

BIOPROCESS OPTIMIZATION FOR HIGH CELL MASS PRODUCTION OF
Lactobacillus acidophilus AS PROBIOTIC

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ABSTRACT

Lactobacillus from the lactic acid bacteria group, mainly synonym as a good bacterium known as probiotics that give a beneficial effect on human health. *Lactobacillus acidophilus* is one of the important bacteria that can maintain and restore gastrointestinal microflora, rebuild the digestive system from harmful bacteria, and fight vaginal infection. However, the biomass production of this bacteria is one of the industrial challenges. Therefore, this study was carried out to maximize cell mass production through optimization of medium composition and scaling up of the process to semi-industrial scale. Twelve different media were screened for the potential effect on cell growth. The best medium was composed of (g L^{-1}): glucose, 30; yeast extract, 6; ammonium citrate, 1; citric acid, 0.5; potassium dihydrogen phosphate (KH_2PO_4), 1.5; magnesium sulphate heptahydrate ($\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$), 0.4; manganese (II) sulphate monohydrate ($\text{MnSO}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$), 0.082; sodium acetate, 1; and tween 80, 1. The biomass produced in this medium reached 2.46 g L^{-1} . Further medium optimization using one factor at a time (OFAT) and statistical method response surface methodology (RSM) improved biomass production up to 4.64 g L^{-1} and 5.36 g L^{-1} , respectively. The RSM optimized medium supported biomass production by approximately 15.52 % compared to OFAT optimized medium. Thus, the RSM optimized medium was used further in a 16-L bioreactor operated in batch cultivation mode to increase cell mass production. Cultivations in the bioreactor were carried out under controlled and uncontrolled pH conditions. High cell mass production was achieved in a controlled pH bioreactor (pH 6.5) and reached 6.41 g L^{-1} compared to in an un-controlled pH bioreactor which produced 4.56 g L^{-1} only. The biomass obtained from the controlled pH bioreactor was used for microencapsulation process. The cell viability after encapsulation was 9.45 log CFU/g with 76.95 % of encapsulation efficiency. The encapsulated *L. acidophilus* exhibited good resistance to bile salt concentration with 77 % of cells survived at bile salt concentration of 0.3%. However, resistance to the bile salt was found to be affected by pH value as well. After two hours of treatment, cell viability was 31.84 % at pH 4, whereas, cells were completely inactivated at pH 1. Thus, it can be concluded that statistically optimized medium composed of (g L^{-1}): glucose, 50; yeast extract, 20.91; ammonium citrate, 3.42; citric acid, 0.5; KH_2PO_4 , 1.5; $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.4; $\text{MnSO}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.082; sodium acetate, 1; and tween 80, 1 produced the highest biomass production under pH-controlled condition of 6.5. Microencapsulation was also a suitable approach to protect cell viability when further applied to the human gastrointestinal tract.

ABSTRAK

Lactobacillus daripada kumpulan bakteria asid laktik, sangat sinonim sebagai bakteria baik yang dikenali sebagai probiotik yang memberikan kesan baik kepada kesihatan manusia. *Lactobacillus acidophilus* adalah salah satu bakteria penting yang dapat mengekalkan dan memulihkan mikroflora gastrousus, membina semula sistem pencernaan daripada bakteria berbahaya, dan memerangi jangkitan faraj. Walau bagaimanapun, pengeluaran biojisim bakteria ini adalah salah satu cabaran kepada industri. Oleh itu, kajian ini dilakukan untuk memaksimumkan pengeluaran sel melalui pengoptimuman komposisi medium, dan meningkatkan proses ke skala semi-industri. Dua belas media yang berbeza disaring untuk mengesan potensi pada pertumbuhan sel. Medium terbaik mengandungi komposisi berikut (g L^{-1}): glukosa, 30; ekstrak ragi, 6; ammonium sitrat, 1; asid sitrik, 0.5; kalium dihidrogen fosfat (KH_2PO_4), 1.5; magnesium sulfat heptahidrat ($\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$), 0.4; mangan (II) sulfat monohidrat ($\text{MnSO}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$), 0.082; natrium asetat, 1; dan tween 80, 1. Biojisim yang dihasilkan dalam medium ini mencapai 2.46 g L^{-1} . Medium dioptimumkan lagi dengan menggunakan kaedah satu faktor pada satu masa (OFAT) dan kaedah statistik permukaan (RSM), masing-masing menghasilkan biojisim 4.64 g L^{-1} dan 5.36 g L^{-1} . Medium yang dioptimumkan secara RSM menyokong pengeluaran biojisim sebanyak 15.52 % berbanding medium dioptimumkan secara OFAT. Oleh itu, untuk meningkatkan lagi pengeluaran sel, medium yang dioptimumkan secara RSM digunakan di dalam bioreaktor 16-L yang beroperasi pada mod pengkulturan kelompok. Pengeluaran sel yang lebih tinggi diperhatikan dalam keadaan pH terkawal dan tidak terkawal. Pengeluaran sel yang tinggi dicapai dalam bioreaktor pH terkawal (pH 6.5) dan mencapai 6.41 g L^{-1} berbanding dengan bioreaktor pH tidak terkawal yang menghasilkan 4.56 g L^{-1} sahaja. Biojisim yang diperoleh dari bioreaktor pH terkawal digunakan untuk proses mikroenkapsulasi. Keupayaan sel selepas enkapsulasi adalah $9.45 \log \text{CFU/g}$ dengan kecekapan enkapsulasi 76.95 %. *L. acidophilus* yang telah dienkapsulasi menunjukkan ketahanan yang baik terhadap garam hempedu dengan 77 % sel bertahan pada kepekatan garam hempedu 0.3 %. Walau bagaimanapun, ketahanan terhadap garam hempedu juga dipengaruhi oleh nilai pH. Setelah dua jam rawatan, keupayaan sel pada pH 4 ialah 31.84 %, sementara sel tidak aktif sepenuhnya pada pH 1. Oleh itu, dapat disimpulkan bahawa medium yang dioptimumkan secara RSM yang mengandungi (g L^{-1}): glukosa, 50; ekstrak ragi, 20.91; ammonium sitrat, 3.42; asid sitrik, 0.5; KH_2PO_4 , 1.5; $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.4; $\text{MnSO}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.082; natrium asetat, 1; dan tween 80, 1 dengan kawalan pH 6.5 adalah medium yang menghasilkan pengeluaran biojisim yang tertinggi. Mikroenkapsulasi juga merupakan pendekatan yang tepat untuk melindungi keupayaan sel apabila digunakan pada saluran gastrousus manusia pada masa akan datang.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	-	Analysis of Variance
CaCl ₂	-	Calcium chloride
CCD	-	Central composite design
CDW	-	Cell dry weight
CO ₂	-	Carbon Dioxide
FDA	-	Food and drug administration
GRAS	-	Generally regarded as safe
HCl	-	Hydrochloric acid
K ₂ HPO ₄	-	dipotassium hydrogen phosphate
KHPO ₄	-	Potassium phosphate
<i>L. acidophilus</i>	-	<i>Lactobacillus acidophilus</i>
LAB	-	Lactic acid bacteria
MgSO ₄ .7H ₂ O	-	Magnesium sulfate heptahydrate
MnSO ₄ .H ₂ O	-	Manganese (II) sulfate monohydrate
MRS	-	Man Rogosa Sharpe
NaCl	-	Sodium Chloride
NaOH	-	Sodium hydroxide
OD	-	Optical density
OD ₆₀₀	-	Optical density 600 nm
OFAT	-	One factor at a time
RSM	-	Response surface methodology
Sp	-	Species
%	-	Percentage
λ	-	Wavelength
°C	-	Degree Celsius
g	-	Gram
g L ⁻¹	-	Gram per liter
min	-	Minutes
ml	-	Millilitre
h	-	Hour

L	-	Liter
$L\ h^{-1}$	-	Liter per hour
Mg	-	Milligram
P	-	Pressure
μ	-	Specific growth rate (h^{-1})
μ_{max}	-	Maximum specific growth rate (h^{-1})
v/v/m	-	Volume per volume per minute
rpm	-	Rotations per minutes
M	-	Molarity

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Health awareness nowadays is increased especially in terms of nutritional intake from the food supplement. The human intestine is one of the major organs that can contribute to the serious illness if no protection given from the beginning. Thus, one of the market's demands for gut microflora is probiotic from lactic acid bacteria (LAB). Lactic acid bacteria are commercially important in many branches of industries like the pharmaceutical and food industry as dietary supplements and probiotics product. There are also many products in the market that contain LAB cells (Polak-Berecka et al., 2010). Lactic acid bacteria are fastidious microorganisms and have complex nutrient requirements due to their limited specific minerals, vitamins B, amino acids, purine and pyrimidine bases (Taskila and Ojama, 2013). Therefore, a rich medium is crucial to achieving a higher growth profile. Lactic acid is an organic acid that can be obtained either by the action of fermentative microorganisms or chemical synthesis. Lasprilla et al. (2012) reported that approximately 90% of lactic acid production was produced by bacterial fermentation.

According to FAO/WHO, probiotics are living microorganisms in which if administered in sufficient amounts, can confer a health benefit on the host (Senz et al., 2015). Probiotic bacteria could suppress the growth of pathogens, prevention of diarrhea and constipation diseases, as well as prevention of cancer and mutation activities in the human gut (Yari et al., 2015). Hence, for the host to get beneficial health impact from probiotic foods, the viability and metabolic action of probiotic microorganism integrated into food product ought to be maintained in all step of food digestion processing operation and they must additionally be capable to survive within the gastrointestinal tract (Chang and Liew, 2013).

Lactobacillus group are commonly best known for human digestive health. The *Lactobacillus* genus has a variety of heterogeneous bacteria with more than 100 species and sub-species. Most of them were utilized as probiotics, silage inoculants and as starters in the fermented food industry (Machado et al., 2013). Salvetti (2012) also stated that *Lactobacillus* contains a high number of GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) species, which has a functional group consisting of Gram-positive, as well as catalase-negative bacteria which produce lactic acid as a major metabolic end-product of carbohydrate fermentation.

The main important elements in the growth medium of *Lactobacillus* species are carbon, nitrogen, and mineral. Man-Rogosa-Sharpe (MRS) is the standard medium for the growth of *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, which is expensive for industrial applications (Pedram and Ataei, 2014). By decreasing the concentration of nutrients at the minimum level or using low-cost components could possibly reduce the cost of growth media for industrial biomass production. After all, a high concentration of lactic acid components from product cultivation can lead to an inhibition of organism growth and a reduction of the metabolic product yield (Kostov et al., 2011).

Despite that, by selected the major compositions of the medium capable influenced much in the growth of *L. acidophilus* cells especially in large scale processes. The screening method was carried out before getting an optimized medium composition. During screening, each composition with best concentration will be selected in further optimization process. Thus, One Factor at A Time (OFAT) and statistical experiment design using response surface methodology (RSM) expected to be the as efficient approach used in this study to achieve the optimal growth medium composition, by evaluated the effect of each medium component on *L. acidophilus* growth.

Then, in this study optimized medium compositions and cultivation conditions were carried out in 16-L bioreactor under controlled and uncontrolled pH batch fermentation to produce high cell mass production. Followed by that, the high cell mass of *L. acidophilus* was encapsulated with aseptically adding the *L. acidophilus* pure cell culture in feed solution to turn into a powdered form under the microencapsulation process using a spray drying method.

Other than medium optimization study, there are some important factors like acidity and bile salts which can affect the probiotic cells to remain their function in a host to ensure that *L. acidophilus* can be delivered in the gut system with higher viability. Thus, acidity and bile salts test was prepared by added encapsulated cells in artificial juice solutions at the pH range 1.0 to 4.0 and in media containing different concentrations of ox gall for 0 min, 30 min, 60 min, 90 min, and 120 min. The probiotic bacteria tolerance toward acid and bile was determined by the capability of the cells growth in the extreme environment.

1.2 Problem Statement

The demand for probiotic products like *Lactobacillus acidophilus* is increasing as it is well-known that it can confer significant health benefits to the human gut. However, the challenging part faced by industry with this microaerophilic probiotic is to produce high cell mass and economical fermentaion process. Besides that, development of Fermentation process from shake flask to bioreactor involved many challenges due to the complication in evaluating the factors affecting the process during cultivation. For example, in shake flask study there are limiting factors such as unable to control pH during fermentation and production of secondary metabolites that renders the production of cells. In addition to that, the downstream processing which involves preparation of microbial powder via spray drying technique is challenging due to cell loss during drying process.

An optimized drying conditions couple with microencapsulation technique are required to produce high viability of cells. The cells produced also need to be able to withstand the gastrointestinal tract condition so that it can benefits the host when consumed. Thus, the aim of this research is to develop highly efficient production medium, to get optimum drying conditions and to evaluate the efficacy of the cells to withstand the gastrointestinal tract condition.

1.3 Objectives of Study

This study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To select and optimize a suitable medium composition to support high cell mass production of *L. acidophilus* in shake flasks level.
- ii. To determine the effect of pH on growth kinetic *L. acidophilus* in 16 -L bioreactor.
- iii. To evaluate the effectiveness of the *L. acidophilus* encapsulation process using a spray drying method.
- iv. To evaluate the efficacy of *L. acidophilus* in the gastrointestinal tract condition.

1.4 Scopes of Study The scopes of this study are:

- i. Selected the best medium among twelve different media as mentioned in Table 3.1 to support high cell mass production of *L. acidophilus* in shake flask level.
- ii. Optimization of medium composition for cell mass production of *L. acidophilus* in shake flasks level using One Factor At the Time (OFAT) method and Respond Surface Methodology (RSM) method on the selected medium.

- iii. Batch cultivation study under controlled and uncontrolled pH in the 16-L bioreactor. The pH was controlled at 6.5. The temperature was maintained at 37°C with 200 rpm of agitation and 0.5 v/v/m of aeration. 8 L of working volume with 10% inoculum was used to initiate the cultivation.
- iv. Encapsulated of *L. acidophilus* cell using spray drying method obtained from controlled pH batch cultivation. Feed solution was containing 20% m/v of final concentration with 170°C of inlet temperature and 85°C of outlet temperature. 0.48 L/h of feed solution, 40 L/min of drying air flow rate with 6 Bar of air pressure was used to produce microencapsulation cell powder.
- v. Evaluated the efficacy test on *L. acidophilus* powder in different concentrations of bile salts in 0.5, 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0%. Then, 1.0-4.0 of pH concentrations of gastric juice was used for viability test of acidic condition.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Journal with Impact Factor

1. **Kepli, A. N.**, Dailin, D. J., Malek, R. A., Elsayed, E. A., Leng, O. M., & El-Enshasy, H. A. (2019). Medium Optimization using Response Surface Methodology for High Cell Mass Production of *Lactobacillus acidophilus*. *Journal of Scientific & Industrial Research*, Vol.78(09). <http://nopr.niscair.res.in/handle/123456789/50485>. (**Q4, IF: 0.735**)

Non-index Journal

1. **Kepli, A. N.**, El Enshasy, H. A., El Marzugi, N. A., Elsayed, E. A., Ling, O. M., Malek, R. A., & Ramli, S. (2018). Medical and cosmetic applications of fungal nanotechnology: production, characterization, and bioactivity. In *Fungal nanobionics: Principles and applications*, 21-59. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8666-3_2.

Non-indexed Conference Proceedings

1. **Kepli, A. N** & Enshasy, H. A. (2018). Effect of High Cell Mass Production of *Lactobacillus acidophilus* By Different Carbon and Nitrogen sources Using One factor-At-A-time (OFAT) Method. In *7th International Graduate Conference of Engineering, Science and Humanities (IGCESH)* (pp 595-597). <https://sps.utm.my/igcesh2018/files/2018/08/IGCESH-Proceedings-2018.pdf>.