

OPTIMISATION OF ENZYMATIC REACTIONS FOR GALACTO-
OLIGOSACCHARIDES SYNTHESIS USING BETA-GALACTANASE FROM
Geobacillus mahadii Geo-05

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DEDICATION

Buat yang tersayang...

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All praises belong to Allah, The Almighty and The Benevolent♥.

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ABSTRACT

Galacto-oligosaccharide (GOS) is one of the prominent prebiotics used in infant formula milk. Endo-beta-1,4-galactanase hydrolyses galactan and produces GOS with different degree of polymerisation (DP). DP of the GOS could vary depending on the enzyme source. Besides, reaction parameters such as enzyme loading, substrate loading, incubation temperature, pH and reaction time also contribute to various DP of GOS synthesis. In this study, beta-galactanase from *Geobacillus mahadii* Geo-05 was synthesised with a codon optimised sequence (named BgcGC) and biochemically characterised for its optimum function. The BgcGC reaction was optimised to obtain the highest yield of the targeted GOS (galactotriose, G3 and galactotetraose, G4) from the potato galactan. Then, the optimised conditions were applied on pectin extracted from sweet potato peels (SPP) to produce the GOS. BgcGC could actively hydrolyse potato galactan at 60°C in McIlvaine buffer pH 6 and stable to a wide range of pH between 4 to 10. According to the screening by the factorial design, three reaction parameters significantly contributed to the highest yield of GOS. Due to curvature prediction, the central composite design was further applied to optimise BgcGC reaction to produce GOS. The optimum reaction parameters for the GOS synthesis were identified at 0.15 U/ml BgcGC loading, 1.5 h incubation time and 50°C reaction temperature yielding a 1.5-fold increment of the GOS synthesis. The reaction of BgcGC towards SPP pectin resulted in a 0.081 mg/g yield of G3. These findings showed that GOS synthesised by BgcGC could be enhanced through the manipulation of reaction parameters with a notable increment of GOS yield. Moreover, BgcGC exhibited the potential to be used as an enzyme cocktail for the depolymerisation of pectin polysaccharides.

ABSTRAK

Galakto-oligosakarida (GOS) adalah salah satu prebiotik penting yang digunakan dalam susu formula bayi. Endo-beta-1,4-galaktanase menghidrolisis galaktan dan menghasilkan GOS dengan derajat polimeran (DP) yang berbeza. Perbezaan DP GOS bergantung kepada sumber enzim. Selain itu, parameter tindak balas seperti muatan enzim, muatan substrat, suhu inkubasi, pH dan tempoh tindak balas juga menyumbang kepada sintesis GOS dengan pelbagai DP. Dalam kajian ini, beta-galaktanase daripada *Geobacillus mahadai* Geo-05 telah disintesis dengan jujukan kodon-optimum (dinamakan sebagai BgcGC) dan dicirikan secara biokimia untuk fungsinya yang optima. Tindak balas BgcGC dioptimumkan untuk memperoleh hasil GOS tertinggi (galaktotriose, G3 dan galaktotetraose, G4) daripada galaktan kentang. Kemudian, keadaan optima telah digunakan ke atas ekstrak pektin dari kulit ubi keledak (SPP) untuk menghasilkan GOS. BgcGC aktif menghidrolisis galaktan kentang pada suhu 60°C dalam larutan McIlvaine pH 6 dan mempunyai julat kestabilan pH yang besar di antara 4 hingga 10. Berdasarkan saringan reka bentuk faktorial, terdapat tiga parameter tindak balas yang penting dalam menyumbang kepada hasil GOS yang tertinggi. Disebabkan jangkaan kelengkungan, reka bentuk komposit berpusat seterusnya digunakan untuk mengoptimumkan tindak balas BgcGC bagi menghasilkan GOS. Parameter tindak balas optima untuk sintesis GOS telah dikenalpasti pada muatan 0.15 U/ml BgcGC, tempoh tindak balas 1.5 jam dan suhu inkubasi 50°C menghasilkan peningkatan 1.5 kali ganda sintesis GOS. Tindak balas BgcGC terhadap pektin SPP menghasilkan 0.081 mg/g G3. Penemuan ini menunjukkan sintesis GOS oleh BgcGC boleh ditingkatkan menerusi manipulasi parameter tindak balas dengan peningkatan hasil GOS yang ketara. Tambahan pula, BgcGC mempamerkan potensi untuk digunakan sebagai koktail enzim bagi penyahpolimeran polisakarida pektin.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

2-ME	-	2-mercaptoethanol
ABEE	-	<i>p</i> -aminobenzoic acid ethyl ester
ANOVA	-	analysis of variances
AP	-	apple pomace
A _x	-	absorbance
BgcGC	-	beta-galactanase with codon-optimised from <i>Geobacillus mahadii</i> Geo-05
BLAST	-	basic local alignment search tool
bp	-	base pair
BSA	-	bovine serum albumin
CAI	-	codon adaptation index
Ca ²⁺	-	calcium ion
CCD	-	central composite design
Co ²⁺	-	cobalt ion
Cu ²⁺	-	cuprum ion
Da	-	dalton
DA	-	debranched arabinan
DNA	-	deoxyribonucleic acid
DOE	-	design of experiment
DP	-	degree of polymerisation
EC	-	enzyme commission
EDTA	-	ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
FD	-	factorial design
Fe ²⁺	-	ferrous ion
g	-	gram
GH	-	glycoside hydrolase
G1	-	galactose
G2	-	galactobiose
G3	-	galactotriose
G4	-	galactotetraose
G5	-	galactopentaose

GOS	- galacto-oligosaccharide
h	- hours
HPLC-UV	- high-performance liquid chromatography-ultra violet
H ₂ SO ₄	- sulfuric acid
IMAC	- immobilised metal affinity chromatography
IPTG	- isopropyl β-D-1-thiogalactopyranoside
k _m	- Michaelis-Menten constant
k _{cat} /k _m	- catalytic efficiency
K ⁺	- potassium ion
LB	- luria bertani
LG	- lupin galactan
M	- molar
Mg ²⁺	- magnesium ion
min	- minutes
Mn ²⁺	- manganese ion
MW	- molecular weight
NEB	- new england biolabs
Ni-NTA	- nickel-nitriloacetic acid
Ni ²⁺	- nickel ion
n.s	- not specified
OD	- optical density
OFAT	- one-factor-at-a-time
PAHBAH	- <i>p</i> -hydroxybenzoic acid hydrazide
PA	- pectin from apples
PG	- potato galactan
pH	- potential of hydrogen
pI	- isoelectric point
PMSF	- phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride
ppm	- parts per million
psi	- pounds per square inch
RGI	- rhamnogalacturonan I
RID	- refractive index detector
rpm	- revolutions per minutes

RSM	-	response surface methodology
SDS-PAGE	-	Sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
sp.	-	species
SPP	-	sweet potato peels
TFA	-	trifluoro-acetic acid
v	-	volume
V_{\max}	-	maximum velocity
vs.	-	versus
w	-	weight
Zn^{2+}	-	zinc ion
μg	-	microgram
μl	-	microliter
μm	-	micrometre
%	-	percentage
$^{\circ}\text{C}$	-	degree celsius

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

Pectin, a complex polysaccharide found in the plant cell walls, is categorised into four main regions: homogalacturonan, rhamnogalacturonan I, rhamnogalacturonan II and xylogalacturonan (Mohnen, 2008; Reichembach and de Oliveira Petkowicz, 2021). Depolymerisation of pectin structure requires different types of enzymes such as arabinofuranosidase, endo-polygalacturonase and beta-galactanase to work on the specific group of substrate. Galactan exists as side chains attached to the rhamnogalacturonan I domain with galactose as a sugar monomer. Beta-galactanase is responsible for the hydrolysis of beta-linkage in galactan into galactose and galacto-oligosaccharide (GOS). GOS mimics the function of oligosaccharides found in human milk and has been extensively studied using a by-product from cheese and casein industry, i.e. lactose as substrate. It is derived from the transgalactosylation reaction of beta-galactosidase and enhanced growth of beneficial bacteria in the human gut (Carević *et al.*, 2018; Fara *et al.*, 2020). GOS is also attained from galactan by the reaction of beta-galactanase, either by the hydrolysis or transglycosylation reaction.

Although chemical synthesis can be used to produce GOS, the enzymatic approach is always preferable by the industry such as FrieslandCampina and Bimuno manufacturers due to its specific target, mild condition and safe to be consumed. Nevertheless, the limitations of enzyme application at the industrial level are the capacity to operate at high temperatures, rough flow regimes and low product yield. One of the strategies to cater to the industrial need for the robust enzyme in terms of temperature stability is to isolate the enzyme from a thermophile environment, which gives a better chance to obtain a thermostable enzyme. The thermostable enzyme is essential for an enzymatic reaction to perform at high temperature, especially when

using a concentrated substrate that requires heat to solubilise, for example, high-methoxyl pectin (Raj *et al.*, 2012). Besides, the reaction that runs at a high temperature could improve the solubility of the concentrated substrate and reduce the risk of microbial contamination (Kambourova, 2018; Liu *et al.*, 2019).

Meanwhile, various degree of polymerisation (DP) of GOS has been reported and its diversity depends on many factors. DP refers to a number of monomers that builds up the oligosaccharide. Oligosaccharide with higher DP was postulated to arrive at the distal colon because it can resist acid hydrolysis during transportation (Martins *et al.*, 2019). DP equal to three and more, particularly trisaccharides, were preferred to be consumed by bifidobacteria (Cardelle-Cobas *et al.*, 2009; O'Connell Motherway *et al.*, 2013). Several strategies can be employed to obtain the targeted GOS and subsequently enhance the production yield. One of the approaches is through enzyme modification or protein engineering. Muderspach *et al.* (2021) found that more galactopentaose (G5) than G4 has been synthesised by extending the substrate binding groove of beta-1,4-galactanase compared to the wild type enzyme. Besides, enzyme selection is also essential to target a specific DP where subsites variation between fungal and bacterial beta-galactanases determine the length of GOS produced (Ryttersgaard *et al.*, 2004).

Apart from that, reaction parameters also contribute to the formation of different DP and yield of GOS (Martins *et al.*, 2019). Hydrolysis of potato galactan by the recombinant beta-1,4-galactanase from *Geobacillus stearothermophilus* had discovered the synthesis of higher molecular weight of GOS during the earlier time of incubation before it started to degrade into shorter GOS (Tabachnikov and Shoham, 2013). In contrast, a longer reaction time was needed by the recombinant beta-1,4-galactanase from *Clostridium thermocellum* to obtain an optimum yield of DP 4 of pectic galactan-oligosaccharides compared to DP 2 (González-Ayón *et al.*, 2019). However, other parameters such as temperature, pH and enzyme to substrate ratio were varied accordingly. Thus, optimising the enzymatic reaction may need to look into the interaction between factors involved in the response affecting GOS synthesis. The statistical design allows the investigation of the relationship between parameters associated with the reaction.

1.2 Problem Statement and Novelty

GOS from plant-based is lactose-free because it does not come from a dairy source. Hence, it serves as an alternative prebiotic for a lactose-intolerance individual. The GOS synthesis by the transgalactosylation of beta-galactosidase on lactose is extensively studied while optimisation of beta-galactanase for the GOS synthesis with a defined DP is scarcely evaluated. Product from the beta-galactanase reaction contains galactose and GOS with various DP. One of the strategies to optimise the production of targeted GOS is by manipulating the enzymatic reaction parameters. Although the hydrolysis of galactan resulted in the formation of GOS, it can be further hydrolysed into a monomer of galactose. Galactose (G1), galactobiose (G2), galactotriose (G3) and galactotetraose (G4) were among the major products reported from the hydrolysis reaction of beta-galactanase towards galactan or galactan-rich polysaccharides. In this study, the targeted product was G3 and G4 and referred as GOS. Several factors such as reaction time, enzyme loading, and temperature affect the hydrolysis reaction and final product formation. These factors are sometimes interrelated and may or may not significantly affect GOS yield. Therefore, controlling the reaction conditions and studying the effect of interaction between parameters may result in a higher synthesis of GOS.

Apart from that, different enzymes have different features that affect the reaction. It holds the key to product specificity and how the reaction is conducted. Studying the characteristic of the enzyme is vital to help better understanding and manipulation of the enzyme reaction. For instance, the thermostable enzyme allows the reaction to occur at higher temperatures and reduces microbial contamination. It is also important when dealing with a concentrated substrate such as high-methoxyl pectin that requires heat to solubilise. Thus, this is the first report on the optimisation of GOS synthesis by a thermostable beta-galactanase with codon-optimisation from *Geobacillus mahadii* (*G. mahadii*) Geo-05 (hereafter named as BgcGC) focusing on G3 and G4 using potato galactan. In addition, the potential of BgcGC reaction for GOS synthesis using locally extracted pectin galactan from sweet potato peels also was the first has been reported here.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

- a) To determine the characteristics of a recombinant beta-galactanase isolated from thermophilic bacteria, *G. mahadii* Geo-05.
- b) To optimise reaction parameters of BgcGC hydrolysis towards commercial potato galactan for the GOS synthesis.
- c) To evaluate the performance of BgcGC using pectin extracted from sweet potato peels (SPP) for the GOS synthesis.

1.4 Scope of Research

This study focuses on the characterisation of locally isolated beta-galactanase from *G. mahadii* Geo-05 and the improvement of GOS synthesis through optimisation of reaction conditions. Following were the scopes of this study:

- a) Synthesis of gene; optimisation of BgcGC codon according to *Escherichia coli* expression system as the host. Screening of inducer, isopropyl β -D-1-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG) concentrations (0.05-1 mM) and post-induction temperature (15-25°C) for overexpression of BgcGC. Purification of BgcGC using affinity and ion-exchange chromatography. Biochemical characterisation of purified BgcGC (optimum temperature and stability, optimum pH and stability, effect of metal ions and additives, substrate specificity and kinetic analysis).
- b) Preliminary experiment using one-factor-at-time (OFAT) to obtain a range of parameters involved in the reaction of BgcGC. They were enzyme loading (0.1-4.0 U/ml), substrate loading (0.2-2.0% w/v), temperature (20-80°C), pH (2-10), time of reaction (10 m - 6 h). Screening for significant parameters using fractional factorial design (FD). Optimisation of reaction processes of GOS

synthesis using response surface methodology (RSM) of three significant parameters, i.e. enzyme loading (0.05-0.15 U/ml), temperature (30-50°C) and time of reaction (1.5-4.0 h) to achieve an optimum yield of GOS (total of G3 and G4).

- c) Extraction of pectin from sweet potato peels (SPP), *Ipomoea batatas* (L.) Lam using acid hydrolysis method (0.05 M HCl, 90°C, 1 h) and the reaction of SPP pectin using BgcGC to obtain GOS. Analysis of GOS using HPLC.

1.5 Significance of Study

Instead of lactose, galactan is also a substrate for the synthesis of GOS via the enzymatic reaction of beta-galactanase. The utilisation of plant biomass to produce value-added products is in line with sustainable development and waste minimisation. Beta-galactanase plays an important role in depolymerising pectin polysaccharide, specifically galactan presence as side-chains on rhamnogalacturonan I, part of the pectin component. Locally isolated beta-galactanase with thermostable property gives an advantage for application to be conducted at high temperature. In the meantime, optimisation of enzymatic reaction is the first step prior to up-scaling production. Thus, results from the present work support application of beta-galactanase on the hydrolysis of pectin galactan to produce higher GOS yield at optimum reaction conditions. The significant parameters contributed in enhancing GOS yield resulted from the hydrolysis reaction of BgcGC may become a referral for future work.

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LIST OF PUBLICATION

1. Ismail, N. F., Abang Zaidel, D. N., and Mat Isa, M. N. (2021). Characterization of Thermostable Beta-1,4-Galactanase and Its Application in Hydrolysis of Pectin from Sweet Potato (*Ipomoea Batatas* (L.) Lam) Peels. *Jurnal Teknologi*, 83(5), 57-65. <https://doi.org/10.11113/jurnalteknologi.v83.17198> (Indexed by Scopus)