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Adenanthera Pavonina as a Sustainable Biosorbent: Heavy Metal Removal Potential and Regeneration Studies

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the efficacy of Adenanthera pavonina seeds as a sustainable, low-cost biosorbent for the removal of heavy metals—lead (Pb(II)), copper (Cu(II)), and cadmium (Cd(II))—from aqueous solutions, with a focus on their removal potential and regeneration capabilities. Batch experiments demonstrated that A. pavonina seeds effectively adsorb these metals, achieving removal efficiencies of 85-95% under optimal conditions (pH 4-5, 60-minute contact time, 2 g/L biosorbent dosage), with adsorption capacities ranging from 10-30 mg/g. The biosorption process was characterized using kinetic (pseudo-second-order) and isotherm (Langmuir) models, suggesting chemisorption and monolayer adsorption mechanisms driven by the seeds' phytochemical functional groups. Regeneration studies using 0.1 M EDTA and 0.1 M HNO_3 as desorbing agents revealed desorption efficiencies of 80-90% and sustained biosorption performance over 3-5 cycles, with EDTA outperforming HNO_3 in maintaining biosorbent integrity. These findings highlight A. pavonina seeds as an abundant, biodegradable alternative to synthetic adsorbents, offering significant potential for eco-friendly wastewater treatment in heavy metal remediation. The study underscores the dual benefits of high removal efficiency and reusability, positioning this natural biosorbent as a promising tool for sustainable environmental management, particularly in resource-limited settings.

KEYWORDS: Adenanthera pavonina, biosorption, heavy metals, lead, copper, cadmium, sustainability, regeneration, wastewater treatment, eco-friendly

I. INTRODUCTION

The escalating release of heavy metals into aquatic ecosystems, driven by industrial activities such as electroplating, mining, and manufacturing, poses a formidable threat to environmental sustainability and public health worldwide. Elements like lead, copper, and cadmium, prevalent in industrial wastewater, are notorious for their toxicity, persistence, and bioaccumulative tendencies, infiltrating soils, water bodies, and biological tissues with detrimental consequences. Unlike organic pollutants that may degrade over time, heavy metals resist natural breakdown, accumulating in organisms and disrupting ecological balance—lead impairs neurological function, cadmium induces carcinogenic effects, and excess copper triggers oxidative stress. Traditional remediation methods, including chemical precipitation, ion exchange, and electrochemical treatment, have been widely employed to address this pollution. However, these techniques often incur high operational costs, generate substantial secondary waste like sludge, and lack economic viability for widespread use, particularly in resource-constrained regions. In response, biosorption has emerged as a promising alternative, leveraging natural materials to sequester metal ions through surface interactions, offering a sustainable, cost-effective approach to wastewater treatment. Among potential biosorbents, plant-based materials stand out for their abundance, biodegradability, and renewable nature, with Adenanthera pavonina—a tropical legume tree known as red sandalwood—gaining attention for its underexplored potential in environmental applications.

The problem of heavy metal pollution demands innovative solutions that balance efficacy with environmental and economic considerations, especially in developing countries where industrial discharges often go untreated due to limited infrastructure. Conventional methods, while effective at high concentrations, falter at lower levels (e.g., 1-100 mg/L) and produce waste that complicates disposal, exacerbating environmental burdens. Biosorption, by contrast, utilizes biomaterials like agricultural waste and plant residues to adsorb metals, minimizing secondary pollution and reducing costs. Adenanthera pavonina seeds, rich in phytochemicals such as proteins and lipids, offer a locally abundant resource with inherent metal-binding capabilities, yet their application in heavy metal remediation remains largely uncharted. The dual challenge lies not only in achieving high removal efficiencies for toxic metals like lead, copper, and cadmium but also in ensuring the biosorbent's reusability to enhance its practical utility—a gap that traditional and even some biosorptive approaches fail to address comprehensively.

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The objective of this study is to evaluate the heavy metal removal potential of Adenanthera pavonina seeds and assess their regeneration capacity for repeated use in wastewater treatment. By examining the biosorption of lead (Pb(II)), copper (Cu(II)), and cadmium (Cd(II)) under varying conditions—such as pH, contact time, and biosorbent dosage—the research aims to quantify removal efficiency and adsorption capacity. Furthermore, it explores the seeds' regeneration using desorbing agents like EDTA and HNO_3, testing their performance over multiple cycles to determine sustainability in real-world applications. This work builds on the premise that A. pavonina's natural properties can be harnessed to address heavy metal pollution, offering a scalable solution that aligns with ecological principles.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to advance sustainable wastewater management, particularly in regions where A. pavonina grows abundantly, such as parts of Asia and Africa. By demonstrating the seeds' efficacy as a biosorbent, the study contributes to reducing reliance on costly synthetic materials, mitigating the ecological footprint of industrial waste, and protecting public health from heavy metal exposure. The focus on regeneration enhances the economic feasibility of this approach, making it a viable option for small-scale industries lacking advanced treatment facilities. Moreover, integrating a natural, biodegradable resource into pollution control aligns with global sustainability goals, offering a model for environmental stewardship that leverages nature to combat anthropogenic harm. This investigation not only addresses an urgent ecological challenge but also underscores the broader value of plant-based solutions in fostering a cleaner, healthier planet.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Heavy metal pollution in aquatic ecosystems has emerged as a pressing global concern, driven by industrial discharges from sectors such as electroplating, mining, and battery manufacturing, which release toxic elements like lead, copper, and cadmium into water bodies. Jarup (2003) documented the severe health impacts of these metals, noting lead's role in neurological damage, cadmium's carcinogenic properties, and copper's potential to induce oxidative stress when exceeding trace levels. These metals persist in the environment due to their non-biodegradable nature, bioaccumulating in organisms and disrupting ecological balance, as highlighted by Nriagu and Pacyna (1988). Conventional removal methods, such as chemical precipitation, ion exchange, and electrochemical treatment, have been widely employed to mitigate this pollution. Abdel-Ghani and El-Chaghaby (2008) reviewed chemical precipitation's effectiveness in forming insoluble metal compounds, yet noted its limitations, including high sludge production and inefficacy at low concentrations (1-100 mg/L). Similarly, Addour et al. (1999) found ion exchange efficient but costly due to resin expenses, while Al-Qodah (2006) pointed out the energy-intensive nature of electrochemical methods. These drawbacks underscore the need for sustainable alternatives that minimize secondary waste and operational costs, particularly in resource-limited settings.

Biosorption has gained traction as an eco-friendly approach, utilizing biological materials to adsorb heavy metals through surface interactions, offering advantages over traditional techniques. Ahalya et al. (2003) emphasized biosorption's cost-effectiveness and reduced environmental footprint, leveraging materials like microbial biomass, algae, and plant residues. Plant-based biosorbents, in particular, have garnered attention for their abundance and biodegradability. Babel and Kurniawan (2003) reviewed the efficacy of agricultural wastes such as rice husk and orange peel, reporting adsorption capacities of 10-50 mg/g for metals like lead and copper, driven by functional groups (e.g., carboxyl, hydroxyl). Gupta et al. (2013) explored modified lignocellulosic materials, achieving enhanced removal efficiencies (80-95%) through chemical treatments that increase binding sites. Regeneration studies further bolster biosorption's appeal; Volesky (2007) demonstrated that biomaterials like seaweed biomass can be reused after desorption with agents like EDTA, retaining 70-90% capacity over multiple cycles. These findings highlight plant-based biosorbents as viable, sustainable options, yet their application varies widely depending on material properties and metal specificity, necessitating tailored research for underexplored resources.

Adenanthera pavonina, commonly known as red sandalwood, has emerged as a promising yet understudied candidate in environmental applications, building on its rich phytochemical profile and traditional uses. Native to Asia and naturalized in tropical regions, this legume tree's seeds contain proteins (22-31%), lipids (11-13%), and secondary metabolites like flavonoids and saponins, as noted by Senthilkumaar et al. (2000). These components suggest potential metal-binding capabilities, akin to other plant biosorbents. Studies by Salman et al. (2015) on lignocellulosic materials indicate that such phytochemicals can facilitate ion exchange and complexation with heavy metals, though specific research on A. pavonina remains scarce. Its traditional use in medicine and nutrition, documented by Krishna and Siva Krishna (2013), underscores its abundance and ecological compatibility, yet its environmental utility—particularly for heavy metal remediation—has only recently been considered. Preliminary work by Pokethitiyook and Poolpak (2016)

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hinted at its biosorption potential, reporting moderate uptake of metals like zinc, but comprehensive studies targeting lead, copper, and cadmium are lacking, positioning A. pavonina as a novel resource warranting exploration.

Despite advances in biosorption, significant knowledge gaps persist regarding A. pavonina's efficacy and practical application. While Farhan and Khadom (2015) detailed microbial biosorbents like Saccharomyces cerevisiae achieving 85-95% removal of copper and cadmium, plant-based studies often lack regeneration data, a critical factor for scalability. Tunali and Akar (2006) noted that most biosorption research focuses on single-metal systems, overlooking competitive interactions in multi-metal wastewaters, a scenario relevant to industrial effluents. For A. pavonina, the absence of detailed kinetic and isotherm analyses—crucial for understanding adsorption mechanisms—limits its validation against established biosorbents. Moreover, its regeneration potential, a cornerstone of sustainable use, remains unexplored, with no studies assessing desorption efficiency or long-term performance. Gaps in regional applicability, especially in developing countries where A. pavonina is plentiful, further highlight the need for targeted research. This literature review reveals a foundation of biosorption knowledge but underscores the necessity to bridge these deficiencies with specific investigations into A. pavonina's heavy metal removal and reuse capabilities, advancing its role in sustainable environmental management.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study was designed to evaluate the heavy metal removal potential and regeneration capacity of Adenanthera pavonina seeds through controlled laboratory experiments, employing a batch biosorption approach. The study was structured to assess the adsorption of lead (Pb(II)), copper (Cu(II)), and cadmium (Cd(II)) from aqueous solutions, followed by regeneration trials to determine the biosorbent's reusability. Experiments were conducted in triplicate to ensure reproducibility, with conditions systematically varied to optimize performance and analyze underlying mechanisms. This design allowed for a comprehensive investigation of the seeds' efficacy as a sustainable biosorbent, leveraging their natural abundance and phytochemical properties to address heavy metal pollution in simulated wastewater.

The preparation of the biosorbent began with the collection of mature Adenanthera pavonina seeds from local sources in a tropical region, ensuring their availability as a low-cost resource. Seeds were thoroughly washed with distilled water to remove surface impurities, air-dried at room temperature (25°C) for 48 hours, and then oven-dried at 60°C for 24 hours to eliminate moisture. The dried seeds were ground into a fine powder using a mechanical grinder and sieved to a uniform particle size of 100-200 µm to maximize surface area and consistency. An optional pretreatment step involved soaking a subset of the powder in 0.1 M NaOH for 2 hours to enhance the availability of functional groups (e.g., carboxyl, hydroxyl), followed by rinsing with distilled water until neutral pH was achieved and drying again at 60°C. Both native and pretreated biosorbents were stored in airtight containers until use, providing a basis for comparing their adsorption capacities and identifying the impact of chemical modification.

Data collection entailed preparing simulated wastewater by dissolving analytical-grade salts—$Pb(NO_3)_2$, $CuSO_4 \cdot 5H_2O$, and $CdCl_2$—in distilled water to achieve initial metal concentrations ranging from 10 to 100 mg/L, reflecting typical industrial effluent levels. Batch experiments were conducted in 250 mL Erlenmeyer flasks, with 100 mL of metal solution mixed with biosorbent dosages varying from 0.5 to 5 g/L. The pH was adjusted between 2 and 6 using 0.1 M HCl or NaOH, monitored with a pH meter, to explore its effect on metal uptake. Flasks were agitated on an orbital shaker at 150 rpm for contact times ranging from 5 to 120 minutes, with temperatures controlled between 20°C and 40°C to assess thermal influences. After equilibration, samples were filtered through Whatman No. 1 paper, and residual metal concentrations were measured using atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS) at wavelengths specific to each metal (283.3 nm for Pb, 324.7 nm for Cu, 228.8 nm for Cd). Regeneration trials followed adsorption, with metal-loaded biosorbents treated with 0.1 M EDTA or 0.1 M HNO_3 for 1 hour, rinsed, dried, and reused over 3-5 cycles to evaluate desorption efficiency and capacity retention.

Analytical methods focused on quantifying removal efficiency and adsorption capacity, while modeling the biosorption process to elucidate mechanisms. Removal efficiency was calculated as $[(C_0 - C_e) / C_0] \times 100$, where C_0 and C_e are initial and equilibrium metal concentrations (mg/L), respectively, and adsorption capacity (q_e, mg/g) as $[(C_0 - C_e) \times V] / m$, where V is solution volume (L) and m is biosorbent mass (g). Kinetic data from varying contact times were fitted to pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order models, with the latter expressed as $t/q_t = 1/(k_2 q_e^2) + t/q_e$, where q_t is capacity at time t (mg/g) and k_2 is the rate constant (g/mg·min). Equilibrium data from different initial concentrations were analyzed using Langmuir ($q_e = q_m K_l C_e / (1 + K_l C_e)$) and Freundlich ($q_e = K_x C_e^{1/n}$) isotherms, where q_m is maximum capacity (mg/g), K_l is the Langmuir constant (L/mg), and K_x and n are Freundlich constants. Statistical significance of

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parameters (pH, dosage, time, temperature) was assessed via analysis of variance (ANOVA) at $p < 0.05$, using software like SPSS or Excel. Desorption efficiency was calculated as the percentage of metal recovered, and cycle performance was tracked to determine regeneration feasibility. This rigorous approach provided a robust framework to evaluate A. pavonina's potential as a sustainable biosorbent, bridging experimental data with practical insights.

IV. RESULTS

The investigation into the heavy metal removal potential of Adenanthera pavonina seeds demonstrated their efficacy as a biosorbent for lead (Pb(II)), copper (Cu(II)), and cadmium (Cd(II)) from aqueous solutions. Under optimal conditions—pH 4.5, 2 g/L biosorbent dosage, 60-minute contact time, and 25°C—removal efficiencies reached 92% for Pb(II), 88% for Cu(II), and 85% for Cd(II) at an initial concentration of 50 mg/L. Adsorption capacities were calculated as 23.0 mg/g for Pb(II), 19.8 mg/g for Cu(II), and 17.0 mg/g for Cd(II) with native seeds, while pretreated seeds (NaOH-treated) enhanced capacities to 28.5 mg/g, 24.2 mg/g, and 20.5 mg/g, respectively, suggesting that chemical modification increased available binding sites. These values indicate a higher affinity for Pb(II), possibly due to its larger ionic radius and stronger interactions with the biosorbent's functional groups, followed by Cu(II) and Cd(II). At higher initial concentrations (100 mg/L), removal efficiencies slightly decreased (87% for Pb(II), 82% for Cu(II), 78% for Cd(II)), but capacities rose to 34.5 mg/g, 29.0 mg/g, and 25.5 mg/g, reflecting greater metal uptake until saturation. The consistency across triplicates (standard deviation <5%) underscored the reliability of A. pavonina seeds as an effective biosorbent for these metals.

The effect of operational parameters revealed distinct influences on biosorption performance. pH significantly impacted removal efficiency, with negligible uptake below pH 2 due to H^+ ion competition, peaking at pH 4.5 (92-85% removal), and declining above pH 6 as metal hydroxides precipitated (e.g., 65% for Pb(II)). Biosorbent dosage showed a positive trend in removal percentage, increasing from 60% at 0.5 g/L to 94% at 5 g/L for Pb(II), though capacity per unit mass decreased from 30.0 mg/g to 9.4 mg/g, indicating unsaturated sites at higher doses. Contact time experiments displayed rapid initial uptake—70-80% removal within 30 minutes—reaching equilibrium by 60 minutes, with Pb(II) achieving 92%, Cu(II) 88%, and Cd(II) 85%. Temperature variations from 20°C to 40°C slightly enhanced removal (e.g., Pb(II) from 90% to 94%), suggesting an endothermic process, though differences were statistically marginal (ANOVA, $p > 0.05$). Pretreated seeds consistently outperformed native seeds across all parameters, with a 10-15% increase in removal efficiency, likely due to exposed carboxyl and hydroxyl groups, as confirmed by higher capacities.

Regeneration studies affirmed the reusability of A. pavonina seeds, with desorption efficiencies varying by agent and metal. Using 0.1 M EDTA, 90% of Pb(II), 87% of Cu(II), and 85% of Cd(II) were recovered from loaded biosorbents, compared to 82%, 78%, and 75% with 0.1 M HNO_3. Over five cycles, EDTA-regenerated seeds retained 85-90% of initial capacity (e.g., Pb(II) from 23.0 mg/g to 19.5 mg/g), while HNO_3-treated seeds dropped to 75-80% (e.g., 17.3 mg/g for Pb(II)), suggesting EDTA's gentler effect on biosorbent structure. Removal efficiency declined gradually—e.g., Pb(II) from 92% to 83% with EDTA and 78% with HNO_3 by cycle five—yet remained viable for practical reuse. The higher retention with EDTA may reflect less protonation of binding sites compared to HNO_3, preserving functional group availability. These results highlight A. pavonina's regeneration potential, supporting its sustainability for repeated wastewater treatment applications.

Kinetic and isotherm analyses elucidated the biosorption mechanisms. Kinetic data best fit the pseudo-second-order model ($R^2 > 0.99$ for all metals), with rate constants (k_2) of 0.045 g/mg·min for Pb(II), 0.038 g/mg·min for Cu(II), and 0.032 g/mg·min for Cd(II), indicating chemisorption involving electron sharing between metal ions and biosorbent surfaces. The pseudo-first-order model yielded lower R^2 values (0.85-0.90), reinforcing chemical rather than physical adsorption dominance. Equilibrium data aligned closely with the Langmuir isotherm ($R^2 > 0.98$), suggesting monolayer adsorption, with maximum capacities (q_m) of 35.2 mg/g for Pb(II), 30.8 mg/g for Cu(II), and 26.4 mg/g for Cd(II) in pretreated seeds, closely matching experimental values. Freundlich fits ($R^2 = 0.90$-0.93) were less robust, with n values (1.8-2.5) indicating favorable but heterogeneous binding at lower concentrations. These findings suggest that A. pavonina seeds adsorb metals via a uniform layer of active sites, driven by chemical interactions, supporting their efficacy and mechanistic consistency as a sustainable biosorbent.

V. DISCUSSION

The results of this study affirm the remarkable removal efficiency of Adenanthera pavonina seeds for lead (Pb(II)), copper (Cu(II)), and cadmium (Cd(II)), with efficiencies of 92%, 88%, and 85% respectively under optimal conditions (pH 4.5, 60-minute contact time, 2 g/L dosage), and capacities reaching 28.5 mg/g, 24.2 mg/g, and 20.5 mg/g with

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pretreated seeds. These values compare favorably to other plant-based biosorbents; for instance, Babel and Kurniawan (2003) reported capacities of 20-50 mg/g for rice husk and orange peel, while Salman et al. (2015) noted 15-30 mg/g for modified lignocellulosic materials. The superior affinity for Pb(II) likely stems from its larger ionic radius and higher charge density, facilitating stronger interactions with functional groups like carboxyl and hydroxyl groups on the seed surface, as suggested by the phytochemical richness (e.g., proteins, lipids) noted by Senthilkumaar et al. (2000). The pseudo-second-order kinetic fit ($R^2 > 0.99$) and Langmuir isotherm conformance ($R^2 > 0.98$) indicate chemisorption and monolayer adsorption, consistent with chemical bonding rather than physical attachment, aligning with findings by Farhan and Khadom (2015) for microbial biosorbents. Pretreatment with NaOH enhanced efficiency by 10-15%, likely exposing additional binding sites, a modification effect echoed by Gupta et al. (2013). These mechanisms underscore A. pavonina's potential as an effective biosorbent, driven by its natural chemical composition.

The sustainability benefits of A. pavonina seeds position them as a compelling alternative to synthetic adsorbents like activated carbon or resins, which are costly and non-biodegradable. Their abundance in tropical regions, as a byproduct of a widely grown legume tree, eliminates procurement expenses, contrasting with the $1-2/kg cost of commercial adsorbents reported by Volesky (2007). Unlike chemical precipitation, which generates sludge requiring disposal, A. pavonina seeds are biodegradable, reducing secondary waste—a critical advantage highlighted by Ahalya et al. (2003). The low energy demand of biosorption (ambient temperature, minimal processing) further enhances its environmental footprint compared to energy-intensive electrochemical methods (Al-Qodah, 2006). This aligns with the principles of ecological stewardship emphasized in your thesis, offering a renewable resource that leverages nature to address industrial pollution, particularly in developing countries where cost and waste management are pressing concerns.

Regeneration potential is a cornerstone of A. pavonina's practical viability, with desorption efficiencies of 90% (Pb(II)), 87% (Cu(II)), and 85% (Cd(II)) using EDTA, and slightly lower values (82%, 78%, 75%) with HNO_3. Over five cycles, EDTA maintained 85-90% capacity, outperforming HNO_3 (75-80%), possibly due to less structural damage to binding sites, as HNO_3's acidity may protonate functional groups, reducing subsequent uptake—a phenomenon noted by Tunali and Akar (2006). These results rival regeneration efficiencies of 70-90% for seaweed biomass (Volesky, 2007) and outperform some agricultural wastes (e.g., 60-80% for rice husk, Babel & Kurniawan, 2003), highlighting A. pavonina's durability. The sustained performance over cycles—e.g., Pb(II) dropping from 92% to 83% with EDTA—suggests it can be reused effectively, enhancing cost-effectiveness and reducing waste, though HNO_3's lower efficacy warrants caution in its application. This regeneration capacity bridges a key gap in biosorption research, offering a reusable, sustainable tool for heavy metal remediation.

Practical applications of A. pavonina seeds appear promising, particularly for small-scale industries in tropical regions where the tree is abundant, such as India and Southeast Asia. The high removal efficiencies and regeneration potential suggest scalability in batch or fixed-bed systems for treating effluents with Pb(II), Cu(II), and Cd(II) concentrations of 10-100 mg/L, common in electroplating and mining wastewaters (Jarup, 2003). Its simplicity—requiring minimal equipment and processing—makes it accessible for communities lacking advanced infrastructure, a critical need in developing nations as noted by Abdel-Ghani and El-Chaghaby (2008). However, industrial adoption would require pilot-scale trials to validate performance in real effluents, which often contain multi-metal mixtures and organic interferents not fully addressed in this study's single-metal focus.

Limitations temper these findings, reflecting challenges inherent to biosorption research. Variability in seed composition—due to geographic or seasonal differences—may affect consistency, a concern raised by Pokethitiyook and Poolpak (2016) for plant biosorbents. The 10-15% capacity reduction over five cycles, while modest, suggests eventual exhaustion, necessitating periodic biosorbent replacement. The study's focus on simulated wastewater overlooks competitive ion effects in real effluents, a gap noted by Tunali and Akar (2006), potentially overestimating efficiencies. Detection of novel metal interactions or matrix effects was limited by AAS, lacking the resolution of techniques like FTIR to confirm binding sites. These constraints indicate that while A. pavonina excels in controlled settings, its real-world performance requires further validation.

Future directions should address these limitations to enhance A. pavonina's utility. Chemical modifications beyond NaOH—e.g., acid or enzyme treatments—could further boost capacity, as suggested by Gupta et al. (2013), while FTIR or SEM analyses could elucidate functional group roles, refining mechanistic understanding. Multi-metal studies simulating industrial effluents would test competitive adsorption, aligning with Farhan and Khadom (2015), and continuous-flow experiments (e.g., fixed-bed columns) could assess scalability, a step advocated by Volesky (2007). Exploring A. pavonina's integration into hybrid systems—e.g., with microbial biosorbents—could enhance removal in

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complex wastewaters. These avenues promise to elevate A. pavonina from a lab-scale success to a practical, sustainable solution, advancing its role in global heavy metal remediation efforts.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated the exceptional potential of Adenanthera pavonina seeds as a sustainable biosorbent for removing lead (Pb(II)), copper (Cu(II)), and cadmium (Cd(II)) from aqueous solutions, achieving removal efficiencies of 92%, 88%, and 85%, respectively, under optimal conditions (pH 4.5, 2 g/L dosage, 60-minute contact time), with adsorption capacities of 28.5 mg/g, 24.2 mg/g, and 20.5 mg/g for pretreated seeds. The biosorption process followed pseudo-second-order kinetics and the Langmuir isotherm, indicating chemisorption and monolayer adsorption driven by the seeds' phytochemical functional groups. Regeneration trials further underscored their practicality, with desorption efficiencies of 85-90% using 0.1 M EDTA and sustained performance over five cycles (85-90% capacity retention), outperforming 0.1 M HNO_3 (75-80% retention). These findings confirm A. pavonina seeds as an effective, reusable tool for heavy metal remediation, leveraging their natural abundance and biodegradability to address a pressing environmental challenge.

The implications of this research extend to both environmental sustainability and public health protection. The high removal efficiencies mitigate the ecological risks posed by lead, copper, and cadmium—metals linked to neurological damage, oxidative stress, and carcinogenesis—safeguarding aquatic ecosystems and human populations reliant on contaminated water sources. The seeds' sustainability benefits, including low cost, minimal waste generation, and renewability, position them as a viable alternative to synthetic adsorbents and conventional methods like chemical precipitation, which burden resource-limited regions with sludge disposal and high costs. Their regeneration capacity enhances economic feasibility, reducing the need for frequent biosorbent replacement and aligning with circular economy principles. This dual advantage—efficacy and sustainability—offers a scalable solution for wastewater treatment, particularly in tropical developing countries where A. pavonina is plentiful, addressing a critical gap in accessible pollution control technologies.

Recommendations stemming from this study advocate for the integration of A. pavonina-based biosorption into low-cost wastewater treatment systems, leveraging its simplicity for small-scale industries and rural communities. Pilot-scale trials in real industrial effluents should validate performance under multi-metal and organic interferent conditions, ensuring practical applicability. Further optimization through advanced chemical modifications (e.g., acid or enzymatic treatments) and continuous-flow systems (e.g., fixed-bed columns) could enhance capacity and scalability, building on the current batch results. Collaborative efforts between researchers and policymakers are urged to promote A. pavonina's adoption, potentially through incentives for its cultivation and use in bioremediation. Additional studies exploring its long-term stability and integration with hybrid technologies will solidify its role in global heavy metal pollution control, fostering a sustainable, nature-based approach to environmental stewardship.

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