

IMMOBILIZATION OF MICROALGAE
Chlorella vulgaris FOR BIOMASS RECOVERY
AND FATTY ACID METHYL ESTER
PRODUCTION

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Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRAK

Mikroalga dikenali sebagai bahan mentah yang berpotensi untuk penghasilan bahan api bio di atas kebolehannya menghasilkan minyak dan tumbuh lebih cepat daripada tanaman konvensional. Namun begitu, saiz mikroalga yang kecil telah menyebabkan kesusahan di proses pengasingan. Oleh itu, kaedah imobilisasi diperkenalkan disebabkan ia tidak memerlukan tenaga dan perbandingan kaedah ini dengan sel kultur bebas dilakukan pada permulaan penyelidikan. Alginat adalah matriks yang paling banyak digunakan tetapi menggunakan alginat sahaja boleh menyebabkan mikroalga pegun pecah. Oleh itu, kombinasi matriks yang baru telah dilaksanakan untuk meningkatkan kestabilan dan pertumbuhan sel. Saringan dan optimuman faktor yang memberi kesan kepada pertumbuhan sel imobilisasi mikroalga telah dilakukan untuk mendapat maksimum nombor pertumbuhan sel. Media Bold Basal (BBM) yang mahal telah mendesak penggunaan efluen kilang kelapa sawit sebagai medium pengkulturan disebabkan ia amat banyak di Malaysia. Mikroalga *Chlorella vulgaris* 211/11B telah diimobilisasikan di dalam tiga gabungan baru matriks dan namanya adalah (1) matriks campuran, $S_A C_{MC} C_A$ (S_A : natrium alginat, C_{MC} : natrium karboksimetil selulosa, C_A : kalsium alginat) (2) $S_A C_A$ dan (3) $S_A C_{MC}$. Nisbah isi padu matriks ke mikroalga (0.2: 1 - 1: 1) yang sesuai telah diselidiki melalui jumlah pertumbuhan sel. Seterusnya, imobilisasi mikroalga telah disaring dan dioptimumkan menggunakan reka bentuk faktorial berperingkat (FFD) dan reka bentuk komposit berpusat (CCD). Lima faktor yang mempengaruhi bilangan pertumbuhan sel dan kehilangan sel bagi mikroalga pegun *C. vulgaris* termasuk masa pencahayaan, tempoh pengkulturan, kepekatan glukosa, natrium alginat ($NaNO_3$), dan kalsium klorida ($CaCl_2$) telah disaring melalui 16 eksperimen terhasil daripada sistem FFD. Potensi efluen kilang kelapa sawit (POME) sebagai medium kultur telah disiasat melalui perbezaan kepekatan POME (20 % - 100 %) bercampur dengan air suling (DW) dan Media Bold Basal (BBM). Sementara itu, kajian terhadap kinetik dan parameter termodinamik telah dilakukan untuk memahami pengekstrakan imobilisasi mikroalga menggunakan persamaan kadar tindak balas dan persamaan tenaga bebas Gibb's. Mikroalga matriks campuran memaparkan bilangan sel yang tertinggi dengan 1.72×10^9 sel/ml pada hari ke 10 dan 30.43 % hasil pengekstrakan minyak diikuti oleh $S_A C_A$ (0.3:1) (24.29 %), $S_A C_{MC}$ (1:1) (13.00 %), dan S_A (1:1) (6.71 %). Melalui saringan menggunakan FFD, masa pencahayaan dan tempoh pengkulturan telah dikenalpasti sebagai faktor penting untuk kedua-dua respons. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa FFD adalah alat yang berguna untuk menentukan faktor-faktor penting untuk pertumbuhan sel imobilisasi dan meningkatkan pengeluaran minyak sebanyak 17.27 %. Selepas itu, dua faktor penting tadi telah dioptimumkan menggunakan CCD. Kondisi optimum yang dicadangkan daripada FFD dan CCD adalah 5.03 g/L $NaNO_3$, 1 w/v % $CaCl_2$, 24 h masa pencahayaan, 23.99 g/L glukosa dan 7.96 hari pengkulturan. Pengoptimuman menggunakan CCD telah meningkatkan minyak kepada 51.6 %. Sementara itu, 20 % POME dicampur dengan 80 % air suling sebagai medium kultur untuk mikroalga pegun telah menunjukkan hasil minyak yang agak setanding (38.14 ± 2.2 %) dengan minyak yang diperolehi daripada medium BBM (48.03 ± 3.7 %). Kajian kinetik menunjukkan bahawa nilai kadar pemalar sangat bergantung pada suhu. Kajian termodinamik mendedahkan bahawa pengekstrakan minyak daripada biojisim mikroalga pegun adalah reaksi endotermik, tak boleh berbalik dan spontan. Penggabungan S_A , C_A , dan C_{MC} telah membentuk struktur baru yang sesuai untuk meningkatkan pertumbuhan sel *C. vulgaris* dan meningkatkan pengeluaran minyak berbanding dengan imobilisasi menggunakan matrik tunggal. Selain itu, profil asid lemak metil ester yang diperolehi mempunyai potensi tinggi untuk pengeluaran biodiesel.

ABSTRACT

Microalgae had known to be a promising source for biofuel production as it can produce oil and grown faster than conventional crops. However, the small size of microalgae brings difficulties in the separation process. Thus, the immobilization method was introduced since it does not require energy and a comparison of this method with free cells culture was made initially. Alginate is the most widely used matrix but using alginate alone can cause bead rupture. Thus, a new combination of a matrix was implemented to improve the stability and cell growth. The screening and optimization of the factors affecting the immobilized microalgae cell growth were performed to obtain the maximum number of cell growth. The expensive Bold Basal Medium (BBM) had urged the usage of palm oil mill effluent (POME) as a cultivation medium since it is abundant in Malaysia. The microalgae *Chlorella vulgaris* 211/11B cells were immobilized within three novel combinations of matrices namely (1) mixed matrices, $S_{ACMC}C_A$ (S_A : sodium alginate, C_{MC} : sodium carboxymethyl cellulose, C_A : calcium alginate) (2) S_{ACA} and (3) S_{ACMC} . The suitable matrix-to-microalgae volume ratios (0.2:1 – 1:1) were determined by evaluating the number of cell growth. Subsequently, the immobilized microalgae were screened and optimized using fractional factorial design (FFD) and central composite design (CCD). Five factors inducing the number of cell growth and cell loss of immobilized *C. vulgaris* including photoperiod, cultivation period, the concentration of glucose, sodium nitrate ($NaNO_3$) and calcium chloride ($CaCl_2$) were screened through 16 experiments generated from the system. The potential of palm oil mill effluent (POME) as a cultivation medium was investigated through different concentrations of POME (20 % - 100 %) mixed with distilled water (DW) and Bold Basal Medium (BBM). Meanwhile, studies on the kinetic and thermodynamic parameters were exhibited to understand the nature of extraction of immobilized microalgae using the reaction rate equation and Gibb's free energy equation. The immobilized microalgae of mixed matrices with a ratio of 0.3:1 exhibited the highest number of cells with 1.72×10^9 cells/mL at day 10 and 30.43 % of oil extraction yield followed by S_{ACA} (0.3:1) (24.29 %), S_{ACMC} (1:1) (13.00 %), and S_A (1:1) (6.71 %). Through the screening process using FFD, photoperiod and cultivation days were identified as the significant factors for both responses. The outcomes indicated that FFD is a convenient tool to determine the important factors for immobilized cell growth and increased lipid production by 17.27 %. Then, the two significant factors were optimized by central composite design (CCD). The suggested conditions obtained from FFD and CCD were 5.03 g/L of $NaNO_3$, 1 w/v % of $CaCl_2$, 24 h of photoperiod, 23.99 g/L of glucose and 7.96 cultivation days. The optimization using CCD had increased the lipid yield to 51.6 %. Meanwhile, 20 % POME mixed with 80 % DW showed a quite comparable lipid yield (38.14 ± 2.2 %) with the lipid obtained from BBM (48.03 ± 3.7 %). The kinetic studies showed that the values of the rate constants relied strongly on temperature. The thermodynamic studies revealed that the lipid extraction of immobilized microalgae biomass is an endothermic, irreversible and spontaneous reaction. The combination of S_A , C_A , and C_{MC} made a new structure that enhanced the growth of *C. vulgaris* cells and increased the lipid production than the immobilization using a single matrix. Moreover, the FAME profile obtained from all the experimental works shows a high prospective for biodiesel production.

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