  |
| 6   | 83.89  | 86.86 | 83.91 | 29  | 83.88  | 82.88 | 83.85 |
| 7   | 86.53  | 87.62 | 86.61 | 30  | 84.25  | 84.2  | 84.26 |
| 8   | 87.79  | 87.66 | 87.79 | 31  | 88.21  | 87.82 | 88.21 |
| 9   | 94.64  | 94.73 | 94.68 | 32  | 88.85  | 89.6  | 88.87 |
| 10  | 95.78  | 96.46 | 95.92 | 33  | 82.56  | 82.59 | 82.36 |
| 11  | 97.68  | 97.39 | 97.77 | 34  | 85.64  | 85.55 | 85.48 |
| 12  | 99.19  | 98.63 | 99.26 | 35  | 82.71  | 82.92 | 82.51 |
| 13  | 90.01  | 90.16 | 90.07 | 36  | 90.03  | 89.71 | 89.86 |
| 14  | 89.76  | 89.96 | 89.77 | 37  | 99.59  | 99.36 | 99.13 |
| 15  | 94.04  | 94.27 | 94.05 | 38  | 88.71  | 88.42 | 88.81 |
| 16  | 94.01  | 93.68 | 93.99 | 39  | 85.09  | 84.94 | 84.91 |
| 17  | 81.52  | 81.54 | 81.61 | 40  | 98.62  | 98.57 | 98.44 |
| 18  | 84.74  | 85.25 | 84.79 | 41  | 96.45  | 96.39 | 96.21 |
| 19  | 84.68  | 84.23 | 84.73 | 42  | 85.25  | 83.82 | 85.13 |
| 20  | 88.07  | 87.7  | 88.16 | 43  | 93.1   | 92.69 | 93.08 |
| 21  | 76.51  | 76.55 | 76.55 | 44  | 92.98  | 92.69 | 93.08 |
| 22  | 78.19  | 78.07 | 78.2  | 45  | 92.88  | 92.69 | 93.08 |
| 23  | 80.59  | 80.35 | 80.56 | 46  | 93.02  | 92.69 | 93.08 |

**Table 8**  
The structural shape of the artificial neural network (ANN) and b) the regression diagrams for ANN.

| Performance            | ANN   | CCD                  |
|------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| MAE                    | 0.4   | 0.087                |
| MAPE                   | 0.005 | 0.00096              |
| RMSE                   | 0.647 | 0.121                |
| Minimum Adsolute Error | 0.02  | $0.1 \times 10^{-3}$ |
| Maximum Adsolute Error | 2.97  | 0.4595               |
| R <sup>2</sup>         | 0.987 | 0.999                |

MAPE: mean absolute percentage error, MAE: mean absolute error.

**Table 9**  
Comparing the adsorption capacity of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> with the adsorption capacity of different adsorbents for Deltamethrin.

| Adsorbent                                              | Adsorbate    | q <sub>m</sub> (mg/g) | Ref.       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Activated Carbon from Pistachio nutshells              | Deltamethrin | 162.6                 | [84]       |
| Activated Carbon from Novel African walnut shell (AWS) | Deltamethrin | 57.64                 | [85]       |
| La-MOF                                                 | Deltamethrin | 227.34                | [86]       |
| Activated Carbon                                       | Deltamethrin | 74                    | [87]       |
| Clay/GO/Fe <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>                 | Diazinon     | 7.38                  | [83]       |
| CS/PAA/Fe <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>                  | Deltamethrin | 369.9                 | This study |

of both models to express Deltamethrin adsorption experimental data. Finally, the RSM-CCD method has a higher capability in expressing data than the artificial neural network method due to lower error values [83].

3.9. Comparison with previous studies

The results (q<sub>m</sub>) of this study were compared with others and reported in Table 9. As can be seen, the maximum capacity of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> is higher than other adsorbents. Also, the maximum capacity of the adsorbents that was used for Deltamethrin removal is low. Therefore, in this study CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was synthesized and used for Deltamethrin adsorption. Maximum capacity of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> is equal to 369.9 mg/g that was better and comparable to the previously reported.

4. Conclusion

In this study, the ability and adsorption capacity of CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel in the adsorption of Deltamethrin from aqueous solutions was investigated. The results of FT-IR, XRD, VSM, TGA, EDX, Map, and FE-SEM analysis showed that the CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel was properly synthesized and had a semi-crystalline structure. Also, the effect of temperature, pH, contact time, the amount of composite, and pesticide concentration on the adsorption efficiency was studied using artificial neural networks and response surface methodology. The results of this study showed that the optimum conditions for the removal of Deltamethrin using CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel are: temperature=26.07 °C, initial concentration = 22.24 mg/L, contact time = 89.72 min, nanocomposite hydrogel dosage = 1.28 g/L and the pH at 7.23, in which the adsorption efficiency is equal to 99.79 %. The results showed that the model is obtained from the response surface method had a higher predictability than the artificial neural network model. The results of the isothermal study showed that the adsorption process of Deltamethrin by this adsorbent from the three-parameter Toth isotherm model with high R<sup>2</sup> and low error had a better ability to express the adsorption process equilibrium; the process was reversible and physically desirable. The results of the kinetic study showed that the process of Deltamethrin adsorption by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel follows pseudo-second-order model. In addition, the results of the adsorption mechanism study showed that the adsorption process of Deltamethrin by this adsorbent followed the Double-exponential model which is a combination of intra and inter particle diffusion. The results generally showed that the adsorption process of Deltamethrin using CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel occur both monolayer and multilayer. The results of the thermodynamic study showed that the process of adsorption of Deltamethrin by CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel is an exothermic and spontaneous process. The results of the adsorption and adsorption study showed CS/PAA/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocomposite hydrogel had the ability to adsorb and release the Deltamethrin pesticide for up to 10 cycles. In general, the results of this study showed that the response surface method can be used to evaluate the optimal conditions in the process of adsorption of Deltamethrin by the adsorbent. The main limitation for the practical use of the results of this study is the highly variable concentrations of the mentioned pesticide at different times. However, in this study, an appropriate concentration range was tried to be checked, but continuous monitoring of the environmental can be a suitable solution to overcome this problem.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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