Kinetics and Mechanism of the Addition of Benzylamines to Ethyl-α-cyanocinnamates in Acetonitrile

Hyuck Keun Oh, Jin Hee Yang, Young Hee Hwang,[†] Hai Whang Lee,[‡] and Ikchoon Lee^{*,‡}

Department of Chemistry, Chonbuk National University, Chonju 561-756, Korea Department of Forest, Chonbuk National University, Chonju 561-756, Korea Department of Chemistry, Inha University, Inchon 402-751, Korea Received October 5, 2001

Nucleophilic addition reactions of benzylamines (BA: XC₆H₄CH₂NH₂) to ethyl- α -cyanocinnamates (ECC: YC₆H₄CH=C(CN)COOEt) have been investigated in acetonitrile at 30.0 °C. The rate is first order with respect to BA and ECC. The rate is slower than that expected from the additive effect of σ^- or R^- for the activating groups (CN and COOEt). Natural bond orbital $\pi^-_{c=c}$ calculations show that the contribution of COOEt group may not be fully effective despite the coplanar molecular structure. The selectivity parameters including the cross-interaction constant ($\rho_{XY} = -0.22$) indicate that the addition occurs in a single step. The kinetic isotope effects ($k_{\rm H}/k_{\rm D}$ = 2.5-2.8) involving deuterated BA (XC₆H₄CH₂ND₂) nucleophiles and activation parameters (ΔH^{*} =4-6 kcal mol⁻¹; ΔS^{*} = -45~- 52 e.u.) suggest a cyclic transition state in which N-C_{α} and H-C_{β} bonds are formed concurrently.

Keywords : Nucleophilic addition reaction, Natural bond orbital calculation, Cross-interaction constant. Kinetic isotope effect.

Introduction

Nucleophilic additions of amines to activated olefins in acetonitrile (eq. 1) are found to proceed in a single step to neutral products.¹ This is in striking contrast to the mechanism of addition in aqueous solution through zwitter-ionic intermediate² (eq. 2).

In most cases in aqueous solution the acid-base equilibria.

ArCH=CZZ' +
$$R_2NH \xrightarrow{k_2} ArCH-CHZZ'$$

NR₃ (1)

ArCH=CZZ' + R₂NH
$$\xrightarrow{k_a}$$
 ArCH-C \xrightarrow{Z} $\xrightarrow{k_b}$ Products
NHR₂ Z' (2)

 $T_A^{\pm} \rightleftharpoons T_A^{-}$, is rapidly established subsequently and hence nucleophilic addition, k_a , is rate limiting.² In this mechanism, the development of resonance into the activating (electronacceptor) group (Z.Z') lags behind charge transfer or bond formation and hence the transition state (TS) becomes imbalanced.² Thus the ease of the initial attack by amines on C_{α} and hence the polar electron-withdrawing effect of Z.Z', is the rate determining factor for the reaction in aqueous solution. This means that the greater the electronwithdrawing power ($\Sigma\sigma$) of the activating group (Z.Z'), the faster becomes the rate. In contrast the rate in acetonitrile (eq. 1) increases with the sum of exalted substituent constants $\Sigma\sigma_p^-$, since the addition step. k_2 , involves π orbitals through an sp² carbon center, C_{α} . In the present work, we aim to further investigate the mechanistic difference of the amine addition to olefins between in water and in acetonitrile by conducting kinetic studies of benzylamine (BA) additions to ethyl- α -cyano-

$$\underset{COOEt}{\overset{\mathsf{N}}{\longrightarrow}} C = C \underbrace{\underset{COOEt}{\overset{\mathsf{CN}}{\longrightarrow}} + \mathrm{XC}_{e}\mathrm{H}_{4}\mathrm{C}\mathrm{H}_{2}\mathrm{N}\mathrm{H}_{2}}_{20,0^{1/2}} \xrightarrow{\mathrm{MeCN}} \mathrm{YC}_{e}\mathrm{H}_{2} \underbrace{\underset{\mathsf{COOEt}}{\overset{\mathsf{COOEt}}{\longrightarrow}} + \underset{\mathsf{N}C}{\overset{\mathsf{COOEt}}{\longrightarrow}} (3)$$

cinnamates (ECC) in acetonitrile at 30.0 °C, eq. 3. We have determined various selectivity parameters including crossinteraction constant $\rho_{XY_1}^3$ eqs. 4 where X and Y are the substituents in the nucleophile (X) and substrate (Y), respectively.

$$\log (k_{\rm XY}/k_{\rm HH}) = \rho_{\rm X} \sigma_{\rm X} + \rho_{\rm Y} \sigma_{\rm Y} + \rho_{\rm XY} \sigma_{\rm X} \sigma_{\rm Y}$$
(4a)

$$\rho_{\rm NY} = \partial \rho_{\rm Y} / \partial \sigma_{\rm N} = \partial \rho_{\rm N} / \partial \sigma_{\rm Y} \tag{4b}$$

Results and Discussion

The reactions studied in this work (eq. 3) obeyed a simple rate law given by eqs. 5 and 6 where k_2 is the rate constant

$$-\frac{d[\text{ECC}]}{dt} = k_{\text{obs}}[\text{ECC}]$$
(5)

$$k_{\rm obs} = k_2[{\rm BA}] \tag{6}$$

for the benzylamine (BA) addition to the ethyl- α -cyanocinnamates (ECC). No catalysis by a second BA molecule was detected in the present studies. Plots of $k_{obs} vs$. [BA] were linear for ca. 10-fold increase in [BA]. The k_2 values obtained from the slopes of these plots are summarized in Table 1. The selectivity parameters, the Hammett ρ_X and ρ_Y

^{*}Corresponding Author. Fax: +82-32-865-4855; e-mail: ilee@inha.ac.kr

Table 1. The second order rate constants, $k_2 \times 10^2 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ for the addition reactions of X-benzylamines to ethyl- α -cyano-Y-cinnamates in acetonitrile at 30.0 °C

X		a ^a				
	p-Me	Н	p-Cl	<i>p</i> -Br	p-NO ₂	$ ho_{Y^{lpha}}$
p-OMe	2.79	3.34	4.36	4.65	7.63	0.46±(0.03)
	2.14^{b}				5.38	
	1.61°				3,77	
<i>p</i> -Me	2.25	2.73	3.38	3.54	5.59	0.41±(0.02)
H	1.47	1.62	2.01	2.16	3.32	0.38±(0.02)
	0.828	0.929	1.11	1.16	1.75	0.35±(0.01)
p-Cl	0.591				1.19	
-	0.418				0.801	
$\rho_{\rm x}^{d}$	-1.07	-1.15	-1.21	-1.22	-1.29	
	(±0.02)	(± 0.05)	(± 0.03)	(± 0.01)	(±0.02)	$\rho_{\rm XY}^{e}$ = -0.22
$\beta_{\rm X}'$	1.02	1.09	1.15	1.416	1.23	(±0.05)
	(±0.05)	(± 0.08)	(± 0.06)	(±0.05)	(± 0.04)	

"The σ values were taken from reference 11. Correlation coefficients were better than 0.995 in all cases. ^bAt 20.0 °C. 'At 10.0 °C. "The source of σ is the same as for footnote *a*. Correlation coefficient were better than 0.998 in all cases. 'Correlation coefficient was 0.999. 'The pK_a values were taken from Fischer, A.; Galloway, W. J.; Vaughan, J. J. Chem. Soc. **1964.** 3588. Correlation coefficient were better than 0.995 in all cases. The pK_a = 9.67 was used for X = p-CH₃O. (Oh. H. K.; Lee J. Y.; Lee, I. Bull. Korean. Chem. Soc. **1998**, *19*, 1198.)

values and the Bronsted $\beta_{\rm X}$ values, are also shown in Table 1 together with the cross-interaction constant $\rho_{\rm NY}$ (eqs. 4). Although the $\beta_{\rm X}$ values are based on the plots of log k_2 (MeCN) against p K_a of the BAs in water, they are thought to be reliable since it was found both experimentally and theoretically that the absolute values of pK_a for conjugate acids of amines in MeCN differ from those in water by a reasonably constant value of ΔpK_a (= $pK_{\rm MeCN}$ - $pK_{\rm H20}$) \cong 7.5.⁴ Bruice and cowoker⁵ have investigated ester hydrolysis mechanism using *p*-nitrophenyl-2-cyano-3-(*p*-methoxyphen-yl) propenoate (*p*-CH₃O-C₆H₄CH=C(CN)COOC₆H₄-*p*-NO₂). They found that the ester hydrolysis occurs with the expulsion of *p*-NO₂-phenoxide leaving group in aqueous solution. This step was found to have a substantially high activation barrier. $\Delta H^a = 26.9 \pm 1.0$ kcal mol⁻¹ with ΔS^a =

-6.0 \pm 3.1 e.u. In the present work, such ester aminolysis mechanism may also be a possibility, but in our product analysis we found no ester aminolysis product. The leaving group in the present case is EtO group which is a very poor nucleofuge and the reaction medium is also an aprotic one (MeCN) so that such possibility can be safely ruled out. Ialani *et al.*⁶ have reported on the kinetic studies of the BA additions to ECC in acetonitrile using various BAs. Their data disagree with our corresponding results. One reason may be that they plotted log [ECC] *vs.* time instead of ln [ECC] *vs.* time, and they have not reported how well the reaction temperature was controlled. Otherwise, we are not sure why there are such disagreements.

In general, rates of amine additions to activated olefins are much faster in water ($ca \ge 10^2$ fold) than those for the corresponding reaction in acetonitrile.¹ Although the ratelimiting steps in both media are believed to be the initial nucleophilic addition. k_a in water (eq. 2) and k_2 in acetonitrile (eq. 1). effects of the activating (electron-withdrawing) groups (Z,Z') on the rate are found to be different: In water the stabilization of the imbalanced transition state (delocalization of which into the activating groups (Z,Z')lags behind the C_{α} -N bond formation) is important so that the rate (intrinsic rate) increases with the sum of electron accepting power of the activating groups, $\Sigma \sigma_{\rm p}$.¹ In acetonitrile, however, the rate was found to increase with the sum of electron-accepting ability of Z.Z' through π -orbitals *i.e.*, the sum of through conjugative electron-accepting power. $\Sigma \sigma_{\rm p}^{-}$ or ΣR^{-1} . This is of course a manifestation of the mechanistic difference in the two media, *i.e.*, the amine addition reaction in water proceeds through an intermediate (eq. 2), whereas that in acetonitrile proceeds by a single step addition (eq. 1). The rates of amine additions to various activated olefins in water and in acetonitrile are compared in Table 2. The available rate data in aqueous solution show general parallelism between the intrinsic rate $(\log k_0)^{2b.7}$ and the sum of the normal substituent constants ($\Sigma \sigma_0$). For ECC the data in aqueous solution are not available, but we can predict that the $\log k_0$ values will fall in between benzylidenemalononitrile (BMN) and benzylidene-1.3-indandione (BID). In acetonitrile, however, only the through conjugative electron shift, $\Sigma \sigma_{\rm e}^-$ or ΣR^- , *i.e.*, the electron shift through π -

Table 2. Comparisons of reactivity parameter for the amine addition reaction, YC₆H₄CH=CZZ'+XC₆H₄CH₂NH₂, in acetonitrile

1	.p	n in the second s								
Entry	Z, Z'	$k_2^{a}/M^{-1}s^{-1}$	$\log k_0^c$	$ ho_{\mathrm{X}^{e}}$	$ ho_{Y^{\mathcal{S}}}$	$ ho_{\mathrm{XY}^f}$	$\Sigma \sigma^{\!s}$	$\Sigma \sigma^{-h}$	ΣR^{-i}	Ref.
l (BMN)	CN, CN	1.48^{b}	4.94 (≈7.0) ^d	-1.62	-0.55	-0.31	1.32	2.00	0.98	16
2 (BID)	$(CO)_2C_6H_4$	1.48	(3.13)	-1.10	0.41	-0.33	0.83	2.08	1.30	Ic
3 (NS)	NO ₂ , H	2.63×10^{-2}	2.55 (0.73)	-1.22	1.73	-0.40	0.78	1.27	0.62	la
4 (ECC)	CN, COOEt	1.62 × 10 ⁻² (30 °C)	_	-1.15	0.38	-0.22	1.11	1.00/+0.75*	0.49′+0.41 ^k	This work

^aFor X=Y=H at 25 °C unless otherwise noted. ^bExtrapolated to 25.0 °C. ^cIntrinsic rate constants, k_0 , for carbanion forming reactions (k_a in eq. 2) in 50% Me₂SO-50% H₂O at 20.0 °C with amines.^{2b.7} ^dThe same as b but for CH₂ZZ'+R₂NH. For Y=H or X=H. ^fCorrelation coefficients are better than 0.997 in all cases. ^sNormal Hammett substituent constants (σ_p). ^bExalted substituent constant (σ_p^{-}). ^cSwain-Lupton resonance constant. ^fFor CN. ^kFor COOEt.

orbital. is important. Table 2 shows that the rate for ECC is slower than that for NS (nitrostyrene) which indicates that the through conjugative electron withdrawing power of the COOEt group ($\sigma_p^- = 0.75$ and $R^- = 0.41$) is not fully operative.

Our MO theoretical calculations (B3LYP/6-31+G* optimized geometries⁸) for $H_2C=C(CN)COOEt$ show that the COOEt group is coplanar with the vinylic π -orbital and the trans C=C/C=O form is more stable than the cis C=C/C=O form with a substantial rotational barrier (ca. 7 kcal mol⁻¹) between the two conformers. If we compare the natural bond orbital (NBO)⁹ $\pi^*_{c=c}$ MO levels (at the HF/6-31+G*// B3LYP/6-31+G^{*}level⁸) in the mono CN (0.183 a.u.) and COOEt substituted (0.209 a.u.) with that in the CN+COOEt disubstituted (0.175 a.u.) ethylene, the $\pi^*_{c=c}$ level in the latter disubstituted ethylene is quite closer to that of the mono CN substituted one, albeit the $\pi^*_{c=c}$ level of the mono CN ethene is depressed somewhat by an additional COOEt substituent. It is well established that the π^* LUMO level is important in determining the rate of the initial π -attack of the nucleophile to the olefins; the lower the π^* level the faster is the rate of the addition.¹⁰ This means that although the R^- value of COOEt $(0.41)^{11}$ is only smaller by 0.08 than that for CN (R^{-1} = 0.49),¹¹ the effect on $\pi^*_{c=c}$ lowering by COOEt is relatively small, *i.e.*, the R^- (and/or σ_p^-) is not fully additive. This could be the reason why the rate for ECC is slower than that for NS.

The cross-interaction constants, $\rho_{\rm XY}$ in eqs. 4, are all negative for the four series in Table 2. This shows that the cross-interaction constants, $\rho_{\rm XY}$ in the bond formation process is negative.^{1c,3} It is also notable that the magnitude of $\rho_{\rm XY}$ (-0.22) as well as $\rho_{\rm Y}$ (+0.38) value for ECC is smaller than those for BMN ($\rho_{\rm XY}$ = -0.31)^{1b}, BID ($\rho_{\rm XY}$ = -0.33)^{1c} and NS ($\rho_{\rm XY}$ = -0.40).^{1a} This is consistent with somewhat lower degree of N-C_a bond formation in the TS for ECC than those for the BA addition to other activated olefins listed in Table 2.³

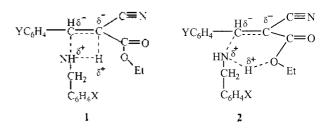
The kinetic isotope effects, $k_{\rm H}/k_{\rm D}$ (Table 3). involving deuterated benzylamine nucleophiles¹² (XC₆H₄CH₂ND₂) are greater than one. $k_{\rm H}/k_{\rm D}$ = 2.5-2.8, suggesting a possibility of hydrogen-bond formation (1 and/or 2) as have been pro-

Table 3. Kinetic isotope effects on the second-order rate constants (k_2) for the addition reactions of deuterated X-bezylamines (X-C₆H₄CH₂ND₂) to ethyl- α -cyano-Y-cinnamates in acetonitrile at 30.0 °C

x	Y	$k_{\rm H} \times 10^2 / {\rm M}^{-1} {\rm s}^{-1}$	$k_{\rm D} \times 10^2 / { m M}^{-1} { m s}^{-1}$	$k_{\rm H}/k_{\rm D}$
p-OMe	p-Me	2.79(±0.01)	1.04(±0.01)	2.68±0.02"
p-OMe	Н	3.34(±0.03)	1.23(±0.01)	2.72 ± 0.03
p-OMe	<i>p</i> -Cl	4.36(±0.03)	1.59(±0.01)	2.74 ± 0.03
p-OMe	<i>p-</i> Br	4.65(±0.04)	1.68(±0.01)	2.77±0.03
p-OMe	p-NO ₂	7.63(±0.08)	2.73(±0.03)	2.79±0.04
<i>p</i> -Cl	p-Me	0.828(±0.008)	0.329(±0.003)	2.52 ± 0.03
<i>p</i> -C1	Н	0.929(±0.001)	0.364(±0.003)	2.55±0.03
<i>p</i> -C1	p-Cl	$1.11(\pm 0.01)$	0.430(±0.004)	2.58 ± 0.03
p-C1	p-Br	1.16(±0.01)	0.446(±0.004)	2.60 ± 0.03
<i>p</i> -C1	p- NO ₂	1.75(±0.02)	0.663(±0.008)	2.64±0.04

"Standard deviations.

posed for the BA additions in acetonitrile to other activated olefins listed in Table 2. The hydrogen bonding of the N-H proton toward one of the oxygen atoms in the COOEt group, **2**. (mostly toward the ester oxygen, since the *trans* C=C/C=O form is more stable) is also a possibility, albeit such hydrogen-bonding may involve a too long H-bond as the lone pair on N (n_N) of BA approaches to the $C_a=C_\beta \pi$ -bond



almost vertically from above (or below) the molecular plane of ECC.

The $k_{\rm H}/k_{\rm D}$ (>1.0) values increase with an electron acceptor Y and an electron donor X, which is in line with the C_{α} -N bond formation in the TS with a greater degree of bond making by a stronger electron-donor X. $\delta\sigma_{\rm X} \le 0$ (with a larger positive Y. $\delta \rho_{\rm Y} \ge 0$ and by a stronger electronaccepter Y. $\delta \sigma_{\rm Y} > 0$ (with a larger negative X, $\delta \rho_{\rm X} < 0$) leading to a negative cross-interaction constant $\rho_{\rm XY}$ eq. 4b. The activation parameters. ΔH^{*} and ΔS^{*} (Table 4), are quite similar to those for the corresponding reaction of other activated olefins in Table 2 in acetonitrile with low ΔH^{*} and large negative ΔS^{*} values. These are consistent with the concurrent N-C $_{\alpha}$ and H-C $_{\beta}$ bond formation in the TS, 1. Since exclusion repulsion energy in the N-C $_{\alpha}$ bond making is partially offset by the bond energy of the partial bond formed, and also by the H-C $_{\beta}$ bond formation, barrier to bond formation in the rate determining step should be low with little variation depending on X and/or Y. This is because the higher barrier for a weaker nucleophile ($\delta \sigma_X > 0$) is partially offset by a stronger acidity of the N-H proton in the H-bond formation. The large negative entropy of activation is in line with fourcentered constrained TS structure. 1.

Experimental Section

Materials. Merck GR acetonitrile was used after three distillations. The benzylamine nucleophiles, Aldrich GR, were used after recrystallization. Ethyl cyanoacetate and benz-

Table 4. Activation parameters^{α} for the addition reactions of X-benzylamines to ethyl- α -cyano-Y-cinnamates in acetonitrile

-	-	•	
Х	Y	$\Delta H^{\neq}/\text{kcal mol}^{-1}$	−ΔS [≠] /cal mol ⁻¹ K ⁻¹
<i>p</i> -OMe	<i>p</i> -Me	4.1	52
<i>p-</i> OMe	p-NO ₂	5.4	45
<i>p-</i> Cl	p-Me	5.3	51
<i>p-</i> Cl	p-NO ₂	6.1	47

^aCalculated by the Eyring equation. The maximum errors calculated (by the method of Wiberg, K. B. *Physical Organic Chemistry*, Wiley: New York, 1964: p 378.) are ± 0.5 kcal mol⁻¹ and ± 2 e.u. for ΔH^{z} and ΔS^{z} , respectively.

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aldehydes were Aldrich reagent.

Preparations of Ethyl- α **-Cyanocinnamates.** The ethyl- α -cyanocinnamates were prepared by the literature method of Zabicky.¹³ A 0.1 M ethanolic solution of both benzaldehyde and ethyl cyanoacetate with few drops of piperidine was refluxed for 4-6 hours. The solvent was quickly evaporated, and the residue cooled. filtered off. and purified by repeated recrystallizations from ethanol (yield > 85%). Melting point, IR (Nicolet 5BX FT-IR) and ¹H and ¹³C NMR (JEOL 400 MHz) data were found to agree well with the literature values.

Kinetic Measurement. The reaction was followed spectrophotometrically by monitoring the decrease in the concentration of ethyl- α -cyanocinnamates, [ECC]. at λ_{max} of the substrate to over 80% completion. The reaction was studied under pseudo first-order condition. [ECC] = 8.0×10^{-5} M and [BA] = 0.1-0.4 M at 30.0 ± 0.1 °C. The pseudo first-order rate constant, k_{obs} , was determined from the slope of the plot (r > 0.994) of ln [ECC] vs. time. Second-order rate constants, k_3 , were obtained from the slope of a plot (r > 0.993) of k_{obs} vs. benzylamine with more than four concentrations of BA and more than three runs at each [BA], and were reproducible to within $\pm 3\%$.

Product Analysis. Ethyl- α -cyanocinnamates (0.01 mole) and benzylamine (0.05 mole) were reacted in acetonitrile at 30.0 °C. After more than 15 half lives, solvent was removed under reduced pressure and product was separated by column chromatography (silica gel. 20% ethylacetate/*n*-hexane). Analytical data of the product gave the following results.

p-Cl-C₆H₄CH(NHCH₂C₆H₄-*p*-OCH₃)CH(CN)COOEt: m.p. 143-45 °C, IR (KBr), 3341 (N-H, stretch). 2919 (C-H. CH₃), 2234 (C=N), 1718 (C=O), 1589 (C=C, aromatic); ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃), 1.36 (3H, t, COOCH₂CH₃), 1.76 (1H, b, NH), 3.73 (3H, s, OCH₃), 3.89 (1H, s, H-C(CN) COOEt), 4.29 (2H, q, COOCH₂), 4.75 (1H, s, PhCH), 6.88-7.70 (8H, m, aromatic ring): ¹³C NMR (100.4 MHz, CDCl₃). 190.8, 160.1, 158.7, 153.4, 140.7, 134.7, 134.6, 132.2, 131.9, 114.3, 113.9, 64.4, 55.6, 27.3, 22.8, 14.2.

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