

RESEARCH PAPER

## Nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>: a Natural Based Magnetic Nano-catalyst for the Synthesis of Coumarins

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### ABSTRACT

Nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> as an efficient natural based magnetic nano-catalyst was synthesized and characterized using commercial nano-kaoline. Structural properties of this catalyst were investigated by using various techniques such as fourier transform infrared (FT-IR) spectroscopy, X-ray diffraction (XRD), field emission scanning electron microscopy (FESEM), transmission electron microscopy (TEM), vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM), thermal gravimetric analysis (TGA) and energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDX). Coumarines have shown various biological activities such as analgesic, antimicrobial, antimalarial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anticancer, antituberculosis and anti-HIV properties. Nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was used for the synthesis of coumarines via Pechmann condensation between phenols and β-ketoester under solvent-free conditions at 120 °C. In this procedure, we have used phloroglucinol, resorcinol, 1-naphthol, pyrogallol and catechol as nucleophile and ethyl acetoacetate, ethyl 2-chloro-acetoacetate, ethyl propionylacetate, ethyl 3-oxo-hexanoate, 2-ethoxycarbonyl cyclopentanone and ethyl benzoylacetate as electrophile. The structure of coumarine products was identified by FTIR and NMR spectroscopies. This method offers has several advantages such as easy workup, short reaction times, high product yields and reusability of catalyst.

#### How to cite this article

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### INTRODUCTION

Coumarin is a heterocyclic compound that plays an important role in the field of natural products and synthetic organic chemistry [1]. Coumarins are also a member of the benzopyrone family [2]. These compounds have shown various biological activities such as analgesic, antimicrobial, antimalarial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anticancer, antituberculosis and anti-HIV properties [3]. In addition, coumarins are used in various industries such as perfumery, cosmetics, food industry and dispersed fluorescent and

laser dyes [4-6]. Coumarins are synthesized in several various methods, such as Reformatsky [7], Wittig [8-9], Knoevenagel [10-11], Perkin [12], and Pechmann reaction [13]. One of the widely used methods for the synthesis of coumarin is the Pechmann reaction, which involves the condensation reaction between phenols and β-ketoesters by various types of acidic catalyst [14-15]. The catalysts including H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> [13], P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> [16-17], AlCl<sub>3</sub> [18], CF<sub>3</sub>COOH [19], starch-SO<sub>3</sub>H [20], SnCl<sub>4</sub>-SiO<sub>2</sub> [21], NbCl<sub>5</sub> [22], Nano-CuFe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> [23], ZrCl<sub>4</sub> [24], [Et<sub>3</sub>NH]<sup>+</sup>[HSO<sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup> [25] and [Hmim]<sup>+</sup>[HO<sub>3</sub>SCH<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>3</sub>]<sup>-</sup>

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[26] have been applied for the preparation of these compounds. The drawbacks of these protocols are high price of catalyst, long reaction time and required large amounts of catalyst, which lead to environmental pollution.

Kaolin is a clay mineral, part of the group of industrial minerals with the chemical composition Al<sub>2</sub>Si<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>(OH)<sub>4</sub>. It is a layered silicate mineral, with one tetrahedral sheet of silica (SiO<sub>4</sub>) linked through oxygen atoms to one octahedral sheet of alumina (AlO<sub>6</sub>) octahedral [27-29]. The various physical attributes of kaolin mineral have made it useful in various ways industrially and these include paints, ceramics, rubber, paper, medicine, petroleum and glass industries [30]. One of main use of kaolin is catalyst role in the chemical industry [31]. Magnetic nanoparticles are a category of nanoparticle that can be manipulated using magnetic fields. Such particles generally include of two components, a magnetic material, often iron, nickel and cobalt, and a chemical component that has functionality [32-34]. Among them, magnetic nanoparticles (Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>) have been the focus of much research recently because advantages such as high stability, low toxicity and easy separation from reaction media [35]. In this work, we wish to report application of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> [28] for synthesis of coumarines via pechmann reaction include of the condensation reaction of β-keto esters with phenols.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

All compounds were purchased from Merck, Aldrich and Fluka chemical companies and used without any additional purification. FT-IR spectra were run on a Bruker, Equinox 55 spectrometer. A Bruker (DRX-400 Avance) NMR was used to record the NMR spectra. Melting points were determined by a Buchi melting point B-540 B.V.CHI apparatus.

### Preparation of Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> NPs

A mixture of FeCl<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O (2.7 g, 10 mmol) and FeCl<sub>2</sub>·4H<sub>2</sub>O (1 g, 5 mmol) in deionized water (25 mL) was warmed until 80 °C. Then 17 ml of NH<sub>3</sub> (30%) was added slowly and the mixture was stirred with mechanical stirrer for 30 minutes. Then black magnetic nanoparticles were collected by using an external magnet and washed three times with deionized water. Finally Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> NPs were dried at 80 °C for 4 hours.

### Preparation of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)

At first, 1 ml of TiCl<sub>4</sub> was added drop wise to a mixture of nano-kaolin (2 g) in 10 ml of dichloromethane in a beaker. The mixture stirred by using a mechanical stirrer for 1 h at room temperature. The resulting suspension was filtered and washed with dichloromethane and dried at room temperature.

### Preparation of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>

The mixture of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV) (2 g) and dichloromethane (10 mL) were dispersed in the ultrasonic irradiation bath for 30 minutes. Then, nano-Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (1 g) was added to the mixture. Again, compound placed for 40 minutes in the ultrasonic irradiation bath to disperse the particles. The resulting suspension was collected by using external magnet and washed with dichloromethane and dried at room temperature.

### General procedure for the synthesis of coumarines

The mixture of phenol (1 mmol), ethyl acetoacetate (1 mmol) and nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (0.03 g) was warmed at 100 °C in a sand bath and stirred by using a mechanical stirring motor with a speed of 50 rpm. The advance of the reaction was monitored by TLC. After completion of reaction, the reaction mixture was dissolved in ethanol and the catalyst was separated by an external magnet. Finally, The reaction mixture was purified using column chromatography on silica gel and recrystallized from hot ethanol to afford pure coumarin derivatives.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was generally prepared as a magnetic nano-catalyst in two-steps process. At first, TiCl<sub>4</sub> was added to the mixture of nano-Kaolin and CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>. The resulted white powder (nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)) was added to the suspension of nano Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> under ultrasonic condition to formation of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> as a brown magnetic powder.

The particles size of the nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>4+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was studied using field emission scanning electron microscopy (FESEM) and transmission electron microscopy (TEM) and were less than 100 nm (Fig. 1).

Energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) was used to determine the percentage of elements in the nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>4+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. (Fig. 2) The percentage of Fe, Si, Al, Ti, Cl, O and K in nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>4+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was 37.4, 25.5, 12.6, 11.0, 8.2, 4.2 and 1.2

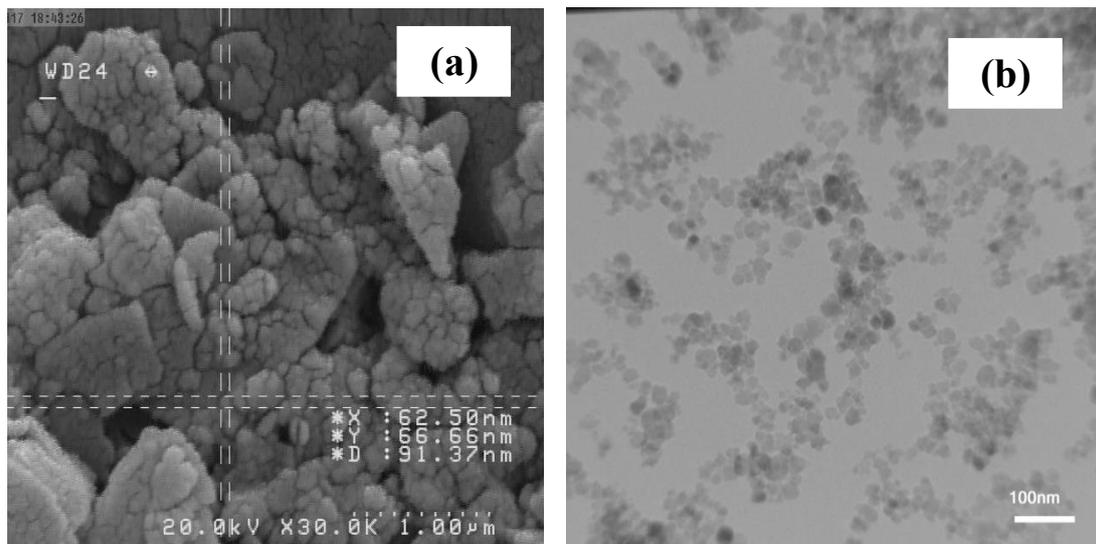


Fig. 1. (a) FESEM and (b) TEM images of nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>.

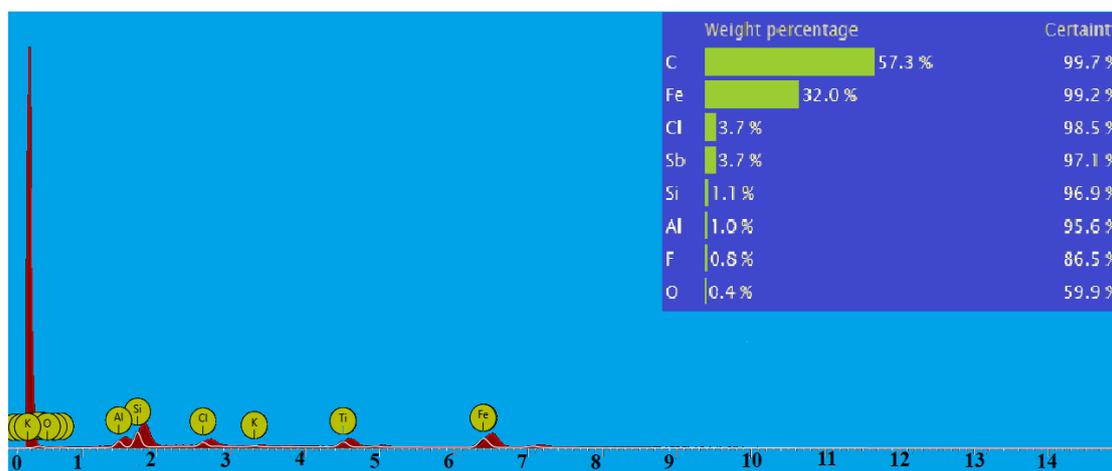


Fig. 2. The EDX spectra of nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>

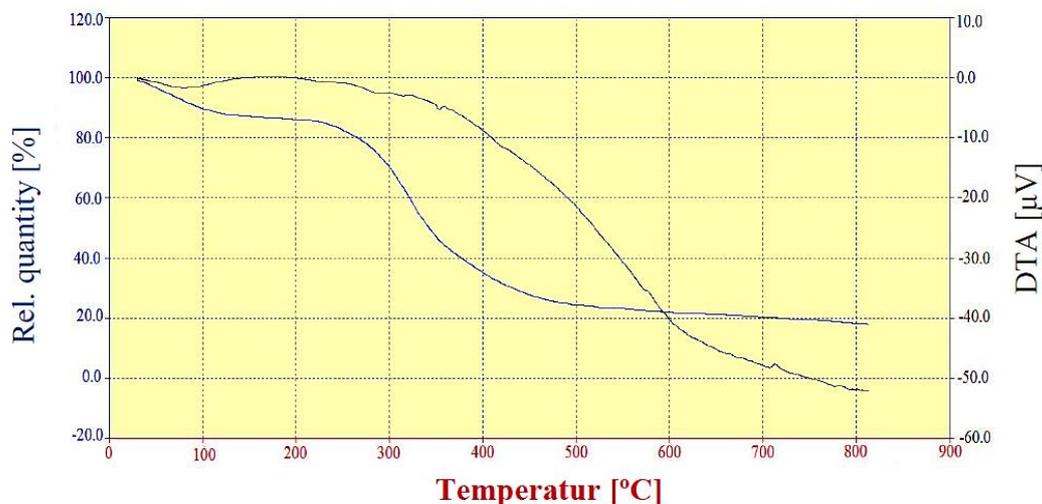
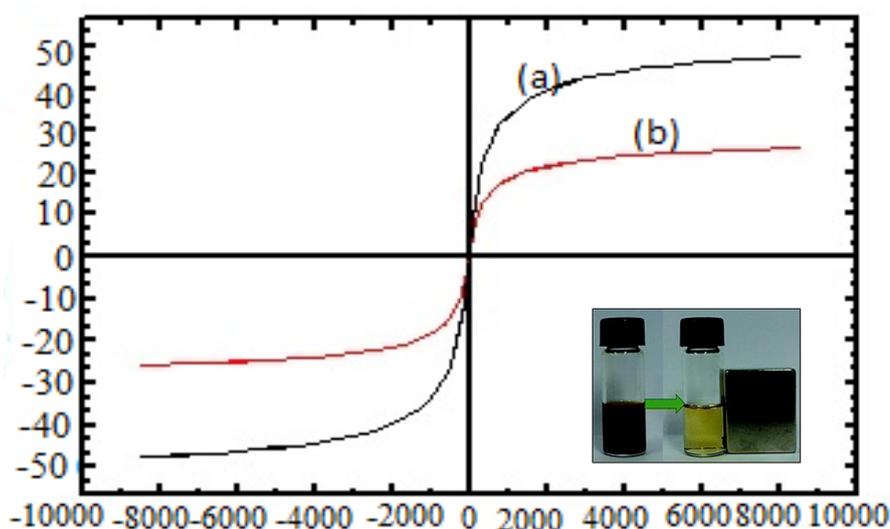
respectively.

The thermal stability (TG-DTA) of nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was studied by thermo-gravimetric analysis (TGA) in a temperature range of 50-800 °C (Fig. 3). According to the figure 4, at 100-250 °C, 4% of catalyst weight was reduced, which can be related to the removal of moisture and bonded water. Also, the catalyst has lost 80% of its weight in the range of 250-600 °C probably due to collapse of the Kaolin network. According to the TGA curve, this catalyst is stable to 230 °C and is suitable for reactions that were carried out at temperatures below 230 °C.

The vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM)

pattern of catalyst at room temperature shows, the coercivity value is zero and there was no hysteresis loop and remanence that confirm the catalytic superparamagnetic property (Fig. 4). The saturation magnetization (M<sub>s</sub>) values of Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> and the nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> were 50 and 23 emu g<sup>-1</sup>, respectively. Although the magnetization of catalyst is lower than Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, the catalyst can be easily separated from the solution with an external magnet.

The X-ray diffraction (XRD) of nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> is shown in Figure 5. According to the XRD pattern, signals at 2θ equal to 13°, 20°, 25°, 41°, 46°, 61° and 68° indicates the presence of

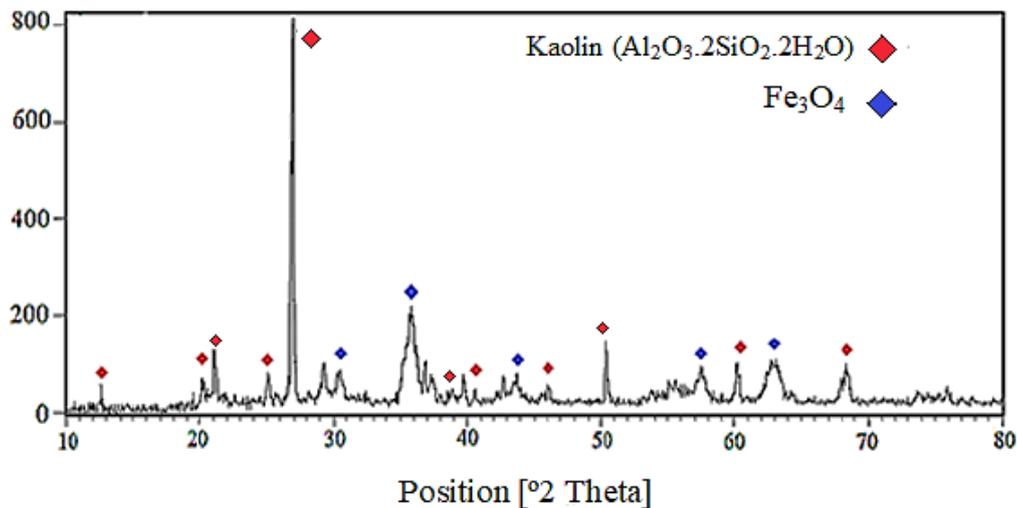
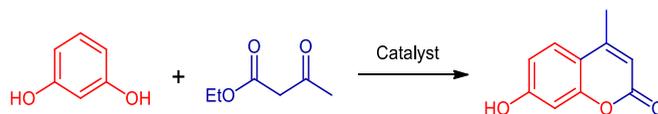
Fig. 3. Thermal gravimetric analysis of nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>Fig. 4. Magnetization loops of (a) Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> and (b) nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>

kaolin. The four signals in  $2\theta = 21^\circ$ ,  $27^\circ$ ,  $39^\circ$  and  $50^\circ$  show the existence of SiO<sub>2</sub>. Also, the signals in  $2\theta = 31^\circ$ ,  $36^\circ$ ,  $44^\circ$ ,  $58^\circ$  and  $63^\circ$  are related to Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. Presumably, three other peaks in  $2\theta$  of  $37^\circ$ ,  $43^\circ$  and  $55^\circ$  revealed that Ti was bonded to Kaolin and Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>.

After characterization of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, its catalytic activity was investigated for the synthesis of coumarin derivatives by using Pechmann condensation between phenols and  $\beta$ -ketoester. To select optimization conditions, the reaction of ethyl acetoacetate and resorcinol as a model reaction was studied in various conditions.

As shown in Table 1, entry 14, the best conditions for the synthesis of coumarines under solvent-free conditions are using 0.03 g of catalyst at 120 °C.

With the optimized reaction conditions for the model reaction, 7-hydroxy-2H-chromen-2-one derivatives were explored by the reaction of phenolic derivatives with a range of  $\beta$ -ketoester and the results are summarized in Table 1. The nature of the substituent on  $\beta$ -ketoester and phenols have a considerable effect on the time and yield of the reaction.  $\beta$ -Ketoesters with electron withdrawing group and phenol with electron releasing group reacts in shorter time with higher

Fig. 5. XRD pattern of nano-kaolin/Ti<sup>4+</sup>/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>Table 1. The reaction of ethyl acetoacetate and resorcinol in the presence of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> under different conditions<sup>a</sup>

Entry	Catalyst (g)	Solvent/ Condition	Time (h)	Yield (%) <sup>b</sup>
1	Fe <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub> (0.03)	-120 °C	1.5	40
2	Kaolin (0.03)	-120 °C	3	50
3	Nano-Kaolin/Ti(IV) (0.03)	-120 °C	1	70
4	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	H <sub>2</sub> O/Reflux	6	65
5	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> OH/Reflux	10	0
6	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	H <sub>2</sub> O/120 °C	10	0
7	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	PEG-100/ultrasonic irradiation	1	0
8	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	H <sub>2</sub> O/ microwave	15(min)	45
9	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	-90 °C	1.5	65
10	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	-100 °C	1.5	68
11	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	-110 °C	1.5	70
12	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	-120 °C	1.5	94
13	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03)	-120 °C	1.5	90
14	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.02)	-120 °C	1.5	70
15	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.04)	-120 °C	1.5	65
16	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.05)	-120 °C	1.5	70
17	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03), 2 <sup>th</sup> run	-120 °C	1.5	90
18	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03), 3 <sup>th</sup> run	-120 °C	1.5	86
19	Catalyst <sup>c</sup> (0.03), 4 <sup>th</sup> run	-120 °C	1.5	81

<sup>a</sup>The amount ratios of resorcinol (mmol) and ethyl acetoacetate (mmol) are equal to 1:1<sup>b</sup>Isolated yield<sup>c</sup>Nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>

yield. The product structure were characterized by using melting point, FT-IR, and <sup>1</sup>H-NMR spectra.

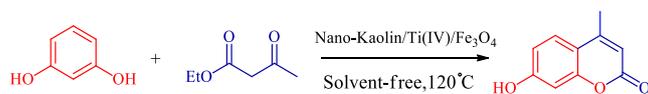
The reusability of the catalyst was also investigated on the model reaction in the presence of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> at 120 °C under solvent-free conditions. That way, catalyst was separated by using an external magnet, washing with ethanol and drying at room temperature. The

results indicated that the catalyst nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> can be reused for four times without considerable loss at its catalytic activity (Table 1).

The suggested mechanism for the synthesis of coumarins is shown in Fig. 6. In this reaction, the Ti(IV) cation in catalyst doing as a Lewis acid and activates carbonyl groups in substrates.

The efficiency of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>

Table 2. The synthesis of coumarine derivatives<sup>a</sup>



Entry	R	Phenol	Product	Time (h)	Yield (%) <sup>b</sup>	Melting Point		Ref.
						Observed	Reported	
1				1.5	94	180-182	180-182	[20]
2				1.8	80	170-171	-	-
3				1	70	129-132	-	-
4				0.65	85	240-244	236-240	[36]
5				2.5	72	283-284	284-285	[37]
6				1	85	286-288	288-290	[38]
7				1.75	83	262-264	-	-
8				1	70	233-236	-	-
9				0.65	87	320-322	317-319	[36]
10				0.75	82	271-272	-	-
11				2	75	154-156	153-155	[38]

<sup>a</sup>One mmol of phenol and  $\beta$ -ketoester were used.

<sup>b</sup>Isolated yield

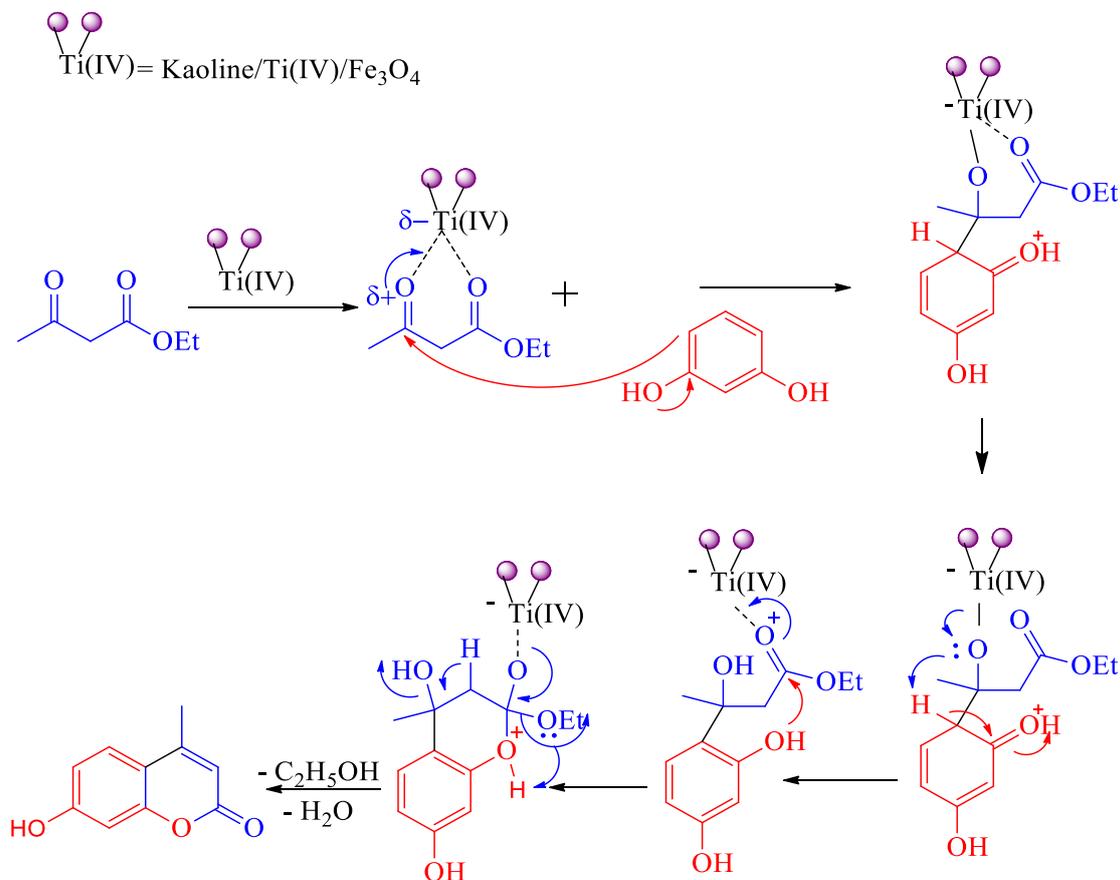


Fig. 6. A proposed mechanism for preparation of coumarine

Table 3. Comparison of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> catalyst with other reported catalysts for the synthesis of 7-hydroxy-4-methyl-2H-chromen-2-one<sup>a</sup>

Entry	Catalyst	Solvent/Condition	Time(h)	Yield (%) <sup>b</sup> , Ref.
1	In(OTf) <sub>3</sub> (1 mol%)	-/ 120 °C	0.53	87 <sup>[37]</sup>
2	SnCl <sub>4</sub> -SiO <sub>2</sub> (5 mol%)	-/ 120 °C	0.58	90 <sup>[21]</sup>
3	[Et <sub>3</sub> NH] <sup>+</sup> [HSO <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>-</sup> (0.04 g)	-/ 110 °C	0.25	94 <sup>[25]</sup>
4	[Hmim] <sup>+</sup> [HSO <sub>3</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>3</sub> ] <sup>-</sup> (0.75mmol)	-/ 80 °C	1	90 <sup>[26]</sup>
5	Fe <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub> @SiO <sub>2</sub> @PrSO <sub>3</sub> H (0.018 g)	-/ 130 °C	0.42	96 <sup>[39]</sup>
6	Nanosilica molybdic acid (5 mol%)	-/ 80 °C	0.33	93 <sup>[40]</sup>
7	nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub> (0.03 g)	-/ 120 °C	1.5	94 <sup>[This work]</sup>

<sup>a</sup> One mmol of any substrate (resorcinol and ethyl acetoacetate) were used.<sup>b</sup> Isolated yield

catalyst in Pechmann reaction was compared with other reported ones (Table 3). The results shows, one of the best catalysts for the synthesis of coumarin in solvent-free conditions is nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> with short reaction time and high yield.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have reported the

preparation and description of nano-kaolin/Ti(IV)/Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> as an efficient and magnetically recyclable heterogeneous catalyst. This catalyst was applied to synthesize of coumarin derivatives via Pechmann condensation reaction of phenols and  $\beta$ -ketoester under solvent-free condition at 120 °C. Several main advantages of this protocol includes high yields, short reaction times, mild reaction conditions, simple work-up procedure and easy

separation with reusability of the catalyst  
Conflicts of interest

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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