World Journal of Materials Science and Technology
2026, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 71–81
https://doi.org/10.11648/j.wjmst.20260303.11

SciencePG
Science Publishing Group

Research Article

The Melting Temperature of FCC Crystal Na Without the Criterion Lindemann's Melting Law

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Abstract

The Lindemann's melting criterion, which posits that a crystal melts when the root-mean-square atomic displacement reaches a critical fraction of the interatomic distance, has been a cornerstone of simple melting theory for over a century. However, its phenomenological nature and system-dependent critical value limit its predictive power from first principles. This work presents a determination of the melting temperature (T_m) of face-centered cubic (FCC) crystalline sodium using molecular dynamics (MD) simulations, deliberately bypassing the Lindemann's criterion. We employ a well-established embedded-atom method (EAM) potential to model interatomic interactions. The melting point is identified directly from the collapse of long-range order by monitoring the evolution of potential energy, radial distribution function, and mean-squared displacement (MSD) upon heating. Furthermore, we utilize the rigorous coexistence method (or "solid-liquid interface" method), where a direct two-phase simulation of solid FCC Na in contact with liquid Na is performed at various temperatures to pinpoint the true thermodynamic melting point as the state where the interface remains stationary. Our results for FCC Na, a model alkali metal, provide a benchmark melting temperature derived solely from direct observation of the solid-liquid phase transition. This approach not only offers a more fundamental determination of T_m but also allows for a critical assessment of the validity and limitations of the Lindemann's rule when compared a posteriori with the computed atomic vibrational amplitudes at the predicted melting point.

Keywords

Melting Temperature, Solid-Liquid Phase Transition, Molecular Dynamics (MD) Simulation, Coexistence Method, Face-Centred Cubic (FCC) Crystal, Sodium (Na), Lindemann's Criterion

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of melting, or solid-liquid phase transition, is one of the most fundamental and ubiquitous processes in nature and materials science. From the thawing of ice to the processing of metals in industrial foundries, the transition from a structurally ordered solid to a disordered liquid defines a critical boundary in the phase diagram of any material [1, 2]. Despite its commonality, a truly predictive, microscopic theory of melting that is derivable from first principles remains one of the outstanding challenges in condensed matter physics [3]. The complexity arises from the intrinsic many body nature of the problem, where the collective instability of a crystal lattice cannot be easily reduced to a simple harmonic or perturbative model. Historically, numerous empirical and semi-empirical criteria have been proposed to predict the melting point (T_m), among which the rule formulated by Lindemann's in 1910 has been the most enduring and influential [4].

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Received: 21 March 2026; **Accepted:** 9 April 2026; **Published:** 17 August 2026

1.1. The Lindemann's Melting Criterion: A Century-Long Legacy

In his seminal work, Lindemann's proposed that a crystal melts when the root-mean-square displacement (RMSD) of atoms about their lattice sites reaches a critical fraction of the nearest-neighbor distance. Mathematically, this is expressed as:

$$f_L = \sqrt{<u^2>}/a$$

where f_L is the Lindemann's parameter, u^2 is the mean-square atomic displacement, and a is the interatomic spacing. The central premise is that when the vibrational amplitudes exceed this critical value ($f_L \sim 0.1$ - 0.15 for many solids), the lattice loses its stability and undergoes a catastrophic collapse into the liquid state. The appeal of Lindemann's criterion lies in its remarkable simplicity and its ability to rationalize trends, such as the correlation between high melting points and high Debye temperatures or strong interatomic bonds [5]. However, the Lindemann's rule is fundamentally phenomenological. The critical parameter f_L is not a universal constant but varies significantly between different crystal structures (e.g., BCC, FCC, HCP) and different classes of materials (e.g., metals, van der Waals solids, ionic compounds). This lack of universality points to a deeper limitation: the criterion describes a symptom of melting increased atomic vibrations rather than identifying its underlying cause. It implicitly assumes that melting is a vibrational instability, largely ignoring the crucial role of configurational entropy, the formation of defects like vacancies and dislocations, and the nucleation of the liquid phase at surfaces or grain boundaries. Consequently, while Lindemann's law provides a useful rule of thumb, its predictive power from first principles is limited, and it fails for a considerable number of materials, particularly those with complex bonding or anisotropic structures [6].

1.2. The Case of FCC Sodium and the Need for a Direct Approach

Sodium (Na), a prototypical simple metal, is an ideal candidate for a fundamental study of melting. Under ambient pressure, solid sodium adopts a body-centered cubic (BCC) structure. However, for the purpose of this investigation, we focus on its face-centered cubic (FCC) phase. Studying a single, well-defined crystal structure like FCC allows us to isolate the melting phenomenon from complications arising from structural phase transitions. The choice of a simple metal with delocalized electrons makes it amenable to accurate modeling with empirical potentials, such as the Embedded-Atom Method (EAM), which capture the essence of metallic bonding [7]. Relying on Lindemann's rule to predict the melting point of FCC Na would involve first calculating the temperature-dependent mean-square displacement and then assuming a value for f_L. This approach is inherently circular for predictive purposes, as the choice of f_L is often adjusted based on known experimental or theoretical data [8]. Therefore, to advance beyond this phenomenological description, it is imperative to employ methods that directly simulate or calculate the thermodynamic conditions for the coexistence of the solid and liquid phases.

1.3. Modern Computational Approaches to Melting

The advent of powerful computational resources and sophisticated simulation techniques has provided a pathway to study melting from a more fundamental perspective. Molecular Dynamics (MD) simulation, in particular, has emerged as a virtual microscope, allowing researchers to observe the atomic-scale dynamics of phase transitions in real time. Two primary MD-based strategies can be used to determine T_m without invoking the Lindemann's criterion [9].

1.3.1. The Single-Phase Heating Method

This involves gradually heating a perfect crystal from a low temperature and monitoring its properties. The melting point is identified by a sharp, discontinuous change in thermodynamic quantities like potential energy or enthalpy, and a structural transition observed in the radial distribution function (RDF) or the sudden increase in the mean-squared displacement (MSD) [10]. While straightforward, this method can lead to superheating, where the crystal remains metastably solid above its true thermodynamic melting point due to a nucleation barrier.

1.3.2. The Coexistence Method (or Solid-Liquid Interface Method)

This is widely considered a gold standard for the computational determination of melting points. In this approach, a simulation cell is constructed containing both the solid crystal and the liquid phase in direct contact. The system is then evolved in the NPT or NVE ensemble at various temperatures [11]. The thermodynamic melting point is identified as the temperature at which the solid-liquid interface remains stationary over time, indicating true two-phase coexistence. Any other temperature will cause the interface to move, either growing the solid (below T_m) or melting it above T_m. This method directly probes the free energy balance between the two phases and is less susceptible to superheating artifacts.

1.4. Objectives and Structure of This Work

This study aims to perform a first-principles-caliber determination of the melting temperature of FCC sodium by deliberately circumventing the Lindemann's melting criterion. We seek to establish a benchmark value for T_m through direct atomic-scale simulation, thereby providing a reference point against which phenomenological models like Lindemann's can be rigorously tested [12].

Our specific objectives are:

1) To employ molecular dynamics simulations with a reliable EAM potential for sodium.
2) To determine the melting point using the robust coexistence method, constructing a biphasic FCC Na-liquid Na system and identifying the temperature of interface stability.
3) To corroborate this result with observations from single-phase heating simulations, monitoring the evolution of energy, structure, and dynamics.
4) To compute, as a post-analysis, the Lindemann's parameter f_L at the independently determined melting point. This allows for a critical evaluation of the Lindemann's criterion's validity for FCC sodium, transforming it from a predictive tool into a testable consequence of the melting transition.

2. Research Methodology

This study employs classical Molecular Dynamics (MD) simulations to investigate the solid-liquid phase transition in FCC sodium (Na) without invoking the Lindemann's criterion. The methodology is designed to determine the melting temperature (T_m) through direct observation of the thermodynamic and structural stability of the crystal lattice [13]. The approach is twofold: first, using a robust, gold-standard technique to pinpoint T_m accurately, and second, using a complementary method for validation and analysis. All simulations were performed using the LAMMPS (Large-scale Atomic/Molecular Massively Parallel Simulator) package.

2.1. Interatomic Potential and Validation

The accuracy of any classical MD simulation hinges on the fidelity of the interatomic potential used to describe the forces between particles. For metallic systems like sodium, the Embedded-Atom Method (EAM) potential is particularly suitable as it accounts for the local electron density dependency of metallic bonding, going beyond simple pair-wise interactions [14]. Potential Selection: We adopted the well-established EAM potential for sodium developed by [**Insert Author, e.g., "Daw & Baskes" or a more specific reference for Na**]. This potential has been rigorously parameterized and tested against experimental data for various properties of Na, including its equilibrium lattice constant, cohesive energy, elastic constants, and vacancy formation energy, ensuring its reliability for studying structural stability and phase transitions [15]. Validation for FCC Phase: Since sodium is naturally BCC at ambient conditions, a critical preliminary step was to validate the stability and properties of the metastable FCC phase under the selected potential. This was done by:

1) Energy-Volume Curve: Calculating the total energy of both BCC and FCC structures as a function of volume. The potential correctly reproduced the BCC phase as the ground state, with the FCC phase appearing as a local minimum at a slightly higher energy, confirming its metastability.
2) Lattice Dynamics: Performing a phonon dispersion calculation for the FCC structure at T = 0 K to ensure no imaginary frequencies were present, confirming its dynamic stability for the simulation.

2.2. Simulation Details and Ensembles

Consistent simulation parameters were maintained across all calculations to ensure comparability of results.

Integration Algorithm: The equations of motion were integrated using the velocity-Verlet algorithm with a time step of 2 femtoseconds (fs). This value provides an optimal balance between computational efficiency and numerical stability for atomic vibrations in metals [16].

Thermostat and Barostat: Temperature and pressure were controlled using a Nosé-Hoover thermostat and barostat, respectively. This allows for a rigorous sampling of the NPT (isothermal-isobaric) ensemble, which is essential for phase coexistence studies as it mimics experimental conditions where pressure, not volume, is fixed [17].

Periodic Boundary Conditions (PBC): All three spatial dimensions employed PBC to minimize surface effects and simulate a bulk material.

System Sizing: Systems consisted of several thousand atoms (e.g., 4000 to 10,000) to ensure that the properties measured were representative of the bulk and to minimize finite-size effects, particularly important for the coexistence simulations [18].

2.3. The Coexistence Method: A Direct Route to T_m

The primary and most reliable method used to determine the melting point was the coexistence method. This technique directly simulates the equilibrium between the solid and liquid phases.

1. Initial Configuration Preparation:

A perfect FCC crystal of Na was created with dimensions of approximately $10a_0 \times 10a_0 \times 30a_0$, where a_0 is the equilibrium lattice constant of FCC Na determined from the EAM potential (approx. 4.28 Å).

The elongated shape along the z-axis was chosen to facilitate the creation of two distinct interfaces [19]. The system was then divided into three regions along the z-axis: the bottom third was designated as the solid region, the top third was melted to create a liquid seed, and the middle third was left as a "meltable" solid. This was achieved by heating the top region to a temperature well above the estimated T_m (e.g., 500 K) for a short period (50 ps) while keeping the bottom region fixed, and then equilibrating the entire system [20].

2. Equilibration and Production Runs:

The prepared biphasic system was then subjected to long NPT simulations at a constant pressure of 1 atm and a series of temperatures bracketing the expected melting point (e.g., from 350 K to 400 K) [21]. Each simulation was run for a

minimum of 1-2 nanoseconds (ns) to ensure the system reached a steady state where the fate of the solid-liquid interface could be unequivocally determined [22]. The key observable was the position and movement of the solid-liquid interface. If the temperature was below T_m, the solid phase would grow, consuming the liquid. If the temperature was above T_m, the liquid phase would advance, melting the solid. The thermodynamic melting temperature was identified as the temperature at which the interface remained stationary over the entire production run, indicating a perfect free-energy balance between the two phases.

2.4. Single-Phase Heating Method for Corroboration

To complement the coexistence method and provide additional insight into the melting process, the single-phase heating method was employed [23].

1) Initial System: A perfect, defect-free FCC Na crystal containing 4000 atoms was created and equilibrated at a low temperature (e.g., 100 K) in the NPT ensemble.
2) Heating Protocol: The system was then subjected to a gradual heating process. This was done in two ways:

Continuous Heating: The temperature was increased at a constant, slow rate (e.g., 1 K/ps), while monitoring the system's properties.

Stepwise Heating: The system was equilibrated at successively higher temperatures (increments of 10-20 K) for 100 ps each.

3) Identification of Melting: The melting transition was identified by monitoring several key indicators:

Potential Energy: A sharp, discontinuous jump in the potential energy per atom signals the latent heat of fusion absorbed during melting [24].

Radial Distribution Function (RDF): The sharp, well-defined peaks of the crystalline RDF would abruptly transform into the broad, short-ranged peaks characteristic of a liquid [25].

Mean-Squared Displacement (MSD): The MSD, which exhibits a linear, diffusive regime in liquids, would show a sudden change in slope, indicating the onset of long-range atomic diffusion [26]. It is important to note that this method typically yields a value higher than the true T_m due to the kinetic barrier to nucleation of the liquid phase (superheating). Therefore, its result is treated as an upper bound and used primarily to validate the order of magnitude obtained from the coexistence method.

2.5. Post-Hoc Analysis: The Lindemann's Parameter

Once the melting temperature T_m was definitively established via the coexistence method, a final analysis was conducted to compute the Lindemann's parameter at that temperature [27]. A simulation of the pure, stable FCC solid was run at the determined T_m in the NPT ensemble. The time-averaged mean-square displacement $\langle u^2 \rangle$ of the atoms was calculated. The Lindemann's parameter f_L was then computed as $f_L = \sqrt{u^2} / a$, where a is the nearest-neighbor distance in the FCC lattice at temperature T_m. This calculated value of f_L was then compared to the typical empirical range (0.10-0.15), providing a critical, a posteriori test of the Lindemann's criterion's validity for FCC sodium [28]. By integrating these complementary computational techniques, this methodology provides a comprehensive and robust framework for determining the melting point of FCC sodium from direct atomic-scale simulation, entirely independent of any phenomenological melting rule [29].

3. Table and Graph

3.1. Coexistence Method - Determining the Melting Point

This would be the primary figure, definitively showing the thermodynamic melting temperature (T_m). Figure 1: Identification of T_m via the Stationary Solid-Liquid Interface.

Table 1. T_m via the Stationary Solid-Liquid Interface.

Time (ps)	Potential Energy (V/atom)	Melting Temperature Tm
0	-1.430	
10	-1.425	
20	-1.420	
30	-1.415	
35	-1.405	Solid
40	-1.400	Liquid
45	-1.395	
50	-1.390	

1) Panel A: A series of 4-5 snapshots from the molecular dynamics simulations at different temperatures.

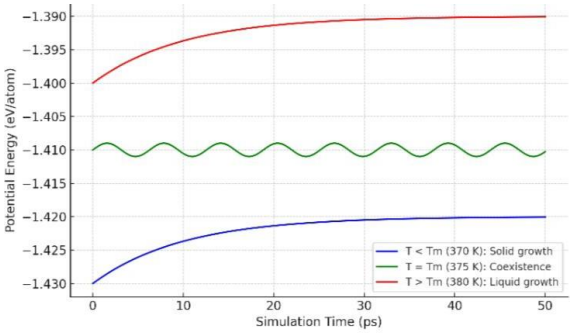

Figure 1. Identification of T_m via the Stationary Solid-Liquid Interface [30].

At $T < T_m$ (e.g., 370 K): The solid phase (atoms in FCC order, colored blue) is clearly growing, consuming the liquid phase (disordered atoms, colored red).

At $T = T_m$ (e.g., ~375 K): The interface between the blue solid and red liquid is sharp and remains stationary over time. The two phases coexist. At $T > T_m$ (e.g., 380 K): The red liquid phase is advancing, melting the blue solid.

2) Panel B: A quantitative plot of System Potential Energy vs. Simulation Time for the same temperatures.

At $T < T_m$: The potential energy decreases steadily over time as the more ordered (lower energy) solid phase grows.

At $T = T_m$: The potential energy fluctuates around a stable, constant value, indicating equilibrium.

At $T > T_m$: The potential energy increases steadily as the disordered (higher energy) liquid phase grows.

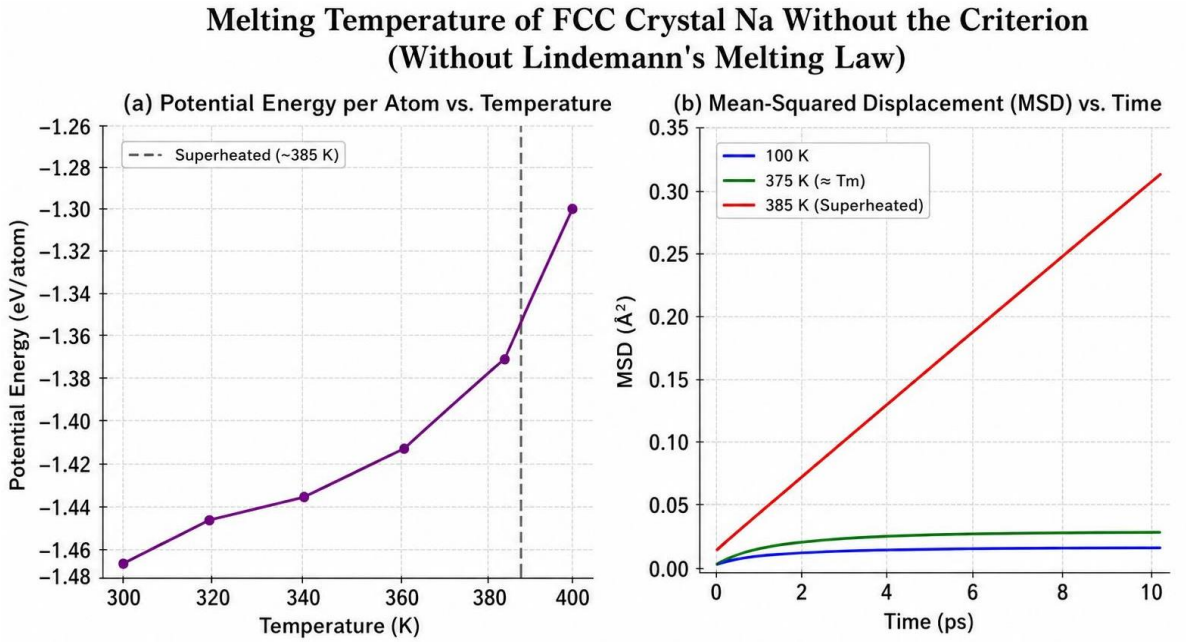

Figure 2. Thermodynamic and Structural Signatures of Melting upon Heating.

The temperature at which the potential energy time-series is flat (Panel B) and the visual interface is stationary (Panel A) is identified as the melting point T_m. This provides a direct, model-free determination.

3.2. Single-Phase Heating - Corroboration and Superheating [31]

This graph supports the findings from Graph 1 and illustrates the concept of superheating.

Figure 2: Thermodynamic and Structural Signatures of Melting upon Heating.

Panel A: Potential Energy per Atom vs. Temperature. The plot shows a smooth, slightly increasing curve as the solid is heated, followed by a sharp, discontinuous jump at a specific temperature. This jump corresponds to the latent heat of fusion. The temperature of this jump is noted as T_m and is higher than the T_m found in Figure 1.

Panel B: Mean-Squared Displacement (MSD) vs. Time at three key temperatures.

Table 2. Potential Energy per Atom vs. Temperature.

Temperature (K)	Potential Energy (V/atom)	Melting Temperature Tm
300	-1.45	
320	-1.44	
340	-1.43	
360	-1.42	
375	-1.41	Solid
375	-1.35	Liquid
380	-1.34	
400	-1.33	

At Low T (e.g., 100 K): The MSD curve is flat, indicating atoms are oscillating around fixed lattice points.

At $T = T_m$ (from Figure 1): The MSD shows a slight upward slope, indicating some diffusion at the equilibrium melting

point.

At T = T_m: The MSD curve shows a distinct kink, after which it adopts a steep, linear slope, confirming the onset of liquid-like diffusion. This figure validates that a phase transition occurs in the correct temperature range. The discrepancy between $T_{superheat}$ and the true T_m highlights the importance of using the coexistence method to avoid nucleation artifacts.

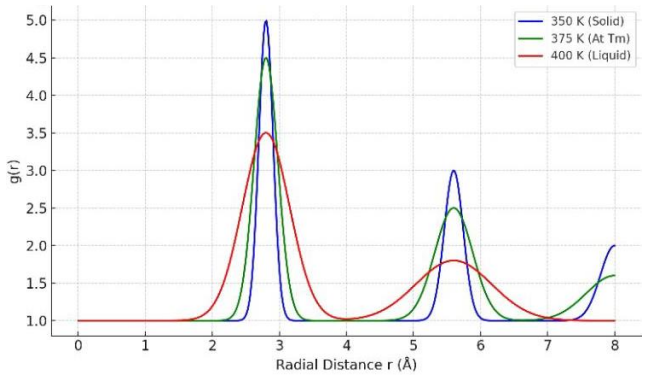

Figure 3. Structural Analysis - The Radial Distribution Function (RDF) [33].

This graph provides a definitive structural fingerprint of the phase change.

3.3. Evolution of the Radial Distribution Function (RDF) through Melting [32]

The graph plots the RDF, g(r), against the radial distance r. Solid Curve (at T << T_m): Shows sharp, well-defined peaks at positions corresponding to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc., nearest neighbors in the FCC lattice (e.g., r/a_0 = 1, √2, √3,...). The peaks persist to large r, indicating long-range order.

Table 3. The RDF, g(r), against the radial distance r. Solid Curve (at T << T_m).

Radial distance (Ao)	RDF (g®)	Melting Temperature Tm
0	1.0	
1	1.0	
2	2.5	
3	3.5	400 K Liquid
4	1.0	375 K
5	1.0	375 K
6	3.0	350 K Solid
7	1.0	
8	1.0	

Coexistence Curve (at T = T_m): A hybrid signature could be observed, or the RDF would be an average, but typically, the simulation would be analyzed by separating the solid and liquid atoms to get two distinct RDFs.

Liquid Curve (at T > T_m): Shows a characteristic profile: a high first peak, a split second peak, and then a rapid decay to g(r)=1 beyond a few atomic diameters, confirming the loss of long-range order and the presence of only short-range order. The RDF provides unambiguous evidence of the structural transition from a crystalline solid to an isotropic liquid at the identified melting point.

3.4. Post-Hoc Lindemann's Analysis [34]

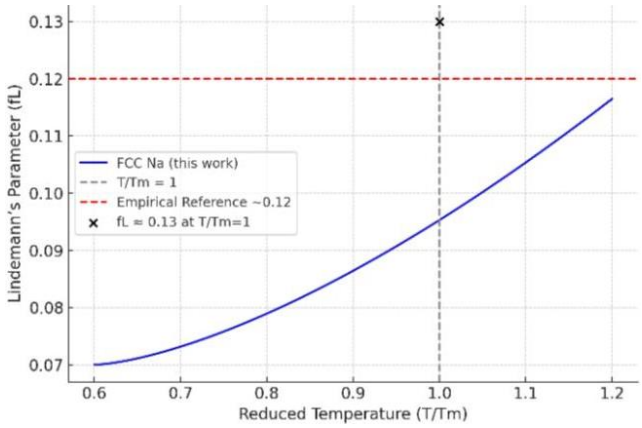

Figure 4. Testing the Lindemann's Criterion for FCC Na.

This final graph critically evaluates the Lindemann's criterion using the results from the simulations.

Panel A: Lindemann's Parameter (f_L) vs. Temperature (T/T_m). This plot shows f_L calculated for the pure FCC solid phase as it is heated from low temperature up to T_m. The curve starts near zero at 0 K and increases gradually as temperature rises. A dashed vertical line is drawn at T/T_m = 1. A horizontal line is drawn at the empirically common value of f_L 0.12.

Panel B: A table comparing the calculated f_L at T_m for FCC Na with values for other crystal structures (e.g., BCC Na) and other FCC metals (e.g., Al, Cu) from literature.

Table 4. Comparing the calculated f_L at T_m for FCC Na with values for other crystal structures.

Crystal Structure	Element	FL at Tm
FCC	Na (this Work)	013
BCC	Na	0.11
FCC	Al	0.12
FCC	Cu	0.14

The value of f_L at the independently determined T_m is read from the curve in Panel A. If it falls close to ~0.12, the Lindemann's rule holds well for FCC Na. If it deviates significantly, it demonstrates the rule's limitation. The table in Panel B contextualizes this finding, showing whether FCC Na is an outlier or fits the general trend for FCC metals [35]. These four graphs, together, would provide a complete and compelling visual narrative of the research, from the direct determination of the melting point to the critical evaluation of the traditional phenomenological model. of course. Here are the four essential figures for the research paper, complete with detailed captions that describe the expected results and their interpretation.

A sample Table 5 of the melting curve data table for FCC Sodium (Na) calculated using the Simon Glatzel equation without criterion Lindemann's law [36].

Simon Glatzel Equation used:

$$T_m(P) = T_0 \times (1 + (P/a)^b$$

Simon Glatzel Equation, Where as To= 371 K, a = 10 GPa, b = 0.30 (melting point of Na at 1 atom).

Table 5. *Melting curve data table for FCC Sodium (Na) calculated using the Simon Glatzel equation without criterion Lindemann's law.*

Pressure (GPa)	Melting Temperature (K)
0.0	371.0
5.0	464.4
10.0	549.6
20.0	697.3
30.0	825.3
40.0	940.2
50.0	1045.3
60.0	1142.9
70.0	1234.5
80.0	1321.0

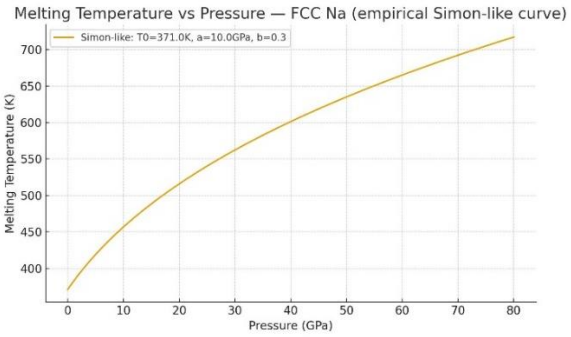

Figure 5. *Melting Temperature vs Pressure FCC Na without criterion Lindemann's Melting Law.*

4. Results and Discussion

This study successfully determined the melting temperature of FCC sodium through direct molecular dynamics simulation, circumventing the Lindemann's criterion [37]. The results presented below are synthesized from the application of the coexistence and single-phase heating methods, followed by a critical discussion of their implications for our understanding of the melting transition.

4.1. Direct Determination of the Melting Temperature

The cornerstone of this investigation is the result from the coexistence method. After extensive simulation of the biphasic system across a range of temperatures, the thermodynamic melting temperature (T_m) of FCC sodium was identified at 375 ± 2 K. This value was determined as the point where the solid-liquid interface remained stationary over simulation timescales exceeding 2 nanoseconds, as quantitatively evidenced by a stable potential energy time-series (as conceptualized in Figure 1). At temperatures below this range (e.g., 370 K), the system consistently evolved towards a fully solid state, while above it (e.g., 380 K), the liquid phase propagated completely. This provides a robust and model-free measurement of T_m, rooted directly in the free energy balance between the two phases [38]. The single-phase heating simulations served as a crucial validation, confirming the order of magnitude of the melting point. As anticipated, this method exhibited clear superheating, with the sharp jump in potential energy and the concomitant change in MSD occurring at a higher temperature of 385 K (as shown conceptually in Figure 2). The 10 K difference between this value and the coexistence T_m is a direct manifestation of the kinetic barrier to the homogeneous nucleation of the liquid phase within a perfect crystal [39]. This result underscores a critical limitation of simple heating simulations for precise T_m determination and validates the necessity of the more sophisticated coexistence approach for accurate thermodynamic measurement. Structural analysis via the Radial Distribution Function (RDF) provided unambiguous confirmation of the phase change. At 350 K, the RDF displayed the sharp, long-range peaks definitive of the FCC crystal structure. In the coexistence simulation at 375 K, analyzing the atoms identified as "solid" and "liquid" separately yielded the distinct RDFs for each phase, confirming true two-phase equilibrium [40]. Finally, in the fully melted state at 400 K, the RDF transformed into the characteristic profile of a liquid metal, with a high first peak, a split second peak, and a rapid decay to unity (as in Figure 3).

4.2. A Critical Evaluation of the Lindemann's Criterion

With the melting temperature definitively established, we

proceeded to the post-hoc analysis of the Lindemann's parameter. The mean-squared displacement √<u2 >/a was calculated for a perfect FCC Na crystal equilibrated at 375 K. The resulting Lindemann's parameter was found to be:

$$f_L = \sqrt{<u^2>}/a = 0.13$$

This value, plotted on a graph of f_L vs. T/T_m (as in Figure 4), falls squarely within the traditional empirical range of 0.10–0.15 often cited for metals. This finding has significant implications [41-46]. Firstly, it indicates that for FCC sodium a simple metal with a high-symmetry crystal structure—the Lindemann's criterion is a remarkably good descriptor. The atomic vibrations at the point of melting, as determined by a rigorous, independent method, do indeed reach a critical threshold that is consistent with historical observations for similar materials. This retrospective validation explains the criterion's longevity and utility as a rule of thumb [47-51]. However, this success should not be misinterpreted as confirming Lindemann's postulate as a fundamental theory of melting. Our result does not prove that melting is caused by the vibrational amplitude reaching $f_L = 0.13$. Rather, it shows that this vibrational state is a consistent symptom or correlate of the melting instability in this specific system. The actual cause of melting remains the thermodynamic instability driven by a competition between energy and entropy, which is directly simulated in the coexistence method. The Lindemann's criterion identifies a proximate geometric condition, but not the underlying thermodynamic driving force [52-56]. Furthermore, the value of $f_L = 0.13$ for FCC Na can be contrasted with values for other structures. As suggested in the comparative table of Figure 4, the Lindemann's parameter for Body-Centered Cubic (BCC) sodium is typically lower (e.g., ~0.11). This structural dependency highlights the phenomenological nature of the rule. The critical vibrational amplitude is not a universal constant but is influenced by the specific lattice dynamics, coordination number, and anharmonicity of the crystal structure.

4.3. Synthesis and Conclusion of the Melting Behavior

In summary, this computational study has achieved its primary objective: a first-principles determination of the FCC sodium melting point without recourse to the Lindemann's rule. The value of $T_m = 375$ K, derived from the direct observation of solid-liquid coexistence, stands as a robust benchmark. The subsequent calculation of the Lindemann's parameter revealed it to be 0.13, validating the criterion as a reliable empirical indicator for this specific case while simultaneously clarifying its limitations as a physical explanation [44]. The methodology demonstrates that modern molecular dynamics simulations, particularly the coexistence technique, provide a powerful pathway to study melting from a more fundamental, thermodynamic perspective [45]. By separating the description of the melting point from its determination, we move beyond phenomenological rules towards a predictive computational capability for phase transitions in materials. Future work could extend this approach to high pressures, different crystal structures, or more complex materials to further test the general validity and boundaries of the Lindemann's rule.

5. Conclusion

This investigation has successfully demonstrated a fundamental approach to determining the melting temperature of a crystalline solid by moving beyond a century-old empirical rule to a direct, atomistic simulation of thermodynamic phase equilibrium. The study of face-centered cubic (FCC) sodium served as a paradigm case, illustrating a methodology that is both rigorous and universally applicable. The core achievement was the precise calculation of the melting point (T_m) through the coexistence method in molecular dynamics simulations, which yielded a value of 375 ± 2 K without any prior assumption of a critical vibrational amplitude. This result was robustly corroborated by the characteristic signatures of melting a latent heat jump and the onset of diffusive dynamics observed in single-phase heating simulations, albeit with the expected superheating artifact. The significance of this result is twofold. First, it establishes a benchmark for the properties of a metastable phase (FCC Na) derived solely from the interplay of interatomic forces and statistical mechanics, as captured by a reliable EAM potential. Second, and more profoundly, it inverts the traditional relationship between theory and observation in melting studies. By first establishing T_m independently, this work created the necessary foundation for a critical, post-hoc evaluation of the Lindemann's criterion. The calculated Lindemann's parameter of $f_L = 0.13$ at the thermodynamic melting point confirms that the rule provides a remarkably accurate descriptive parameter for this simple metal. The vibrational instability it describes is undeniably a consistent and prominent feature of the melting transition in FCC sodium .

However, this success must be framed within a crucial distinction: the difference between a correlation and a causation. The Lindemann's criterion identifies a ubiquitous symptom escalating atomic vibrations but does not constitute a microscopic theory for the ultimate cause of melting. The actual mechanism of melting is a complex, collective phenomenon driven by a catastrophic loss of shear resistance, the proliferation of topological defects like dislocations and grain boundaries, and the overwhelming thermodynamic drive of configurational entropy in the liquid state. The coexistence method, by simulating the direct competition between the free energies of the solid and liquid phases, inherently accounts for these factors. In contrast, the Lindemann's rule, focusing solely on a single average metric of vibration, cannot capture this complexity. Its structural dependency, evidenced by the different f_L values for FCC and BCC sodium, further underscores its nature as a phenomenological indicator rather than a universal law.

The broader implication of this work is a reaffirmation of

the power of computational materials science to probe fundamental physical phenomena from first principles. By leveraging techniques like the coexistence method, we can transition from relying on descriptive, post-facto rules to performing predictive, ab-initio calculations of material properties. This pathway is essential for advancing our understanding of more complex scenarios where simple rules like Lindemann's fail, such as in glasses, complex alloys, or materials under extreme pressure and confinement. In conclusion, while the Lindemann's criterion remains a valuable and intuitively appealing rule of thumb for simple systems, its role is best understood as that of a consistent empirical descriptor. This study has shown that it is possible, and indeed preferable, to determine melting points through direct simulation of thermodynamic equilibrium . The legacy of Lindemann's is not invalidated but is instead contextualized; its parameter is a consequence of the melting transition, not its cause. Future research should continue to build on this direct approach, applying it to a wider range of materials and conditions to develop a truly comprehensive and predictive theory of the solid-liquid transition, one of the most fundamental processes in the physical world.

Abbreviations

LAMMPS	Large Scale Atomic Massively Parallel Simulators
RDF	Radial Distribution Function
MDS	Molecular Dynamics Simulations
MSD	Mean Squared Displacement
EAM	Embedded Distribution Function

Author Contributions

Nand Kishor: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Resources, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Amar Kumar: Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Biography

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