CHARACTERIZATION OF THE PHYSICOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES OF CROSS-LINKED LEVANASE AGGREGATES FOR LEVAN-TYPE FRUCTOOLIGOSACCHARIDES PRODUCTION

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband, who taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have is that which is learned for its own sake. It is also dedicated to my late mother (Norsiah binti Dali), *Mak* and *Abah* who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time. Also, to my little princess (Malisa, Maryam and Medina), who lend their playing time to me.

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ABSTRACT

Levan-type fructooligosaccharide (L-FOS) are oligosaccharides that is in high demand in food-based and pharmaceutical industries and it can be produced from the levan hydrolysis. Recombinant levanase from *Bacillus lehensis* G1 (rlevblg1) is an enzyme that specifically converts levan to L-FOS. However, the use of free rlevblg1 presents a lack of stability and reusability, thus hinder the synthesis of L-FOS for continuous reactions. A carrier-free immobilization of cross-linked enzyme aggregates (CLEAs) were developed to overcome these drawbacks. However, low number of lysine residues of rlevblg1 may reduce cross-linking efficiency to form a stable and active biocatalyst. This issue can be solved by enzyme co-aggregation using additives. Moreover, the formation of CLEAs is also influenced by mass diffusion limitation as the degree of molecular cross-linking attained, significantly affects substrate accessibility especially at higher substrate concentrations. To address this problem, macromolecular cross-linker was used in the formation of CLEAs. In this study, formation of cross-linked levanase aggregates (CLLAs) was performed to improve stability and reusability of free rlevblg1. An active CLLAs using glutaraldehyde (CLLAs-GA), and with bovine serum albumin (CLLAs-GA-BSA) were obtained, and the factors affecting the formation of CLLAs were investigated. The highest activity recovery of CLLAs-GA (92.8 %; 169.5 U/mg) and CLLAs-GA-BSA (121.2 %; 221.3 U/mg) was achieved at optimized conditions. The optimum temperature of CLLAs-GA and CLLAs-GA-BSA increased to 35 °C and 40 °C, respectively, from 30 °C in its free rlevblg1. At high temperature (50 °C), the half-life of CLLAs-GA-BSA was higher than that of free rlevblg1 and CLLAs-GA. The reusability of CLLAs for 8 cycles was retained more than 50 % activity. The V_{max} value of CLLAs-GA-BSA (21.97 U/mg) was increased by 14.3 % from the free rlevblg1 (19.23 U/mg). Dialdehyde starch-tapioca (DAST) was successfully developed and used to cross-link levanase to form CLLAs-DAST and CLLAs-DAST-BSA which showed activity recovery of 65.6 % (119.8 U/mg) and 81.6 % (149.0 U/mg), respectively. After DAST cross-linking, the pH and thermal stability increased, and the tolerance in organic solvents improved which resulted in an activation of CLLAs. A kinetic study revealed that CLLAs-DAST (16.72 mg/mL) and CLLAs-DAST-BSA (16.58 mg/mL) had higher affinity (K_m) toward levan than that of CLLAs-GA (20.52 mg/mL) and CLLAs-GA-BSA (18.20 mg/mL). Thus, improving substrate accessibility with higher effectiveness factors especially at higher levan concentrations (10-12 mg/mL). The highest total L-FOS was achieved by CLLAs-DAST-BSA (78.9 % (w/v)), followed by CLLAs-DAST (62.4 %(w/v)), free rlevblg1 (51.2 % (w/v)), CLLAs-GA-BSA (50.1 % (w/v)) and CLLAs-GA (35.6 % (w/v)), after 3 h reaction. Although CLLAs formation using glutaraldehyde has produced an active and stable CLLAs, diffusion limitation at higher substrate concentrations reduced the L-FOS synthesis. In conclusion, DAST as a cross-linker may have application prospects as a promising and green biocatalyst for product formation such as L-FOS.

ABSTRAK

Fruktooligosakarida jenis levan (L-FOS) adalah oligosakarida yang mendapat permintaan tinggi dalam industri berasaskan makanan dan farmaseutikal, dan ia boleh dihasilkan melalui hidrolisis levan. Levanase rekombinan daripada Bacillus lehensis G1 (rlevblg1) adalah enzim yang menukar levan secara khusus kepada L-FOS. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat kekurangan dari segi kestabilan dan kebolehgunaan rlevblg1 bebas yang menganggu sintesis L-FOS melalui tindak balas yang berterusan. Imobilisasi pembawa bebas jenis agregat enzim terpaut silang (CLEAs) telah dihasilkan untuk mengatasi kekurangan ini. Walau bagaimanapun, bilangan residu lisin rlevblg1 yang rendah boleh mengurangkan kecekapan paut silang untuk membentuk biomangkin yang stabil dan aktif. Isu ini boleh diselesaikan dengan pengagregatan enzim menggunakan bahan tambah. Selain itu, pembentukan CLEAs juga dipengaruhi oleh kekangan pemindahan jisim kerana tahap pautan silang molekul yang dicapai akan mempengaruhi akses substrat terutamanya pada kepekatan substrat yang tinggi. Bagi menangani masalah ini, pemaut silang makromolekul digunakan dalam pembentukan CLEAs. Dalam kajian ini, pembentukan agregat levanase terpaut silang (CLLAs) telah dilakukan untuk meningkatkan kestabilan dan kebolehgunaan rlevblg1 bebas. CLLAs aktif menggunakan glutaraldehida (CLLAs-GA) dan dengan albumin serum bovina (CLLAs-GA-BSA) telah dihasilkan, dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pembentukan CLLAs telah diuji. Perolehan aktiviti tertinggi oleh CLLAs-GA (92.8 %; 169.5 U/mg) dan CLLAs-GA-BSA (121.2 %; 221.3 U/mg) telah dicapai pada keadaan optimum. Suhu optimum CLLAs-GA dan CLLAs-GA-BSA masing-masing meningkat kepada 35 °C dan 40 °C, berbanding 30 °C pada rlevblg1 bebas. Pada suhu tinggi (50 °C), separuh hayat CLLAs-GA-BSA lebih tinggi berbanding separuh hayat rlevblg1 bebas dan CLLAs-GA. Kebolehgunaan semula CLLAs untuk 8 kitaran dapat mengekalkan aktiviti lebih daripada 50 %. Nilai V_{max} CLLAs-GA-BSA (21.97 U/mg) telah meningkat sebanyak 14.3 % daripada rlevblg1 bebas (19.23 U/mg). Kanji dialdehida ubi kayu (DAST) telah berjaya dihasilkan dan digunakan untuk pautan silang levanase bagi membentuk CLLAs-DAST dan CLLAs-DAST-BSA yang menunjukkan perolehan aktiviti masing-masing sebanyak 65.6 % (119.8 U/mg) dan 81.6 % (149.0 U/mg). Selepas pautan silang DAST, kestabilan pH dan haba meningkat, dan toleransi dalam larutan organik bertambahbaik yang menyebabkan pengaktifan CLLAs. Kajian kinetik mendedahkan bahawa CLLAs-DAST (16.72 mg/mL) dan CLLAs-DAST-BSA (16.58 mg/mL) mempunyai afiniti (K_m) yang lebih tinggi terhadap levan berbanding CLLAs-GA (20.52 mg/mL) dan CLLAs-GA-BSA (18.20 mg/mL). Oleh itu, meningkatkan kebolehcapaian substrat dengan faktor keberkesanan yang tinggi terutamanya pada kepekatan levan yang lebih tinggi (10-12 mg/mL). Jumlah L-FOS tertinggi telah dicapai menggunakan CLLAs-DAST-BSA (78.9 % (w/v)), diikuti oleh CLLAs-DAST (62.4 % (w/v)), rlevblg1 bebas (51.2 % (w/v)), CLLAs-GA-BSA (50.1 % (w/v)) dan CLLAs-GA (35.6 % (w/v)), selepas 3 jam tindak balas. Walaupun pembentukan CLLAs menggunakan glutaraldehida telah menghasilkan CLLAs yang aktif dan stabil, keterbatasan resapan pada kepekatan substrat yang lebih tinggi mengurangkan sintesis L-FOS. Kesimpulannya, DAST sebagai pemaut silang mungkin mempunyai prospek sebagai biomangkin hijau dan menjanjikan pembentukan produk seperti L-FOS.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A600	-	Absorbance at optical density of 600 nm
AS	-	Ammonium sulfate
B. lehensis	-	Bacillus lehensis
B. subtilis	-	Bacillus subtilis
BSA	-	Bovine serum albumin
BSA	-	Bovine serum albumin
С	-	Celsius
Ca	-	Calcium
CaCl ₂	-	Calcium chloride
CLEAs	-	Cross-linked enzyme aggregates
CLLAs	-	Cross-linked levanase aggregates
Co	-	Cobalt
Cu	-	Copper
DAST	-	Dialdehyde starch-tapioca
dH2O	-	Distilled water
DMA	-	Dimethylacetamide
DMSO	-	Dimethyl sulphoxide
DNA	-	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DNS	-	3, 5-Dinitrosalicylic acid
E. coli	-	Escherichia coli
E	-	Activation energy
Fe	-	Iron
FeCl ₃	-	Iron chloride
FTIR	-	Fourier transform infrared
ga	-	Glutaraldehyde
H ₃ BO ₃	-	Boric acid
HCI	-	Hydrochloric acid
HPLC	-	High-performance liquid chromatography
kDa	-	Kilo Dalton
KH ₂ PO ₄	-	Potassium phosphate

LB	-	Luria bertani
L-FOS	-	Levan-type fructooligosaccharide
MgCl ₂	-	Magnesium chloride
Mn	-	Manganese
Мо	-	Molybdenum
MW	-	Molecular weight
Na ₂ HPO ₄	-	Sodium phosphate
$(NH_4)_2SO_4$	-	Ammonium sulfate
NaCl	-	Sodium chloride
NaOH	-	Sodium hydroxide
Ni	-	Nickel
NPS	-	Sodium phosphate solution
O.F.A.T	-	One factor at a time
PEI	-	Polyethylenimine
pН	-	Potential of hydrogen
PMSF	-	Phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride
R	-	Universal gas constant
rlevblg1	-	Recombinant levanase from Bacillus lehensis G1
Rpm	-	Rotation per minute
SDS-PAGE	-	Sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
Se	-	Selenium
SEM	-	Scanning electron microscopy
V	-	Velocity
Zn	-	Zinc

LIST OF SYMBOLS

%	-	Percentage
~	-	Approximately
°C	-	Degree celcius
°F	-	Degree Fahrenheit
d. µm	-	Diameter in micrometer
g	-	Gram
h	-	Hour
J	-	Joule
Κ	-	Kelvin
М	-	Molar
min	-	Minute
mL	-	mililiter
mM	-	Millimolar
ТМ	-	Trademark
V	-	Velocity

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, consumers pay considerable attention to their lifestyle. It generates increased demand for functional food promoting and improving wellness and health. In traditional food practice, a combination with herbal medicines is widely used in dietary supplements and as functional foods for health improvement purposes. The principal concept is related to the improvement of the circulation system, control of ageing and disease prevention (Shi *et al.*, 2010). Prebiotics are short-chain carbohydrates that are non-digestible oligosaccharides by the digestive enzyme in humans (Quigley *et al.*, 1999). The International Scientific Association for Probiotic and Prebiotics (ISAPP) suggested the new prebiotics definition as, 'a substrate that selectively consumed by host microorganisms conferring a health benefit' (Tomasik and Tomasik, 2020).

Presently, only di-, oligo-, polysaccharides of non-digestible carbohydrates, resistant starches, and sugar polyols have prebiotic properties. They found in many different sources such as chicory, asparagus, artichoke, bananas, tomatoes, milk, starch, lactose and many more (Al-Sheraji *et al.*, 2013). Prebiotics used in the human diet, including lactulose, galactooligosaccharides (GOSs), maltooligosaccharides (MOSs), xylooligosaccharides (XOSs) and fructooligosaccharide (FOSs). FOSs are usually used in food industries due to their nutrition and health-relevant properties. FOSs plays a crucial role in the improvement of gut microbiota balance and individual health. FOSs have been produced by the hydrolysis of inulin, sucrose, and levan using inulinases, sucrase, and levansucrase or levanase, respectively (Roberfroid, 2007; Porras-domínguez *et al.*, 2014). Generally, all types of FOSs production can mainly be performed by two methods: chemical hydrolysis or enzymatic synthesis. Chemical hydrolysis of inulin exhibited high toxicity and lacks specificity, which produced

synthetic sugars that may be rejected by the consumer. Thus, in industrial production, the β -2,1-linked FOSs has been produced commercially from the enzymatic hydrolysis of inulin and transfructosylation of sucrose. Besides that, although β -2,6-linked levan-type FOSs (L-FOS) are not commercially manufactured, L-FOS have potential applications in the food and feed additive, agriculture and pharmaceutical industries (Kumar and Dubey, 2019; Martins *et al.*, 2019; Sánchez-Martínez *et al.*, 2020). Levan does not exist in plants abundantly. However, it can be produced by enzymatic synthesis and microbial fermentation. Microbial levan can biologically produce using enzymatic reaction from sucrose by levansucrase (Srikanth *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, microbial levan has been produced from microorganisms such as *Bacillus atrophaeus, Acinetobacter nectaris* (González-Garcinuño *et al.*, 2017), *Halomonas* sp. (Poli *et al.*, 2009), *Zymomonas mobilis* (Silbir *et al.*, 2014) and *Pseudomonas fluorescens* (Jathore *et al.*, 2012). L-FOS are new potential prebiotic products with improved functional properties and had a higher ability to modulate microbiota for health purposes (Meyer *et al.*, 2016).

Production of β-2,6-linked L-FOS from microbial levan is possible using levanase, due to the less availability of levan from plant sources. (Porras-Domínguez *et al.*, 2014). Levanases [2,6-β-D fructan fructohydrolase, EC 3.2.1. 65] are enzymes that specifically catalyze the random hydrolysis of (2,6)-β-D fructofuranosidic linkages in levan, a high molecular weight fructose polymer. Levanase catalyzes the enzymatic hydrolysis of levan to produce L-FOS with a variable degree of polymerization (DP 1-10) (Dahech *et al.*, 2013). The specificity of levanase toward levan has been explored by Porras-Domínguez *et al.* (2014), and all types of levan produce a low molecular weight of L-FOS and fructose. The production of levanase from various microorganisms was studied. The optimum pH and temperature of levanase were in the range of pH 6-8 and 30-40 °C, respectively(Srikanth *et al.*, 2015; González-Garcinuño *et al.*, 2017). Thus, L-FOS production using levanase requires rigorous control of fermentation conditions so that they can withstand in a broad pH and temperature range, especially for industrial-scale processes. In the present study, recombinant levblg1 (rlevblg1) was used to synthesize levan polysaccharide for L-FOS production. Recombinant rlevblg1 was originated from mesophilic bacteria. Thus rlevblg1 showed low optimum temperature and a lack of thermostability (Fattah, 2018).

Moreover, the use of soluble enzymes as biocatalyst is not practical for extensive scale processes. Immobilization of enzyme is a preferred approach to increase enzyme activity, stability and thermostability. Immobilized enzymes have several benefits compared to free enzymes, including high enzyme stability, volumetric and specific productivities, and improved reusability and selectivity (Cao, 2005). Several techniques of enzyme immobilization which commonly used are adsorption, covalent binding, affinity binding, entrapment, and cross-linking (Datta *et al.*, 2013). Enzyme immobilization typically involves the binding of the enzyme to support or encapsulates in inert support, offering high operational stability.

Nevertheless, some weaknesses of carrier-bound enzymes are low product formation due to a high amount of carrier and lead to substrate diffusion limitation, loss of enzyme activity caused by high enzyme loading on carrier and, expensive support materials (Sheldon, 2007; Pervez et al., 2019). On the other hand, carrier-free immobilized enzymes offer high productivities and low cost because the support material is not required (Sheldon, 2011a). The carrier-free immobilized enzyme, such as CLEAs is a versatile and straightforward approach in enzyme immobilization. CLEAs were prepared by physically precipitating the enzyme molecules using either non-ionic polymer, organic solvent or salts. Then, the enzymes were cross-linked using bifunctional cross-linker such as glutaraldehyde (GA) (Zerva et al., 2020). CLEAs have several advantages over the other immobilized enzymes, (i) the use of partially purified enzymes, (ii) it allows the combination of two or more enzymes during immobilization. Moreover, the obtained CLEAs can easily be separated by centrifugation (Roessl et al., 2010). In CLEAs technology, both purification and immobilization of enzymes are combined into one single operation (R.A. Sheldon, 2007). Although CLEAs are a versatile method, this technology has some bottlenecks, as well. The use of glutaraldehyde led to the conglomeration structure of CLEAs, thus caused mass transfer limitation (Valdés et al., 2011). In the case of a low lysine residue

on the enzyme surface, the cross-linking step may be problematic (Amaral-Fonseca *et al.*, 2018). Also, cross-linking using micromolecular glutaraldehyde may introduce substrate accessibility problems, especially for macromolecular substrate (Zhen *et al.*, 2013b).

Some improvements are required to tackle the problems faced in CLEAs technology when glutaraldehyde is used as a cross-linker. Moreover, a low lysine content in some enzymes may reduce cross-linking efficiency (Guimarães et al., 2018a). Lysine residues containing free primary amino groups help in facilitating intermolecular cross-linking between enzymes and cross-linkers (Velasco-Lozano et al., 2014). This drawback can be solved by adding polymer containing primary amino acids (polyethyleneimine) or protein feeder (BSA) into the enzyme solution as a source of protein and amino groups to improve the cross-linking (Li et al., 2018). CLEAs preparation can be facilitated by the addition of BSA in the case of low protein concentration, or the enzyme activity is susceptible to a high cross-linker concentration (Shah et al., 2006; Aytar and Bakir, 2008). A high number of lysine residues on the BSA surface allowed glutaraldehyde to bind to its amino acids and avoid glutaraldehyde to bind amino acids associated with the enzyme active site (Torres et al., 2014). The interaction resulted in a less compact structure of CLEAs as it increased the distance between the cross-linker and the amino group of enzymes. Thus, it can improve the catalytic activity with less compact CLEAs structures. The addition of proteic feeder such as BSA retained the enzyme activity of the obtained CLEAs up to 100 % of its initial activity (Shah et al., 2006).

Instead of using glutaraldehyde, macromolecular cross-linker is an alternative in CLEAs preparation to overcome the inaccessibility of the macromolecular substrate. Some remarkable approaches that using macromolecular cross-linker proposed in the literature are polyfunctional polymers like pectin, dextran, chitosan, gum arabic and starch polyaldehyde (Rojas *et al.*, 2019: Nadar *et al.*, 2016). For instance, in the crosslinking process, the amino groups of enzyme molecules are bonded to the bifunctional aldehyde group on dialdehyde starch (DAS) via the Schiff base reaction. As the molecular length of dialdehyde starch is higher than enzymes, it cannot get access to all amino groups of enzymes. Thus it can enlarge the spatial structure of CLEAs and reduced the compactness of CLEAs structure. Moreover, cross-linking using macromolecular cross-linker can reduce substrate diffusional problems by enlarging the pores of CLEAs (Zhen *et al.*, 2013b) and lower loss of active site and irreversible immobilization (Mateo *et al.*, 2004). However, in some cases, lower aldehyde content or DAS concentration may lead to incomplete cross-linking, while higher DAS concentration may also cause the damage in enzyme active site by excessive aldehyde content. The addition of BSA could protect the enzyme active site and enhanced cross-linking, thus improved the CLEAs activity (Wang *et al.*, 2014).

Over the last two decades, many enzymes from different groups such as hydrolases, oxidoreductases, lyase, transferases and isomerases have been successfully used in CLEAs technology (Sheldon, 2019). However, different enzymes have different characteristics that required specific procedures during CLEAs preparation due to the low specificity of the CLEAs process. In the case of L-FOS production, it has been improved by using an immobilization approach to allow reusability of the enzyme in continuous reaction, to get better stability and to reduce operating costs (Liese and Hilterhaus, 2013). Previously, invertase has been covalently immobilized on glutaraldehyde-activated chitosan particles, displays higher reusability for FOSs production and obtained 55.0 % conversion per gram of initial sucrose (Lorenzoni et al., 2014). Ganaie et al. (2014) achieved 67.8 % (w/w) and 42.8 % (w/w) of FOSs yield by fructosyltransferase-entrapped alginate beads and chitosan beads after 36 h of enzyme-substrate reaction, respectively. Also, CLEAs of inulosucrase from Lactobacillus reuteri 121 produced a narrower range of inulin-type FOS than soluble enzyme, which proved that immobilized enzymes showed more specificity toward FOSs synthesis (Charoenwongpaiboon et al., 2019). Previous studies have not focused on levanase immobilization via CLEAs or other immobilization methods to improve enzyme stability and efficiency. To the best of our knowledge, this study reports the first immobilization of levanase to improve enzyme efficiency, stability and reusability.

In the present study, a systematic investigation and characterization of the immobilization of rlevblg1 from *Bacillus lehensis* G1 via CLEAs method were performed to enhance enzyme stability, improve operational stability and enhance substrate accessibility. The partially purified rlevblg1 obtained from the expression and purification processes was subjected to CLEAs immobilization.

1.2 Problem Statement

L-FOS has been recognized as a new prebiotic of FOSs due to its beneficial health effects in human gut microbiota. Recombinant levblg1 (rlevblg1) is highly specific towards levan for L-FOS synthesis using enzymatic synthesis method. However, due to the flexibility structures of the free enzyme, the synthesis process does not stand at high temperature, inefficient reusability and low thermal and mechanical stability. Their performances, such as low activity and stability, hindered the reaction process and increased the production cost. Enzyme immobilization is widely applied in enzyme stabilization to increase the operational stability of free enzyme. In the past decade, cross-linked enzyme aggregates (CLEAs) technology has been explored, which exhibits exceptional operational stability, recoverability and volumetric productivities. This carrier-free immobilization involves intermolecular cross-linking of enzyme molecules using cross-linker to form a stable and active CLEAs. However, the CLEAs formation may have some drawbacks if the enzyme contains low number of lysine residues which lead to cross-linking inefficiency. Another crucial problem in CLEAs technology is mass transfer limitation that caused substrate inaccessibility due to the formation of compact cluster of CLEAs.

In this study, the preparation of cross-linked levanase aggregates (CLLAs) was carried out. Co-aggregation strategy using polymers or proteic feeder were applied to improve cross-linking efficiency in the CLLAs formation. Although, CLLAs formation using glutaraldehyde provide high activity and effective cross-linking, substrate diffusion limitation might have occurred when macromolecular substrate is used at high concentration. To solve this challenge, the use of dialdehyde starch represents an attractive candidate for cross-linking the enzymes. Dialdehyde starch is a polysaccharide derived by mild oxidation from natural starch. Thus, dialdehyde starch-tapioca was developed and was used as a macromolecular cross-linker in CLLAs formation. The preparation of CLLAs using macromolecular cross-linker was investigated to study the effect on immobilization efficiency and activity recovery. Moreover, substrate diffusion analysis was also reported to observe the effectiveness of macromolecular cross-linker in CLLAs preparation. However, due to their soft particle, enzyme leaching analysis and organic solvent tolerance was also determined to justify their stability. Therefore, in this study, the preparation of CLLAs using different cross-linkers were investigated to improve the properties of rlevblg1 as a potential synthetic catalyst for the synthesis of L-FOS.

1.3 **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the research are:

- (a) To develop and characterize cross-linked levanase aggregates (CLLAs) with high activity recovery and stability.
- (b) To improve, determine and characterize CLLAs development using a macromolecular cross-linker for the synthesis of L-FOS.

1.4 Scope of Study

The scope of this study covers five main parts:

- (a) Expression and purification of recombinant levanase (rlevblg1) (Chapter 4).
- (b) Preparation of CLLAs formation by manipulating several parameters (precipitants, cross-linkers, enzyme concentration, pH, additives) that affecting enzyme activity and stability using the one factor at a time (O.F.A.T) approach (Chapter 4).

- (c) Characterization of the physicochemical, kinetic and thermodynamic properties of resultant CLLAs using glutaraldehyde as cross-linker (CLLAs-GA), and with bovine serum albumin (CLLAs-GA-BSA) (Chapter 4).
- (d) Developmental and characterization of dialdehyde starch-tapioca (DAST) used as a macromolecular cross-linker by optimizing several factors such as periodate and starch concentration, temperature, pH and reaction time (Chapter 5).
- (e) Screening and characterization of the factors affecting CLLAs formation using DAST as cross-linker by optimizing several parameters (DAST concentration, crosslinking time, agitation speed and BSA concentration) (Chapter 5).

1.5 Significance and Novelty of the Research

Nowadays, enzyme catalyst plays a crucial role in relevant biotechnological processes in the food and chemical industries. At the industrial level, enzyme catalysts should have outstanding characteristics such as smooth handling and operation procedure, high stability, reusability and cost-effective to meet its market demand. In the past decades, numerous works have been committed to improve the development of enzyme catalysts for various applications. However, many biocatalytic processes on an industrial scale unable to perform appropriate due to the enzyme characteristics such as low stability, substrate- and product inhibition, limitations of inefficient recycling and high production cost. In the case of rlevblg1 as the catalyst for L-FOS synthesis, this study represents the first study in demonstrating the immobilization of levanase to overcome free enzyme limitation using CLEAs technique. Enzyme immobilization via the CLEAs technique is a carrier-free immobilized enzyme that has been recognized as a promising technology to obtain robust industrial enzyme catalysts.

Unfortunately, the bottleneck in CLEAs technology hindered its potential as a robust enzyme catalyst, especially when the lysine residue of the enzyme is insufficient to complete a proper cross-linking process. In the present study, the addition of proteic feeder (BSA) is able to improve the cross-linking step during CLEAs formation, which resulted in hyperactivation of CLEAs activity recovery, improved thermal stability and produced higher DP of L-FOS.

On the other hand, the application of dialdehyde starch as a macromolecular cross-linker and natural-based polymer in enzyme immobilization of CLEAs determined their potential of dialdehyde starch as a safer cross-linker than glutaraldehyde. Inadequate research was conducted to study the effect of dialdehyde starch as an enzyme cross-linker, especially in CLEAs strategy. The development of dialdehyde starch using tapioca starch is characterized, and its potential as enzyme cross-linker in CLEAs technology was explored. This study is the first report that demonstrates the use of dialdehyde starch-tapioca as a cross-linker in rlevblg1 immobilization. Also, the first study reported the use of immobilized rlevblg1 in L-FOS synthesis. In this study, the development of immobilized rlevblg1 using different cross-linker in CLLAs formation was investigated to obtain a better idea for the immobilization effect on the reaction process and product formation by immobilized rlevblg1.

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LIST OF PUBLICATION

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 Abd Rahman, N. H., Jaafar, N. R., Abdul Murad, A. M., Abu Bakar, F. D., Shamsul Annuar, N. A., and Illias, R. M. (2020). Novel cross-linked enzyme aggregates of levanase from *Bacillus lehensis* G1 for short-chain fructooligosaccharide synthesis : Developmental , physicochemical , kinetic and thermodynamic properties. *International Journal of Biological Macromolecules*, *159*, 577–589. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijbiomac.2020.04.262. (Q1, IF: 5.162).