

Solvent-Assisted Headspace Sampling and Physical Investigation of SPME Fibres

By

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Certificate of Authorship and Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

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Date: 15.01.2022

A rectangular box with a decorative scroll-like border on the left and top edges, containing the author's signature.

Rawaa Al-Baghdadi

DEDICATION

To my parent

And, I will always be grateful to my wonderful mother, who supported and surrounded me with her love, tenderness, and beautiful prayers that illuminated my path. If I have succeeded in my life, that is because you are in it.

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- ❖ First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the great interest, valuable support, and professional guidance that I have got throughout my research project from my supervisor Prof. Bradley Williams. Words are powerless to express my appreciation: I could never have thought I would have a better doctoral supervisor.
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- ❖ To the spirit of my dearest uncle Tariq, who died in August of this year before I could return with a PhD certificate to make him happy
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Abstract

The analysis of samples contaminated by organic compounds is an essential aspect of environmental monitoring. While pesticides are beneficial to crops, they have a harmful influence on the environment that must be considered when using them. Excessive use of pesticides may result in the extinction of biodiversity. Other human-related activities also lead to pollutants in the environment; these include polycyclic aromatic compounds (PAH) and aromatic (semi)volatiles. The term "semi-volatile" refers to a collection of contaminants having a wide range of chemical and structural characteristics. Analytes of interest in this study were PAH, Pesticide, TPH and discretionary aromatic volatiles. Because of the complex nature of environmental samples, isolating target organic compounds from their matrices is a significant challenge. In addition, trace organic components in water samples must be isolated and pre-concentrated to be analysed using analytical procedures. Therefore, sample preparation is a significant focus in environmental analysis nowadays. Over the past decade, the use of SPME in sample preparation has grown steadily. It is often combined with chromatographic separation modules to extract volatile and semi-volatile organic chemicals and allows the trace analysis of substances in complicated matrices.

In the present study, a solvent-free solid-phase microextraction (SPME) method has been developed to determine PAH, pesticides, TPH and discretionary aromatic volatiles in water and different matrices. The developed method was applied to various

environmental samples such as aqueous samples, milk, Orange juice and stream water.

The optimisation process will involve an analysis of the function of some commercially available fibres in achieving maximum analyte absorption and research of the various fibres' reactions to the solvents utilised, which has been investigated with each material. These fibres have also been subjected to solvent-assisted headspace analysis to determine their suitability. The method showed good linearity for 0.2 and 0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$ with regression coefficients ranging between 0.997 and 0.999. The relative standard deviation (RSD) ($n = 6$) for the target analytes were in the range of 4 –15 %, respectively. The developed technique was successfully applied to preconcentration and determination of the target analytes in environmental water and different matrices.

Table of contents

Contents

Certification of authorship and originality	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgment	iv
Abstract	v
Table of contents	vii
List of Figures	xiv
List of Abbreviations	xxv
List of Tables	xxvi
<u>Chapter 1: Introduction and literature review</u>	1
1.1 Introduction to sample preparation	2
1.2 Extraction methods to pre-concentrate analyte	3
1.2.1 Liquid-liquid extraction (LLE)	3
1.2.1.1 Ionic liquids as solvents in LLE	5
1.2.2 Solid-phase extraction (SPE)	8
1.3 Micro-extraction methods used to isolate and concentrate organic analytes	12
1.3.1 Liquid phase micro-extraction (LPME) / single drop micro-extraction (SDME)	12
1.3.2 Solid-phase micro-extraction	17
1.3.2.1 Headspace microextraction	20
1.4 Objectives of this study	22
1.5 Methodology	24
<u>Chapter 2: Application and optimisation of solid-phase microextraction technique on polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons mixture</u>	26
2.1 Introduction	27
2.2 Experimental	32
2.2.1 Chemical and reagents	32
2.2.2 Standard solutions.....	32

2.2.3	Preparation of SPME samples.....	32
2.2.4	Instrument.....	33
2.2.5	The procedure for microextraction	33
2.2.6	Preparation and conditioning of different types of fibres	35
2.3	Results and discussion	36
2.3.1	General method development and optimisation	36
2.3.2	Method development and GC optimisation	38
2.3.2.1	Extraction optimisation	38
2.4	Exploring various parameters to optimise the extraction efficiency of headspace sampling	47
2.4.1	Selected fibres	47
2.4.2	Extraction as a function of time	50
2.4.3	The effect of NaCl in aqueous solutions	51
2.4.4	Solvent choice	53
2.5	Application to other matrices.....	57
2.5.1.a	No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of a water matrix containing 0.05 ppm PAH mixture	58
2.5.1.b	No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of a milk matrix containing 0.05 ppm PAH mixture	62
2.5.1.c	No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of Orange juice matrix containing 0.05 ppm PAH mixture	64
2.5.1.d	No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of stream water matrix containing 0.05 ppm PAH mixture	67
2.5.2.a	No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of a water matrix containing 0.0005 ppm PAH	69
2.5.2.b	No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of milk matrix containing 0.0005 ppm PAH	72
2.5.2.c	No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of Orange juice matrix containing 0.0005 ppm PAH	73

2.5.2.d No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of stream water matrix containing 0.0005 ppm PAH	75
2.6 Statistical data and other relevant data processing	76
2.6.1 Headspace sampling of PAH compounds containing (0.2-0.0005) ppm PAH mixture in water	76
2.6.2 Solvent-assisted headspace sampling of PAH compounds containing (0.2-0.0005) ppm PAH mixture in water.....	80
2.6 General conclusion	83
Chapter 3. Optimisation and application of solid-phase microextraction technique on pesticide mixture	85
3.1 Introduction	86
3.2 Experimental	90
3.2.1 Chemicals and reagents	90
3.2.2 Standard solutions	90
3.2.3 Preparation of SPME samples	90
3.2.4 Instrument	91
3.2.5 The procedure for microextraction	91
3.2.6 Preparation and conditioning of different types of fibres	92
3.3 Results and discussion.....	93
3.3.1 General method development and optimisation	93
3.3.2 Method development and GC optimisation	95
3.3.2.1 Extraction optimisation.....	95
3.4 Exploring various parameters to optimise the extraction efficiency of headspace sampling	103
3.4.1 Selected fibres	103
3.4.2 Extraction as a function of time	104
3.4.3 The influence of sodium chloride on aqueous solutions	106
3.4.4 Solvents choice	107
3.5 Application to the other matrices	109
3.5.1.a No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of a water matrix containing 0.05 ppm pesticide mixture	109
3.5.1.b No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of a milk matrix containing 0.05 ppm pesticide mixture	114

3.5.1.c No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of Orange juice matrix containing 0.05 ppm pesticide mixture	117
3.5.1.d No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of Stream water matrix containing 0.05 ppm pesticide mixture	120
3.5.2.a No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of a water matrix containing 0.0005 ppm pesticide mixture	123
3.5.2.b No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of milk matrix containing 0.0005 ppm pesticide mixture	128
3.5.2.c No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of Orange juice matrix containing 0.0005 ppm pesticide mixture	131
3.5.2.d No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of stream water matrix containing 0.0005 ppm pesticide mixture	134
3.6 Statistical data and other relevant data processing	139
3.6.1 Headspace sampling of pesticide compounds containing (0.2-0.0005) ppm pesticide mixture in water.....	139
3.6.2 Solvent-assisted headspace sampling of pesticide compounds containing (0.2-0.0005) ppm pesticide mixture in water with diethyl ether	143
3.7 General discussion	146
Chapter 4: Application and optimisation of solid-phase microextraction technique for Total petroleum hydrocarbon mixture	149
4.1 Introduction	149
4.2 Experimental	152
4.2.2 Chemicals and reagents	152
4.2.3 Standard solutions	152
4.2.3 Preparation of SPME samples	152
4.2.4 Apparatus	153
4.2.5 The procedure for microextraction	153
4.2.6 Preparation and conditioning of different types of fibres.....	154
4.3 Results and discussion	155
4.3.1 General method development and optimisation	155
4.3.2 Method development and GC optimisation	157
4.3.2.1 Extraction optimisation.....	157
4.3.3 Statistical data and other relevant data processing	165
4.4 Exploring various parameters to optimise the extraction efficiency of headspace sampling	169
4.4.1 Selected fibres.....	169

4.4.2 Extraction as a function of time	170
4.4.3 The influence of sodium chloride on aqueous solutions	171
4.4.4 Solvent choice	173
4.5 Application to other matrices	175
4.5.1.a No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of a water matrix containing 0.05 ppm TPH mixture	178
4.5.1.b No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of milk matrix containing 0.05 ppm TPH mixture.....	178
4.5.1.c No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of Orange juice matrix containing 0.05 ppm TPH mixture	180
4.5.1.d No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of stream water matrix containing 0.05 ppm TPH mixture.....	184
4.5.2.a No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of water matrix containing 0.0005 ppm TPH mixture	186
4.5.2.b No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of milk matrix containing 0.0005 ppm TPH mixture.....	189
4.5.2.c No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of Orange juice matrix containing 0.0005 ppm TPH mixture.....	192
4.5.2.d No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of stream water matrix containing 0.0005 ppm TPH mixture	195
4.6 Statistical data and other relevant data processing	197
4.6.1 Headspace sampling of pesticide compounds containing (0.2-0.0005) ppm pesticide mixture in water	197
4.6.2 Solvent-assisted headspace sampling of pesticide compounds containing (0.2-0.0005) ppm pesticide mixture in water	201
4.7 General conclusion	204
Chapter 5: Application and optimisation of solid-phase microextraction technique for discretionary volatile aromatic mixture	205
5.1 Introduction	206
5.2 Experimental	209
5.2.1 Chemicals and reagents	209
5.2.2 Standard solutions	209
5.2.3 Preparation of SPME samples	209
5.2.4 Apertures	210
5.2.5 The procedure for microextraction	210
5.2.6 Preparation and conditioning of different types of fibres	211

5.3 Results and discussion	212
5.3.1 General method development and optimisation	212
5.3.2 Method development and GC optimisation	214
5.3.2.1 Extraction optimisation	215
5.4 Exploring various parameters to optimise the extraction efficiency of headspace sampling.....	222
5.4.1 Selected fibres	222
5.4.2 Extraction as a function of time	223
5.4.3 The influence of sodium chloride on aqueous solutions	224
5.4.4 Solvent choice	226
5.5 Application to other matrices	229
5.5.1.a No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of a water matrix containing 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic mixture	230
5.5.1.b No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of a milk matrix containing 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic mixture	233
5.5.1.c No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of Orange juice matrix containing 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic mixture	237
5.5.1.d No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of stream matrix containing 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic mixture	239
5.5.2.a No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of water matrix containing 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic mixture	241
5.5.2.b No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of milk matrix containing 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic mixture	245
5.5.2.c No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of orange juice matrix containing 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic mixture	248
5.5.2.d No-solvent and solvent-assisted headspace sampling of stream water matrix containing 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic mixture	250
5.6 Statistical data and other relevant data processing	253
5.6.1 Headspace sampling of pesticide compounds containing (0.2-0.0005) ppm discretionary mixture in water	253
5.6.2 Solvent-assisted headspace sampling of discretionary compounds containing (0.2-0.0005) ppm pesticide mixture in water with diethyl ether	257
5.7 General conclusion	260
Chapter 6: Physical properties of fibres	261

6.1 Introduction to physical properties	281
6.2 TGA analysis	288
Chapter 7: Thesis Conclusions and Possible Future Studies	291
7.1 Thesis Conclusions	291
7.2 Recommendations for future research	293
References	295

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Steps involved in SPE.....	9
Figure 1.2: Hollow fibre-based liquid phase microextraction.....	15
Figure 2.1: Headspace Solid-Phase Microextraction	33
Figure 2.2: Diagram of analysis with solid-phase microextraction-gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (SPME-GC-MS)	33
Figure 2.3: GC chromatogram of PAH standard compounds after extraction at 50 °C	35
Figure 2.4: GC chromatogram of PAH standard compounds after extraction at 70 °C	36
Figure 2.5: Oven program temperature starts with 75 °C, inlet 280 °C, flow rate 29.07 mL.min ⁻¹	37
Figure 2.6: Oven program temperature starts with 70 °C inlet 280 °C, flow rate 29.07 mL.min ⁻¹	38
Figure 2.7: Hold time 4 min	39
Figure 2.8: Hold time 0 min	39
Figure 2.9: Ramp temperature to 150 °C	40
Figure 2.10: Ramp temperature to 200 °C	40
Figure 2.11: Ramp temperature to 250 °C	41
Figure 2.12: Split	42
Figure 2.13: Splitless	42
Figure 2.14: Splitless - 250 °C	43
Figure 2.15: Splitless – 280 °C.....	43
Figure 2.16: Ion chromatogram of standard PAHs - Splitless 300 °C.....	44
Figure 2.17: Fibres type comparison in an aqueous solution of PAHs compounds	48
Figure 2.18: The extraction – time profile for PAH compounds	49
Figure 2.19: The extraction –time profile for PAH compounds	49

Figure 2.20: Effect of NaCl for PAH compounds in aqueous solution	51
Figure 2.21: Effect of NaCl for PAH compounds in aqueous solution	51
Figure 2.22: 0.05 ppm PAH in water with diethyl ether (a) and without diethyl ether (b) and Polyacrylate fibre	53
Figure 2.23: 0.05 ppm PAH in water with DCM (a) and without DCM (b) and Polyacrylate fibre.....	53
Figure 2.24: The comparison of different solvents on the extraction of some PAH compounds in aqueous samples.....	55
Figure 2.25: 0.05 ppm PAH in water with polyacrylate fibre	57
Figure 2.26: 0.05 ppm PAH in water with PEG fibre.....	58
Figure 2.27: 0.05 ppm PAH in water with Carboxen/PDMS fibre	58
Figure 2.28: The effect of diethyl ether on the extraction efficiency of 0.05 ppm PAH with different matrices in aqueous samples and Polyacrylate	60
Figure 2.29: The effect of DCM on the extraction efficiency 0.05 ppm PAH with different matrices in aqueous samples and Polyacrylate	60
Figures 2.30: Comparsion of 0.05 ppm PAH spiked in milk with and without solvents and NaCl	62
Figure 2.31: The extraction efficiency of 0.05 ppm PAH spiked in milk	63
Figures 2.32: Comparsion of 0.05 ppm PAH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Orange juicie with and without solvents and NaCl	65
Figure 2.33: Comparsion of 0.05 ppm PAH and Carboxen/PDMS fibre spiked in Orange juicie with and without solvents and NaCl	66
Figure 2.34: The effect of different solvents on the extraction efficiency with stream matrix	67
Figures 2.35 Comparsion of 0.05 ppm PAH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	68
Figure 2.36: 0.0005 ppm of PAHs in water with polyacrylate fibre	69
Figure 2.37: 0.0005 ppm of PAHs in water with diethyl ether	70
Figure 2.38: 0.0005 ppm of PAHs in water with DCM	70
Figure 2.39: The effect of DCM on the extraction efficiency 0.0005 ppm PAH with different matrices	71

Figure 2.40: The effect of diethyl ether on the extraction efficiency 0.0005 ppm PAH with different matrices.....	71
Figure 2.41: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm PAH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in milk with and without solvents and NaCl	72
Figure 2.42: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm PAH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Orange juice with and without solvents and NaCl	73
Figure 2.43: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm PAH and Carboxen/PDMS fibre spiked in Orange juice with and without solvents and NaCl	74
Figure 2.44: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm PAH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	76
Figure 2.45: Standard curves for different concentrations of PAH compounds with the internal standard.....	77
Figure 2.46: Standard curves for different concentrations of PAH compounds with the internal standard	79
Figure 2.47: Standard curves for different concentrations of PAH compounds in water with diethyl ether.....	81
Figure 2.48: Standard curves for different concentrations of PAH compounds in water with diethyl ether	82
Figure 3.1: Headspace microextraction	93
Figure 3.2: 50 °C extraction temperature GC result for standard pesticide compounds.....	95
Figure 3.3: 80 °C extraction temperature GC result for standard pesticide compounds.....	95
Figure 3.4: Oven program temperature starts with 50 °C, inlet 280 °C, flow rate 29.07 L.min ⁻¹	96
Figure 3.5: Oven program temperature starts with 80 °C, inlet 280 °C, flow rate 29.07 L.min ⁻¹	96
Figure 3.6: GC result with Ramp rate 20 °C per minute	98
Figure 3.7: GC result with Ramp rate 10 °C per minute	99
Figure 3.8: GC result with split mode	100
Figure 3.9: GC result with splitless mode.....	101
Figure 3.10: Splitless – inlet temperature 250 °C.....	102
Figure 3.11: Ion Chromatogram of standard Pesticide-Splitless 280 °C	102

Figure 3.12: Comparison of selected sampling fibres making use of aqueous solutions of pesticide compounds	104
Figure 3.13: The effect of extraction - time profile for pesticide compounds	105
Figure 3.14: The effect of extraction - time profile for pesticide compounds	106
Figure 3.15: Effect of NaCl on the extraction of Pesticide compounds in aqueous solution.	107
Figure 3.16: Effect of NaCl on the extraction of Pesticide compounds in aqueous solution..	108
Figure 3.17: Effect of solvent on extraction efficiency for 0.2 ppm pesticide compounds in aqueous solution	109
Figure 3.18: Effect of solvent on extraction efficiency for 0.2 ppm pesticide compounds in aqueous solution	109
Figure 3.19: GC result for 0.05 ppm pesticides in water with polyacrylate fibre.....	111
Figure 3.20: GC result for 0.05 ppm pesticides in water with PEG fibre	111
Figure 3.21: GC result for 0.05 ppm pesticides in water with Carboxen/PDMS fibre	112
Figure 3.22: The effect of diethyl ether on the extraction efficiency of 0.05 ppm pesticide with different matrices using a polyacrylate fibre	114
Figure 3.23: The effect of DCM on the extraction efficiency of 0.05 ppm pesticide with different matrices using a polyacrylate fibre.....	115
Figure 3.24: Comparison of 0.05 ppm pesticide and polyacrylate fibre spiked in milk with and without solvents and NaCl	116
Figure 3.25: The efficiency of extraction of 0.05 ppm pesticide spiked in milk.....	117
Figure 3.26: Comparison of 0.05 ppm Pesticide and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Orange juice with and without solvents and NaCl	118
Figure 3.27: The effect of different solvents on the extraction efficiency with stream matrix.....	120
Figure 3.28: Comparison of 0.05 ppm Pesticide and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	121
Figure 3.29: GC result for 0.0005 ppm of pesticide in water with polyacrylate fibre	123
Figure 3.30: GC result for 0.0005 ppm of pesticide in water with PEG fibre.....	124
Figure 3.31: GC result for 0.0005 ppm of pesticide in water with Carboxen/PDMS fibre.	124

Figure 3.32: GC result for 0.0005 ppm of pesticide in water with diethyl ether and polyacrylate fibre	126
Figure 3.33: GC result for 0.0005 ppm of pesticide in water with DCM and polyacrylate fibre	126
Figure 3.34: Diethyl ether effect on the extraction efficiency of 0.0005 ppm pesticide with various matrices	127
Figure 3.35: DCM effect on the extraction efficiency of 0.0005 ppm pesticide with various matrices	127
Figure 3.36: Comparsion of 0.0005 ppm Pesticide and polyacrylate fibre spiked in milk with and without solvents and NaCl	128
Figure 3.37: Comparsion of 0.0005 ppm pesticide and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Orange juicie with and without solvents and NaCl	130
Figure 3.38: Comparsion of 0.0005 ppm pesticide and Carboxen/PDMS fibre spiked in Orange juicie with and without solvents and NaCl	132
Figure 3.39: Comparsion of 0.0005 ppm pesticide and polyacrylate fibre spiked in stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	133
Figure 3.40: Comparsion of 0.0005 ppm pesticide and Carboxen/PDMS fibre spiked in Stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	135
Figure 3.41: Comparsion of 0.0005 ppm pesticide and PEG fibre spiked in Stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	136
Figure 3.42: Standard curves for different concentrations of pesticide compounds with the internal standard	137
Figure 3.43: Standard curves for different concentrations of pesticide compounds with the internal standard	139
Figure 3.44: Standard curves for different concentrations of pesticide compounds in water with diethyl ether	141
Figure 3.45: Standard curves for different concentrations of pesticide compounds with diethyl ether	142
Figure 4.1: Autosampler GC system	152
Figure 4.2: GC result for standard TPH compounds detected by using an Inlet temperature of 200°C	154

Figure 4.3: GC result for standard TPH compounds detected by using an Inlet temperature of 280°C	152
Figure 4.4: Oven initial temperature start with 50°C, inlet 280 °C, flow rate 29.07 mL.min ⁻¹	156
Figure 4.5: Oven initial temperature start with 80°C, inlet 280 °C, flow rate 29.07 mL.min ⁻¹	156
Figure 4.6: Hold time 3 min.....	157
Figure 4.7: Hold time 20 min.....	158
Figure 4.8: GC result with ramp temperature to 200 °C	159
Figure 4.9: GC result with ramp temperature to 250 °C	159
Figure 4.10: GC result when using the split mode	161
Figure 4.11: GC result when using the splitless mode	161
Figure 4.12: Splitless – inlet temperature 250 °C	162
Figure 4.13: Ion Chromatogram of standard TPH-Splitless 280 °C -Agilent GC	162
Figure 4.14: Fibres type comparison in an aqueous solution of TPH compounds	164
Figure 4.15: The effect of extraction – time on solvent assisted headspace sampling	165
Figure 4.16: The effect of extraction – time on solvent assisted headspace sampling	165
Figure 4.17: Effect of NaCl on the extraction of TPH compounds in aqueous solution	166
Figure 4.18: Effect of NaCl on the extraction of TPH compounds in aqueous solution	167
Figure 4.19: Effect of solvent on extraction efficiency of 0.2 ppm TPH compounds in aqueous solution	168
Figure 4.20: Effect of solvent on extraction efficiency 0.2 ppm TPH compounds in aqueous solution	168
Figure 4.21: GC result for 0.05 ppm TPH in water with 85 µm polyacrylate fibre.....	170
Figure 4.22: SPME GC/MS response peak areas for 0.05 ppm TPH mixtures and polyacrylate fibre with and without solvents	171
Figure 4.23: Comparson of 0.05 ppm TPH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in milk with and without solvents and NaCl	172
Figures 4.24: The extraction efficiency of 0.05 ppm TPH spiked in milk	173

Figure 4.25: Comparison of 0.05 ppm TPH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Orange juice with and without solvents and NaCl	175
Figure 4.26: Comparison of 0.05 ppm TPH and Carbon/PDMS fibre spiked in Orange juice with and without solvents and NaCl	177
Figure 4.27: GCMS Measurements showing the effect of different solvents on the extraction efficiency of TPHs from a stream water matrix.....	178
Figure 4.28: Comparison of 0.05 ppm TPH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	179
Figure 4.29: GC result for 0.0005 ppm TPH in water with polyacrylate fibre	181
Figure 4.30: GC result for 0.0005 ppm of TPH in water with diethyl ether	182
Figure 4.31: GC result for 0.0005 ppm of TPH in water with DCM	182
Figure 4.32: SPME GC/MS peak areas of 0.0005 ppm TPH mixture and polyacrylate fibre with and without solvents	183
Figure 4.33: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm TPH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in milk with and without solvents and NaCl	184
Figure 4.34: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm TPH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Orange juice with and without solvents and NaCl	186
Figure 4.35: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm TPH and Carbon /PDMS fibre spiked in Orange juice with and without solvents and NaCl	188
Figure 4.36: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm TPH and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	189
Figure 4.37: Standard SPME GC/MS response curves for different concentrations of TPH compounds with internal standards included	191
Figure 4.38: Standard SPME GC/MS response curves for different concentrations of TPH compounds with the internal standard included	193
Figure 4.39: Standard SPME GC/MS response curves for different concentrations of TPH compounds in water with diethyl ether.....	195
Figure 4.40: Standard SPME GC/MS response curves for different concentrations of TPH compounds in water with diethyl ether.....	196
Figure 5.1: Autosampler GC system	205

Figure 5.2: GC result of the standard discretionary aromatic compounds at 75 °C extraction temperature	207
Figure 5.3: GC result of the standard discretionary aromatic compounds at 70 °C extraction temperature	207
Figure 5.4: Oven program temperature starts with 50 °C, inlet 280 °C, flow rate 29.07 mL.min ⁻¹	209
Figure 5.5: Oven program temperature starts with 70 °C, inlet 280 °C, flow rate 29.07 mL.min ⁻¹	210
Figure 5.6: Oven program temperature starts with 100 °C, inlet 280 °C, flow rate 29.07 mL.min ⁻¹	210
Figure 5.7: GC result with Ramp rate 15 °C per minute.....	212
Figure 5.8: GC result with Ramp rate 10 °C per minute	212
Figure 5.9: Split.....	213
Figure 5.10: Splitless.....	213
Figure 5.11: Splitless – inlet temperature 250 °C	214
Figure 5.12 Ion chromatogram of standard discretionary VOC sample using Splitless mode at 280 °C Inlet Temperature.....	215
Figure 5.13: Fibres type comparison in an aqueous solution of discretionary aromatic compounds.....	216
Figure 5.14: The extraction – time profile for discretionary aromatic components.....	217
Figure 5.15: The extraction – time profile for discretionary aromatic components.....	218
Figure 5.16: Effect of NaCl on the extraction of discretionary VOC compounds in aqueous solution.....	219
Figure 5.17: Effect of NaCl on the extraction of discretionary VOC compounds in aqueous solution.....	219
Figure 5.18: GC Signal Levels for 0.05 ppm discretionary VOCs on polyacrylate fibre in water with and without diethyl ether.....	220
Figure 5.19: GC Signal Levels for 0.05 ppm discretionary VOCs on a Polyacrylate fibre in water with and without DCM fibre.....	220
Figure 5.20: Effect of solvent on extraction efficiency of 0.2 ppm discretionary compounds in aqueous solution.....	222

Figure 5.21: Effect of solvent on extraction efficiency of 0.2 ppm discretionary compounds in aqueous solution.....	222
Figure 5.22: GC result for 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic compounds in water with 85 μ m polyacrylate fibre.....	224
Figure 5.23: The effect of diethyl ether on the extraction efficiency of 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic with different matrices and Polyacrylate.....	226
Figure 5.24: The effect of DCM on the extraction efficiency 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic with different matrices and Polyacrylate.....	226
Figure 5.25: Comparson of 0.05 ppm discretionary and polyacrylate fibre spiked in milk with and without solvents and NaCl	228
Figure 5.26: Comparson of 0.05 ppm discretionary and Carbon/PDMS fibre spiked in milk with and without solvents and NaCl	229
Figure 5.27: The efficiency of extraction of 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic compounds spiked in milk.....	230
Figure 5.28: Comparson of 0.05 ppm discretionary and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Orange juicie with and without solvents and NaCl	232
Figure 5.29: GC results showing the effect of different additional solvents and NaCl solute on the HS-SPME extraction efficiency of discretionary aromatic compounds from a stream matrix.....	234
Figure 5.30: Comparson of 0.05 ppm discretionary and polyacrylate fibre spiked in stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	235
Figure 5.31: GC result for 0.0005 ppm of discretionary aromatics in water with polyacrylate fibre.....	237
Figure 5.32: GC measured peak areas for 0.0005 ppm of discretionary aromatic in water with diethyl ether	238
Figure 5.33: GC measured peak areas for 0.0005 ppm of discretionary aromatic in water with DCM	238
Figure 5.34: The effect of diethyl ether on the extraction efficiency of 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic volatiles from different matrices using a Polyacrylate sampling fibre.....	239
Figure 5.35: The effect of DCM on the extraction efficiency of 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic volatiles from different matrices using a polyacrylate sampling fibre.....	240

Figure 5.36: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm discretionary and polyacrylate fibre spiked in milk with and without solvents and NaCl	241
Figure 5.37: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm discretionary and polyacrylate fibre spiked in Orange juice with and without solvents and NaCl	243
Figure 5.38: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm discretionary and polyacrylate fibre spiked in stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	245
Figure 5.39: Comparison of 0.0005 ppm discretionary and Carbon/PDMS fibre spiked in stream water with and without solvents and NaCl	247
Figure 5.40: Standard curves for different concentrations of discretionary aromatic compounds and the internal standard.....	248
Figure 5.41: Standard curves for different concentrations of discretionary compounds with the internal standard.....	250
Figure 5.42: Standard SPME GC/MS response curves for different concentrations of discretionary compounds in water with diethyl ether.....	252
Figure 5.43: Standard SPME GC/MS response curves for different concentrations of discretionary compounds in water with diethyl ether.....	253
Figure 6.1.a : Micrograph of the new 85 µm polyacrylate” tip of the fibre”	259
Figure 6.1.b : Micrograph of the new 85 µm polyacrylate” shaft of the fibre”	259
Figure 6.3.a: Micrograph of the 85 µm polyacrylate “tip of the fibre” -100 samples over an aqueous matrix	260
Figure 6.3.b: Micrograph of the 85 µm polyacrylate “shaft of the fibre” -200 samples over an aqueous matrix	260
Figure 6.4.a: Micrograph of the 85 µm polyacrylate “tip of the fibre” - 200 samples with solvents.....	261
Figure 6.4.b: Micrograph of the 85 µm polyacrylate “shaft of the fibre” - 200 samples with solvents.....	261
Figure 6.5: Micrograph of the PEG 60 µm- new “tip of the fibre”	262
Figure 6.6.a: Micrograph of the PEG 60 µm – over 200 samples used with solvents “tip of the fibre”	262
Figure 6.6.b: Micrograph of the PEG 60 µm- over 200 samples used with solvents “shaft of the fibre”	263

Figure 6.7: Micrograph of the 75 μm Carboxen/PDMS new fibre	263
Figure 6.8: Micrograph of the 75 μm Carboxen/PDMS fibre over 200 samples used with solvents	264
Figure 6.9: Micrograph of the Polyacrylate 100 μm arrow fibre-Shimadzu GC new	264
Figure 6.10: Micrograph of the Carbon WR 120 μm arrow fibre-Shimadzu GC new	265
Figure 6.11: Micrograph of the Carbon WR 120 μm arrow fibre Shimadzu GC used over 200 samples with solvents	265
Figure 6.12: TGA for Carboxen/PDMS fibre	267
Figure 6.13: TGA for PEG fibre	267
Figure 6.14: TGA for Polyacrylate fibre	268

List of abbreviations

DCM	Methylene chloride
GC-FID	Gas chromatography/flame ionisation detection
GC-MS	Gas chromatography/mass spectrometry
HSME	Headspace microextraction
ILs	Ionic liquids
LLE	Liquid-liquid extraction
LPME	Liquid phase micro-extraction
LOD	Limit of detection
LOQ	Limit of quantification
OCPs	Organochlorine pesticide
PDMS	Polydimethylsiloxane
PDMS/DVB	Polydimethylsiloxane / divinylbenzene
PDMS	Polydimethylsiloxane
PPM	Parts-per-million
POPs	Persistent organic pollutants
RS-HPLC	Reversed-phase high-performance liquid chromatography
RTIL	Room temperature ionic liquid
SDME	Single drop microextraction
SPE	Solid-phase extraction
SPME	Solid-phase micro-extraction
VOCs	Volatile organic compounds
PT-GC/MS	purge and trap (PT) gas chromatography-mass spectrometry
DSC	differential scanning calorimetry
TGA	Thermogravimetry

List of Tables

Table 1.1: SPME fibres currently available commercially.....	19
Table 2.1: Advantages and disadvantages extraction techniques used to determine PAHs ..	29
Table 2.2: Temperature and conditioning guidelines for SPME Fibre coating.....	34
Table 2.3: Oven initial temperature	38
Table 2.4: Oven program- hold time	39
Table 2.5: Oven program – Ramp temperature	41
Table 2.6: Comparison of GC injection port type	42
Table 2.7: Inlet temperature – splitless	44
Table 2.8: Chemical structure of PAHs compounds	46
Table 2.9: Statistic parameter of 0.05 ppm PAH compounds spiked in water with polyacrylate fibre	58
Table 2.10: Statistic parameter of 0.05 ppm PAH compounds spiked in water with PEG fibre.....	59
Table 2.11: Statistic parameter of 0.05 ppm PAH compounds spiked in water with Carboxen/PDMS fibre	59
Table 2.12: Statistical parameter 0.05 ppm PAH spiked in milk	64
Table 2.13: Statistical parameter 0.05 ppm PAH spiked in milk with DCM.....	64
Table 2.14: Statistical parameter 0.05 ppm PAH spiked in milk with diethyl ether.....	64
Table 2.15: Statistical parameter of 0.0005 ppm PAH compounds spiked in water with polyacrylate fibre	69
Table 2.16: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$) spiked in water..	78
Table 2.17: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 ppm) spiked in water....	79
Table 2.18: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2 - 0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$) spiked in water with diethyl ether	81
Table 2.19: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2 - 0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$) spiked in water with diethyl ether	82
Table 2.20: Limit of detections for PAH in sediment.....	83
Table 2.21: Advantages and disadvantages of some SPME techniques	85

Table 3.1: Chemical structure of the pesticide compounds	90
Table 3.2: Temperature and conditioning guidelines for SPME Fibre coating	94
Table 3.3: Comparing oven programmes – initial temperature ..	97
Table 3.4: Ramp rate °C per minute comparison	99
Table 3.5: GC injection port type	101
Table 3.6 GC inlet temperature and the best developed method details.....	103
Table 3.7: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in water.....	112
Table 3.8: PEG SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in water	113
Table 3.9: Carbon/PDMS SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in water	113
Table 3.10: Statistical parameters of 0.05 ppm pesticide spiked in milk.....	117
Table 3.11: Statistical parameters of 0.05 ppm pesticide spiked in milk with DCM....	117
Table 3.12: Statistical parameters of 0.05 ppm pesticide spiked in milk with diethylether.....	117
Table 3.13: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in Orange	119
Table 3.14: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in Orange with DCM	119
Table 3.15: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in Orange with diethyl ether	119
Table 3.16: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in Orange	122
Table 3.17: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in Orange with DCM	122
Table 3.18: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in Orange with diethyl ether.....	122
Table 3.19: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in water	125

Table 3.20: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in water with DCM	125
Table 3.21: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in water with diethyl ether	125
Table 3.22: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in milk	129
Table 3.23: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in milk with DCM	129
Table 3.24: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in milk with diethyl ether	129
Table 3.25: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in Orange	132
Table 3.26: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in Orange with DCM	132
Table 3.27: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in Orange with diethyl ether	132
Table 3.28: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in stream water	134
Table 3.29: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in stream water with DCM	134
Table 3.30: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm pesticide compounds spiked in stream water with diethyl ether	134
Table 3.31: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$) spiked in water.	138
Table 3.32: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2 - 0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$) spiked in water	140
Table 3.33: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2 - 0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$) spiked in water with diethyl ether	141
Table 3.34: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2 - 0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$) spiked in water with diethyl ether	142
Table 4.1: Chemical structure of TPH compounds.....	149
Table 4.2: Temperature and conditioning guidelines for SPME Fibre coating.....	152
Table 4.3: Comparing oven programmes – initial temperature	157
Table 4.4: ...Oven program- hold time	158

Table 4.5: Oven program – ramp temperature.....	160
Table 4.6: GC injection port type.....	161
Table 4.7: GC Inlet temperature and the best-developed method details.....	163
Table 4.10: Statistic parameter of 0.05 ppm TPH compounds spiked in water with polyacrylate fibre	170
Table 4.11: Statistical parameters for GCMS peak areas of 0.05 ppm TPH spiked in milk...	173
Table 4.12: Statistic parameter for GCMS peak areas of 0.05 ppm TPH spiked in milk with DCM.....	173
Table 4.13: Statistic parameter for GCMS peak areas of 0.05 ppm TPH spiked in milk with diethyl ether.....	173
Table 4.14: Statistic parameter of 0.05 ppm TPH compounds spiked in Orange juice with polyacrylate fibre.....	176
Table 4.15: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm TPH compounds spiked in stream water.....	180
Table 4.16: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm TPH compounds spiked in water.....	181
Table 4.17: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm TPH compounds spiked in milk.....	185
Table 4.18: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm TPH compounds spiked in Orange juice.....	187
Table 4.19: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm TPH compounds spiked in stream water.....	190
Table 4.20: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 ppm) spiked in water....	192
Table 4.21: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 ppm) spiked in water....	193
Table 4.22: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 ppm) spiked in water with diethyl ether.....	196
Table 4.23: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 ppm) spiked in water with diethyl ether.....	197
Table 4.24: Analytical performance characteristics of HS-SPME–GC–MS.....	197
Table 5.1: Chemical structure of discretionary aromatic compounds	202
Table 5.2: Temperature and conditioning guidelines for SPME Fibre coating.....	205
Table 5.3: Complete oven parameters for 3 choices of initial temperature.....	211
Table 5.4: Ramp rate °C per minute comparison.....	212
Table 5.5: Settings for the two GC injection port types used.....	214
Table 5.6: GC inlet temperature and the best-developed method details.....	215

Table 5.7: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic compounds spiked in water.....	225
Table 5.8: Statistical parameters of 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic spiked in milk.....	230
Table 5.9: Statistical parameters of 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic spiked in milk with DCM.....	230
Table 5.10: Statistical parameters of 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic spiked in milk with diethyl ether.....	230
Table 5.11: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic compounds spiked in Orange juice.....	233
Table 5.12: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.05 ppm discretionary aromatic compounds spiked in-stream water.....	236
Table 5.13: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic compounds spiked in water.....	237
Table 5.14: GC signal peak areas of a Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling of 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic compounds spiked into milk.....	242
Table 5.15: GC signal peak areas when using Polyacrylate SPME fibre for headspace sampling of 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic compounds spiked in Orange juice.....	244
Table 5.16: Polyacrylate SPME fibre in headspace sampling in 0.0005 ppm discretionary aromatic compounds spiked in-stream water.....	246
Table 5.17: Data analysis of the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$) spiked in water..	249
Table 5.18: Data analysis of the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 $\mu\text{g.mL}^{-1}$) spiked in water..	250
Table 5.19: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 ppm) spiked in water with diethyl ether	252
Table 5.20: Data analysis from the calibration curves (0.2-0.0005 ppm) spiked in water with diethyl ether	253
Table 5.21: Linearity, LODs, LOQs, and accuracy study of VOCs.....	254