

**PROPERTIES OF STARCH-BASED PACKAGING FILM INCORPORATED
WITH CHITOSAN AND LAURIC ACID AS ANTIMICROBIAL AGENTS**

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PROPERTIES OF STARCH-BASED PACKAGING FILM INCORPORATED
WITH CHITOSAN AND LAURIC ACID AS ANTIMICROBIAL AGENTS

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
Philosophy Doctor (Bioprocess)

Faculty of Chemical Engineering
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

JUNE 2011

Specially dedicated to my beloved kids, Nur Era Nabihah bt Zuledham and Muhammad Edham Haziq bin Zuledham. May this achievement inspire them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, thanks to Allah for giving me strength to finish my research study. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, PM Dr. Ida Idayu Muhamad for her invaluable enthusiasm, guidance, patience, encouragement and advice during the entire study. I express my warmest gratitude to PM. Dr. Wan Aizan and Prof. Dr. Azemi sharing their knowledge in this field and for their suggestions and advice.

I am thankful to the whole laboratory staff of Bioprocess Engineering Department for providing technical help, and guidelines throughout the whole research.

I am also owe and very grateful to all my friends especially Norhayati Pa'e, Nozieana Khairuddin, Mahfuzah Mustapha, Nooranis Mustapha, Iryatie Ishak and Norazlina Mohd Nawi. Thank you for always being there for me, to share all the hard time together.

Last but not least, a sincere appreciation goes to my beloved family and all people who involved directly and indirectly for their love and everlasting unconditional support.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop the antimicrobial (AM) packaging based on wheat starch incorporated with chitosan and lauric acid as antimicrobial agents. A series of blends with different ratio of starch, chitosan and lauric acid (S:C:LA) were prepared by casting method. Effects of incorporation of antimicrobial agents into starch-based film were investigated in order to improve the spectrum activity based on measured distributions of inhibitory results. The diffusivity equation approach for describing the antimicrobial effects was also extended to include information on the molecular size of particles in the formed matrices. The Agar Disc Diffusion Assay and Liquid Culture Test measured the distributions of inhibitory effect towards the type of bacterial contamination in terms of Gram-positive, Gram-negative and their combination of wider spectrum activity in the blend films. For the first time, the inhibition size distribution resulting from rationing of base polymers and lauric acid as filler in the starch-base film itself was quantified. Spectrum activity of different Gram-stained bacteria as measured by the bacterial growth inhibition, gave surprisingly consistent pattern on rationing of compositions in the film. This indicates that the spectrum activity produced by the antimicrobial components can be related directly to the ratio on blending during film preparation. This phenomenon is proven by dominating of chitosan (S:C:LA ratio 1:9:0.08 to 3:7:0.24) for 48% increase of effective *E. coli* inhibition (Gram-negative bacteria). More positively, however, it signifies that the affinity of lauric acid towards starch as reported by previous research indicates relatively unambiguously the ratio required to achieve a constant degree of *B. subtilis* (Gram-positive) bacterial inhibition from starch/chitosan/lauric acid dominating of S:C:LA ratio at 4:6:0.32 to 7:3:0.56. Furthermore, S:C:LA ratio 8:2:0.64 and 9:1:0.72 showed good synergic inhibition of 54% higher relative to sole chitosan towards both bacteria. This implies that the ratio index is inherently meaningful, and explains why it has been possible in this work to relate the ratio index directly to a change in physical property of the structural-modified polymer matrices. Further studies of antimicrobial effects investigated the mode of release from the base film. The release of lauric acid in fatty acid food stimulant was satisfactorily expressed by Fickian-diffusion mechanism described by zero order kinetics which indicated that lauric acid released from the film matrix remains constant over time. The physical and mechanical properties of the films were improved relative to sole starch film. Increasing starch amount resulted in progressive interaction and stronger bonding between starch and chitosan molecules nevertheless decreasing the mechanical properties as shown by the results from OTR, WVTR and microstructure studies. S:C:LA ratio 5:5:0.40 gave the most smooth surfaces followed by S:C:LA ratio 6:4:0.48 which confirmed the most homogeneous and dense structure achievable. That is an indicative of a homogeneous and good miscibility or blending of starch and chitosan where SEM, XRD and FTIR analysis confirmed these properties. Results showed that S:C:LA ratio 5:5:0.40 is the phase inversion between S:C:LA ratio dominate by chitosan (S:C:LA ratio 1:9:0.08-4:6:0.32) and S:C:LA ratio dominated by starch (S:C:LA ratio 6:4:0.48-9:1:0.72). These were proven by the SEM, XRD, tensile strength, percent elongation, water uptake, diffusion coefficient, OTR and WVTR results analysis.

ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk membangunkan pembungkusan makanan antimikrob (AM) menggunakan kanji gandum yang digabungkan dengan kitosan dan asid laurik sebagai agen anti-mikrob. Beberapa siri campuran filem dengan nisbah kanji, kitosan dan asid laurik (S:C:LA) yang berbeza telah disediakan dengan menggunakan kaedah tuangan. Pengaruh penggabungan agen antimikrob dalam filem berasaskan kanji telah diselidiki dalam usaha meningkatkan aktiviti spektrum yang diukur berdasarkan hasil ujian perencatan. Persamaan Keresapan yang telah digunakan untuk menggambarkan kesan antimikrob turut digunakan untuk mendapat maklumat tentang saiz molekul zarah dalam matriks yang terbentuk. Ujian Peresapan Agar dan Ujian Kultur Cecair dijalankan bagi mengukur kesan perencatan terhadap jenis bakteria pencemar Gram-positif, Gram-negatif dan gabungan keduanya untuk aktiviti spektrum yang lebih luas dalam campuran filem. Untuk pertama kalinya, taburan saiz perencatan kesan daripada penisbahan polimer asas dan asid laurik sebagai pengisi dalam filem berasaskan kanji telah diukur. Menariknya, spektrum aktiviti bakteria dengan Gram berbeza yang diukur melalui pemerhatian terhadap perencatan pertumbuhan bakteria, memberi pola yang konsisten pada komposisi penisbahan dalam filem. Hal ini menunjukkan bahawa aktiviti spektrum yang dihasilkan oleh komponen antimikrob boleh dikaitkan secara langsung dengan nisbah campuran penyediaan filem. Fenomena ini terbukti dengan dominasi kitosan (nisbah S:C:LA 1:9:0.08 hingga 3:7:0.24) dengan kenaikan 48% bagi keberkesanan perencatan *E. coli* (bakteria Gram-negatif). Bagaimanapun, itu menandakan bahawa afiniti asid laurik terhadap kanji seperti yang dilaporkan oleh kajian sebelumnya yang relatif jelas menunjukkan nisbah yang diperlukan untuk mencapai tahap malar *B. subtilis* (Gram-positif) perencatan bakteria dari kanji/kitosan/asid laurik mendominasi S:C:LA pada nisbah 4:6:0.32 sehingga 7:3:0.56. Selanjutnya, nisbah S:C:LA 8:2:0.64 dan 9:1:0.72 menunjukkan perencatan yang baik iaitu 54% lebih tinggi berbanding dengan kitosan sahaja terhadap kedua-dua bakteria. Ini bermakna bahawa indeks nisbah memberi kesan secara semulajadinya dan menjelaskan bagaimana kajian ini dapat mengaitkan indeks nisbah dengan perubahan ciri-ciri fizikal struktur matriks polimer terubahsuai. Penelitian lebih lanjut terhadap kesan antimikrob telah menyelidiki cara pembebasan dari filem asas. Pembebasan asid laurik dalam bahan yang merupai makanan yang mengandungi asid lemak sebenar dapat diungkapkan menggunakan mekanisme Peresapan Fickian yang digambarkan oleh susunan kinetik sifar yang menunjukkan bahawa asid laurik dilepaskan dari filem matriks adalah malar dari masa ke masa. Sifat fizikal dan mekanik dari filem-filem meningkat berbanding filem yang mengandungi kanji sahaja. Peningkatan jumlah kanji menghasilkan interaksi progresif dan ikatan yang kuat antara molekul kanji dan kitosan namun sifat mekanik menurun seperti yang diperolehi dalam keputusan OTR, WVTR dan kajian mikrostruktur. Nisbah S:C:LA 5:5:0.40 adalah permukaan yang paling halus diikuti oleh nisbah S:C:LA 6:4:0.48 membuktikannya sebagai campuran yang paling homogen dan padat. Ini menjadi penunjuk kehomogenan dan percampuran yang baik antara kanji dan kitosan di mana SEM, XRD serta analisis FTIR mengesahkan sifat-sifat ini. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa nisbah S:C:LA 5:5:0.40 adalah fasa pembalikan antara nisbah S:C:LA yang didominasi oleh kitosan (nisbah S:C:LA 1:9:0.08-4:6:0.32) dan S:C:LA yang didominasi oleh kanji (nisbah S:C:LA 6:4:0.48-9:1:0.72). Keadaan ini dapat dibuktikan dari hasil analisis SEM, XRD, kekuatan tegangan, peratus pemanjangan, penyerapan air, pekali penyerapan, OTR dan WVTR

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AM	-	Antimicrobial
ASTM	-	American society for testing and materials
ANOVA	-	Analysis of variance
<i>B. subtilis</i>	-	<i>Bacillus subtilis</i>
BHA	-	Butylated hydroxyanisole
BHT	-	Butylated hydroxytoluene
CO ₂	-	Carbon dioxide
D	-	Diffusion coefficient
DD	-	Degree of deacetylation
DSC	-	Differential scanning calorimetry
E	-	Percent of elongation
<i>E. coli</i>	-	<i>Escherichhia coli</i>
EDTA	-	Ethylene diamine tetraacetic acid
EPA	-	Environment protection agency
EVOH	-	Ethylene vinyl alcohol
FDA	-	Food and drug administration
FTIR	-	Fourier transform infrared spectrometry
FESEM	-	Field-emission scanning electron microscope
GRAS	-	General recognize as safe
GNP	-	Gross national product
HDPE	-	High density polyethylene
HPLC	-	High performance liquid chromatography
IR	-	Infra-red
LA	-	Lauric acid
LDPE	-	Low density polyethylene
MC	-	Moisture content
NH ₂	-	Amino

NH ₃	-	Ammonia
O ₂	-	Oxygen
OD	-	Optical density
OH	-	Hydroxide
OTR	-	Oxygen transfer rate
PE	-	Polyethylene
PET	-	Polyethylene terephthalate
PS	-	Polystyrene
PVOH	-	Polyvinyl alcohol
RH	-	Relative humidity
SAS	-	Statistical analysis system
S:C:LA	-	Starch:Chitosan:Lauric Acid
SEM	-	Scanning electron microscope
TBHQ	-	Tert-butylhydroquinone
TS	-	Tensile strength
TFA	-	Trifluoroacetic acid
TSB	-	Tryptic soy broth
UHT	-	Ultra high temperature
USDA	-	United stated department of agriculture
UTS	-	Ultimate tensile strength
UV	-	Ultra-violet
VP	-	Variable pressure
WVTR	-	Water vapour transmission rate
WVP	-	Water vapour permeability
XRD	-	X-ray diffraction
Y	-	Modulus young's

LIST OF SYMBOLS

M_i	-	Initial weight of the sample before drying
M_f	-	Final weight after drying
L	-	Thickness of the sample
M_t	-	Moisture content at time t
M_∞	-	Moisture content at the equilibrium
k	-	Rate constant of zero order
n	-	Release component
σ	-	Tensile stress
ε	-	Tensile strain
E	-	Young modulus
$X(t)$	-	Cell concentration
μ	-	Specific growth
t	-	Time

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Foods, unlike durable goods such as electronics and furniture, are usually perishable products and heterogeneous mixtures. In addition, foods have safety aspects and relatively very short shelf life. Therefore the food packaging is quite different from the packaging of durable products (Han, 2000). The food product may include processed foods, beverage, fresh produce or minimally processed fruits and vegetable at the food market. Most food product are packaged for distribution convenience and quality management, and usually opened at the point of consumption. Foods are the first major product among all of packaged products in market, and food industry is the biggest end-user of most kinds of packaging materials (Han, 2003).

The basic functions of food packaging are protection, containment, information and convenience. Packaging is the one most important element in the preservation of products for storage, transportation and end use. Common packaging materials are paper/paperboard, glass, metals and plastics.

The first priority of food packaging criteria is always food safety. Food safety is one of the key issues of public health. Food deterioration always relates to the food safety as well as simple quality maintenance. Contaminated materials and inferior light package would deteriorate food quality and jeopardize public health.

Hence food safety is the essential issue of the purpose of food packaging. Microbial protection and preservation are characteristic functions of food packaging compared to other packaging such as hardware and appliance (Han, 2003). One option is to use packaging to provide an increased margin of safety and quality. In line with that, active packaging technologies are being developed as a result of these driving forces.

1.2 Active Packaging

Active packaging is an innovative concept that can be defined as a mode of packaging in which the package, the product and the environment interact to prolong shelf life or enhance safety or sensory properties, while maintaining the quality of the product (Suppakul *et al.*, 2003). This is particularly important in the area of the fresh and extended shelf life foods as originally described by Labuza and Breene (1989).

Floros *et al.* (1997) reviewed the products and patents in the area of Active Packaging and identified antimicrobial packaging as one of the most promising versions on an Active Packaging system. Other forms of active packaging are oxygen scavenging, ethylene scavengers, carbon dioxide scavengers and emitters, moisture regulators, antioxidant release and release or absorption of flavours and odours.

Active packaging was introduced in the market in 70's in Japan (oxygen scavenging sachets-Mitsubishi Gas Chem. Corp.). Interest in EU and US rose in 1990's. There was high expectation of growth in active packaging in EU and US during 2000's. An overview of the market demand on active packaging can be seen from Figure 1.1 and Table 1.1.

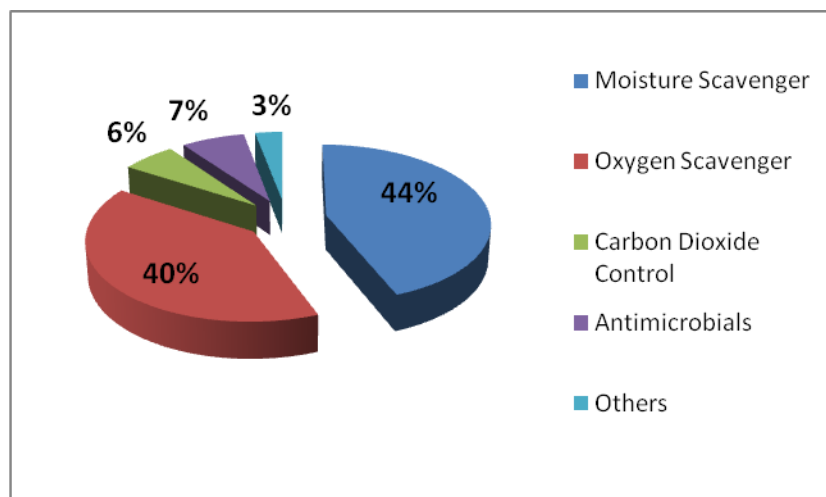


Figure 1.1: Type of active packaging in 2002 (total of \$1371 millions) (Source of all data: Pira International Ltd. (www.pira-international.com.)).

Table 1.1: Global market for active packaging by type, 2001-2010 (Source: Pira International (www.pira-international.com.)).

	\$ million			% share 2005	% change	
	2001	2005	2010		2001-2005	2005-2010
Oxygen Scavenger	371	660	985	37	15.5	8.3
Carbon Dioxide Scavenger	81	108	156	6	7.6	7.6
Ethylene Scavenger	30	57	100	3	17.4	11.9
Antimicrobial Films	50	100	170	6	18.9	11.2
Ethanol Emitters	21	37	65	2	15.2	11.9
Moisture Scavenger	190	287	405	16	10.9	7.1
Odour Absorbers	28	47	70	3	13.8	8.3
Antioxidants	3	7	20	0	23.6	23.4
Self venting	195	280	550	16	9.5	14.5
Susceptor laminates	80	165	265	9	19.6	9.9
Temperature Control	15	38	100	2	26.2	21.4
Total Above	1064	1786	2556	100	13.8	10.1

*Notes: Total may not add up due to rounding

Active packaging continues to be developed and to find some commercial applications. In the food and beverage market, growth of active packaging concepts is being driven by the growing use of packaged food, increasing demand for ready-prepared foods such as microwave meals, and increasing use of smaller package

sizes. Drivers include consumer desires for food safety, quality, freshness and convenience as well as packaging user's desire for increased shelf-life. Active packaging is used more heavily in Japan, but use in Europe and North America is beginning to increase as shown in Figure 1.2.

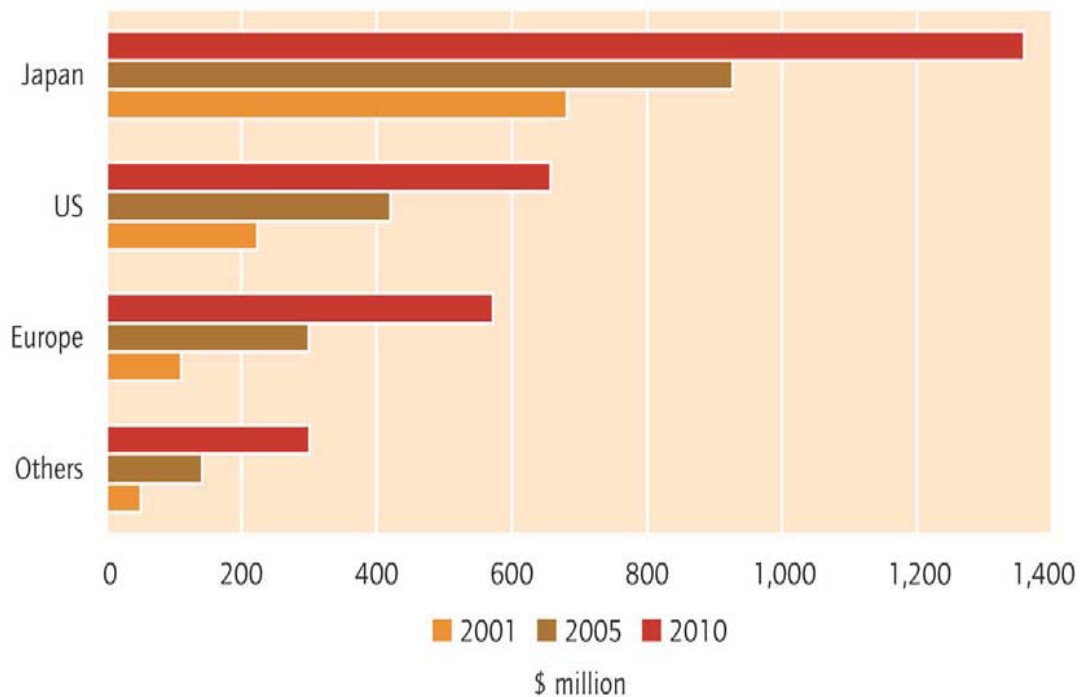


Figure 1.2: Global markets for active packaging 2001-2010. (Source: Pira International Ltd. (www.pira-international.com)).

1.3 Antimicrobial (AM) Packaging

Recently antimicrobial packaging has emerged one of the most reliable and promising tool in the search of 'active' packaging (Brody, 2001; Salleh *et al.*, 2007; Dutta *et al.*, 2009 ; Tripathi *et al.*, 2010). Antimicrobial packaging is one of the most promising active packaging systems that have been found highly effective in killing or inhibiting spoilage and pathogenic microorganisms that contaminate foods (Salleh *et al.*, 2007). Contamination of food products by pathogenic bacteria has emerged as a serious public concern. Bacteria such as *Bacillus cereus* and *Escherichia coli* are identified as serious and most frequently occurring food-borne pathogens associated

with food-borne illness. Others are *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Salmonella typhimurium* and *Shigella sonnei* (Kandasamy, 2005). Antimicrobial packaging is one promising approach to prevent both contamination of pathogens and growth of spoilage microorganisms on the surface of food. Antimicrobial food packaging acts to reduce inhibit or retard the growth of microorganisms that may be present in the packed food or packaging material itself (Appendini and Hotchkiss, 2002). According to Han (2003a), antimicrobial function of the packaging system can be achieved by incorporating active substances into the packaging system by various ways. The antimicrobial packaging is conducted by (1) the addition of antimicrobial containing sachets or pads into food packages; (2) the coating, immobilization or direct incorporation of antimicrobials into food packaging materials or (3) the use of packaging materials that are inherently antimicrobial (Appendini and Hotchkiss, 2002).

1.3.1 Biodegradable and Active Packaging

Nowadays, about 150 million tons of plastic are produced annually all over the world, and the production and consumption continue to increase (Parra *et al.*, 2004). Most of these plastics are crude oil based, as the price of oil and natural gas has risen, manufacturing cost of plastic will become more expensive.

In addition, handling of plastic waste are associated with serious environmental pollution problem due to waste disposal and undegradable polymers. Therefore, the use of agricultural biopolymers that are easily biodegradable not only would solve these problems, but would also provide a potential new use for surplus farm production (Okada, 2002; Pavlath and Robertson, 1999; Scott, 2000). Because of the environmental concerns and technological problems such as denaturing effects of thermal polymer processing methods, extrusion and injection moulding, the incorporation of bio preservatives into biodegradable films is more suitable than incorporation into plastic films (Appendini and Hotchkiss, 2002; Han, 2000; Suppakul *et al.*, 2003). Direct addition of

antimicrobial substances into food formulations or onto food surfaces may not be sufficient to prevent the growth of pathogenic and spoilage microorganisms as antimicrobial substances applied could be partially inactivated or absorbed by the food systems (Ouattara *et al.*, 2000). Until now, the edible and biodegradable bio-based films are always not meant to totally replace the conventional packaging materials. However, the use of active bio-based films as packaging materials is still one of the most promising ways for effective methods of maintaining food quality (Aider, 2010).

Most of biodegradable films are edible and their film formations occur under mild conditions. Different edible films incorporated with bio preservatives include cellulose derivatives, carrageenan, alginate, protein films include casein, collagen, corn zein, gelatin, soy protein, whey proteins and wheat gluten (Padgett *et al.*, 1998; Cha *et al.*, 2002; Han, 2000; Quintavalla and Vicini, 2002; Suppakul *et al.*, 2003).

In the food packaging sector, biodegradable polymers based on natural polysaccharides, particularly starch has gain more attention owing to its availability as agricultural surplus raw material, abundant, can be produced at low cost and at large scale, nonallergic and thermoprocessibility. Several studies are concentrated on the development of starch-based materials for the above-mentioned reasons.

According to Narayan (2001), starch based materials reduce non-renewable resources use and environmental impact associated with increasing emissions as CO₂ and other products. Starches are polymer that naturally occurs in a variety of botanical sources such as wheat, corn, yam, potatoes and tapioca. Starches can interact with many additives or components of the food (Famá *et al.*, 2005). However starch presents some major drawbacks such as the strong hydrophilic behaviour (poor moisture barrier) and poorer mechanical properties than the conventional non-biodegradable plastic films used in the food packaging industries.

In the last years much research has been focused on the use of biodegradable films as a way of supporting antimicrobials in food products. Several researchers

have previously reported on coating food contact surfaces with antimicrobial compounds. Various natural and synthetic compounds are being used to produce antimicrobial films for foods; some of them include metallic ions, organic acids, benzoates, sorbets, fatty acid, polysaccharides and bacteriocins (Santiago-Silva *et al.*, 2009).

In Japan, chemical antimicrobial agents Ag-substituted zeolite is the most common antimicrobial agent incorporated into plastics. Ag-ions which inhibit a range of metabolic enzymes have strong antimicrobial activity. Unfortunately Ag-zeolite is expensive, and it is laminated as a thin layer containing Ag-zeolite. Only a few descriptions of the effectiveness of this material have appeared and the regulatory status on the addition of Ag to food has not been clarified in the US or Europe (Vermeiren *et al.*, 1999). Several other chemical compounds have been proposed and/ or tested for antimicrobial activity in food packaging including organic acids such as sorbet, propionate and benzoate. Sodium benzoate, sodium nitrate, potassium sorbet and sodium lactate were incorporated into synthetic plastic, LDPE, PS and PET. Sodium nitrate inhibit *Aspergillus niger* and *Bacillus subtilis*, sodium benzoate and potassium sorbet had activity only against *B. subtilis* and sodium lactate did not have any antimicrobial activity as reported by Vartiainen *et al.* (2003).

Due to the health concern of consumers especially concern over the safety of the food and so the demand for natural foods has spurred the search for bio preservatives and this affect the packaging industry to show greater interest in the use of bio preservatives for antimicrobial packaging. For the consumer, it seems safer when active agents are indirectly integrated in the food package. Moreover, consumers tend to accept products to which naturally occurring substances have been added more than those containing synthetic agents. This trend subsequently draws many researchers to integrate natural antimicrobial into food packaging materials agents (Salleh *et al.*, 2009). Natural compounds, such as essential oils, chitosan, nisin or lysozyme, are investigated to replace chemical preservatives and to obtain “green label” products (Devlieghere *et al.*, 2004). Nisin and lauric acid are two food-grade antimicrobials shown to be effective in food applications.

Dawson *et al.* (2002) incorporated lauric acid and nisin singly and together into thermally compacted soy films. Nisin and lauric acid films were equally effective in reducing *L. monocytogenes* in 1% peptone water after 48h exposure. However, the combination of nisin and lauric acid in corn zein cast films was found to be more effective in reducing *L. monocytogenes* in peptone water than when each used singly (Hoffman *et al.*, 2001). The activity of bacteriocins is however often limited due to its narrow activity spectrum (Devlieghere *et al.*, 2004).

Besides, Padgett *et al.* (2000) revealed that addition of 8% lauric acid into corn zein films significantly lowered the film water permeability. In addition to that, chitosan inherent antimicrobial reaction against a wide range of microorganisms such as filamentous fungi, yeast and bacteria (Fernandez *et al.*, 2008). Chitosan has already been proved as a food additive in some countries, for instance in Japan and Korea (KFDA, 1995). Furthermore, this polymer also presents interesting properties such as excellent film-forming capacity and gas and aroma barrier properties at dry conditions, which makes it a suitable material for designing food coatings and packaging structures (Caner, 2005). The advantage in having a film material carrying a biocide is that continued inhibition can occur during storage or distribution of the food product.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Throughout history, mankind has been striving to improve the safety and stability of food. It began in an empirical way with a few simple processes such as smoking and salting. Now a precise science and modern food technologists have a wide range of preservative compounds at their disposal. Despite the undoubted benefits, however, there are concerns over the long-term health effects of many food preservatives in use today. Modern consumers are increasingly concerned about the health implications (be the real or imagined) of the foods they eat, as evidenced by the growing trend for additive-free and organic produce.

There is, thus, both a commercial and a public health incentive to develop novel natural antimicrobial systems for use in foods and food-related applications, and reduce dependency on traditional preservatives. Worldwide, considerable research effort is dedicated to achieving this objective (Rhoades and Rastall, 2000).

The term antimicrobial packaging encompasses any packaging technique(s) used to control microbial growth in a food product. These include packaging materials and edible films and coatings that contain antimicrobial agents and also techniques that modify the atmosphere within the package. In recent years, antimicrobial packaging has attracted much attention from the food industry because of the increase in consumer demand for minimally processed, preservative-free products. Reflecting this demand, the preservative agents must be applied to packaging in such way that only low levels of preservatives comes into contact with the food.

The film or coating technique is considered to be more effective, although slightly complicated to apply. New antimicrobial packaging materials are continually being developed. Many of them exploit natural agents to control common food-borne microorganisms. Current trend suggest that, in due course, packaging will generally incorporate antimicrobial agents, and the sealing systems will continue to improve. Unfortunately, all antimicrobial agents have different activities which affect microorganisms differently. There is no 'Magic Bullet' antimicrobial agent effectively working against all spoilage and pathogenic microorganisms. This is due to the characteristic antimicrobial mechanisms and due to the various physiologies of the microorganisms.

The focus of packaging in the past has been on the appearance, size and integrity of the package. A greater emphasis on safety features associated with the addition of antimicrobial agents is the current area for development in packaging technology.

1.5 Research Problem

A widespread trend worldwide is the movement towards “natural” food products. In meeting this demand, there has been increased interest in the food industry in using antimicrobial preservatives that are perceived as more natural. Future work will focus on the use of biologically active derived antimicrobial compounds bound to biopolymers. However many natural antimicrobials have a limited spectrum of activity and are effective only at very high concentrations. The need for new antimicrobials with wide spectrum activity and low toxicity will increase. A possible solution may be using combinations of antimicrobials (Sofos *et al.*, 1998). Instead of concentrating on development of new antimicrobial, it seems potentially practical to combine the antimicrobial agents that already being researched.

Lauric acid, a medium length- long chain fatty acid is found in the form of glycerides in a number of natural fats, coconut oil and palm-kernel oil. It offers advantages in food processing as it acts as a kind of preservative, staving off oxidation and spoilage. Lauric acid has been shown to have an antimicrobial effect against Gram-positive bacteria and yeasts (Beuchat and Golden 1989; Kabara 1993).

Beuchat and Golden (1989) suggested that fatty acids were bacteriostatic and may be potential microbial inhibitors in foods using a systematic approach with other antimicrobials. Based on Padgett *et al.* (2000), Nisin instantaneously kills *L. plantarum* cells whereas lauric acid inhibits more slowly but steady inhibitory effect. Furthermore, the incorporation of lipid compounds such as fatty acid to a starch film decreases the moisture transfer due to their hydrophobic properties (Coma *et al.*, 2001). Fatty acids, such as lauric acid were found to be effective in limiting water vapour transfer through edible films (Gennadios *et al.*, 1993; Greener and Fennema, 1989 a, b; Kamper and Fennema, 1984; Kester and Fennema, 1989).

A packaging material with a wide antimicrobial spectrum would be necessary and desirable for universal use to improve the storage stability of variety of foods.

For this purpose, the incorporation of another antimicrobial agent into the packaging materials would be useful (Lee *et al.*, 2004b). Besides, the use of chitosan in preparing the antimicrobial packaging films was based on the fact that it has good film forming properties. Ban *et al.* (2006) reported that chitosan can also play an important role in the enhancement of starch-based film strength. However, considering the cost of chitosan preparation, it seems important to combine it with other films forming biopolymers such as polysaccharides (Aider, 2010).

Chitosan, a polysaccharide of β -1,4 linkage and a deacetylated form of chitin, appears as a natural antimicrobial candidate due to their non-toxicity (Hirano *et al.*, 1994), biocompatibility (Muzzarelli, 1993), biodegradability (Shigemasa *et al.*, 1994), film forming ability (Averbach, 1978) and inherent antimicrobial properties (Sudarshan *et al.*, 1992). Chitosan can inhibit the growth of a wide variety of fungi, yeasts and bacteria (Rhoades and Rastall, 2000; No *et al.*, 2003; Tsai *et al.*, 2002; Sagoo *et al.*, 2002). It was also reported that both Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria were inhibited by those antimicrobial films when chitosan was incorporated into low-density polyethylene (LDPE) film at concentrations above 1.43% (Park *et al.*, 2002). Moreover, antimicrobial properties of chitosan can be enhanced by synergistic enhancement with antimicrobial agents (Lee *et al.*, 2004b) or in combination with other hurdle technologies. Besides the reasons for chitosan addition in this study are the good film forming, having antimicrobial activity, have a selective permeability to gases (CO₂ and O₂) and good mechanical properties (Bangyaken *et al.*, 2006; Mathew and Abraham, 2008; Chillo *et al.*, 2008; Vargas *et al.*, 2009). However, the fact that they are highly permeable to water vapour limits their uses which are an important drawback. An effective control of moisture transfer is a desirable property for most foods but yet chitosan still relatively more hydrophobic nature than starch that could provide higher moisture barrier and water resistance (Vargas *et al.*, 2009).

Starch produces film with good mechanical properties and coverings that are efficient barriers against low polarity compounds. However, they do not offer good barrier against humidity (Azeredo *et al.*, 2000; Kester and Fennema, 1989). The application of hydrophilic films such as starch-based films is limited by the water

solubility and the poor water vapour permeability. To solve this shortcoming, the blending of starch with different bio-polymers (Xu *et al.*, 2005; Chillo *et al.*, 2008) or the addition of hydrophobic materials such as oils, waxes and fatty acid have been proposed (Garcia *et al.*, 2000; Ayranci and Tunc, 2003; Chillo *et al.*, 2008).

The release rate of antimicrobial agent is critical to maintain food quality and safety. A rapid release of an antimicrobial agent from film to food surface may reduce the success of packaging application considerably since this causes subsequent diffusion of the agent from food surface to internal parts which are less critical than the food surface for microbial growth and contamination. On the other hand, if the release rate of the antimicrobial agent is very slow, its inhibitory concentration cannot be reached, consequently, spoilage reactions on the surface may start and food quality and safety can no longer be maintained. Controlled released of the active agent is highly desirable since this helps maintaining inhibitory concentrations of the agent at the critical food surface during storage period (Appendini and Hotchkiss, 2002).

Therefore, incorporation of lauric acid and chitosan into starch based film will be expected to create synergy to enhance the antimicrobial spectrum activity among Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria. Kinetics of release for both antimicrobial agents also will study in order to investigate the release mechanism towards both types of bacteria. Besides, incorporation of lauric acid and chitosan into starch based film will strengthen the mechanical properties of starch and improve water permeability of the film.

1.6 Objective of Study

Generally, this study is aiming to develop starch-based packaging film incorporated with chitosan and lauric acid as antimicrobial agents. Therefore, the main objectives of this study are:

1. To formulate and develop an antimicrobial starch-based film in different of starch to chitosan mass ratio.
2. To study and predict on how the polymer matrix structure that being formed from those combination of mixing affect mode of antimicrobial agent release and the effectiveness towards antimicrobial activity, physical and mechanical properties of the film.
3. To investigate on how this mode of release can be controlled to inhibit only the target microorganism.

1.7 Scope of Study

In this study, starch used as packaging material incorporated with lauric acid and chitosan as antimicrobial agents to produce antimicrobial film. Solution of starch and chitosan with different mixing ratios from S:C:LA ratio 1:9:0.08 to S:C:LA ratio: 9:1:0.72 starch/chitosan (w/w) will be blended to formulate the synergy antimicrobial film (AM) using starch, lauric acid and chitosan.

Antimicrobial film formulated then will be characterized based on antimicrobial activity against Gram-positive (*B. subtilis*) and Gram-negative (*E. coli*) bacteria, water barrier properties, mechanical and physical properties. Performance evaluation of physical and mechanical properties focused on water vapour permeability, film strength and water uptake of the film besides other test that support the determination of the physical and mechanical properties of the film. While, evaluation on mechanism of antimicrobial agent release from food simulant was carried out by using mathematical release kinetic model.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of 6 Chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the introduction of the research, significance of the study, research problem, the objective and the scope of the study. Chapter 2 presents the literature review on the food packaging and its role in the food chain, active and antimicrobial packaging, antimicrobial agents, spoilage microorganism, and factors affecting the effectiveness of antimicrobial packaging including the control release and release mechanism. Chapter 3 provides a detailed methodology of this research to achieve the targeted objectives. Chapter 4 shows the results and discussion on antimicrobial spectrum activity and lauric acid release behaviour of AM starch-based film while in chapter 5 presents the results and discussion on physical, microstructure and mechanical properties of AM starch-based film formed. Finally chapter 6 summarises the findings of this study and suggestions for further work.

1.9 Published Work

The work has resulted in two papers published in journals, one abstract published in a journal, one paper in review, four papers published in conference proceedings, an oral presentation; two posters presented at conferences, exhibitions and patent. All the publications are listed in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2: List of Publications

No	Paper Title	Publication Type	Status
1.	Salleh, E., Muhamad, I. I. and Khairuddin, N. (2007). Preparation, characterization and antimicrobial analysis of antimicrobial starch-based film incorporated with chitosan and lauric acid. Asian Chitin Journal, 3, 55–68.	International Journal	Published
2.	Eraricar Salleh, Ida Idayu Muhamad and	International	Published

	Nozieanna Khairuddin (2009). Structural Characterization and Physical properties of antimicrobial starch-based films. World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, 55, 432-440.	Journal	
3.	Eraricar, S., Ida Idayu, M. and Nozieana, K. (2008). Characterization of the mechanical, chemical and thermal properties of antimicrobial (AM) starch-based films. International Journal of Natural Products and Medical Plant Research (Planta Medica), 74:1208.	International Journal	Published
4.	E. Salleh and I.I. Muhamad. Starch-based AM films incorporated with lauric acid and chitosan. American Institute of Physics (AIP). (In review).	International Journal	In review
5.	Salleh, E., Muhamad, I. I. and Khairuddin, N. Inhibition of <i>B. subtilis</i> and <i>E. coli</i> by AM starch-based film incorporated with lauric acid and chitosan. Proceedings of 3 rd International Symposium Food and Agricultural Products: Processing and Innovations (CIGR), Naples, Itali (24-26 September 2007).	International conference	Published
6.	Salleh, E., Muhamad, I. I. and Khairuddin, N. Mechanical properties and antimicrobial analysis of AM starch-based film. Proceedings of Polymer Advanced	International conference	Published

	Technologies (PAT2007), Shanghai, China (22-25 October 2007).		
7.	Salleh, E., Muhamad, I. I. and Khairuddin, N. Performance study of lauric acid and chitosan as antimicrobial agents in starch-based film films. Proceedings of 2 nd South East Asian Technical University Consortium (SEATUC), ITB Bandung (26-27 February 2008).	International conference	Published
8.	E. Salleh and I. I. Muhamad. Water barrier properties of Starch/chitosan blend films. Proceedings of 4 th South East Asian Technical University Consortium (SEATUC) Symposium, Tokyo, Jepun (25-26 February 2010).	International conference	Published
9.	N. Khairuddin, I. I. Muhamad, E. Salleh, D. N. Abang Zaidel, N. A. Zaki. Effects of antimicrobial agent in starch-based films towards inhibition of bacteri. Poster presented at Asian Food Conference 2007, Kuala Lumpur (21-23 August 2007).	International conference	Poster Presentation
10.	E. Salleh and I. I. Muhamad. Mechanical properties of starch/chitosan blend films containing lauric acid. Poster presentation at 3 rd International Conference on Chemical and bioprocess Engineering in conjunction with 23 rd Symposium of Malaysian Chemical Engineers (Somche 2009), Sabah (12-14 August 2009).	International conference	Poster Presentation

11.	Ida Idayu Muhamad, Eraricar Salleh, Nozieana Khairuddin and Mohd Redza A. Rahman. Intellectual property patent protection PI No: 2007 1577 for “An active packaging using a smart bio-switch concept”.	UTM Patent	Patent Pending
12.	Ida Idayu Muhamad, Eraricar Salleh, Nozieana Khairuddin and Mohd Redza A. Rahman. Active - smart plastic films using a bio-switch concept for application in packaging. Salon International Des Inventions, (2007).	International Exhibition Geneva, Switzerland.	Gold Medal
13.	Ida Idayu Muhamad, Eraricar Salleh, Nozieana Khairuddin and Mohd Redza A. Rahman. Active & smart packaging for monitoring safety using a bio-switch concept. Malaysian Technology Expo (MTE), PWTC Kuala Lumpur, (2007).	National Exhibition Kuala Lumpur	Gold Medal
14.	Ida Idayu Muhamad, Eraricar Salleh, Nozieana Khairuddin and Mohd Redza A. Rahman. Active packaging using a smart bio-switch concept. INATEX, UTM Skudai, (2006).	UTM Exhibition	Bronze Medal

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