

OPTIMIZATION OF EXTRACTION AND SPRAY DRYING PROCESSES OF  
TONGKAT ALI EXTRACTS USING RESPONSE SURFACE METHODOLOGY

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Engineering (Chemical)

Faculty of Chemical Engineering  
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

SEPTEMBER 2014

Dedicated to beloved Abah, Ummi, Abe, Maisarah, Manisah and Mawaddah.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Allah that I could finish my thesis. In preparing this thesis, I was in contact with many people, researchers and academicians, who have helped and contributed towards my understanding and thoughts. First and foremost, I would like to convey my gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. Ramlan bin Aziz and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Azila bt Abd. Aziz for their guidance, encouragement, criticisms and advices throughout this project.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Harisun and Mrs. Noor Hafiza for their moral support, suggestions and time for endless discussions. I indebted to Mrs. Roshanida for helpful advice and suggestions towards the application of the statistical software and analysis. I also like to thank all the research officer, research assistant and technicians of Institute Bioproduct Development (IBD), especially to Mr. Ismail, Mrs. Fashya, Mrs. Muna and Mr. Syafiq for their guides and assistances.

A great appreciation for staff and technicians of Laboratory of Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Natural Sources, Universiti Malaysia Pahang for permission in using the spray dryer and their technical supports during the experiments. I am also grateful to Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry, Malaysia under NKEA 1: NKEA Herbal Research Grant Scheme for funding my master study.

My sincere thankfulness also extends to all my colleagues, my beloved father, mother, siblings and those whom directly and indirectly had helped in making this project a success. Thank you.

## ABSTRACT

Tongkat Ali is a popular herb due to its various medicinal benefits. However, Tongkat Ali processing has a low yield and the quality and safety of spray dried Tongkat Ali had been an issue. Therefore, this study was done to optimize Tongkat Ali production process to obtain high quality and safe Tongkat Ali product. A Central Composite Design was employed to study the effects of solvent to raw material ratio, duration of extraction and particle size of raw material from Tongkat Ali extraction on total solid content and amount of eurycomanone. A Box Benhken Design was applied to determine the effects of inlet air temperature, feed temperature, air pressure and feed flow rate from Tongkat Ali spray drying process on the efficiency of spray drying. Effect of spray drying heat was investigated on four bioactive compounds of Tongkat Ali which were amount of eurycomanone, total polysaccharide, total protein, and total glycosaponins and its toxicity. The optimum condition for extraction process was achieved at 10:1 g/g of solvent to raw material ratio, 1 hour of duration of extraction and 0.5-1.0 mm particle size which corresponded to 6.2290 mg/g solid content and 1.7139 % eurycomanone. Yield of extract at this condition was 6.8526 %. For spray drying process, the optimum condition was observed at 180 °C of inlet air temperature, 100 °C of feed temperature, 15.18 psi of air pressure and 5.44 ml/min of feed flowrate with 38.48 % efficiency of spray drying achieved. Temperature of the spray dryer was found to have no effect on the amount of eurycomanone, total polysaccharide, total glycosaponins and cytotoxicity except for total protein. Spray dried Tongkat Ali was safe to be used and no major difference was found in the cytotoxic test of both spray dried and freeze dried extracts. Response surface methodology was successful in identifying the optimal conditions of Tongkat Ali processing.

## ABSTRAK

Tongkat Ali merupakan herbal terkenal kerana pelbagai kelebihannya dalam bidang perubatan. Walaubagaimanapun, pemprosesan Tongkat Ali mempunyai hasil yang rendah dan kualiti serta keselamatan Tongkat Ali hasil daripada pengeringan semburan menjadi isu. Oleh itu, kajian ini telah dijalankan untuk mengoptimal pemprosesan produk Tongkat Ali bagi mendapatkan produk Tongkat Ali yang berkualiti tinggi dan selamat. Pusat rekabentuk komposit telah digunakan untuk mengkaji kesan nisbah pelarut kepada bahan mentah, tempoh pensarian dan partikel saiz bahan mentah daripada pensarian Tongkat Ali terhadap jumlah kandungan pepejal dan kuantiti *eurycomanone*. *Box Benhken Design* telah digunakan untuk mengkaji kesan suhu udara masuk, suhu masukan, tekanan udara dan kadar aliran masukan daripada pengeringan semburan Tongkat Ali terhadap kecekapan pengeringan semburan. Kesan pemanasan pengeringan semburan juga dikaji terhadap empat bioaktif kompaun dalam Tongkat Ali iaitu kuantiti *eurycomanone*, kuantiti polisakarida, kuantiti protein, dan kuantiti glikosaponin, dan juga toksisiti. Keadaan optimal untuk proses pensarian adalah pada 10:1 g/g nisbah pelarut kepada bahan mentah, 1 jam tempoh pensarian dan 0.5-1.0 mm partikel saiz bahan mentah bersamaan dengan 6.8526 mg/g jumlah kandungan pepejal dan 1.7139 % kuantiti *eurycomanone*. Hasil sarian pada keadaan ini adalah 6.8526 %. Untuk pengeringan semburan, keadaan optimal adalah pada 180 °C suhu udara masuk, 100 °C suhu masukan, 15.18 psi tekanan udara dan 5.44 ml/min kadar aliran masukan dengan 38.48 % kecekapan pengeringan semburan. Suhu daripada pengeringan semburan tidak member kesan kepada kuantiti *eurycomanone*, kuantiti polisakarida, dan kuantiti glikosaponin, dan sitotoksik kecuali kepada kuantiti protein. Tongkat Ali hasil daripada pengeringan semburan selamat digunakan dan tiada perbezaan ketara dalam ujian sitotoksik bagi kedua Tongkat Ali yang dihasilkan daripada pengeringan semburan dan pengeringan beku. Kaedah tindakbalas permukaan Berjaya dalam mengenalpasti keadaan optimal untuk pemprosesan Tongkat Ali.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ANOVA	-	Analysis of Variance
C	-	Concentration
CO <sub>2</sub>	-	Carbon dioxide
D	-	Dilution factor
df	-	Degree of freedom
DMEM	-	Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium
DMSO	-	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DOE	-	Design of experiment
F	-	Fisher
FBS	-	Fetal Bovine Serum
FV	-	Final volume
GC	-	Gas chromatography
GC-MS	-	Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry
HPLC	-	High Performance Liquid Chromatography
HPLC-MS	-	High Performance Liquid Chromatography- mass spectrometry
MS	-	Mean squares
MSA	-	Means of squares for factor A
MSE	-	Means of squares for error or residual
MTT	-	3-[4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl]-2,5 diphenyl tetrazolium bromide
N	-	Normality
NMR	-	Nuclear Magnetic Resonance
O.D	-	Optical Density
P	-	Probability
RPMI	-	Roswell Park Memorial Institute



RSM	-	Response Surface Methodology
SS	-	Sum of squares
SSE	-	Sum of squares of residual error
SSR	-	Sums of squares of regression
SST	-	Sums of squares of total variation
TC <sub>50</sub>	-	Concentration toxic in 50 % of the cell population
TLC	-	Thin Layer Chromatography
UV	-	Ultra Violet
UV-Vis	-	Ultra Violet Visible
V	-	Volume
W	-	Weight

**LIST OF SYMBOLS**

%	-	Percentage
$\beta_i$	-	Coefficients of the linear parameters
$\beta_o$	-	Constant term
°C	-	Degree of Celsius
µg	-	Microgram
µl	-	Microliter
cm	-	Centimeter
g	-	Gram
h	-	Hour
H <sub>A</sub>	-	Alternative hypothesis
H <sub>o</sub>	-	Null hypothesis
kg	-	Kilogram
m	-	Meter
mg	-	Milligram
min	-	Minutes
ml	-	Milliliter
mm	-	Millimeter
nm	-	Nanometer
ppm	-	Part per million
psi	-	Pounds per square inch
R <sup>2</sup>	-	Coefficient of multiple determinations
rpm	-	Revolution per minute
$x_i$	-	Variables

$\alpha$	-	Level of significance
$\varepsilon$	-	Residual
$k$	-	Number of variables

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Tongkat Ali (*Eurycoma longifolia*) is a popular herb used by natives Malaysian and Indonesian. There are various bioactive compounds can be found in this plant such as canthin-6-one alkaloids,  $\beta$ -carboline alkaloids, quassinoids, tirucallane-type triterpenes, squalene derivatives, and biphenylneolignans. The plant's phytochemicals contains several medicinal benefits, some of which are anti-pyretic, anti-malarial, energy boosting, anti-tumour, and aphrodisiac properties. Besides processing parameters, the geographical factors also influence the type of metabolite and concentration of the plant extract. Consistency of the phytochemical content must be ensured particularly for herbal medicine efficacy study (Chua *et al.*, 2011). Tongkat Ali root has various benefits and is taken orally. The tap root is processed traditionally, by decocting the root and is drunk for the benefit (Kumaresan and Sarmidi, 2003). Nowadays, Tongkat Ali has become known globally due to its ability to treat erectile dysfunction and to improve sexual desire.

Due to Tongkat Ali's high market demand as health supplement, these phytochemical products have a high commercial value in local and global market. For instance, the prices of Tongkat Ali dried roots ranges between 20 and 25 US dollars/kg while the price of Tongkat Ali water extracts is about 26 US dollars per bottle of 60 capsules. Market demand of this plant has greatly increased as there are almost 200 products from Tongkat Ali available in health-food market specifically for its aphrodisiac properties. Tongkat Ali product are available are either in the form

of capsules mixed with other aphrodisiac herbs, in raw crude powder form especially from roots, as additives mixed with coffee and ginseng, or as health products (Bhat and Karim, 2010).

Eurycomanone, a quassinoids found in Tongkat Ali extract has a potential to be developed as complementary for anti-cancer therapy due to its ability to inhibit cancer cells such as lung, liver, breast cancer cells, and, decrease tumorigenic and significant activities against *Plasmodium falciparum* strains (Chan *et al.*, 1986; Kardono *et al.*, 1991; Cheah and Azimahtol, 2004; Zakaria *et al.*, 2009; Wong *et al.*, 2012). Other compounds found in Tongkat Ali include total polysaccharide, total protein, and total glycosaponins also shows medicinal properties. Total polysaccharides have been reported to exhibit a variety of biological activity like anti-inflammation, anti-oxidation, anti-complement, anti-fatigue, anti-coagulation and enhancement of probiotic bacteria growth (Zheng *et al.*, 2010). Polysaccharides also induce anti-tumor activity, anti-virus activity, anti-bacterial activity, immune activating activity, and anti-diabetic activity (Nakamura *et al.*, 2009; Xi *et al.*, 2010).

Total protein are essential to human's health because they are a major sources of energy and contain essential amino-acids such as lysine, tryptophan, methionine, leucine, isoleucine, and valine which the body cannot synthesize. Total glycosaponins have a wide spectrum of activities such as anti-bacterial and anti-fungal agents, inhibiting cancer cell growth, and lowering blood cholesterol (Sezgin and Artik, 2010). Glycosaponins also found to be having molluscicidal properties, anti-microbial activity, anti-inflammatory activity, anti-dermatophytic activity, anthelmintic properties, and antitussives properties (Chen *et al.*, 2010). Since eurycomanone, total polysaccharides, total protein and total glycosaponins have great benefits on human's health, processing techniques of Tongkat Ali that could achieve high concentration while retaining the biological activities of the compounds are very important.

The production of Tongkat Ali water extract is mainly carried out through various traditional methods, such as boiling or soaking which often lead to high losses and low product yield. Hence more efforts are needed to develop the various

stages of phytochemical processing, be it in planting and harvesting, raw material preparation, processing or as value added production (Athimulam *et al.*, 2006). It is desirable to have Tongkat Ali in powder form to then put into a capsule due to its bitter taste.

The ability of solvents to extract solutes present in the drug material is shown by the amount of dry residue (extracts) that can be obtained. Higher amount of extracts obtained from selected extraction conditions is required for spray drying process. The dry residue does not only affect yield of spray drying but also the properties of the final product. In addition, running spray dryer at the highest amount of dry residue is economically beneficial due the reduced amount of water to be evaporated (Fernandes *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, maximum dry residue or total solid content of Tongkat Ali extraction was required in this study.

Spray drying is widely used in the production of Tongkat Ali extract in a powder form. Spray dried powders have good reconstititional characteristics; lower water activity, good quality and are easier to be transported and stored which are important properties for powder products (Kha *et al.*, 2010). The cost for spray drying extraction is cheaper compared to freeze drying (Gharsallaoui *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, freeze drying is a discontinuous process with low yield, energy, and time consuming. Spray drying on the other hand is relatively inexpensive, short time period process and allows continuous large capacity production. Compared to freeze drying method, spray drying can offer 6 times less expensive alternatives for every kg of water removed (Paez *et al.*, 2012). A spray dried powder is characterized not only by its composition (protein, carbohydrates, fats, mineral and water) but also its physical properties such as bulk and particle density, hygroscopicity, insolubility index, and particle size. The physiochemical properties of spray dried powders depends on some process variables such as characteristics of the liquid feed (particle size, viscosity, flow rate), drying air (temperature, pressure), and the type of atomizer (Tonon *et al.*, 2008).

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Batch solid liquid extraction and spray drying technology have been developed for Tongkat Ali processing. However, current extraction process based on batch solid liquid extraction has a low yield of 2-3 % w/w (Mohtar *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, most studies only focuses on the yield extract and not much on eurycomanone yield. Thus, effects of extraction operating parameters need to be investigated in order to achieve the highest yield of extraction and eurycomanone at the optimum condition. Operating parameters that can affect the extract yield includes solvent used, solvent to raw material ratio, time of extraction, extraction temperature, raw material particles size and agitation speed of extraction vessel (Kumaresan and Sarmidi, 2003).

Another important process in the production of Tongkat Ali product is spray drying process. Tongkat Ali extracted is converted into powder form that is easier to handle and free of harmful bacteria and fungi. There is common conception that Tongkat Ali powder produced by freeze dryer is more quality as compared to those produced using spray drying method (Chan and Chew, 2003). However, freeze drying is a very expensive method and require higher costs. Spray drying powders however may have some problems on their properties such as hygroscopicity, stickiness, and solubility which lead to low efficiency of spray drying process (Tonon *et al.*, 2008). Hence, the effect of processing parameters of spray drying process needs to be studied to attain highest process yield.

Quality of phytochemicals and safety of Tongkat Ali extract from spray drying process has also been an issued by majority due to the use of elevated temperature during the process. Degradation of phytochemicals will diminish its biological activity and might produce harmful byproducts. Therefore, the effects of spray drying heat on the spray dried Tongkat Ali extracts were observed by investigating the quality of the compounds in the extract and their safety is examined by cell toxicity study.



### **1.3 Objective of the Research**

In this research the effects of processing parameters during Tongkat Ali extraction and spray drying process were investigated. The objective of this research is to optimize Tongkat Ali production process to obtain high quality and safe Tongkat Ali product.

### **1.4 Scope of the Research**

In order to achieve the objectives of the research, the experimental works were divided into three major scopes. The scopes of the research are:

- i) To optimize Tongkat Ali extraction process on total solid content and amount of eurycomanone. The optimization of Tongkat Ali extraction was carried out at three different parameters which are solvent to raw material ratio, duration of extraction and particle sizes of raw material.
- ii) To optimize Tongkat Ali spray drying process on efficiency of spray drying. The optimization of Tongkat Ali spray drying was carried out at four parameters which are air inlet temperature, feed temperature, air pressure and feed flow rate.
- iii) To investigate the effects of spray drying heat on eurycomanone, total polysaccharide, total protein, total glycosaponins, and toxicity of Tongkat Ali. Cultured colon cancer cell line; HT-29 was used as a model in cytotoxicity study.

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