

CONSTRUCTION AND CHARACTERIZATION OF A XYLANASE CELL
SURFACE DISPLAY SYSTEM USING ICE NUCLEATION PROTEIN IN
Escherichia coli FOR DEGRADATION OF PINEAPPLE HEMICELLULOSE

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ABSTRACT

Cell surface display is a method of anchoring enzymes on the surface of cells. It can be used as a whole-cell biocatalyst to catalyse the breakdown of substrates extracellularly. An anchoring motif is an essential tool for the construction of a surface display system in cells. By far, ice nucleation protein (INP) has been among the most successful anchoring motifs studied. However, some problems still arise in relation to its limited expression on the cell surface and also its stability during display. Therefore, exploring a wider selection of INP anchors could be useful in providing one with better surface display efficiency. An INP from *Erwinia ananas*, InaA, is the anchor employed in this study for the functional display of xylanase enzyme (EC 3.2.1.8). The surface display using InaA fused to xylanase (InaAxyl) was compared with two other established INPs and gave the highest enzyme activity of 92.2 U/g dry cell weight which was up to three times higher than the other two INPs used. The proper expression of InaAxyl on the surface of the cell was confirmed by SDS-PAGE, Western blot, immunofluorescence microscopy and flow cytometry analysis. Quantitative data from flow cytometry showed that surface anchoring using InaA was up to four times more effective than the other two constructs used. Conditions for expression of InaAxyl were optimized using one-factor-at-a-time (OFAT) method. The conditions are post-induction harvest time of 8 h using LB medium with 0.3 mM inducer concentration and agitation rate of 200 rpm at 25 °C. The cell surface display system was then used for the hydrolysis of hemicellulose from pineapple waste. The degradation of lignocellulosic biomass has not been done using a bacterial surface display system before. After subjecting the raw pineapple waste to pretreatment for the breakdown of lignin, hemicellulose extraction was carried out. The hemicellulose extracted pineapple was analysed using Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy which confirmed the successful extraction of hemicellulose. The morphology of the pineapple waste before and after hemicellulose extraction was also studied using field emission scanning electron microscope. The rough surfaces of the recalcitrant lignin structure before the pretreatment changed to smooth after the extraction of hemicellulose. Then, screening of reaction conditions for InaAxyl with pineapple waste was studied using OFAT. Optimization for pH, cell loading and temperature of reaction was investigated using response surface methodology Box-Behnken design in the DESIGN EXPERT software. A total of 2.129 mg/ml of reducing sugar was produced under the optimized conditions of pH 7.5 using 100 g/L wet cell weight of cells at 30 °C. High performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) was used for qualitative and quantitative analysis to determine the type and amount of xylooligosaccharides (XOS) produced from the reaction. The XOS detected were xylobiose and xylotriose with a total yield of 5.4 mg/g of pineapple substrate. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that InaAxyl was well expressed on the cell surface in its active and stable form. The cell surface display system successfully degraded pineapple waste into XOS.

ABSTRAK

Paparan permukaan sel merupakan kaedah untuk melekatkan enzim pada permukaan sel. Kaedah ini boleh digunakan sebagai mangkinbio keseluruhan sel bagi memangkinkan pemotongan substrat di luar sel. Motif pelekatan adalah amat penting dalam pembinaan sistem paparan permukaan sel. Sehingga kini, protein penukleusan ais (INP) merupakan antara motif pelekatan yang paling berkesan yang telah dikaji. Namun, masih terdapat masalah yang timbul berhubung dengan pengekspresian terhad di permukaan sel dan kestabilan ketika dipaparkan. Oleh itu, penerokaan motif pelekatan INP dari sumber yang lebih luas mungkin dapat menemukan INP yang lebih efisien dari segi paparan permukaan pada sel. INP daripada *Erwinia ananas*, InaA, ialah motif pelekatan yang digunakan dalam kajian ini untuk paparan berfungsi enzim xilanase (EC 3.2.1.8). Paparan permukaan menggunakan InaA yang digabungkan dengan xilanase (InaAxyl), memberikan aktiviti enzim yang hampir tiga kali ganda lebih tinggi iaitu 92.2 U/g berat sel kering berbanding dengan dua INP lain yang digunakan. Pengekspresian InaAxyl pada permukaan sel telah disahkan dengan analisis SDS-PAGE, Western blot, mikroskopi imunopendarfluor, dan aliran sitometri. Data kuantitatif aliran sitometri menunjukkan motif pelekatan InaA adalah hampir empat kali ganda lebih efektif berbanding konstruk INP yang lain. Keadaan pengekspresian InaAxyl telah dioptimumkan menggunakan kaedah satu faktor pada satu masa (OFAT). Keadaan yang dioptimumkan ialah masa selepas aruhan iaitu 8 jam menggunakan medium LB dengan kepekatan pengaruh 0.3 mM dan kadar pengadukan 200 rpm pada suhu 25 °C. Sistem paparan permukaan sel ini kemudiannya digunakan untuk menghidrolisis hemiselulosa daripada sisa nanas. Sehingga kini, masih tiada kajian yang dilakukan terhadap degradasi biojisim lignoselulosik menggunakan sistem paparan permukaan pada bakteria. Setelah sisa mentah nanas melalui proses prarawatan untuk membuang lignin, pengekstrakan hemiselulosa telah dijalankan. Bahagian hemiselulosa nanas yang telah diekstrak kemudiannya dianalisa menggunakan spektroskopi inframerah jelmaan Fourier yang mengesahkan kejayaan proses pengekstrakan tersebut. Morfologi sisa nanas sebelum dan selepas pengekstrakan hemiselulosa dikaji menggunakan mikroskop pengimbasan elektron pancaran medan. Permukaan lignin yang kasar sebelum prarawatan berubah menjadi licin selepas pengekstrakan hemiselulosa. Kemudian, penyaringan parameter tindak balas InaAxyl dengan sisa nanas dikaji dengan kaedah OFAT. Pengoptimuman bagi pH, kepekatan sel dan suhu dikaji menggunakan kaedah sambutan permukaan dengan reka bentuk Box-Behnken daripada perisian DESIGN EXPERT. Jumlah gula ringkas yang terhasil ialah 2.129 mg/ml pada keadaan optimum iaitu pH 7.5 menggunakan 100 g/L berat sel basah pada suhu 30 °C. Kromatografi cecair prestasi tinggi (HPLC) digunakan untuk analisis kualitatif dan kuantitatif bagi menentukan jenis dan kuantiti xilooligosakarida (XOS) yang terhasil daripada tindak balas ini. XOS yang dikesan ialah xilobiosa dan xilotriosa dengan hasil 5.4 mg/g substrat nanas. Berdasarkan kajian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahawa InaAxyl telah diekspres dengan baik pada permukaan sel dalam keadaan enzim yang aktif dan stabil. Sistem paparan permukaan sel yang digunakan telah berjaya menukarkan sisa nanas kepada XOS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	TITLE	PAGE
	DECLARATION	iii
	DEDICATION	iv
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
	ABSTRACT	vi
	ABSTRAK	vii
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
	LIST OF TABLES	xii
	LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
	LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xviii
	LIST OF APPENDICES	xx
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Background of Research	1
1.2	Problem Statement	3
1.3	Objectives	4
1.4	Scope	4
CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1	Bacterial Whole-cell Biocatalyst	7
2.2	Cell Surface Display	9
2.2.1	Components for Cell Surface Display	9
2.2.2	Type of Host for Surface Display	11
2.2.2.1	Gram-positive Bacteria	11
2.2.2.2	Gram-negative bacteria	13
2.2.2.3	Other non-bacterial hosts	14
2.2.3	<i>E. coli</i> as a Host for Surface Display	15
2.2.4	Systems for Surface Display in <i>E. coli</i>	16
2.2.4.1	Outer Membrane Protein (OMP)	16

2.2.4.2	Surface appendages	17
2.2.4.3	Autotransporters	17
2.2.4.4	Ice nucleation protein (INP)	18
2.3	Ice Nucleation Protein (INP)	19
2.3.1	Structure	19
2.3.2	Pros and Cons of using INP for Surface Display	23
2.3.3	Applications	24
2.3.4	InaA from <i>Erwinia ananas</i>	25
2.4	Lignocellulosic Biomass	26
2.5	Hemicellulose and Xylan	27
2.6	Pineapple Waste	29
2.7	Extraction and Hydrolysis of Hemicellulose	30
2.7.1	Acid Hydrolysis and Alkaline Extraction	30
2.7.2	Enzymatic Hydrolysis	31
2.8	Xylanase	32
2.9	Xylooligosaccharides (XOS)	35
2.10	Reaction Parameters Affecting Reaction using Cell Surface Display	36
CHAPTER 3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	39
3.1	Overall Workflow	40
3.2	Preparation of Bacterial Inoculum	41
3.3	Preparation of Bacterial Glycerol Stock	41
3.4	Agarose Gel Preparation	41
3.5	DNA Manipulation for Construction of Cell Surface Display	42
3.5.1	Plasmid Construction	42
3.5.2	DNA Synthesis	43
3.5.3	Plasmid Extraction	43
3.5.4	Primer Design	44
3.5.5	Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)	44
3.5.6	Purification	45

3.5.7	Restriction Enzyme Digestion	46
3.5.8	Ligation	46
3.5.9	Competent Cell Preparation	47
3.5.10	Transformation by TSS Method	47
3.5.11	Screening of Transformants	47
3.6	Analysis of Surface Localization and Expression of Cell Surface Display	48
3.6.1	Cell Fractionation	48
3.6.2	Protease Accessibility Test	49
3.6.3	Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate-Polyacrylamide Gel Electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE)	49
3.6.4	Western Blot	50
3.6.5	Immunofluorescence Microscopy and Flow Cytometry	51
3.7	Expression Studies	52
3.8	Reducing Sugar Assay	53
3.9	Preparation of Pineapple for Hydrolysis	54
3.9.1	Substrate Preparation and Pretreatment	54
3.9.2	Hemicellulose Extraction from Pineapple	55
3.10	Screening for Pineapple Hydrolysis (OFAT)	55
3.11	Optimization using Box-Behnken Design	56
3.12	High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)	56
3.13	Fourier Transform Infrared Analysis (FTIR)	57
3.14	Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscope (FESEM)	57
CHAPTER 4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	59
4.1	Introduction	59
4.2	Molecular Characterization of InaA	59
4.3	Amplification of Xylanase and Molecular Cloning to INPs	62
4.4	Comparison of Whole-cell Xylanase Activity using Different INPs	64
4.5	Expression Localization of INPs Fused to Xylanase	66

4.6	Immunofluorescence Microscopy and Flow Cytometry Analysis	70
4.7	Effects of Surface Display on Cell Growth	74
4.8	Expression Optimization for Cell Surface Display of InaAxl	75
4.9	Application of Cell Surface Display for the Degradation of Hemicellulose	80
4.10	Pretreatment and Hemicellulose Extraction from Pineapple Pomace	80
4.11	Effect of Pretreatment and Hemicellulose Extraction on the Morphology of Pineapple Pomace	84
4.12	Screening of Culture Conditions for Hydrolysis of Pineapple Pomace	89
4.13	Statistical Optimization for Hydrolysis of Pineapple Pomace	95
4.14	Morphology Analysis of Pineapple Pomace after Hydrolysis Reaction	100
4.15	Quantification of XOS Produced	101
CHAPTER 5	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	105
5.1	Conclusion	105
5.2	Recommendations for Future Work	106
	LIST OF REFERENCES	107
	LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	127

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
Table 2.1	Structures of INP used to display various enzymes	22
Table 2.2	Applications of INP for surface display	24
Table 2.3	Applications and potential applications of xylanase in industry	34
Table 3.1	Upper and lower limits of parameters for hydrolysis of pineapple	56
Table 4.1	Optical density of cell cultured in different medium	78
Table 4.2	Experimental design for reducing sugar production using Box-Behnken Design	96
Table 4.3	ANOVA for the reduced quadratic model	97
Table 4.4	Confirmation experiments for BBD model	99
Table 4.5	XOS production from various sources of xylan and enzyme	103

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
Figure 2.1	Membrane barrier in Gram-negative bacteria (Silhavy <i>et al.</i> , 2010)	8
Figure 2.2	Methods of surface display in bacteria. (A) Methods used in Gram-negative bacteria include i) fusion to pili, ii) sandwich fusion to outer membrane proteins iii) C- or N-terminal fusion. (B) Methods used in Gram-positive bacteria i) fusion to sortase, ii) fusion to transmembrane proteins with domains exposed to the cell surface, iii) fusion to S-layer proteins iv) fusion to cell wall-associated proteins such as autolysins. Green colour represents the desired protein, blue colour represents the carrier protein, IM, inner membrane; PG, peptidoglycan; OM, outer membrane; PM, plasma membrane (Gautam and Spiegel, 2014).	10
Figure 2.3	Structure of the surface protein and position of SrtA on the cell wall. Surface protein contains a signal peptide which will be cleaved after passing through the Sec translocon. The back curved connector is the protein to be displayed while the black box after the LPXTG motif represents the hydrophobic amino acids which spans the peptidoglycan layer of the cell wall. The (+) sign indicates the positively charged signal which retains the structure on the cell wall of Gram-positive bacteria (Schneewind and Missiakas, 2012).	12
Figure 2.4	Cell surface proteins on the cell envelope of Gram-positive bacteria. Membrane-associated proteins include proteins which contain transmembrane spans and lipoproteins. Cell-wall associated proteins can be divided into two categories which are covalently and noncovalently bound proteins. Five types cell-wall binding domains (CWBDs) have been characterized; CWBD 1 and 2, LysSM, GW proteins and SLHD (Desvaux <i>et al.</i> , 2006).	13

Figure 2.5	Surface display using OmpA. OmpA has a β -barrel structure with anti-parallel β -strands represented by the arrows. This method of fusion is known as sandwich fusion where the peptide is inserted into the loop facing the external environment of the cell. OM, outer membrane; PP, periplasm; N, N-terminal domain; C, C-terminal domain. Adapted from van Bloois <i>et al.</i> (2011).	16
Figure 2.6	Illustration of an autotransporter display system and factors to be considered when selecting a new host. From the cytoplasm, the autotransporter passes through the inner membrane through the Sec pathway and the signal peptide is cleaved. The β -barrel is assembled on the outer membrane followed by the translocation of the passenger protein to the cell surface through the pore. SP, signal peptide; BAM, β -barrel assembly machinery; SEC, Sec machinery. (Tozakidis <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	18
Figure 2.7	Structure of ice nucleation protein (INP). OM, outer membrane; P, periplasm; IM, inner membrane. Adapted from van Bloois <i>et al.</i> (2011)	19
Figure 2.8	Different structures of INP used for surface display. (a) Full length INP or INP with some truncations to the CRD (b) N- and C-terminal domain (c) N-terminal domain. OM, outer membrane. (van Bloois <i>et al.</i> , 2011)	21
Figure 2.9	General structure of lignocellulose (Mathews <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	27
Figure 2.10	General structure of xylan (Polizeli <i>et al.</i> , 2005)	28
Figure 2.11	Effect of pretreatment on lignocellulosic biomass (Hosseini Koupaie <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	32
Figure 2.12	Hydrolysis of xylan. Cleavage of 1,4- β -D-xylosidic bonds in xylan produces xylooligosaccharides such as xylobiose. Figure adapted from Held (2012)	33
Figure 2.13	Properties and effects of XOS (Amorim <i>et al.</i> , 2019).	35
Figure 3.1	Overall workflow	40
Figure 3.2	Construction of plasmid for surface display using INP.	42
Figure 4.1	Multiple sequence alignment of InaA, InaK and InaZ using Clustal Omega.	60
Figure 4.2	Structure of INP used in this study. OM, outer membrane.	61

Figure 4.3	PCR product on 1.5% agarose gel. M: 1 kb DNA ladder (NEB), Lane 1: xylanase gene (~600bp)	63
Figure 4.4	Gel electrophoresis of digested clone. Lane M: 1 kb DNA ladder (NEB), Lane 1: <i>inaKxyl</i> , Lane 2: <i>inaAxyl</i> and Lane 3: <i>inaZxyl</i> .	64
Figure 4.5	Whole-cell activity of cells expressing InaKxyl, InaAxyl, and InaZxyl. All cells were standardized to a final concentration of OD _{600nm} =3 in PBS. Glazyrina <i>et al.</i> (2010) have reported that an OD _{600nm} of 1 corresponds to 0.39 g/L dry cell weight. The experiments were done in triplicate and the error bars represent the standard deviation in each experiment.	65
Figure 4.6	SDS-PAGE and western blot of INPs fused to xylanase. a) SDS-PAGE and b) western blot of cells expressing InaKxyl (Lane 1 and 5), InaAxyl (Lane 2 and 6), InaZxyl (Lane 3 and 7) and empty vector pET-21a (Lane 4 and 8). Lanes 1-4 show the total membrane protein while lanes 5-8 show the outer membrane fraction c) SDS-PAGE for soluble fraction of cells harboring InaKxyl (Lane 1), InaAxyl (Lane 2), InaZxyl (Lane 3) and empty vector pET-21(a) as control (Lane 4). M: protein marker. Arrows indicate bands corresponding to INPs fused to xylanase. OmpA and OmpF are the natural outer membrane proteins in <i>E. coli</i> .	67
Figure 4.7	SDS-PAGE of outer membranes of InaKxyl, InaAxyl, InaZxyl and pET-21a which was used as control for Proteinase K accessibility test. Arrows represent the respective surface displayed protein bands. OM: untreated cells, PK: whole-cells treated with Proteinase K, PKE: whole-cells treated with Proteinase K with EDTA, M: protein marker.	69
Figure 4.8	Fluorescence and phase contrast micrographs of <i>E. coli</i> . a) Fluorescence micrographs of cells expressing InaAxyl, b) phase contrast of cells expressing empty pET-21a (control) The area in the dotted box highlights some of the <i>E. coli</i> cells. No fluorescence images were shown for the control and InaKxyl and InaZxyl as none were detected.	71
Figure 4.9	Flow cytometry results of surface displayed cells. a) Unstained <i>E. coli</i> BL21 (DE3) as the control for cell background b) Stained <i>E. coli</i> BL21 (DE3) harbouring empty plasmid pET-21a as the stained control for background fluorescence c) cells expressing InaKxyl d) cells expressing InaAxyl and e) cells expressing InaZxyl. Cells expressing InaAxyl showed highest	

	fluorescence intensity (mean and median) and percentage of parent compared to InaKxyl and InaZxyl.	73
Figure 4.10	Growth curve of cells expressing INPs fused to xylanase. Time at 0 h indicates the moment of induction of expression. The control used was pET-21a and all cells were grown under the same conditions.	74
Figure 4.11	Effect of culture conditions on cell surface display of InaAxyl. Effect of a) post-induction harvest time, b) medium of expression, c) inducer concentration, d) agitation rate and e) temperature on the enzyme activity of surface displayed xylanase.	77
Figure 4.12	Flow cytometry analysis of cells displaying InaAxyl expressed at optimum conditions.	80
Figure 4.13	Change of colour of pineapple pomace after reaction with PPA. Left, colour after incubation with Ca(OH) ₂ and right, colour after incubation with PPA.	82
Figure 4.14	FTIR spectra comparing untreated pineapple (red), hemicellulose extracted only pineapple (blue), pretreated only pineapple (purple), both pretreated and hemicellulose extracted pineapple (green) and beechwood xylan (black) which was the control used for commercial xylan.	84
Figure 4.15	Raw, untreated pineapple pomace protected by the rough lignin layer. a) Pineapple pomace, FESEM images for b) ×500 magnification and c) ×10 000 magnification.	86
Figure 4.16	Pretreated and hemicellulose extracted pineapple pomace with lignin removed. a) Hemicellulose of pineapple pomace, FESEM images of pineapple pomace at b) ×100 magnification, arrow indicates the porous structure as an effect of pretreatment c) ×500 magnification, arrow labels the micropore and d) ×10 000 magnification.	88
Figure 4.17	Screening for culture conditions affecting reaction of whole-cells displaying InaAxyl and hemicellulose from pineapple pomace. Effect of a) cell loading, b) pH, c) agitation rate, d) substrate loading and e) temperature on relative reducing sugar produced.	91
Figure 4.18	Appearance of reaction mixtures with different substrate loadings. The percentages below the images indicate the substrate loading in % w/v. As the substrate loading increases, the viscosity increases.	94

Figure 4.19	3-D surface plot for the interaction between pH and cell loading and the amount of reducing sugar produced at the centre point of temperature which was 30 °C.	99
Figure 4.20	Hemicellulose fraction of pineapple pomace after hydrolysis by cell surface displayed xylanase a) ×1 500 magnification b) ×10 000 magnification. Red arrows point to sections of the hemicellulose that have been degraded by xylanase revealing microfibrils. Black arrows indicate <i>E. coli</i> displaying InaAxyl.	101

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBD	-	Box-Behnken Design
BG	-	Bacterial ghost
bp	-	base pair
BPP	-	Beta-propellar phytase
BSA	-	Bovine serum albumin
CRD	-	Central repeating domain
DCW	-	Dry cell weight
DF	-	Dilution factor
DMSO	-	dimethylsulfoxide
DNA	-	deoxyribonucleic acid
DNS	-	3,5-dinitrosalicylic acid
FESEM	-	Field emission scanning electron microscope
FOSHU	-	Food for Specified Health Use
FTIR	-	Fourier Transform infrared spectroscopy
GFP	-	Green fluorescent protein
GPI	-	Glycosylphosphatidylinositol
GRAS	-	Generally regarded as safe
HPLC	-	High performance liquid chromatography
INP	-	Ice nucleation protein
IPTG	-	isopropyl β -D-1-thiogalactopyranoside
kb	-	kilo base
LB	-	Luria-Bertani
MW	-	Molecular weight
OFAT	-	One-factor-at-a-time
OMP	-	Outer membrane protein
PAA	-	Peracetic acid
PBS	-	Phosphate buffered saline
PCR	-	Polymerase chain reaction
PEG	-	Polyethylene glycol
RMS	-	Response Surface Methodology

SDS-PAGE	-	Sodium-dodecyl sulphate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
SOB	-	Super optimal broth
TB	-	Terrific broth
M9	-	Minimal medium
TSS	-	Transformation storage solution
t	-	time
v/v	-	volume per volume
w/v	-	weight per volume
X1	-	xylose
X2	-	xylobiose
X3	-	xylotriose
X4	-	xylotetraose
X5	-	xylopentaose
X6	-	xylohexaose
XOS	-	xylooligosaccharide

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
Appendix A	Gene sequences and amino acid sequences	128
Appendix B	Media and buffers for experimental work	135
Appendix C	Graphs of standard curves	139

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

The use of microorganisms in industrial processes is rapidly growing. In 2010, biotechnological processes products amount to 91.9 billion Euros while the projected amount of sales for these products are about 432 billion Euros in the year 2020. About 5% of the volume of biotechnological products is from the usage of biocatalyst (Schüürmann *et al.*, 2014). These figures highlight the growing potential of biocatalyst in industrial biotechnology and the room for its growth and improvement. Since 1990, many enzymes were commercialized mostly for the production of fine chemicals for use in pharmaceutical industry, plant protecting agents, and fragrances (Reetz, 2013). Currently, various strategies are being applied for extracellular enzyme production. Extracellular protein production is especially important if the substrates are large polymers resulting in difficult passage through the cell surface and its minimal uptake (Ni and Chen, 2009). Thus, if intracellular enzymes are produced, contact with substrates becomes an issue. Besides that, complex bioprocess is avoided through extracellular enzyme production and the quality of enzyme is preserved (Ni and Chen, 2009).

One of the methods for extracellular protein production is to fuse the target protein with an anchoring motif to create a cell surface display system (Lee *et al.*, 2003). Cell surface display is the presentation of the target protein on the surface of cells (van Bloois *et al.*, 2011). This method is particularly useful as enzyme fused to the cell can be easily separated from the medium of reaction through simple methods (Schüürmann *et al.*, 2014). Surface display of enzymes reduces the complexity of bioprocess as it eliminates the time and cost needed for enzyme purification (Dong *et al.*, 2020). Complex substrates which cannot pass through the complex membrane barriers of Gram-negative bacteria in order for reaction to take place can also be

overcome. Among the other applications of cell surface display are the development of live vaccines (Lee *et al.*, 2000), bioremediation (Shimazu *et al.*, 2001a) and high-throughput screening of peptide libraries (Boder and Wittrup, 1997).

A potential use of cell surface display is in the hydrolysis of lignocellulosic biomass. Lignocellulosic biomass is plant material made up mainly of cellulose, hemicellulose and lignin. It includes forestry residues, waste from agriculture, and grasses which are produced in abundance from agro-industries (Anwar *et al.*, 2014). Many industries underutilize lignocellulose as only a portion of the biomass is used for industrial processes while the unused lignocellulose streams are gone to waste (Mathews *et al.*, 2015). These streams have the potential to be used for bioconversion into useful products. Hemicellulose is the second most abundant polymer in lignocellulose and is made up of sugars such as xylan, arabinan, galactan and mannan with xylan being the most abundant (Beg *et al.*, 2001; Mathews *et al.*, 2015). Xylan, when hydrolysed by xylanolytic enzymes yields xylooligosaccharides (XOS) which is a useful product for various industries. The main enzyme used in the hydrolysis of xylan is xylanase (E.C. 3.2.1.8). Therefore, for the hydrolysis of xylan using cell surface display, xylanase has to be anchored to the surface of the cell to catalyse the reaction.

Xylanases can be obtained from many sources such as algae, yeast, bacteria and fungi. Xylanases from fungi has drawn the attention of researchers because it is secreted into the medium for reaction and is produced in high amounts (Polizeli *et al.*, 2005). Enzymatic hydrolysis of xylan has several benefits such as milder reaction conditions and side reactions which produce unwanted byproducts can be avoided (Motta *et al.*, 2013).

In this study, a cell surface display system using ice nucleation protein (INP) as an anchor to display xylanase for the hydrolysis of xylan in pineapple was constructed. INP is an outer membrane protein that can be found in ice nucleation active bacteria such as *Pseudomonas*, *Xanthomonas* and *Erwinia*. This protein catalyzes the formation of ice in supercooled water (Vali *et al.*, 1976). The first study on the surface display ability of INP in *E. coli* was done in 1997 where levansucrase

was successfully displayed on the surface of the cell (Jung *et al.*, 1998a). After this discovery, the display of other enzymes using INP followed such as carboxymethylcellulase (Jung *et al.*, 1998b), organophosphorus (Shimazu *et al.*, 2001a) and transglucosidase (Wu *et al.*, 2006b). To the best of our knowledge, cell surface display using INP for xylanase enzyme has yet been done. Besides that, INP from *Erwinia ananas*, InaA, which has not been reported for cell surface display was used in this study.

1.2 Problem Statement

The use of enzymes as catalysts in chemical reactions bears advantages such as its high specificity for substrates and mild reaction conditions. In many bio-based production processes, purified enzymes are used as catalyst. Unfortunately, enzyme purification is an expensive process and it also takes up time (Schüürmann *et al.*, 2014). The use of microbes as whole-cell biocatalyst is able to solve this problem as enzymes need not undergo further purification procedures.

On the other hand, whole-cell biocatalyst with enzymes produced intracellularly requires the substrate to penetrate the membrane of the cells, especially Gram-negative bacteria. This is particularly difficult if not impossible for large substrates such as polysaccharides to pass through the membrane barrier (Muñoz-Gutiérrez and Martinez, 2013). Besides that, a cell produces many enzymes with reactions that might interfere with the desired reaction (Schüürmann *et al.*, 2014).

In order to address this problem, a cell surface display system where the targeted protein is presented on the surface of cells for the reaction to occur extracellularly was designed. Surface display of enzymes allows contact with the substrate without the need of the substrate to pass the membrane barrier and can also be easily separated from the reaction mixture. Hitherto, INP has been used for the display of many enzymes and it has been found that in some cases, transportation of intracellularly expressed INP-enzyme to the surface of the host cell was limited (Li *et*

al., 2012; Li *et al.*, 2004). Besides that, the instability of the anchoring motif caused by proteolytic degradation also affected the efficiency of the biocatalyst (Li *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, INP variants from other sources should be explored to address this problem.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- (a) To construct and analyse the performance of INP from *Erwinia ananas*, InaA, as a surface display system for enzymes in *E. coli*.
- (b) To evaluate the effect of expression parameters on performance of the constructed system.
- (c) To study the reaction parameters for conversion of pineapple hemicellulose to XOS using cell surface display of xylanase in *E. coli*.

1.4 Scope

The scope of study listed below will be used to achieve the objectives stated.

- (a) The first objective was defined with the following scope; Construction of plasmid containing INP and xylanase enzyme through molecular cloning. Analysing and confirming surface display on the outer membrane of *E. coli* and its stability using fluorescence microscopy and flow cytometry.

- (b) The scope for the second objective was optimising conditions for expression by studying the effects of (1) post-induction time harvest time, (2) type of medium, (3) inducer concentration, (4) temperature of expression, and (5) agitation rate on surface display of xylanase.

- (c) The final objective has the following scope; Screening for reducing sugar from reaction of surface displayed xylanase using one-factor-at-a-time on a few parameters: (1) cell loading, (2) pH, (3) agitation rate, (4) substrate loading, and (5) temperature. Optimisation of reaction using cell surface displayed xylanase on the hydrolysis of pineapple pomace by Box-Behnken Design (BBD) for maximum amount of reducing sugar produced. Analysing the quantity of XOS production from pineapple pomace after reaction at optimum conditions.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Journal with Impact Factor

1. **Wee, M. Y. J.**, Murad, A. M. A., Bakar, D. D. A., Low, K. O., and Illias, R. M. (2019). Expression of xylanase on *Escherichia coli* using truncated ice nucleation protein of *Erwinia ananas* (InaA). *Process biochemistry*. 78, 25-32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procbio.2019.01.005> (**Q2, IF:2.952**)

Conference Proceedings with ISBN

1. **Wee, M. Y. J.**, Illias, R. M. (2015). Functional Cell Surface Display using Ice Nucleation Protein from *Erwinia ananas* on *Escherichia coli*. In 17th *International Conference on Bioinformatics and Molecular Biology (ICBMB)* 3-4 December 2015. Bayview Hotel, Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia.
2. **Wee, M. Y. J.**, Illias, R. M., (2016). Reaction Optimization of Cell Surface Display of Xylanase on *Escherichia coli*. In 3rd *International Conference on Chemical, Biological, and Environmental Sciences, ICCBES'15*, 31 December 2015-1 January 2016. Hotel Mercure Bangkok Siam, Bangkok, Thailand.

Appendix A

Gene sequences and amino acid sequences

Appendix A1: InaA from *Erwinia ananas* IN-10

A1.1: Gene sequence

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>gi|296095|emb|X17316.1| E.ananas inaA gene
CCCGGGTTTTTGCCGAATCGGATACCCAGCCGAGCAAAGTCATGTTTGCCGATCATCTGCTGCGCTA
TGTGCCGCTGGCCGCTTGTATTAACCCTGCTGGATGAACGTACCCGGTCATCGTGCGCCAACGCAT
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A1.2: Amino acid sequence

>sp|P20469|1-1322

MKEDKVLILRTCANNMADHGGI IWPLSGIVECKYWKPVKGFENGLTGLIWKGSDSPLSLHADARRVV
AEVAADECIAIETHGWIKFPRAEVLHVGTQNSAMQFILHHRADYVACTEMQAGPGGPDVTSEAKAGNR
SLPVTDDIDATIESGSTQPTQTIEIFRCWDGKRYTNVAKTGKGGIEADMPYQMEDNNIVNKPEE

Underlined : sequence for N-terminal domain
Dashed underline : sequence for C-terminal domain
Bold : stop codon (not included in synthetic gene)

(Markings/legends are applied to all sequences in Appendix A)

Appendix A2: InaK from *Pseudomonas syringae* KCTC 1832

A2.1: Gene sequence

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>gi|2331278|gb|AF013159.1| Pseudomonas syringae ice nucleation
protein (inaK) gene, complete cds
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A2.1: Amino acid sequence

>sp|030611|1-1148

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AVASVTLPVAEQARHEVFDVASVSAAAPVNTLPVTTTPQNLQTFRLWDGKRYRQLVARTGENGVEADI
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Appendix A3: InaZ from *Pseudomonas syringae* S203

A3.1: Gene sequence

>gi|45828|emb|X03035.1| *Pseudomonas syringae* S203 ice nucleation
gene

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A3.2: Amino acid sequence

>sp|P06620|ICEN PSESY Ice nucleation protein OS=Pseudomonas syringae
pv. syringae GN=inaZ PE=1 SV=1
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Appendix A4: Xylanase from *Aspergillus fumigatus* RT-1

A4.1: Gene sequence

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>gi|305377695|gb|GQ458016.1| Aspergillus fumigatus strain RT-1  
endoxylanase (xynG1) gene  
ACACCCGGCTCGGAGCAATACGTTGAGCTAGCCAAGCGGCAGCTCACCAGCTCTCAGACTGGCACGAA  
TAACGGCTACTACTACTCCTTCTGGACCGACGGCGGGCCAGGTGACCTACACCAACGGCAATGGCG  
GCCAGTATCAGGTCGACTGGAACAACCTGCGGCAACTTTGTTGCTGGGAAGGGCTGGAACCTGGCCAGC  
GAGAAGTATGCGTCCTCTCCCTGCTTGTAGGTTCAAGCTAATGGATTTCAGAGCGGTCACCTACAGCG  
GCTCCTGGCAGACCAGCGAAACGGCTACCTCTCCGTGTACGGCTGGACGACCAGTCCGCTGGTCGAA  
TTCTACATCGTGGAGAGTTACGGCTCCTATGACCCCTCCACGGGAGCCACCCATCTCGGCACCGTCGA  
GAGCGACGGGGCCACGTACAACCTCTACAAGACGACGCGGACGAATGCGCCGTCCATCCAGGGCACGG  
CTACTTTTGACCAGTACTGGTCGGTTCGGACTTCGCACCGGCAGAGTGGAACGTGACGACGAAGAAC  
CACTTTGATGCGTGGAGAAATGCGGGTCTGCAATTGGGGAACCTTGACTATATGATTGTTGCGACGGA  
GGGTACCAGAGCAGCGGCTCTGCTACTATCACTGTTTCT
```

Appendix B

Media and buffers for experimental work

Appendix B1: Buffers

1L PBS buffer

8 g NaCl

0.2 g KCl

1.78 g Na₂HPO₄·2H₂O

0.24 g KH₂PO₄

Autoclave

Buffers for screening of cultural conditions for hydrolysis of pineapple pomace

	<u>0.1 M acetic acid</u>	<u>0.1 M sodium acetate</u>	
pH 4	84.7	15.3	
pH 5	35.7	64.3	
	<u>0.2 M NaH₂PO₄</u>	<u>0.2 M Na₂HPO₄</u>	
pH 6	87.7	12.3	
	<u>0.2 M glycine</u>	<u>0.2 M NaOH</u>	<u>dH₂O</u>
pH 9	25	4.4	Top up to 100
pH 10	25	19.3	Top up to 100

Appendix B2: Medium

1 L SOB medium

20 g tryptone

5 g yeast extract

0.5 g NaCl

10 ml of 250 mM KCl

5 ml of sterilized 2 M MgCl₂ (added after autoclaving the above chemicals in dH₂O)

1 L TB medium

12 g tryptone

24 g yeast extract

4 ml glycerol

Autoclave the above chemicals in about 900 ml of dH₂O and allow to cool. Then add 100 ml of 0.17 M KH₂PO₄ and 0.72 M K₂HPO₄ which have been autoclaved separately.

1 L M9 medium

200 ml 5× M9 salts

2 ml 1 M MgSO₄

20 ml 20 % glucose solution

0.1 ml 1 M CaCl₂

The 1 M MgSO₄ and 1 M CaCl₂ were prepared and autoclaved separately while the glucose solution was filter sterilized. The mixture was top up to 1 L with sterile dH₂O.

1 L of 5× M9 salts

64 g Na₂HPO₄·7H₂O

15 g anhydrous KH₂PO₄

2.5 g NaCl

5 g NH₄Cl

LB medium/agar

10 g tryptone

5 g NaCl

5 g yeast extract

1 % (w/v) agar

Appendix B3: Working solution for SDS-PAGE

2 X SDS-PAGE sample buffer

Tris-HCl pH 6.8 125 mM

Glycerol 20 %

SDS 4 %

Bromophenol blue 0.1 %

5% β -mercaptoethanol was added to the sample buffer before use.

15 % resolving gel 5 ml

H₂O 1.1 ml

30 % acrylamide 2.5 ml

1.5 M Tris (pH 8.8) 1.3 ml

10 % SDS 0.05 ml

10 % ammonium persulphate 0.05 ml

TEMED 0.002 ml

5 % stacking gel 2ml

H₂O 1.38 ml

30 % acrylamide 0.33 ml

1 M Tris (pH 6.8) 0.25 ml

10 % SDS 0.02 ml

10 % ammonium persulphate 0.02 ml

TEMED 0.002 ml

Staining solution A

50 % ethanol

10 % acetic acid

Staining solution B 50 ml

5 % ethanol

7.5 % acetic acid

200 µl of 0.25 % solution of Coomassie brilliant blue in 95 % ethanol

Appendix B4: Working solution for Western blot

Transfer buffer

25 mM Tris base

192 mM glycine

10 % methanol or isopropanol

10 × TBS 250 ml

6.05 g Tris base pH 7.6

21 g NaCl

1 × TBST 500 ml

1 × TBS + 500 µL of 0.1 % Tween 20

Blocking buffer 30 ml

5 % non-fat dry milk to 30 ml 1 × TBST

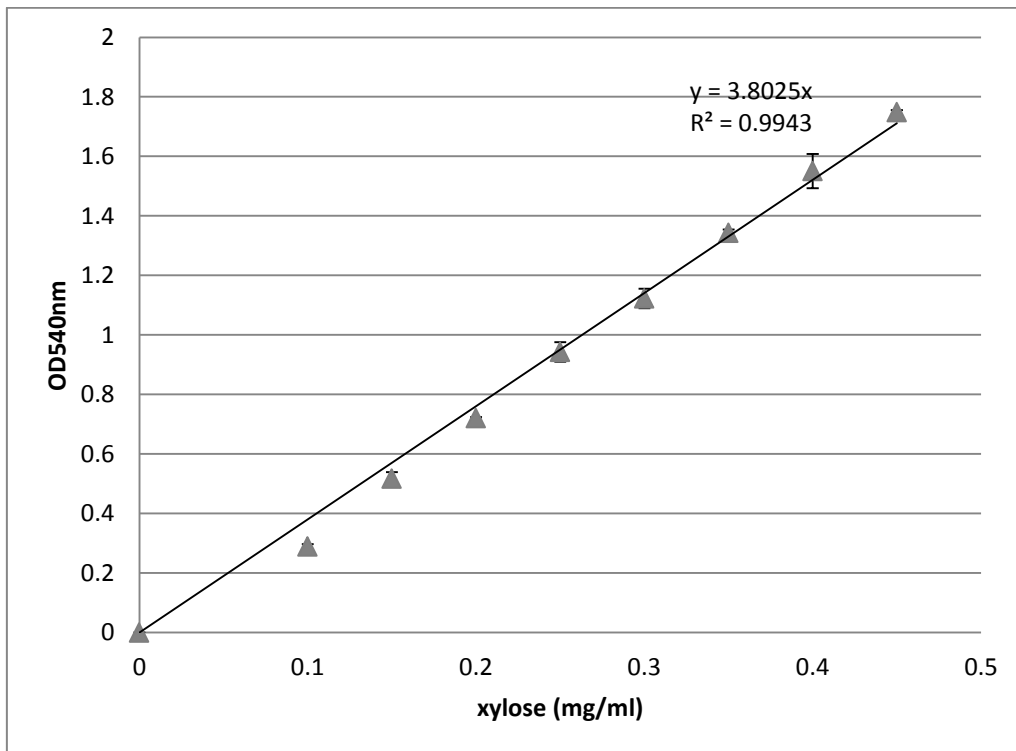
OR

3 % BSA in 1 × TBST

Appendix C

Graphs of standard curves

Appendix C1: Standard curve for reducing sugar assay (using xylose)

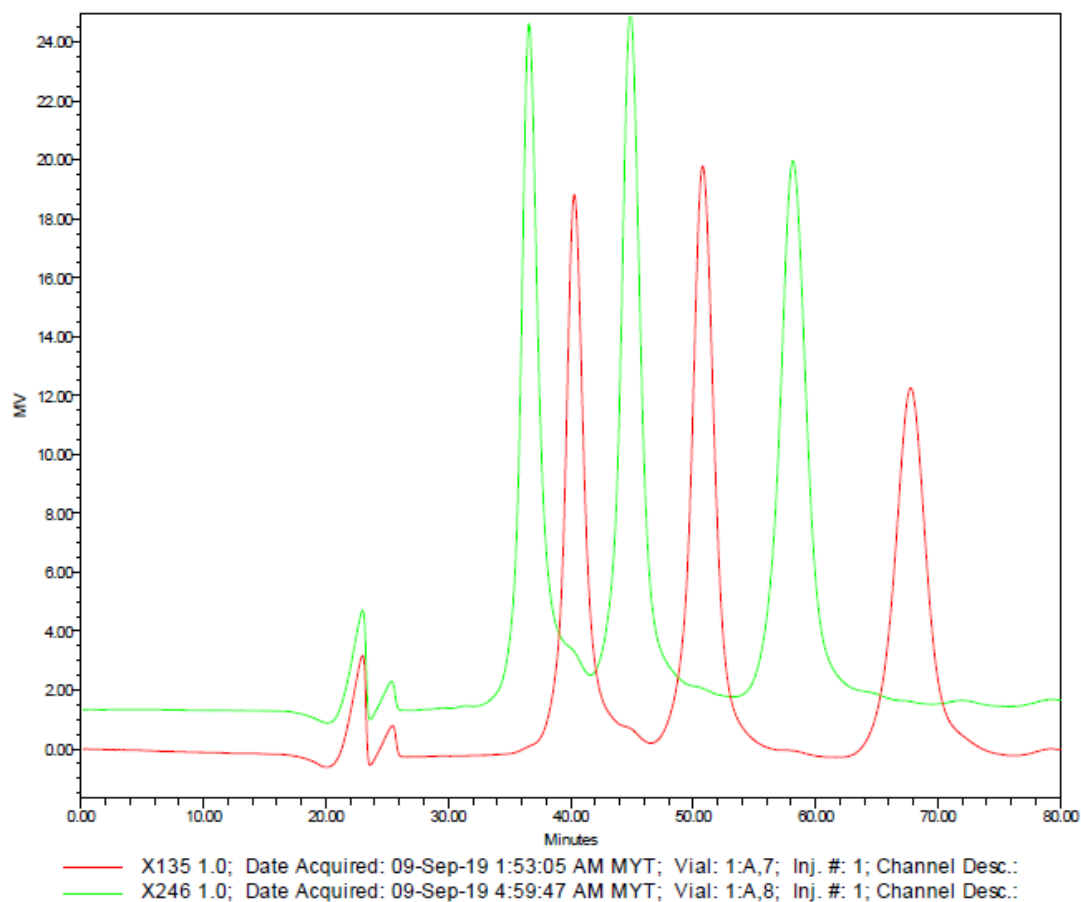


One of the standard curves used for DNS assay.

Appendix C2: XOS standard peaks using HPLC

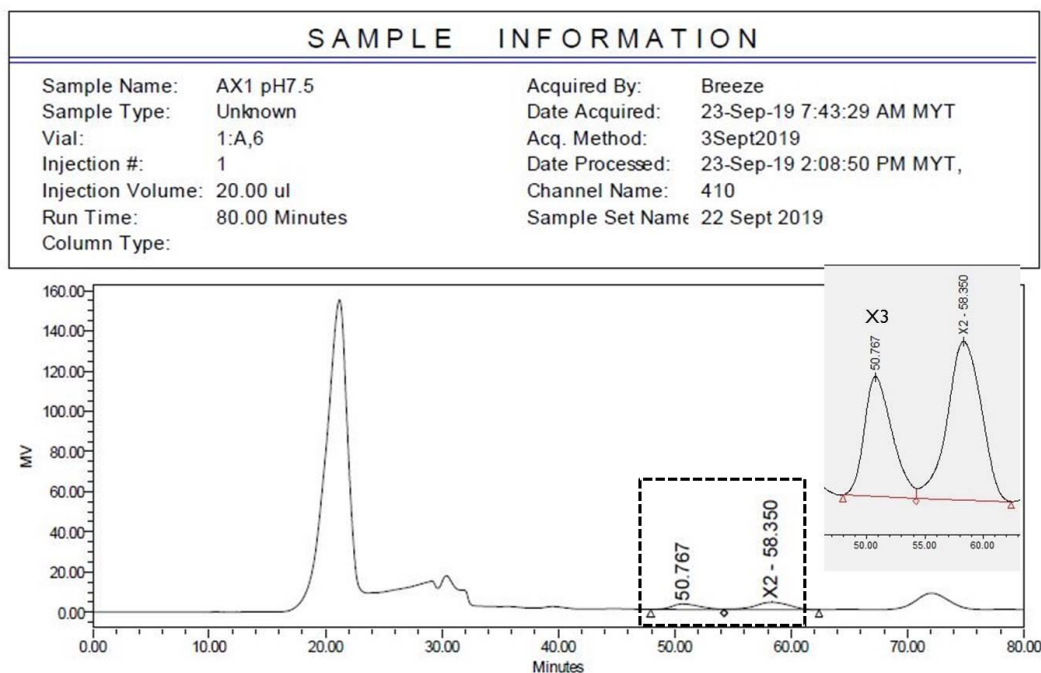
UTM

Project Name Joanne
Reported by User: Breeze user (Breeze)



X135 refers to the combined XOS of xylose, xylotriose and xylopentaose in a single vial with equal concentration of 1 mg/ml while X246 refers to the combined XOS of xylobiose, xylotetraose and xylohexaose with equal concentration of 1 mg/ml.

Appendix C3: Example of chromatogram for HPLC result



Product of reaction using InaAxyl and pineapple pomace. X2 refers to xylobiose while X3 refers to xylotriose. The Figure embedded is the zoomed peak of X2 and X3.

