

**Short Communication:****Determination of Deltamethrin Insecticide in Environmental Samples by Diazo-Coupling Reaction via Spectrophotometric Method**

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**Abstract:** The aptitude to differentiate among various analytes is a vigorous feature of scientific exploration. In this study, a new azo dye exhibiting distinct sensing aptitudes was synthesized and characterized. Dye is the result of the interaction of deltamethrin insecticide with 5-amino-2-hydroxybenzoic acid in the alkaline medium at nearly pH 9 to form a stable yellow azo in the presence of acetone to enhance the solubility of deltamethrin insecticide. The formed compound was named Delta-P, and the maximum absorbance was detected at  $\lambda_{\max}$  402 nm. UV-vis, FTIR,  $^1\text{H-NMR}$ , and  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  spectra were used to characterize the diazo coupling reaction generation. The mechanism by which deltamethrin binds to 5-amino-2-hydroxybenzoic acid was explained. The Beer-Lambert law is obeyed in the 3–60  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  range, which is considered excellent linearity over a wide concentration range, with high sensitivity and reproducibility. The detection and quantification limits gained highlight the significant sensitivity of the synthesized azo dye, ensuring the method's applicability for trace-level analysis. Environmental samples, including water and soil, are successfully analyzed, confirming the method's effectiveness. This finding indicates that the interaction can be used for colorimetric detection of deltamethrin in environmental samples and practical applications in quality control within agricultural and industrial settings.

**Keywords:** deltamethrin; coupling reaction; soil

**■ INTRODUCTION**

The detection and quantification of insecticides in environmental and biological samples are critical for evaluating their impact on human health and ecosystems [1-2]. Deltamethrin (Delta) is a widely used synthetic pyrethroid insecticide known for its high efficacy against a broad spectrum of insect pests in both agricultural and public health applications [3-4]. It functions as a potent neurotoxin that disrupts the nervous systems of insects, leading to paralysis and death. Due to its powerful insecticidal properties, Delta has become a key component of pest control programs worldwide [5].

Delta is extensively applied across various sectors; however, it poses potential health risks to humans, particularly with prolonged or high-level exposure. Its toxicity is primarily linked to its action on voltage-gated sodium channels in the nervous system, resulting in

symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, skin irritation, and, in severe cases, convulsions and respiratory distress [6]. The oral  $\text{LD}_{50}$  in rats ranges from 30 to 300 mg/kg, indicating moderate to high acute toxicity. Thus, understanding its toxicological profile is essential for assessing environmental and occupational safety [3-7].

In agriculture, Delta protects crops such as wheat, cotton, vegetables, and fruits from destructive insect infestations, thereby reducing economic losses and enhancing food security [8]. In public health, it is a key component of mosquito control programs aimed at preventing vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever [9]. Additionally, Delta is used in residential pest control treatments targeting cockroaches, ants, and bedbugs, and in veterinary medicine to control ectoparasites in pets and livestock [10].

Despite its benefits, Delta poses significant ecological and environmental concerns. Its widespread use and high toxicity to aquatic organisms, particularly fish and invertebrates, have raised concerns about pesticide residues in food, water, and soil [11]. Moreover, some insect populations have developed resistance due to frequent exposure, necessitating more careful management practices. Accurate determination of Delta residues in environmental samples is essential due to their extensive use and potential for ecological harm [12]. Recent modeling by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicates that peak environmental concentrations of Delta in both surface and groundwater can reach up to 0.20 µg/L, highlighting a potential risk to human health and aquatic ecosystems and reinforcing the necessity for sensitive and reliable detection methods [13].

Traditional analytical methods for detecting insecticides—such as gas chromatography (GC) [14] and high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) [15] are highly accurate but often expensive, time-consuming, and require sophisticated instruments [16-17]. A more cost-effective and efficient alternative is spectroscopic analysis, particularly ultraviolet (UV) spectrophotometry [18]. UV spectroscopy is a well-established method known for its speed, simplicity, and sensitivity in detecting various compounds [19-20]. Recent advances have improved UV spectrophotometric techniques by developing coupling reactions that enhance sensitivity and selectivity [21].

One approach involves combining Delta with 5-amino-2-hydroxybenzoic acid (5-A-2-HBA)—a reagent known for forming colored complexes with specific compounds [22-23]. This reaction produces a stable chromophore that can be identified and quantified using UV spectroscopy, offering a reliable method for Delta determination. The formation of the Delta-P complex improves the pesticide's UV absorbance characteristics, allowing for sensitive detection even in complex sample matrices [24-25].

Several studies have been conducted to determine Delta concentrations. For instance, one study used GC-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) to detect Delta residues in bovine milk following matrix solid-phase dispersion for

extraction and cleanup [26]. Another investigation proposed ultrasound-assisted liquid microextraction combined with UV-vis spectrophotometry to determine Delta in food samples [27]. Additionally, Delta's immunotoxicity and the resulting tissue damage in the gills of gibel carp were assessed following acute exposure [28].

Therefore, this study introduces a novel, rapid, and cost-effective spectrophotometric method for the determination of Delta based on its diazotization-coupling reaction with 5-A-2-HBA. This reaction forms a stable, colored complex measurable by UV spectroscopy, eliminating the need for complex extraction procedures or advanced instrumentation. To the best of our knowledge, this specific coupling strategy has not been previously applied for Delta detection, marking a significant contribution to the development of accessible pesticide monitoring techniques.

## ■ EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

### Materials

The following chemicals were used without further purification: Delta [(S)-cyano(3-phenoxyphenyl)methyl(1*R*,3*R*)-3-(2,2-dibromoethyl)-2,2-dimethylcyclopropane-1-carboxylate], 2.5% emulsifiable concentrate (EC, MEGHMANI ORGANICS Ltd.), 5-A-2-HBA (98%, Merck), sodium hydroxide (NaOH, 98%, LOBACHemie), hydrochloric acid (HCl, 35–38%, SDFCL), sodium nitrite (NaNO<sub>2</sub>, 98%, CDH), acetone (99.8%, Sigma-Aldrich), and sulfamic acid (99%, Eisen-Golden Laboratories).

### Instrumentation

The synthesized products were characterized by comparison with standard samples and spectral data, including UV-vis, FTIR, <sup>1</sup>H-NMR, and <sup>13</sup>C-NMR techniques. FTIR spectra were recorded using a Shimadzu FTIR 8400S spectrometer. UV-vis spectra were obtained with a Shimadzu UV-1800 Double Beam UV-visible spectrophotometer. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR and <sup>13</sup>C-NMR spectra were recorded on a BRUKER 400 MHz spectrometer (Germany). Melting points were measured using a Stuart SMP30 apparatus (UK). The pH

measurements were conducted with a WTW pH meter, model 720 (Germany). Weighing was performed using a Sartorius sensitive digital balance, model BP 3015 (Germany).

## Procedure

### Diazotization of 5-A-2-HBA

In an ice bath (0–5 °C), 2.5 mL of 5-A-2-HBA ( $10^{-3}$  mol/L) was mixed with 0.5 mL of 1.0 mol/L HCl, followed by the addition of 2.0 mL of 0.5 mol/L  $\text{NaNO}_2$ . The mixture was stirred gently to allow the diazotization reaction to proceed. Then, 0.75 mL of 0.2 mol/L sulfamic acid was added to eliminate the excess nitrite, and the  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  of 5-A-2-HBA was measured at 301 nm.

### Preparation of the Delta solution

Delta solution ( $10^{-3}$  mol/L) was prepared by dissolving 0.050 g of Delta in 100 mL of distilled water. Then, 1.5 mL of this solution was mixed with 0.75 mL of 1.0 mol/L NaOH, and the  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  of Delta was observed at approximately 266.5 nm.

### Optimization of pH

A series of test solutions was prepared at varying pH levels (3, 5, 7, 9, and 11) to determine the optimal pH for the coupling reaction. The maximum absorbance was obtained at pH 9.

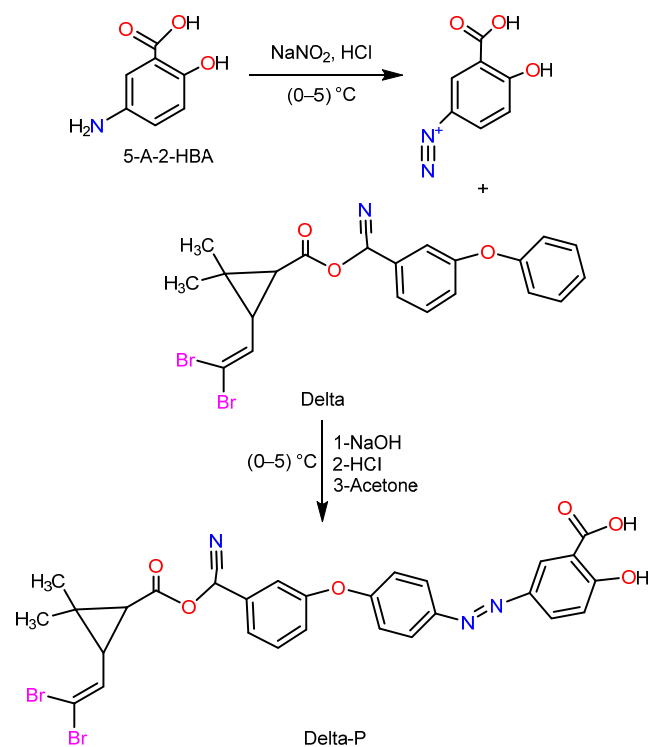
### Coupling reaction and complex formation

The solution from step (2) was added to the diazonium salt solution from step (1), followed by the addition of 0.75 mL of acetone to enhance solubility. The final mixture was stirred briefly, and the total volume was adjusted to 25 mL with distilled water. The  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  of the resulting Delta-P azo complex was measured at approximately 402 nm. Scheme 1 illustrates the synthesis of the azo compound, showing the initial and final expected reactions.

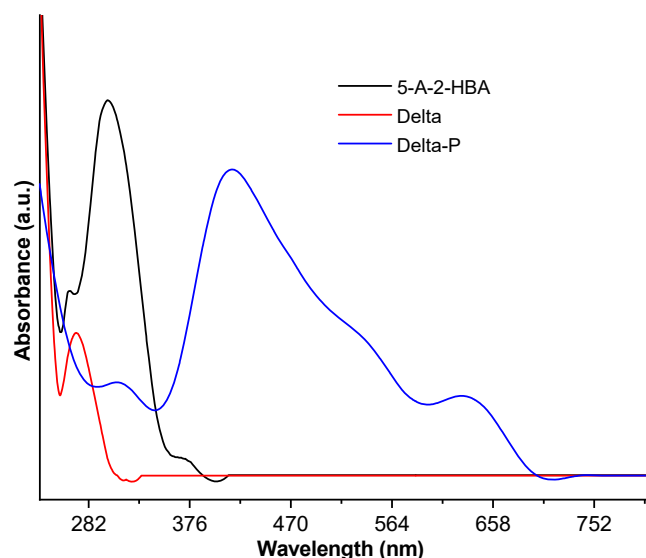
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Analytical Discussion

The synthesized azo compound was confirmed through spectroscopic techniques, including FTIR,  $^1\text{H-NMR}$ ,  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$ , and UV-vis spectroscopy. The absorbance of Delta-P was analyzed in the visible region, with a  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  at 402 nm, which was used for the determination



**Scheme 1.** The proposed reaction between Delta and 5-A-2-HBA



**Fig 1.** Absorption spectra of Delta at 266.5 nm, 5-A-2-HBA at  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  301 nm, and Delta-P at  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  402 nm

of Delta as depicted in Fig. 1. The formed precipitate was collected as a pure solid and colored material. FTIR signal at  $3443\text{ cm}^{-1}$  indicates an O–H stretch in phenols, indicating the presence of a hydroxyl group; at  $3077\text{ cm}^{-1}$  indicates a C–H stretch in unsaturated bonds

as alkenes; and at  $2145\text{ cm}^{-1}$  indicates the presence of a  $\text{C}\equiv\text{N}$  (nitrile) group. At  $1716\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , this strong absorption indicates a  $\text{C}=\text{O}$  group, found in ketones, aldehydes, or carboxylic acids. The bands at  $1693$  and  $1678\text{ cm}^{-1}$  indicate additional vibrations of  $\text{C}=\text{O}$  groups. Two peaks of  $1382$  and  $1189\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ; these bands may be associated with  $\text{C}-\text{H}$  stretches in alkanes and  $\text{C}-\text{N}$  groups in amines. Lastly,  $698\text{ cm}^{-1}$  indicates vibrations of aromatic  $\text{C}-\text{H}$  bonds, indicating the presence of an aromatic ring as explained in Fig. 2. The  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  signals at  $6.19\text{--}9.00\text{ ppm}$  indicate the presence of aromatic rings such as benzene or its derivatives, at  $\sim 3.49\text{ ppm}$  due to  $\text{BrC}=\text{CH}$ , peak at  $\sim 2.5\text{ ppm}$  due to  $\text{DMSO-}d_6$ , and at  $\sim 2.13\text{ ppm}$  due to protons attached to groups such as  $-\text{CH}_2-$  close to highly electronegative atoms such as ketones or amides. At  $1.49\text{--}0.77\text{ ppm}$ , these multiple peaks indicate the presence of protons attached to alkyl groups ( $-\text{CH}_3$ ,  $-\text{CH}_2-$ ). Peaks at  $\sim 0.77\text{ ppm}$  indicate the presence of terminal methyl groups. Signals at  $1.0\text{--}1.5\text{ ppm}$  due to alkane groups such as  $-\text{CH}_2-$  or  $-\text{CH}_3$  in an environment unaffected by highly electronegative atoms, as explained in Fig. 3. The  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  signals at  $160\text{--}180\text{ ppm}$  indicates the presence of  $\text{C}=\text{O}$  ester, at  $118\text{--}140\text{ ppm}$  for aromatic carbonyl range, indicating the presence of a benzene ring and aromatic system (the multiplicity of signals indicates that the ring may contain different substituent groups), at  $60\text{--}$

$100\text{ ppm}$  due to  $\text{C}-\text{O}$  in ester and  $\text{C}-\text{N}$  in amines, at  $39.82\text{ ppm}$  refers to aliphatic carbons ( $\text{CH}$ ,  $\text{CH}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_3$ ), and the signal at  $\sim 40\text{ ppm}$  indicates the presence of  $\text{CH}_2$  and  $\text{CH}_3$  groups, as explained in Fig. 4.

## Optimization of Reaction Conditions

### The optimum volume

The effect of different volumes of Delta ( $0.5\text{--}4.0\text{ mL}$ ) with a concentration of  $10^{-3}\text{ mol/L}$  was studied. The results show that the best absorbance was obtained at a volume of  $1.5\text{ mL}$ . Different volumes of  $5\text{-A-2-HBA}$ ,  $10^{-3}\text{ mol/L}$ , ranging from  $0.5\text{--}4.0\text{ mL}$ , are used in the Delta spectrophotometric determination; the consequences show that the best absorbance was acquired at a volume of  $2.5\text{ mL}$ . The effect of different volumes of  $1.00\text{ mol/L}$  of  $\text{NaOH}$  solution, ranging from  $0.25$  to  $1.5\text{ mL}$ , is used in the determination of Delta. The results mention that the best absorbance was at the optimum volume ( $0.75\text{ mL}$ ). The effect of different volumes of  $\text{HCl}$  solution ( $1.00\text{ mol/L}$ ) ranging from  $0.25$  to  $1.5\text{ mL}$  was used in the Delta spectrophotometric determination. The results display that the top absorbance was found at  $0.5\text{ mL}$ . An acidic medium is needed to protonate the amine group to make it more reactive to nitrous acid [29]. The effect of different volumes of  $0.50\text{ mol/L}$  of  $\text{NaNO}_2$  solution ( $0.5\text{--}3.5\text{ mL}$ ) is used in the Delta determination.

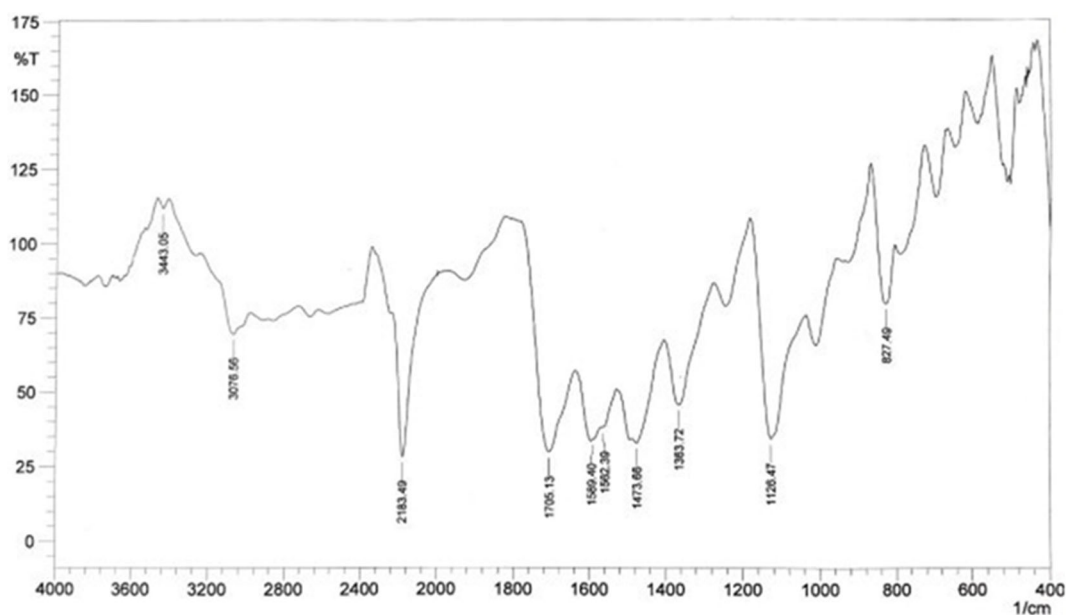
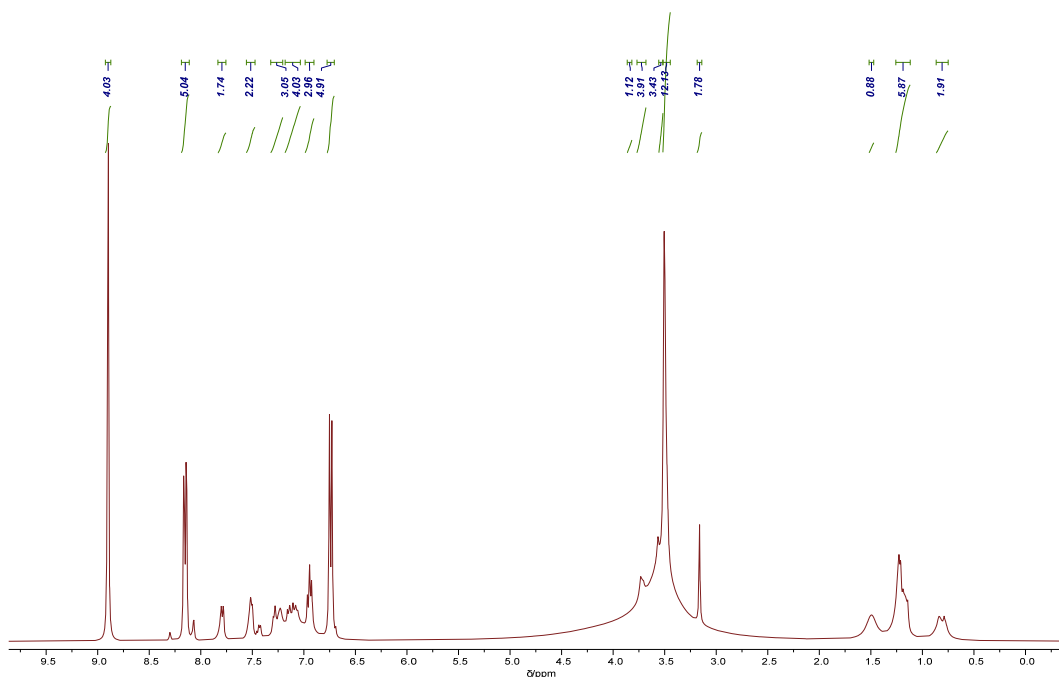
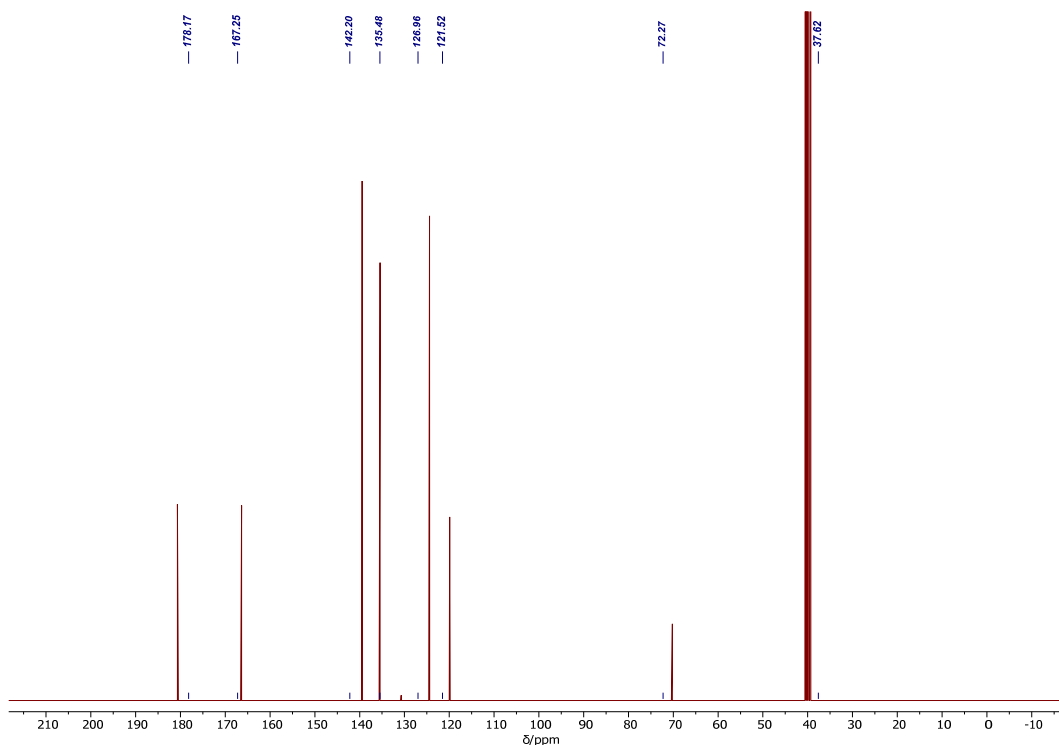


Fig 2. FTIR spectrum of the reaction of Delta with 5-A-2-HBA



**Fig 3.**  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR spectra of the product from Delta reaction with 5-A-2-HBA



**Fig 4.**  $^{13}\text{C}$ -NMR spectra of product from the reaction of Delta with 5-A-2-HBA

The best absorbance was obtained at a volume of 2.0 mL.  $\text{NaNO}_2$  is used to simplify the conversion of the primary aromatic amines to diazonium salts [30]. The effect of different volumes of sulfamic acid (1.00 mol/L) ranges

from 0.25 to 1.5 mL. Sulfamic acid plays an essential role in the diazo coupling reactions by providing the crucial acidic environment for the diazonium salt formation and acting as a coupling substance for azo compound

synthesis [31]. The best absorbance is 0.75 mL. The effect of acetone volume was also examined utilizing a range of acetone volumes. The spectrophotometric measurement of Delta uses 0.25–1.25 mL at various percentages (0.50–2.5%), respectively. The results indicate high absorption at 0.75 mL (1.5%). Since acetone is a polar aprotic solvent, it may dissolve a variety of polar and nonpolar compounds. It also improves clarity by increasing the solubility of Delta particles, which cause turbidity, in the solution [32]. Each volume recorded at specific concentrations has an influence on the new azo compound's absorption, as explained in Fig. 5 and 6.

### The effect of time and temperature

The effect of the required time to complete the formation of diazonium salt for Delta was completed within 10 min, as indicated by the highest absorbance value observed at this time (0.463), with minimal variation in

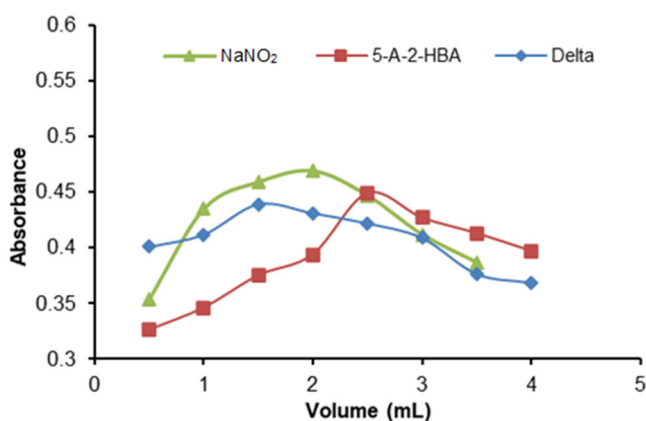


Fig 5. Volume effect of Delta, 5-A-2-HBA, and NaNO<sub>2</sub>

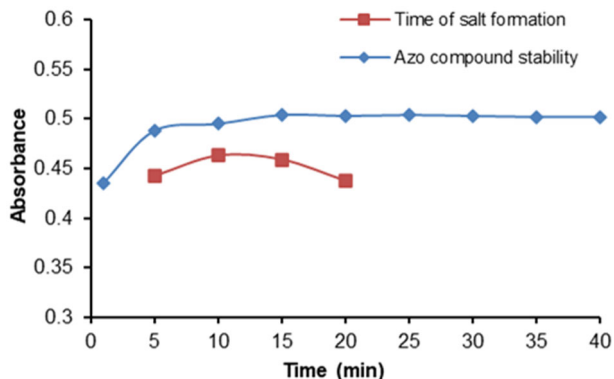


Fig 7. Effect of time on the diazotization salt formation and the stability of Delta-P

absorbance at longer durations, suggesting reaction stability. The formed azo compound revealed that it has somewhat good stability with the time passing; the results are explained in Fig. 7. The effect of temperature was studied by testing different temperatures on the absorbance and has been investigated in order to determine the Delta spectrophotometrically. The absorbance values are equal at 5 to 10 °C, then increase between 15 and 20 °C, after which they nearly stabilize at 20 °C, as appears in Fig. 8.

### Optimization of pH

To determine the optimal pH for the reaction between Delta and 5-A-2-HBA, a series of buffer solutions with pH values ranging from 3.0 to 11.0 was prepared. The absorbance of the resulting dye was measured at each pH. The results showed that the maximum absorbance occurred at pH 9.0, indicating the

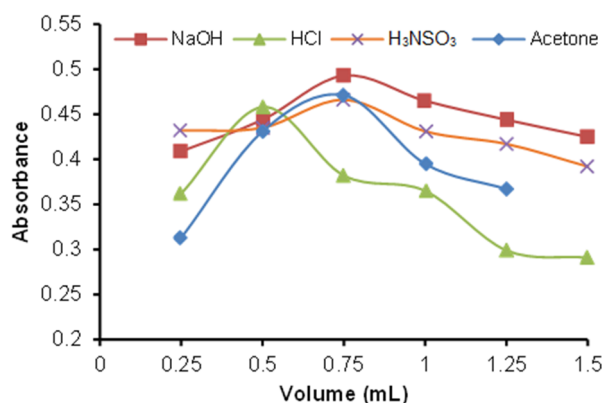


Fig 6. Volume effect of HCl, H<sub>3</sub>NSO<sub>3</sub>, NaOH, and acetone

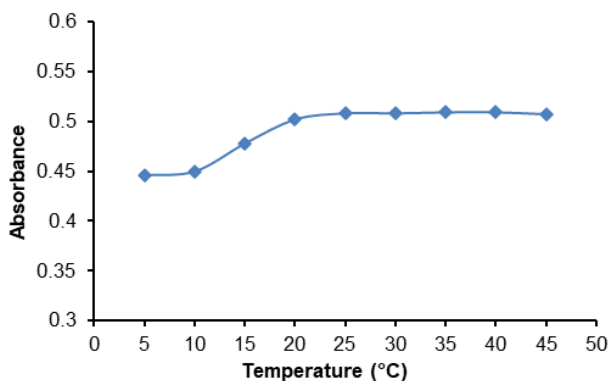


Fig 8. Temperature effect on the reaction of Delta and with 5-A-2-HBA

most favorable reaction conditions. At lower pH values, protonation of the amino group likely inhibited the diazotization–coupling reaction. In comparison, at higher pH values, possible degradation of reagents or instability of the colored product was observed. Therefore, pH 9.0 was selected as the optimal value for subsequent analyses [33], as appears in Fig. 9.

### The Stoichiometric Chemical Reaction

The stoichiometry is calculated using molar ratio methods between 5-A-2-HBA and Delta. Diazotized 5-A-2-HBA solutions were prepared as a series of 25 mL volumetric flasks to provide 1.0 mL of  $10^{-4}$  mol/L. In each flask, 0.50–4.00 mL of  $10^{-4}$  mol/L Delta solution was added in increments, and the final volume was completed to the mark with water. At 402 nm, the absorbance of the resultant solutions was measured. As for Job's methods, Using a series of 25 mL volumetric flasks, increment volumes of 0.1–0.9 mL of 5-A-2-HBA solutions, and decrement volumes of Delta-P 0.9–0.1 mL with the same concentration ( $10^{-4}$  mol/L), the process was carried out as previously described, and the absorbance intensity data obtained at 402 nm were plotted against the mole fraction of insecticide for each indicator, this experiment is important to ensure that the method produces reliable results in the stoichiometry of azo-compound formation reactions. The results show that the ratio of Delta to 5-A-2-HBA was found to be nearly 1:1.

### Analytical Parameters and the Suggested Method's Validity

In the calibration curve, different concentrations of Delta (3–60  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ ) were prepared at the optimum conditions with 5-A-2-HBA. The absorbance of the formed compound (Delta-P) was measured at 402 nm and plotted against the concentrations to acquire the calibration curve, as explained in Fig. 10. LOD and LOQ were determined by the plot obtained, and Table 1 shows analytical parameters of the proposed method.

### Accuracy and Precision

For accuracy, three sample concentrations (10, 20, and 30  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ ) of the sample were used. In order to minimize the errors and ensure the results, the experiment

has been repeated four times for all concentrations. The values of recovery percentage (rec%) show that the current method is accurate. Also for precision, three concentrations (40, 50, and 60  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ ) are created and

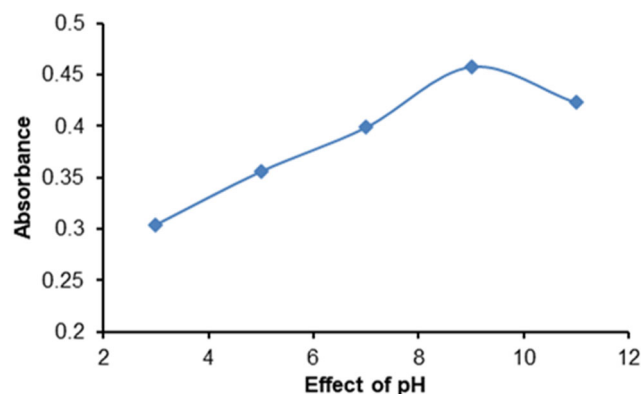


Fig 9. Effect of pH

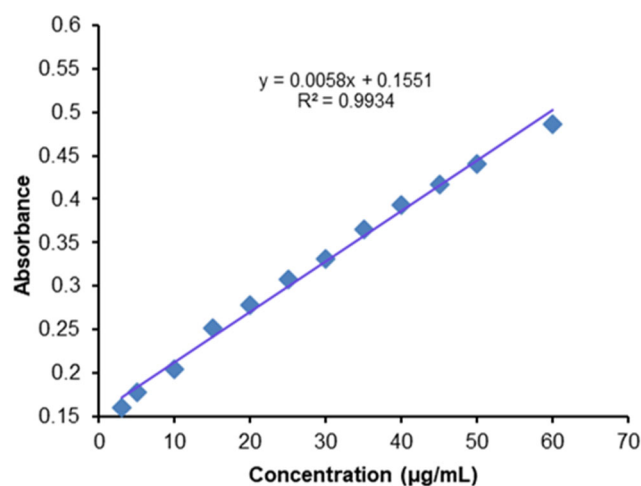


Fig 10. Calibration curve for the reaction between Delta and 5-A-2-HBA

Table 1. The analytical parameters of the proposed method

Parameter	Value
Linear range ( $\mu\text{g/mL}$ )	3–60
Slope	0.0058
Determination coefficient $r^2$	0.9934
Correlation coefficient $r$	0.9967
Intercept	0.1551
Molar absorptivity (L/mol cm)	$2.930 \times 10^3$
$\lambda_{\text{max}}$ (nm)	402
Limit of detection (LOD, $\mu\text{g/mL}$ )	0.535
Limit of quantification (LOQ, $\mu\text{g/mL}$ )	1.784

**Table 2.** The precision and accuracy details of the suggested method

The accuracy details of the suggested method					
Sample	Taken conc. ( $\mu\text{g/mL}$ )	Found conc. ( $\mu\text{g/mL}$ )	E% $\pm$ SD	Rec%*	
1	10	09.29	$-7.069 \pm 0.0010$	93.00	
2	20	21.71	$8.534 \pm 0.0030$	91.50	
3	30	29.63	$-1.207 \pm 0.0035$	98.80	
The precision details of the suggested method					
Sample	Conc. ( $\mu\text{g/mL}$ )	Intra-day precision		Inter-day precision	
		Rec%	RSD%	Rec%	RSD%
1	10	90.04	1.259	92.00	2.349
2	20	96.00	1.002	98.00	1.759
3	30	93.40	0.208	95.30	0.517

\*Mean of four determinations; E%: Relative error%, SD: Standard deviation, Rec%: Recovery, and RSD%: Relative standard deviation

**Table 3.** Details of Delta on the soil of the suggested method

Sample	Taken conc. ( $\mu\text{g/mL}$ )	Found conc. ( $\mu\text{g/mL}$ )	%Rec* after the application to the soil
1	40	13.086	32.72
2	50	15.845	31.69
3	60	21.017	35.03

\*Mean of four determinations

**Table 4.** Comparative analysis of Delta determination methods

Technique	Linear range	RSD%	Rec%	LOD	LOQ	Ref.
GC + LC-MS/MS	0.003–0.1 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	< 20	71.69–117.9	0.003 $\mu\text{g/g}$	0.01 $\mu\text{g/g}$	[35]
GC -flame	-	< 5	93.0–97.0	0.03 $\mu\text{g/L}$	0.1 $\mu\text{g/L}$	[36]
LC-MS/MS	10–500 $\mu\text{g/kg}$	-	-	3 $\mu\text{g/kg}$	10 $\mu\text{g/kg}$	[37]
CFIA technique	0.5–18 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	0.88	98.30	0.14 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	0.48 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	[38]
GC-EI +MS/MS	-	$\leq 20$	60–102	2 $\mu\text{g/kg}$	10 $\mu\text{g/kg}$	[39]
GC-QTOF-MS	-	< 9	82–102	0.2–2 $\mu\text{g/kg}$	0.6–79 $\mu\text{g/kg}$	[40]
PADs-CL probe	0.3–10 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	-	-	0.15 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	-	[41]
CL probe	1.8–20 $\mu\text{g/L}$	-	-	0.3 $\mu\text{g/L}$	-	[42]
UV-visible	3–60 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	0.823	91.5–98.8	0.535 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	1.784 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	Current study

analyzed to verify the accuracy of the suggested method. The results show that the RSD% is less than 2, which means the precision is sufficient. The low rec% could be the result of Delta breaking down or evaporating during the analytical procedure [34]. All results of precision and accuracy are explained in Table 2.

### Effect of Delta on Soil

After spraying the soil with the concentrations of 40, 50, and 60  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  placed in plastic anvils, they were left for two weeks. As much as 1 g of the soil's surface has been skimmed, washed with 10 mL of distilled water, and filtered

through the filter papers; then, all the steps required to prepare the resulting Delta-P compound were carried out, and the absorbance was measured. We note that the recovery values were very low. Such behavior is expected, as a large amount of the insecticide remained in the soil, which means an adequate quantity of Delta will seep into the soil, as displayed in Table 3. More than a statistical description of numerous essential methods used to determine Delta, and the suggested approach that was suitable for RSD% values and the recovery range is given in Table 4. This method can detect even the smallest pesticide quantities.

## ■ CONCLUSION

A new, low-cost, and simple technique for the determination of Delta based on the diazo coupling reaction mechanism has been suggested in this study. Amine compounds can be easily converted into aryl diazonium derivatives. The coupling reaction of Delta proceeds with high chemoselectivity and sensitivity, which is helpful for quality control and environmental monitoring. The identification and characterization of an insecticide's chemical structure might depend on the creation of a diazonium salt, which may expose the presence of specific functional groups or moieties in the Delta molecule. The toxicological results are one of the major aspects; diazonium salts may be more effective at combating insects than their parent molecule, so that they may change Delta's toxicity profile. The recommended approach for determining Delta is easy to use, quick, affordable, and sensitive.

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I want to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture for allowing me to complete my pesticide studies and research.

## ■ CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflict of interest.

## ■ AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Fatimah Hameed Flayyih: data curation, investigation, methodology, validation, visualization, writing-original draft, writing and review; Abbas Noor Alshirifi: validation and review; Khudheyer Jawad Kadem: data curation and formal analysis of data. All authors have approved the final version of the manuscript.

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