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**FULL PAPER** 

## Systematic Study of Calcination Temperature on Photocatalytic Activity of Luminescent Copper(I) Pyrazolate Complex/Titanium Oxide Composites

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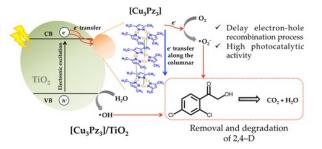
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#### Abstract

Columnar assembly of luminescent 3,5-di 11 thyl pyrazolate complexes/titanium oxide composites with 19 ferent metal ions has shown significant improvement in its photocatalytic activity for the removal and degradation of 2, 4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D). Since photocatalytic activity of semicondu 43 titanium oxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>) with an anatase phase can be imp 1 ved by calcination temperature, we report the effect of heat treatments on the preparation of copper(I) 3,5-dimethyl pyrazolate complex/titanium oxide composite ([Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub>) for the removal and degradation of 2,4-D. Photocatalyst composites [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> were successfully prepared using an impregnation method with different calcination temperature at 373, 473 and 573 K. Although, the activity of photocatalyst composites [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> was significantly improved with increasing of calcination temperature on pure TiO<sub>2</sub>, it was slightly reduced with an increase of calcined temperature to 473 and 573 K. These results showed that [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> was unstable at high temperature due to the decomposition of molecular str 46 ire of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> was unstable at high temperature due to the decomposition temperature is an important parameter to increase photocatalytic activity of photocatalyst composites [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub>.

Luminescent composites [CusPzs]/TiO2 enable as a semiconductor [3] tocatalyst with a significant improvement on photocatalytic 42 jvity for removal and degradation of 2,4-D. This higher photocatalytic activity compared to TiO2 is due to the presence of columnar assembly for delaying electron-hole recombination between valance and conduction bands. Indeed, calcination temperature is important parameter to increase photocatalytic activity of photocatalyst composites.



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 $\textit{Keywords} : {\sf Calcination, Copper(I) pyrazolate complex, 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid}$ 

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#### Introduction

Nowadays, an increasing contamination level in water sources with colorless chlorinated compounds is one of the reatest concern to the human future. Since 1945, 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) has been widely used as selective herbicides in agriculture fields for controlling the broadleaf weeds [1,2]. In contrast, this herbicide is relatively high 41 luble in water and easily flow to water stream. In addition, the degradation rate of 2,4-D also considered slow, which takes few days, depending on some factors such as concentration, acidity, and temperature. Several reports showed that 2,4-D in contaminated water source can be removed chemical, microbial using photochemical process [3-5]. However, those methods stillorave low conversion percentage and take a long time for the removal of 2,4-D. Recently, titanium oxide (TiO2) with its semiconductor properties has been reported as a promising heterogeneous photocatalyst in water treatment technology due to their high activity, large stability, low price, and nontoxic [6-8].

While a lot of strategies have been developed to improve photocatalytic activity of TiO2 [9-12], modification using copper complexes have gained such a tremendous attention due to the ability of the composite in improving suppression of electronhole recombination process, in which the columnar structure from a weak metal-metal interaction can trap the transferred electron along its assembly [13,14]. In 2016, a first modified luminescent trinuclear copper(I) pyrazolate complex/titanium oxide has been reported to give better activity compared to pure TiO2 [13]. This result highlighted that the presence of luminescent trinuclear copper(I) pyrazolate complex ([Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]) with [13] different molecular structure of reduced electron-hole recombination process and slightly increased photocatalytic activity of TiO2. In partic 49 r, the luminescent composite of copper complex prepared from 3,5-dimethyl pyrazole ligand with a less rigid molecular structure show higher photocatalytic activity compared to that 4-(3,5-dimethoxybenzyl)-3,5-dimethyl pyrazole ligand. Recently, we also have reported on photocatalytic activity of modified TiO2 using 3,5-dimethyl pyrazolate complexes with different group 11 metal ions [14]. Such luminescent properties are required not only for indicating the electron-hole recombination from its emission spectral changes, but also for evaluating the



possibility of the electron transfer from conduction band to columnar assembly of the complex.

Although many studies have been done to investigate the performance of 39 are and modified TiO2 composites; however, the effect of heat treatment on the activity of lumings cent composites has still not yet reported so far. For example, Siah and her co-workers have reported that commercial TiO 10 aving anatase phase showed an improvement in the removal and degradation of 2,4-D with increasing of calcination temperature [15]. In contrast, commercial TiO2 with a combination of anatase and rutile phase possessed different results where the high calcination temperature might change the active site of photocatalyst composites. Therefore, we report on systematic study of luminescent trinuclear copper(I) 3,5-dimethyl pyrazolate complex/titanium oxide photocatalyst composites for the removal and degradation of 2,4-D. In this study, we demonstrated that suitable heat 37 atment in preparation of TiO2 composites is also an important parameter to be considered for the improvement of photocatalytic activity.

## Experimental Section Materials and apparatus

Hombikat UV100 TiO2 (Sachtleben Chemie) was used as a precursor of the anatase phase. [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] was previously synthesized from 3,5dimethyl pyrazole ligand (Sigma-Aldrich, C5H8N2 as Pz-CH3, 99%) and metal a tetrakis(acetonitrile)copper(I) hexafluorophosphate (Sigma-Aldrich, C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>12</sub>CuF<sub>6</sub>N<sub>4</sub>P, 97%) [15,16]. High tetrahydrofuran, purity of extra dry dichloromethane, and methanol from Merck was directly used to synthesize the complex under an inert condition. Freshly distilled triethylamine was firstly prepared in the round bottom flask containing potassium hydroxide (Merck, KOH) under a vacuum and an inert condition using a distillation technique. The freshly distilled triethylamine was directly used for the desired reactio 36 2,4-D (Sigma-Aldrich, C8H6Cl2O3, 98%) was used as a model of organic pollutant in the photocatalytic reaction. 6alcination with the temperature of 33, 473 and 573 K and a heating rate of 10 K min-1 under atmospheric conditions was performed using a Nabertherm muffle furnace on a model of LF6/11.

The structure of the samples was characterized using X-ray Diffractometer (XRD) on a model of Bruker D8 with a scan speed of 0.05 °s<sup>-1</sup> and Fourier

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transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR) on a model of Nicolet iS50 Thermo Scientific 5 potassium bromide with a pellet technique). The morphology of the composites was further studied using field-emission scanning electron microscopy (FE-SEM, JEOL on a model of JSM-6701F).

The photocatalytic resolution was performed on UV light irradiation using 200 W Xe-Hg lamp with 8 mW cm<sup>-2</sup> of light intenss. The photocatalytic activity was evaluated using high-performance 25 uid chromatography (HPLC) on a model of Shimadzu Prominence LC-20A equipped with UV detector and Hypersil GOLD PFP column (150 x 4.6 mm).

#### Synthesis of photocatalyst composites

[Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composites were prepared using an impregnation method where 0.1 weight percent of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] in dichloromethane solution (25 mL) was mixed with 1.0 g of TiO<sub>2</sub>. The mixture was sonicated for 20 minutes for better dispersion 73,16,18]. Then, the solution was stirred until dried at room temperature and calcined at 373 K for 4 hours. The protocol was repeated at different calcination temperatures (473 and 573 K) 34 both unmodified and modified TiO<sub>2</sub> to study the effect of heat treatment towards the activity.

#### Photocatalytic study of photocatalyst composites

21 [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composites were tested for degradation of 2,4-D under UV light irradiation [19,2029 Particularly, photocatalyst composite (50 mg) was added to the solution of 2,4-D (50 mL, 0.5 mM) and stirred in a dark condition for 1 hour to reach the adsorption-desorption equilibrium. Then, the mixture was further stirred for 1 hour unde 48 e same UV light irradiation. After the adsorption process and UV lamp exposure, the mixture was collected and purified using a nylon membrane filter (0.2  $\mu$ m). The filtered solution was further analyzed using HPLC. The concentration of 2,4-D was examined with an eluent mixture of 3 etonitrile/distilled water in 60:40 (v/v) at wavelength of 283 nm. The removal and degradation of 2,4-D were calculated from equations (1) and (2).

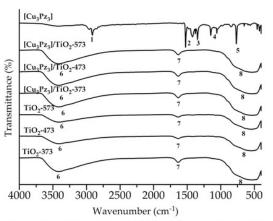
Removal of 2,4-D = 
$$\frac{[2,4-D]_i - [2,4-D]_f}{[2,4-D]_i} \times 100$$
2
Degradation of 2,4-D = 
$$\frac{[2,4-D]_i - [2,3-D]_f - [2,4-DCP]}{[2,4-D]_i} \times 100$$
(2)



The concentration of 2,4-D before and a 14 r UV light irradiation is denoted as [2,4-D]<sub>i</sub> and [2,4-D]<sub>f</sub> wh 33 the concentration of its intermediate (2,4-dichlorophenol, 2,4-DCP) is denoted as [2,4-DCP]. These equations will provide the calibration curves for the determination of photocatalytic activity.

#### Results and Discussion Structural analysis of photocatalyst composites

The molecular structure of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] and [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composites were firstly confirmed by using FT-IR measurement as shown in Figure 1 28 21]. According to the previous report, vibration bands at 3375 cm<sup>-1</sup> (6) and 1626 cm<sup>-1</sup> (7) are assigned to O-H group which indicated the presence of moisture. While the vibration band of Ti-O group was observed at the range of 700 to 500 cm<sup>-1</sup> (8) [21]. In contrast, although [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] was prepared as a composite with TiO<sub>2</sub>, there is no vibration band of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] in [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composites due to the low loading amount of the [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>].



**Figure 1.** FT-IR spectra of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] as well as TiO<sub>2</sub> and [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> at different calcination temperatures.

Figure 2 shows XRD pattern of TiO<sub>2</sub> with 2θ at 25.35°, 38.10°, 48.05°, 54.55° a 61 62.60° which is related to a standard value of Joint Committee on Powder Diffraction Standards (JCPDS) with the file number of 21-1271. This XRD pattern indicates the presence of an ana 47° phase for TiO<sub>2</sub> [14,20,22]. Moreover, by using 32 therrer equation for the main diffraction peak as shown in Table 1, the estimated crystallite sizes of TiO<sub>2</sub> and [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composites were calculated with different calcination temperatures. These results showed that heat treatment slightly affects the

crystallite size of pure TiO2. In contrast, the addition of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] has not affected structural properties of the TiO<sub>2</sub> in its composites. Otherwise, crystallite size of TiO<sub>2</sub> compared to the composites can be used to indicate both the presence of their agglomeration and distribution.

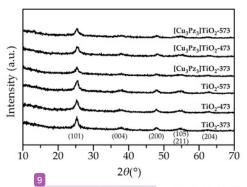


Figure 2. XRD patterns of TiO2 and [Cu3Pz3]/TiO2 at different calcination temperatures.

Table 1 45 nalyses crystallite size of TiO2 and [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> at different calcination temperatures.

Photocatalyst	Crystallite size1
composites	(nm)
TiO <sub>2</sub> -373	9.5
TiO <sub>2</sub> -473	12.3
TiO <sub>2</sub> -573	14.8
Cu3Pz3]/TiO2-373	9.6
Cu <sub>3</sub> Pz <sub>3</sub> ]/TiO <sub>2</sub> -473	9.8
Cu3Pz3]/TiO2-573 9	9.7

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Calculated using the Scherrer equation.

The morphology of TiO2 and [Cu3Pz3]/TiO2 was studied using 16-SEM measurement. Based on FE-SEM images in Figure 3, the surface morphology of modified [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composites showed almost similar properties to that of TiO2. These results showed that [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] was dispersed well at the surface of the TiO2 composites where it was supported by its crystallite size of the composites as shown in Table 1. Moreover, such a small amount of complex will not affect the morphology of the TiO2 in their composites.

#### Photocatalytic activity of photocatalyst composites

The performance of TiO2 and [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO2 photocatalyst composites was tested at ambient

temperature in 1 hour under UV light irradiation.

Based on stability test under UV light irradiation with [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] only and without photocatalyst, degradation of 2,4-D was not occurred due to lack of hydroxyl radical (•OH-). By using the equations 1 and 2 for the calibration curve, the performance of photocatalyst composites can be evaluated for percentages of degradation (conversion of 2,4-D to other compounds, except 2,4-DCP) and removal (decreasing of concentration of 2,4-D). the removal 2n be used for determination of decreasing of concentration of 2,4-D. The photocatalytic testing results of the [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub>-373 photocatalyst composite (Figure 4) showed that addition of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] was found to give significant highest removal in 96% and degradation in 30% compared 13 pure TiO<sub>2</sub> (49% and 10%, respectively). Moreover, the photocatalytic activity of 110re TiO2 also showed an improvement with an increase of calcination temperature due to the formation of more anatase phase. This result indicated that the resulting photocatalyst composites might have higher crystallinity of TiO2 due to the effect of calcination temperature [15].

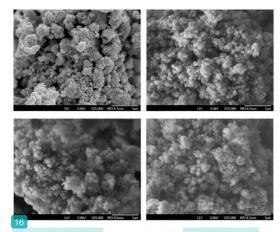
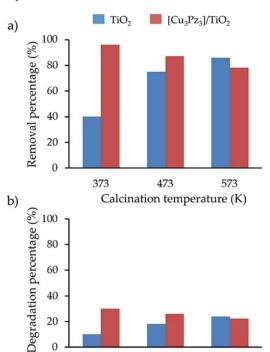


Figure 3. FE-SEM image for the morphology of a) 602 and b-d) [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> at different calcination temperatures of b) 373, c) 473 and d) 573 K.

Based on photocatalytic of TiO2, it was exp 24 ed that the composites gave high activity due to the effect of calcination temperature on the crystallinity of TiO2. Surprisingly, [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO2 composites showed opposite results where the activity slightly decreased after calcined at 473 and 573 K. These results might be due to the decomposition of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] at high temperature [17]. Hence, presence of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>] for delaying electronhole recombination by trapping the transferred electrons with its columnar assembly [13,14] and

suitable calcination temperature [15] play an important role for improving photocatalytic activity of pure TiO<sub>2</sub>.



**Figure 4.** a) Removal and b) degradation percentage of TiO<sub>2</sub> and [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> at different calcination temperatures.

473

Calcination temperature (K)

573

373

#### Conclusions

conclusion, TiO2 In and [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composites were successfully prepared at different calcination temperature (373, 473, and 573 K) by using simple an impregnation method. High calcination temperature slightly affects the crystallite size of pure TiO2. In contrast, the morphology and crystallite size of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composites were not much affected. Both removal and degradation percentage of 2,4-D for pure TiO2 increased from 49% to 86% and 10% to 24% when the calcination temperatures were increased from 373 to 473 K and 373 to 573 K. [Cu<sub>3</sub>P<sub>22</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composite calcined at 373 K showed the highest removal and degradation of 2,4-D compared to other photocatalyst composites with 96% and 30%. In contrast, as the calcination temperature increased, the activity of [Cu<sub>3</sub>Pz<sub>3</sub>]/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst composites decreased. This work demonstrated that modification of TiO2 with metal

comp31 and suitable calcination temperature might play an important role to enhance the degradation of organic pollutants.

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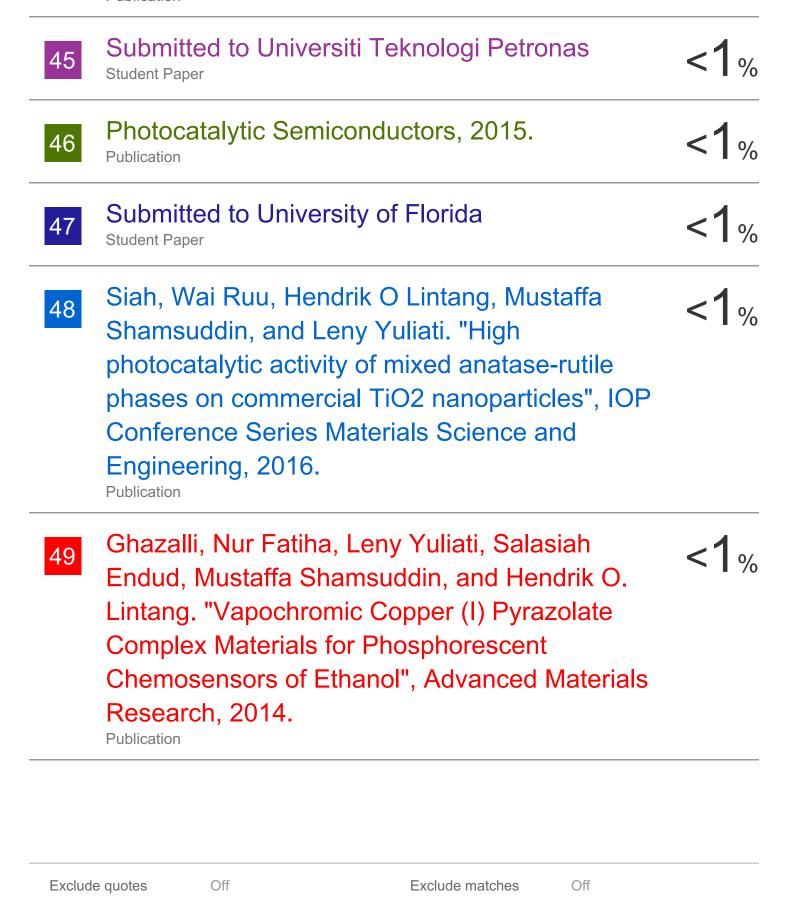
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