



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**THE EFFECTS OF SELECTED MICROBIAL INOCULUM ON MICROBIAL  
AND BIOCHEMICAL CHANGES DURING COCOA FERMENTATION**

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**By**

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**Master of Science  
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**Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements  
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**August 1990**



Dedicated to my beloved wife,

*Daeng Elysa Putri Mambang*

and my children

*Healthy Aldriany Prasetyo*

*Yayuk Putri Rahayu*

*Mauli Aldriano Aquarino Prasetyo*



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	i
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
LIST OF PLATES .....	xii
ABSTRACT .....	xiii
ABSTRAK .....	xv
CHAPTER	
1    INTRODUCTION	1
2    LITERATURE REVIEW	5
The Importance of the Fermentation Process of Cocoa Beans.....	5
Factors Affecting Cocoa Fermentation.....	7
Size of Fermentation .....	7
Duration of Fermentation .....	9
Methods of Fermentation .....	9
Changes During the Fermentation of Cocoa Beans .....	13
Microbiological Changes in the Cocoa Pulp	16
Physico-Chemical Changes in the Cocoa Pulp	23
Temperature Changes During Fermentation	23
pH Changes During Fermentation of Cocoa Beans .....	25
Biochemical Changes During Fermentation	27



	Page
Ethanol Formation by Yeast .....	27
Ester Formation by Yeast .....	29
Acid Formation by Bacteria .....	30
Physico-Chemical Changes in the Cotyledon..	34
Death of Cocoa Beans .....	35
Bean Colour Changes During Fermentation	38
Protein Degradation .....	41
Hydrolysis of Glycosides .....	43
Oxidation of Polyphenol .....	45
Drying of Fermented Cocoa Beans .....	48
Acids Responsible for High Acidity .....	50
A Number of Efforts to Reduce High Acidity	56
3 MATERIALS AND METHODS	62
Preparation of Sample .....	62
Stock Microbial Inoculum Preparation.....	65
Fermentation Procedure .....	66
I. The Determination of Microbial Population and Biochemical Changes of Fermented Cocoa Beans.....	67
A. Total Viable Microbial Count of Yeasts and Bacteria .....	67
B. Temperature Determination .....	68
C. pH Determination .....	68





	Page
D. Total Sugar Determination .....	68
E. Quantification of Ethanol and Ethyl Acetate .....	69
F. Quantification of Lactic and Acetic Acid .....	70
G. Evaluation of the Degree of Fermentation Index .....	71
H. Moisture Content .....	72
II. Biochemical Analysis of Dried Fermented Cocoa Beans .....	73
Preparation of Samples ,,,.....	73
Chemical Analysis .....	73
Titratable Acidity Determination .....	73
Statistical Analysis .....	74
4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS	75
 <u>Experiment I</u>	
The Microbial Population and Biochemical Changes of Fermented Cocoa with Different Microbial Inoculum .....	75
A. Microbial Population of Fermented Cocoa Beans .....	75
B. Temperature Changes of Fermented Cocoa Beans .....	79
C. pH Changes During the Fermentation of Cocoa Beans .....	82



	Page
D. Total Sugar Changes of Cocoa Beans During Fermentation .....	86
E. Production of Ethanol and Ethyl Acetate in Fermented Cocoa Beans.....	89
Production of Ethanol .....	89
Production of Ethyl Acetate .....	93
F. Production of Lactic and Acetic Acid in Fermented Cocoa Beans .....	97
Production of Lactic Acid .....	97
Production of Acetic Acid .....	101
G. Fermentation Index (FI) Value of Fermented Cocoa Beans .....	105
H. Moisture Content Changes During Fermentation of the Cocoa Beans .....	110
The Effect of Microbial Inoculum on Concentration of Esters, Volatile Acetic and Lactic Acid of Fermented Cocoa Beans .....	113
 <u>Experiment II</u>	
Biochemical Changes (pH, Titratable Acidity, Acetic and Lactic Acid, Ethyl Acetate and Fermentation Index) of Fermented and Oven Dried Fermented Cocoa Bean Treated With Microbial Inoculum .....	116
5 CONCLUSION .....	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	121
APPENDIX .....	132
BIOGRAPHICAL SKECTH .....	161



## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Duration of Fermentation in Different Producing Countries .....	10
2	Percentage Composition of Fresh Pulps .....	14
3	Analysis of Unfermented West African Cocoa ..	15
4	Organisms Found in Cocoa Beans Obtained from Africa and Malaysia .....	19
5	Biochemical Changes in Fermenting Cocoa Pulp	28
6	Amino Acid Composition of Basic Fraction of Fermented Cocoa Beans .....	42
7	Changes in the Sugars of Trinidad Beans During Fermentation .....	44
8	Some Chemical Characteristics of the Volatile Fatty Acids In Cocoa Beans .....	52
9	Microbial Inoculum of Yeasts and Bacteria Inoculated onto Cocoa Beans .....	66
10	Mean Fermentation Index (FI) of Cocoa Beans at Different Treatment During Fermentation	106
11	Mean Moisture Content (%) of Cocoa Pulp with Testa at Different Stages of Cocoa Fermentation .....	111
12	Mean Moisture Content (%) of Cocoa Cotyledon at Different Stages of Cocoa Fermentation ...	112
13	Biochemical Changes of pH, Titratable Acidity (TA), Acetic Acid, Lactic Acid, Ethyl Acetate and Fermentation Index (FI) of Fresh Fermented without Drying and Oven Dried Fermented Cocoa with Different Microbial Inoculum .....	117
14	Mean Changes in Total Viable Microbial Count of Treated Cocoa Beans at Different Stages of Cocoa Fermentation .....	138



Table	Page
15 Mean Temperature Changes of Cocoa Beans with Different Treatments at Different Stages of Fermentation .....	139
16 The pH Changes of Cocoa Pulp with Testa that was Inoculated with Different Inoculum at Different Stages of Cocoa Bean Fermentation	140
17 The pH Changes of Cocoa Cotyledon that was Inoculated with Different Inoculum at Different Stages of Cocoa Bean Fermentation	141
18 Mean Total Sugar Content of Cocoa Pulp with Testa on beans Inoculated with Different Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation Period .....	142
19 Mean Ethanol Content of Cocoa Pulp with Testa Found on Inoculated Beans Fermented over 6 Day Period .....	143
20 Mean Ethanol Content of Cocoa Cotyledon Found on Inoculated Beans Fermented over 6 Day Period .....	144
21 Mean Ethyl Acetate Concentration of Cocoa Pulp with Testa on Beans Inoculated with Different Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation Period .....	145
22 Mean Ethyl Acetate Concentration of Cocoa Cotyledon on Beans Inoculated with Different Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation Period .....	146
23 Mean Concentration of Acetic Acid of Cocoa Pulp with Testa with Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation .....	147
24 Mean Concentration of Acetic Acid of Cocoa Cotyledon with Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation Period .....	148
25 Mean Lactic Acid Content of Cocoa Pulp with Testa Found on Inoculated Beans Fermented over 6 Day Period .....	149



Table	Page
26 Mean Lactic Acid Content of Cocoa Cotyledon on Inoculated Beans Fermented over 6 Day Period .....	150
27 Linearity of Standard Glucose, Fructose, Sucrose Injected vs Peak Area .....	151
28 Recovery of Sugars Added to Cocoa Pulp with Testa .....	152
29 Linearity of Standard Lactic and Acetic Acid vs Peak Area .....	153
30 Recovery of Lactic and Acetic Acid to Cocoa Cotyledon .....	154
31 Linearity of Standard Ethyl Acetate and Ethanol Injected vs Peak Area .....	155
32 Recovery of Ethanol and Ethyl Acetate Added to Cocoa Pulp with Testa.....	156



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	The Chemical Reaction of Ethanol Formation by Yeasts .....	28
2	Scheme for the Formation of Esters .....	31
3	The Ester Formation by <u>H. anomala</u> was an Energy-coupled Reaction .....	31
4	Fermentation Products of Pulp Sugar .....	33
5a	Changes in Total Viable Microbial Count of Treated Cocoa Beans at Different Stages of Cocoa Fermentation .....	76
5b	Changes in Total Viable Microbial Count of Treated Cocoa Beans at Different Stages of Cocoa Fermentation .....	77
6	Temperature Changes of Cocoa Beans with Different Treatments at Different Stages of Fermentation .....	80
7	pH Changes of Cocoa Pulp with Testa that was Inoculated with Different Inoculum at Different Stages of Cocoa Bean Fermentation	83
8	pH Changes of Cocoa Cotyledon that was Inoculated with Different Inoculum at Different Stages of Cocoa Bean Fermentation	84
9	Total Sugar Content of Cocoa Pulp with Testa on Beans Inoculated with Different Microbial Inoculated over 6 Days of Fermentation Period	88
10	Changes in Ethanol Content of Cocoa Pulp with Testa Found on Inoculated Beans Fermented over 6 Day Period .....	90
11	Changes in Ethanol Content of Cocoa Cotyledon Found on Inoculated Beans Fermented over 6 Day Period .....	91



Figure		Page
12	Changes in Ethyl Acetate Concentration of Cocoa Pulp with Testa on Beans Inoculated with Different Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation Period .....	94
13	Changes in Ethyl Acetate Concentration of Cocoa Cotyledon on Beans Inoculated with Different Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation Period .....	95
14	Changes in Concentration of Lactic Acid of Cocoa Pulp with Testa with Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation Period .....	98
15	Changes in Concentration of Lactic Acid of Cocoa Cotyledon with Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation Period .....	99
16	Changes in Acetic Acid Content of Cocoa Pulp with Testa Found on Inoculated Beans Fermented over 6 Day Period .....	102
17	Changes in Acetic Acid Content of Cocoa Cotyledon on Inoculated Beans Fermented over 6 Day Period .....	103
18	Possible Changes Involved in the Degradation of Anthocyanin .....	109
19	Changes in Concentration of Ethyl Acetate, Acetic Acid and Lactic Acid of Cocoa Beans (Cotyledon) with Microbial Inoculum over 6 Days of Fermentation.....	114
20	Typical Electronic Chromatogram of Standard Sugars Solution (A) and of Cocoa Pulp Sample (B) .....	157
21	Typical Electronic Chromatogram of Standard Lactic Acid and Acetic Acid Solution (A) and of Cocoa Bean Sample (B) .....	158
22	Typical Electronic Chromatogram of Standard Ethanol and Ethyl Acetate Solution (A) and Cocoa bean .....	159



## LIST OF PLATES

Plate		Page
1	Freshly Harvested Cocoa Pods of the Mixed Hybrid Variety	63
2	The Stainless Steel Fermentation Boxes (25 cm x 25 cm x 30 cm) with Good Drainage	64
3	A (bean without inoculation) B (bean inoculated with yeasts)	160





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By

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Supervisor : Dr. Mohamed Ismail Abdul Karim

Faculty : Food Science and Biotechnology.

Fermentation and drying play an important role in influencing the overall quality of fermented cocoa beans. A study was conducted to look into the effect of various microbial inocula (Saccharomyces cerevisiae, Hansenula anomala and Acetobacter aceti in different combination) on changes in mass temperature, pH, ethanol, ethyl acetate, lactic and acetic acid contents and the degree of fermentation index (FI) of cocoa beans fermented over a period of six days. The dried treated cocoa beans were also analysed for pH, titratable acidity, lactic and acetic acids, ethyl acetate content and fermentation index.

The temperature of bean mass inoculated with microbial inoculum was found to increase to a maximum ranging from 47 to 48°C. The pH of cocoa cotyledon was found to decrease from pH



6.8 to 5.0 - 5.3, while the fermentation index (F.I.) of fermented beans was found to increase from 0.56 to 1.44. Beans inoculated with yeasts (S. cerevisiae + H. anomala) were found to yield higher ethyl acetate (0.5639 g/100 g) and lower levels of acetic and lactic acids (0.0748 g/100 g and 0.0443 g/100 g, respectively) as compared to the controlled sample at the end of 6 days. The controlled bean sample was found to have 0.2436 g/100 g ethyl acetate and 0.1669 g/100 g, 0.2565 g/100 g of acetic and lactic acid content, respectively after a 6 day fermentation period.

Cocoa beans inoculated with yeasts (S. cerevisiae + H. anomala) were found to have fully brown internal colour with a F.I value of 1.44 as compared to the controlled bean (with no inoculum) having dark brown colour with a F.I value of 1.26. There was no significant difference in pH, titratable acidity, lactic and acetic acids, ethyl acetate content and F.I. values between the freshly fermented and dried fermented cocoa beans.



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**KESAN-KESAN INOKULUM MIKROORGANISMA YANG DIPILIH KE ATAS  
PERUBAHAN MIKROORGANISMA DAN BOKIMIA SEWAKTU  
PENAPAIAN BIJI KOKO**

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Fermentasi dan pengeringan memainkan peranan penting dalam mempengaruhi mutu keseluruhan biji koko yang telah difermentasi. Satu kajian telah dijalankan untuk melihat kesan kegunaan inokulum mikroorganisma (Saccharomyces cerevisiae, Hansenula anomala dan Acetobacter aceti dengan kombinasi berbeza) ke atas perubahan suhu, pH, kandungan etanol, etil asetat, asid asetik dan laktik dan indeks fermentasi biji koko semasa difermentasi selama enam hari. Biji koko yang disuntik dengan mikroorganisma dikeringkan dan dikaji perubahan pH, jumlah asid asetik dan laktik, etil asetat dan indeks fermentasi.

Biji koko yang disuntik dengan inokulum mikroorganisma telah didapati mencapai suhu maksimum antara 47°C dan 48°C, dan



pH kotiledon didapati menurun dari pH 6.8 ke 5.0 - 5.1 dan indeks fermentasi (F.I.) didapati naik dari F.I 0.56 ke 1.44 di akhir fermentasi. Biji koko yang disuntik dengan yis (S. cerevisiae + H. anomala) didapati mempunyai kandungan etil asetat yang tinggi (0.5639 g/100 g) dan kandungan asid asetik dan laktik yang rendah (0.0748 g/100 g dan 0.1443 g/100 g, masing-masing) berbanding dengan sampel kawalan selepas menjalani enam hari proses fermentasi. Sampel kawalan mempunyai 0.2436 g/100 g etil asetat dan 0.1660 g/100 g, 0.2565 g/100 g asid asetik dan laktik masing-masing, selepas enam hari proses fermentasi.

Biji koko yang disuntik dengan yis (S. cerevisiae + H. anomala) berwarna coklat dengan indeks fermentasi 1.44 berbanding dengan biji kawalan yang berwarna coklat gelap dengan indeks fermentasi 1.26. Didapati tidak ada perbezaan bererti pada pH, asid tertitrat, kandungan asid asetik dan laktik, etil asetat dan indeks fermentasi di antara biji koko segar yang telah difermentasi dan biji koko yang telah dikeringkan selepas difermentasi.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Cocoa fermentation naturally involves the growth of mixed population of microorganism of the pulp. The chemical and physical nature of the pulp makes it an ideal medium for the development of yeasts, bacteria and fungi (Rohan, 1963). The presence of sugar and high acidity (pH 4) provides excellent condition for the development of microorganisms. The process of cocoa bean fermentation is a prerequisite to the formation of chocolate flavour and aroma (Allison and Rohan, 1958). During this curing process, the involvement of microbial activities on the cocoa bean mucilage or pulp contributes to the formation of alcohol, esters, lactic acid and acetic acid. These components together with the heat generated may eventually lead to the death of the cocoa bean (Forsyth and Quesnel, 1963; Quesnel, 1965; Maravalhas, 1972). The diffusion of pulp fermentation products (acetic acid and ethanol) into the bean causes it to swell and simultaneously triggers biochemical reactions in the bean, resulting in the formation of flavour precursors which eventually produce chocolate flavour upon roasting. Absorption of acid by the beans during fermentation provides an ideal condition for the development of flavour precursors such as reducing sugars, amino acids, and flavonoids which are produced



as a result of enzymatic reaction occurring during the fermentation process. The reaction of most enzymes such as protease, glucosidase, and polyphenol oxidase found in the bean are responsible for the development of flavour precursors.

The flavour and acids of fermented cocoa beans play a major role in influencing the overall quality of the beans. Cocoa produced by some countries, like Malaysia and Brazil, are described by the world market as being characteristically acidic. Malaysian cocoa beans have an average pH value of 4.89 as compared to 5.26 with that of Ghanaian beans (Selamat, 1987). According to Lopez (1983), free fatty acids especially acetic acid is responsible for the acidity of cocoa beans. The high residual acidity in Malaysian cocoa beans has been associated with the primary processing practices and planting materials which are different from those of West Africa. Most of the larger estates in Malaysia ferment their beans in deep boxes and use artificial dryers for drying. Cocoa pods are often harvested earlier which to the West African standard are underripe. All these factors contribute to excessive acid formation during fermentation. Another possible factor that may be associated with the bean acidity is the degree of fermentation. Selamat (1987) reported that highly acidic cocoa beans have a high fermentation index. This indicated that the beans which undergo fermentation for a long period (6 to 7 days in Malaysia) could accumulate more acid in the beans.

The importance of cocoa seed acidification in cocoa flavour precursor development and subsequently in chocolate flavour potentials has been discussed in details elsewhere (Biehl and Adamako, 1983; Brunner et al., 1985). The technology to improve the flavour of Malaysian cocoa based on slow seed acidification has been recently developed by Said et al., (1988).

A lot of efforts has been made to mitigate the acidity of cocoa beans. Countries such as Malaysia and Brazil, which are known for supplying high acid beans, modify the traditional methods of fermentation to control excessive acidity in beans. The modified methods are based on two principles: 1) reducing the amount of pulp by pressing, draining, or by using microbial inoculum and enzymes to liquify the pulp; and 2) increasing the aeration during the fermentation process by using the shallow box fermentation, as well as by using perforated boxes, air blasting and turning the bean mass frequently. Some of the modification methods have been successful; however, some have yielded inconsistent results and were impractical and thus abandoned.

The purpose of this study is to find the effects of using various microbial inocula on microbial and biochemical changes during the fermentation of cocoa beans. The objectives of the experiment include:

- (1) To study the effect of various microbial inocula on changes of microbial population, biochemical changes and fermentation index of cocoa beans fermented for a period of six days.
- (2) The evaluation of acidic characteristics of dry beans.
- (3) The evaluation of fermentation index and ethyl acetate concentration of dried fermented cocoa nibs.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Fermentation of cocoa beans plays an important role in determining the overall quality of fermented beans needed in processing of various chocolate products. During fermentation various biochemical and microbiological changes take place in the bean.

#### **The Importance of the Fermentation Process of Cocoa Beans**

The origin of the fermentation process is lost in antiquity, but it is generally assumed that fresh cocoas are primarily heaped to affect removal of the pulp and facilitate drying. It is fortuitous, therefore, that this pulp removal should be accompanied by enzymic reactions inside the cotyledon which gives rise to the production of chocolate flavour precursors.

The 'sweating' process is now a common practice and essential to the production of chocolate flavour and is in fact the first and most critical stage in chocolate flavour development. The chemical processes involved are not entirely fermenting reactions. The changes which occur in the combined

