



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS OF CUTINASE ENCAPSULATED IN  
ISORETICULAR METAL ORGANIC FRAMEWORK-74-VI***

**TUAN NURUL AZURA BINTI TUAN KOB @ YAAKUB**

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ISORETICULAR METAL ORGANIC FRAMEWORK-74-VI**

**By**

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti  
Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science**

**Disember 2019**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

## STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS OF CUTINASE ENCAPSULATED IN ISORETICULAR METAL ORGANIC FRAMEWORK-74-VI

By

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**December 2019**

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Cutinase is a serine hydrolases enzyme that is widely used as a biocatalyst to produce industrially important chemicals ranging from pharmaceuticals to biological and food additives. However, low thermal stability and lack of efficient recovery are the limitation of cutinase. Enzyme immobilization is one of the techniques used to improve enzyme stability and activity. Recently, immobilization with porous materials such as metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) have shown to improve the thermostability of enzymes even in extreme conditions. Here, quantum mechanics (QM) calculations and molecular dynamics (MD) simulations were performed in order to investigate the structural stability of cutinase when encapsulated within an IRMOF-74-VI. *Ab initio* calculations were performed on the crystal structure of IRMOF-74-VI to obtain partial atomic charges for IRMOF-74-VI atoms. Then, MD simulations of cutinase and cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI in water were performed at different temperatures (300, 350, 400, 450 and 500 K) and 1 atm pressure. The encapsulated cutinase showed greater stability than the free enzyme. Although the average root mean square deviation (RMSD) value increased for both systems with temperature, the cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI exhibited lower RMSD values when compared to free-cutinase especially at 500 K. IRMOF-74-VI was able to control the strong fluctuations at higher temperatures and thereby, helped retain the cutinase structure. The key interactions that maintained the stability of cutinase were identified, such as hydrophobic interactions between amino acid residues of Pro193 and Thr45 with aromatic ring of IRMOF-74-VI. In addition, ion pair interactions between Arg96 residue and carboxylate group of IRMOF-74-VI was found to have a distance of 4.53 Å and was classified as a strong salt bridge. MD simulations also have been employed to study the effect of encapsulation towards stability and flexibility of cutinase in different solvents (water, ethanol and hexane) at room temperature. Cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI in water and ethanol produced lower RMSD values ( $0.14 \pm 0.006$  and  $0.17 \pm 0.017$  nm respectively) compared to cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI in hexane ( $0.24 \pm 0.015$  nm). Further analysis also showed that cutinase-IRMOF74-VI complex was more stable in polar solvent. Cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI exhibited the highest number of intermolecular interactions with hexane compared to water and ethanol, leading to the least stable conformation between the three solvents. These findings demonstrate the potential for cutinase-encapsulation applications

in cage-like pore frameworks by showing that encapsulation of cutinase with IRMOF-74-VI helps to retain the structural integrity at high temperature. However, IRMOF-74-VI destabilized cutinase in hexane compared to higher polarity solvents which are ethanol and water. This information can be used to optimize cutinase-MOF applications and develop new cutinase-specific MOF for biocatalysis and biosensing purposes. The interactions between cutinase and IRMOF-74-VI under different temperatures and solvents would be beneficial as guideline for future rational design of enzyme-MOF biocatalysts.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

## STRUKTUR DAN DINAMIK ENKAPSULASI CUTINASE DALAM RANGKAIAN ORGANIK LOGAM-74-VI

Oleh

**TUAN NURUL AZURA BINTI TUAN KOB @ YAAKUB**

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Cutinase ialah serine hidrolasi enzim yang digunakan secara meluas sebagai biomangkin untuk menghasilkan bahan kimia perindustrian penting yang terdiri daripada farmaseutikal untuk bahan tambahan biologi dan makanan. Walau bagaimanapun, kestabilan haba yang rendah dan kekurangan pemulihan cekap adalah kekurangan cutinase. Enzim enkapsulasi adalah salah satu teknik yang digunakan untuk meningkatkan kestabilan enzim dan aktiviti. Baru-baru ini, rangkaian organik logam (MOFs) telah ditunjukkan untuk meningkatkan kestabilan termal enzim walaupun dalam keadaan suhu yang melampau. Di sini, mekanik kuantum (QM) pengiraan dan dinamik molekul (MD) simulasi telah dijalankan untuk menyiasat kestabilan struktur cutinase apabila terkandung dalam rangkaian organik IRMOF-74-VI. Pengiraan *ab initio* telah dilakukan ke atas struktur kristal IRMOF-74-VI untuk mendapatkan caj atom separa untuk setiap atom IRMOF-74-VI. Kemudian, MD simulasi cutinase dan cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI di dalam air telah dijalankan pada suhu yang berbeza (300, 350, 400, 450 dan 500 K) dan tekanan 1 atm. Cutinase terkandung menunjukkan kestabilan yang lebih besar daripada enzim sahaja. Walaupun akar purata min nilai sisihan persegi (PGPR) meningkat untuk kedua-dua sistem dengan suhu, cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI dipamerkan nilai PGPR lebih rendah jika dibandingkan dengan cutinase sahaja terutama pada 500 K. IRMOF-74-VI dapat mengawal kestabilan pada suhu yang lebih tinggi dan membantu mengekalkan struktur cutinase tersebut. Interaksi utama yang mengekalkan kestabilan cutinase telah dikenal pasti, seperti interaksi hidrofobik antara amino asid Pro193 dan Thr45 dengan cincin aromatik IRMOF-74-VI. Di samping itu, interaksi pasangan ion antara Arg96 dan kumpulan karboksilat daripada IRMOF-74-VI didapati mempunyai jarak 4.53 Å dan telah diklasifikasikan sebagai jambatan garam yang kuat. MD simulasi juga telah digunakan untuk mengkaji kesan enkapsulasi ke arah kestabilan dan fleksibiliti cutinase dalam pelarut yang berbeza (air, etanol dan heksana) pada suhu bilik. Cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI dalam air dan etanol dihasilkan nilai PGPR lebih rendah ( $0.14 \pm 0.006$  dan masing-masing  $0.17 \pm 0.017$  nm) berbanding cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI dalam heksana ( $0.24 \pm 0.015$  nm). Analisis selanjutnya juga menunjukkan bahawa cutinase-IRMOF74-VI kompleks adalah lebih stabil dalam pelarut kepolaran yang tinggi. Cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI dipamerkan bilangan tertinggi interaksi antara molekul dengan heksana berbanding air dan etanol, yang membawa kepada kestabilan yang rendah bagi perbandingan ketiga-tiga pelarut. Dapatan

ini menunjukkan potensi untuk aplikasi cutinase-enkapsulasi dalam sangkar seperti rangkaian organik logam dengan menunjukkan bahawa pengkapsulan cutinase dengan IRMOF-74-VI membantu untuk mengekalkan integriti struktur pada suhu tinggi. Walau bagaimanapun, IRMOF-74-VI mengurangkan kestabilan cutinase dalam heksana berbanding pelarut kepolaran lebih tinggi seperti etanol dan air. Maklumat ini boleh digunakan untuk mengoptimumkan aplikasi cutinase-MOF dan membangunkan MOF cutinase yang baru khusus untuk tujuan biocatalisis dan biosensor. Interaksi antara cutinase dan IRMOF-74-VI di bawah suhu dan pelarut yang berbeza akan memberi manfaat sebagai panduan untuk masa depan dalam reka bentuk pemangkin biologi enzim-MOF.



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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MOFs	metal organic framework
SBU	secondary building units
IRMOFs	isoreticular MOFs
COFs	covalent organic frameworks
MD	molecular dynamics
QM	quantum mechanics
GCMC	Grand Conical Monte Carlo
DOT	2,5-dioxidoterephthalate
ZIF	zeolite imidazolate framework
CD-MOFs	cyclodextrin-based MOFs
RMSF	root mean square deviation
UiO	Universitetet i Oslo
MIL	Materials of Institut Lavoisier
CCDC	Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre
PME	Particle Mesh Ewald
RMSF	Root Mean Square Fluctuation
Arg	arginine
pdb	Protein Data Bank
PET	polyethylene terephthalate

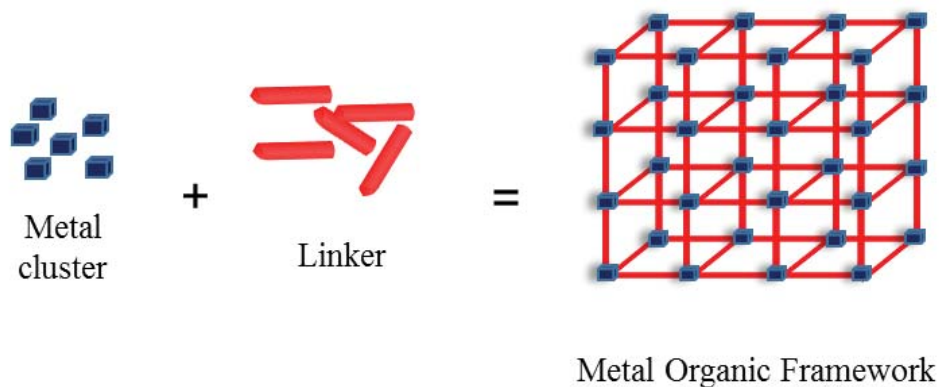
# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

Enzymes have been applied as catalysts for manufacturing of industrially applicable chemicals ranging from pharmaceuticals to biological and food additives. Enzymes have rapidly improved in terms of their catalytic performance, yet their uses in industrial applications are limited by the low thermal stability, denaturation and lack of efficient recovery. Daniel *et al.* (1996) also discovered that in aqueous solution, enzymes can only be active at a temperature up to 85°C and at higher temperature; the denaturation of the enzymes becomes faster. Without any support or protection, enzymes are not stable and their functions becomes very limited. Cutinase is one of those enzymes having the same limitation. Cutinase tends to deactivate and degrade at high temperature. Carvalho *et al.* (1998) had discovered that cutinase possess a very short half-life in water.

Several successful strategies have been proposed to improve the thermal stability of enzymes using either immobilization, encapsulation or biomineralization approaches (Mateo *et al.*, 2007). Normally, physical adsorption such as immobilization or encapsulation was preferred, since the methods do not change the initial structure of the catalyst and do not interrupt its active site (Krajewska *et al.*, 2014). Over the past few years, protein encapsulation in metal organic framework (MOF) has been developed as a new potential application area of these materials. Other than encapsulation methods, conjugation and infiltration also were other methods used for stabilizing biomolecules by MOFs. The metal cluster of MOFs are also called as secondary building units (SBUs). There are variety of SBUs types in MOFs such as triangle, trigonal prism and octahedron. MOFs also can be made up by different types of organic linker either ditopic, tritopic, tetratopic, or multitopic linkers (Sharmin & Zafar, 2016). Currently, the most recent trend regarding the designation of metal cluster and linkers in MOFs are by using mixed linker and mixed metal cluster in the same structure of MOFs (Amarajothi *et al.*, 2016). This combination of linkers or metal clusters could result in MOF with a greater catalytic activity than single metal or single linker MOFs. MOFs have been widely studied over the past decade for a variation of potential applications such as catalysis (Howarth & Hupp, 2017), gas storage (Fracaroli *et al.*, 2014), drug delivery (Erucar & Keskin, 2016), agricultural (Rieth *et al.*, 2017; Jr *et al.*, 2018) and also in the water treatment (Kumar *et al.*, 2018).



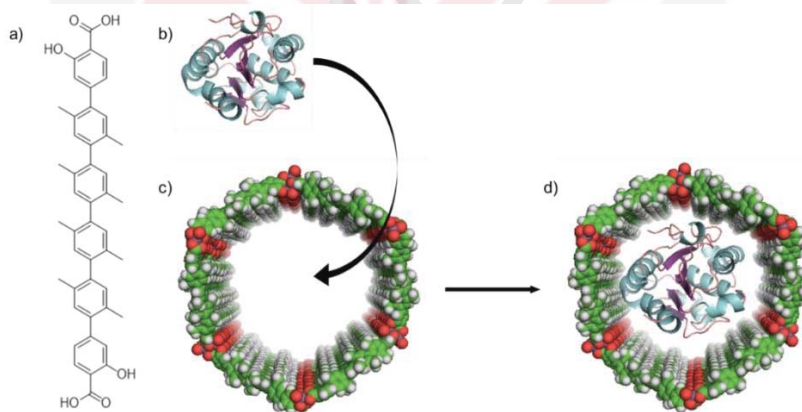
**Figure 1.1: Schematic representation of a MOF system**

MOFs are compounds that are made up by combinations of various metal ions connected by organic linker (Figure 1.1). One of the most interesting features of MOFs is the concept of the reticular chemistry in its design and synthesis. MOFs and covalent organic frameworks (COFs) are the established materials that used the concept of reticular chemistry. Isoreticular synthesis also provided a way to increase the pore apertures of MOFs, which allows for big molecules such as enzymes to enter the pore.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

MOFs have already shown their ability to increase the stability and performance of enzymes. Even at elevated temperatures and pressure, MOF can act as a protective layer, enabling the enzymes to retain their high activity (Li *et al.*, 2016). Although MOFs can improve the stability and performance of enzymes, the behavior and intermolecular interactions between MOFs and enzymes are not yet being fully understood. The encapsulation mechanism which stabilizes enzymes is important to be unveiled in order to further improve the biocatalyst composite. Such information can be the basis of modification for the current MOFs or as guidelines to design new MOFs for biocatalytic applications.

In some cases, the structures of the MOFs are too complicated to be solved experimentally (Liang *et al.*, 2015) thus computational methods are used to explore further the intermolecular interaction of the enzyme encapsulated in the MOFs. Specifically, this project examined a cutinase enzyme, encapsulated in IRMOF-74-VI (Figure 1.2) to test the effect of encapsulation towards the stability of the enzyme at different temperatures and solvent systems.



**Figure 1.2: Graphical representation of cutinase encapsulation in IRMOF-74-VI. (a) 2,5-dioxidoterephthalate (DOT) as the organic linker, (b) cutinase, (c) IRMOF-74-VI and (d) cutinase-IRMOF-74-VI composite**

### 1.3 Objectives

The main goal of this research is to determine the structural and dynamics properties of cutinase encapsulated in IRMOF-74-VI by using molecular dynamics simulation methods. Therefore, four specific objectives were pursued;

- i) To model and parameterize the structure of IRMOF-74-VI for application in MD simulations,
- ii) To determine the effect of encapsulation in IRMOF-74-VI towards the structural stability of cutinase at different temperatures,
- iii) To elucidate the intermolecular interactions between IRMOF-74-VI and cutinase,
- iv) To determine the effect of different solvent towards the structural stability of cutinase-IRMOF74-VI composite.

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