

IN SILICO ANALYSIS AND TRUNCATION STUDIES OF THE C TERMINAL  
ALPHA AMYLASE FROM *ANOXYBACILLUS* SPECIES

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To my beloved mother and father.

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## ABSTRACT

Thermostable and alkalitolerant  $\alpha$ -amylase from *Anoxybacillus* sp. SK3-4 (ASKA) yields high level of maltose (69%) from starch hydrolysis. A putative raw starch binding domain was found in the C-terminal domain of ASKA. Starch binding domain (SBD) plays a role in hydrolyzing insoluble starch which enhances the amyolytic rate. The gene that encodes the ASKA is 1,518 bp. The present study involved *in silico* analyses and protein mutagenesis of two C-terminal truncated variants, namely mutant  $\Delta$ 50 and  $\Delta$ 100. The respective mutants had an elimination of 81 and 112 amino acids from C-terminal end of ASKA. Firstly mutagenesis was made in *in silico* structure. Bioinformatics analysis revealed that the eight  $\beta$ -strand forms as an open-sided distorted  $\beta$ -sandwich fold which of putative domain C. Using Neighbor-Joining (NJ) method, the phylogenetic analysis of the domain C had confirmed that starch binding region of ASKA is the non-catalytic domain C and not the typical SBD of CBM families. Actual gene truncation was constructed via protein engineering approach and the truncated genes were expressed in *Escherichia coli*, under the promoter of T7. However, both recombinant proteins exhibited no activity with soluble starch as a result of inclusion bodies aggregation; despite several optimization on expression conditions were made.

## ABSTRAK

$\alpha$ -amilase daripada *Anoxybacillus* sp. SK3-4 (ASKA) adalah enzim yang tahan haba, toleransi dalam keadaan beralkali dan mampu menghasilkan maltose dalam kadar yang tinggi (69%) daripada hidrolisis kanji. ASKA mempunyai domain kanji tidak terlarut pada domain terminal-C. Domain pengikat kanji (SBD) memainkan peranan yang penting untuk meningkatkan kadar amilolitik dalam proses menghidrolisis kanji. Gen ASKA adalah sepanjang 1,518 bp. Kajian ini melibatkan analisis *in silico* dan mutasi protein yang melibatkan pemotongan terminal-C, menghasilkan dua variasi berbeza iaitu mutan  $\Delta 50$  dan  $\Delta 100$ . Mutan  $\Delta 50$  dan  $\Delta 100$  masing-masing kehilangan amino asid sebanyak 81 dan 112 daripada terminal-C ASKA. Peringkat pertama kajian ini melibatkan mutasi menggunakan pengstrukturkan *in silico*. Analisis bioinformatik menunjukkan mutasi menyebabkan lapan lipatan- $\beta$  pada terminal-C ASKA terganggu lalu membentuk kawasan terbuka pada lipatan- $\beta$  tersebut. Analisis filogenetik menggunakan teknik Neighbor-Joining (NJ) mengesahkan bahawa domain C pada ASKA adalah domain bukan-kata litik yang lazimnya adalah SBD daripada keluarga modul pengikat karbohidrat (CBM). Peringkat kedua kajian ini adalah melibatkan pemotongan gen ( $\Delta 50$  dan  $\Delta 100$ ) menggunakan kaedah kejuruteraan protein dan kedua-dua mutan tersebut telah diekspresi dalam *Escherichia coli* yang mengandungi promoter T7. Namun, kedua-dua rekombinan enzim  $\Delta 50$  dan  $\Delta 100$  diekspresi dalam bentuk aggregasi gumpalan dan tidak menunjukkan sebarang aktiviti terhadap kanji terlarut walaupun beberapa optimasi terhadap parameter ekspresi telah dilakukan.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

3D	-	Three-dimensional
Arg	-	Arginine
ASKA	-	<i>Anoxybacillus</i> species SK3-4 alpha-amylase
Asp	-	Aspartate
BSA	-	Bovine serum albumin
C	-	Carbon
Ca <sup>2+</sup>	-	Calcium ion
CAZy	-	Carbohydrate-Active enZymes
CBM	-	Carbohydrates-binding modules
CDART	-	Conserved Domain Architecture Retrieval Tool
Cys	-	Cysteine
DNA	-	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DNS	-	3,5-dinitrosalicylic acid
DT	-	Dusun Tua
<i>E. coli</i>	-	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
EDTA	-	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
EGTA	-	Ethylene glycol tetraacetic acid
GH(s)	-	Glycoside hydrolase(s)
Gln	-	Glutamine
Glu	-	Glutamate
GST	-	Glutathione S-transferase
Gt-amyII	-	<i>Geobacillus thermoleovorans</i> alpha-amylase
HCl	-	Hydrochloric acid
HFCS	-	High Fructose Corn Syrup
Ile	-	Isoleucine
IPTG	-	Isopropyl- $\beta$ -D-thiogalactopyranoside

<i>lac</i>	-	Lactose
LB	-	Luria Bertani
Lys	-	Lysine
Met	-	Methionine
N	-	Nitrogen
NCBI	-	National Center for Biotechnology Information
NJ	-	Neighbor-joining
O	-	Oxygen
OD	-	Optical density
ORF	-	Open reading frame
PCR	-	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PDB	-	Protein Database
pI	-	Isoelectric point
Pizzo	-	<i>Geobacillus thermoleovorans</i> subsp. <i>stromboliensis</i> alpha-amylase
RSDE	-	Raw Starch Degrading Enzymes
SBD	-	Starch-binding domain
SDS	-	Sodium Dodecyl Sulfate
SDS-PAGE	-	Sodium Dodecyl Sulfate Polyacrylamide Gel Electrophoresis
SEM	-	Scanning electron microscope
Ser	-	Serine
SK	-	Sungai Klah
SOC	-	Super Optimal broth with Catabolite repression
sp.	-	Species
subsp.	-	Subspecies
TIM	-	Triosephosphate isomerase
TNTC	-	Too numerous to count
Tris	-	Tris(hydroxymethyl)methylamine
Trp	-	Tryptophan
Tyr	-	Tyrosine
Ub	-	Ubiquitin
UniProt	-	Universal Protein Resource
Val	-	Valine
NaCl	-	Sodium chloride

**LIST OF SYMBOLS**

%	-	Percentage
<	-	Less than
°C	-	Degree Celsius
∞	-	Infinity
bp	-	Base pair
Ca <sup>2+</sup>	-	Calcium ion
<i>g</i>	-	Gravity
g/L	-	Gram per liter
h	-	Hour
kDa	-	Kilodalton
L	-	Liter
mg/mL	-	Microgram per microliter
min	-	Minute
mL	-	Milliliter
mM	-	Millimolar
ng	-	Nanogram
ng/μL	-	Nanogram per microliter
nm	-	Nanometer
pH	-	Power of hydrogen
rpm	-	Revolutions per minute
sec	-	Second
T <sub>m</sub>	-	Melting temperature
w/v	-	Weight per volume
α	-	Alpha
β	-	Beta
μg/mL	-	Microgram per milliliter
μL	-	Microliter

$\mu\text{M}$	-	Micromolar
$\mu\text{mol}$	-	Micromoles per litre
$\phi$	-	phi
$\psi$	-	psi

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of study

Starch is an essential carbohydrate source of food in human diet, which constitutes a large proportion of food consumed. In plant, starch serves as an energy reservoir by storing in granule forms. The starch is densely packed with amylose and amylopectin, connecting by  $\alpha$ -1,4- and  $\alpha$ -1,6-glycosidic linkages. To manufacture starch-based products, starch is chemically or enzymatically processed into a variety of products such as starch hydrolysates, glucose syrups, fructose and starch or maltodextrin-based derivatives (El-Fallal *et al.*, 2012). Crops like maize, tapioca, potato and wheat are mainly used as an inexpensive source in various starch-processing industries (Uthumporn *et al.*, 2010). The typical starch hydrolysis requires two energy-intensive steps called liquefactions which involved partial hydrolysis and loss in viscosity and saccharification (the production of glucose and maltose via further hydrolysis). As starch is insoluble in cold water, a primary step, gelatinization, is needed and achieved by heating granular starch with water at high temperature (60-80 °C) (Jòzef, 2007; Alvani *et al.*, 2012). The elevated temperature of the starch hydrolysis will lead to enzyme denaturation enzymes as some enzyme usually lose their activities at temperature above 50-60 °C.

Raw starch degrading enzymes are mainly belonging to glycoside hydrolases (GH) 13, 14 and 15, which cleave glycosidic bonds either from the non-reducing end or in the interior of starch chemical structure (Puspasari *et al.*, 2013). These enzymes are multi-domain proteins that consist of a catalytic domain and a non-catalytic domain, namely carbohydrates-binding modules (CBM). CBMs with the affinity for insoluble raw starch are known as starch-binding domain (SBD) which localized frequently at C-terminal or scarcely at N-terminal in some amylolytic enzymes (Peng *et al.*, 2014). Based on sequence-based classification, SBDs belong to ten CBMs families: CBM20, CBM21, CBM25, CBM26, CBM34, CBM41, CBM45, CBM48, CBM53 and CBM58 (Janecek *et al.*, 2011). The presence of SBD can be known as a prerequisite for the hydrolysis of insoluble starch as it improves the efficiency of the enzyme by hydrolyzing raw starch or disrupting the surface of the raw starch granule (Guillen *et al.*, 2007; Sun *et al.*, 2010; Rodriguez-Sanoja *et al.*, 2000; Hayashida *et al.*, 1990). A recent study conducted by Mehta and Satyanarayana (2014) elucidated that C-terminal domain of thermostable  $\alpha$ -amylase from *Geobacillus thermoleovorans* (Gt-amylII) plays a role in raw starch adsorption and thermostability.

Alpha-amylases (1,4- $\alpha$ -D-glucan-glucanhydrolase, E.C. 3.2.1.1) are endo-acting enzymes that catalyses the hydrolysis of internal  $\alpha$ -1,4 glycosidic, liberating various length of oligosaccharides (Gurung *et al.*, 2013). For decades, raw starch degrading  $\alpha$ -amylases had been widely used in different processes in food, textile, brewing, paper industry and in starch liquefaction as these enzymes efficiently react at sub-gelatinisation temperatures (Park *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, the energy intensive starch gelatinization step is eliminated. Thermostable  $\alpha$ -amylase from microbial sources *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens*, *B.subtilis* and *B. licheniformis* are preferable to employ commercially in the industries due to advantages such as improves starch gelatinization, decrease media viscosity, accelerate catalytic reaction and decrease contamination risk and energy saving (Pandey *et al.*, 2000; Haki, 2003; Jøzef, 2007). In recent advances, the study of enzymes (extremozymes) from extremophile had drawn special interest as they are able to withstand harsh industrial processes (Demirjian *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, thermostable enzyme isolated from thermophilic microorganisms that is *Anoxybacillus* sp. SK3-4 was selected in the study.

The genus *Anoxybacillus* was proposed under *Bacillaceae* cluster in the *Firmicutes* phylum by Pikuta *et al.* (2000). The name of *Anoxybacillus* refers to a mild thermophile of rod-shaped microorganism that can survive in the environment where the oxygen is depleted (Goh *et al.*, 2013). The *Anoxybacillus* sp. strain SK3-4 is a moderate thermophile that was isolated from Malaysian hot spring with an optimal growth temperature of 55 °C (Goh *et al.*, 2013). A full-length of  $\alpha$ -amylases gene from *Anoxybacillus* sp. strain SK3-4 is named as ASKA which shares 69% similarity with the  $\alpha$ -amylase from *Geobacillus thermoleovorans* subsp. *stromboliensis* Pizzo and *Geobacillus thermoleovorans* Gt-amyII. Previous studies (Chai *et al.*, 2012) had reported that ASKA belongs to the main representative family of glycoside hydrolase GH13 and it might become industries preference in future as it has higher maltose production than those commonly used  $\alpha$ -amylases. However, the role of domain C of  $\alpha$ -amylase from *Anoxybacillus* sp. strain SK3-4 has not been documented yet.

In this study, two truncated forms of C-terminal domain of  $\alpha$ -amylase from *Anoxybacillus* sp. strain SK3-4, namely mutant  $\Delta$ C100 and mutant  $\Delta$ C50 were undergone bioinformatics analysis. Subsequently, primers used for PCR amplification of truncated  $\Delta$ C100 and  $\Delta$ C50 genes were designed. The amplified mutagenized-genes were subcloned into pET-28a vector and transformed into *Escherichia coli* BL21 (DE3). The successfully transformed cells were used for protein expression by induced with isopropyl- $\beta$ -D-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG). The optimization for the production of truncated proteins was carried out. The molecular weight of the proteins and their enzymatic activity was determined by SDS-PAGE and DNS assay, respectively.

## 1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

- i. Analyse and compare the primary, secondary and tertiary structure of the two truncated form of genes.
- ii. Identify the putative functional domain, conserved region and phylogenetic analysis of domain C.
- iii. Construct two C-terminal truncation of  $\alpha$ -amylase gene from *Anoxybacillus* sp. SK3-4 (mutant  $\Delta$ C100 and mutant  $\Delta$ C50).

## 1.3 Scope of study

- i. Bioinformatics analysis of  $\alpha$ -amylase (ASKA) genes with its truncated C-terminal.
- ii. Construction of C-terminal truncation of  $\alpha$ -amylase from *Anoxybacillus* sp. SK3-4, namely mutant  $\Delta$ C100 and mutant  $\Delta$ C50).
- iii. Transformation of recombinant pET-28a into *E. coli* BL21 (DE3).
- iv. DNA sequencing of the successfully transformed mutant  $\Delta$ C100 and mutant  $\Delta$ C50.
- v. Protein expression of mutant  $\Delta$ C100 and mutant  $\Delta$ C50 by IPTG induction.
- vi. Optimization of the protein expression mutant  $\Delta$ C100 and mutant  $\Delta$ C50.
- vii. Determination of TASKA  $\Delta$ C100 and TASKA  $\Delta$ C50 activity by enzyme assay using DNS method.

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