



**WASHED RICE WATER AS A POTENTIAL LIQUID FERTILIZER AND  
SOIL AMENDMENT FOR CROP PRODUCTIVITY**

By

**NABAYI ABBA**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,  
Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the  
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## **DEDICATION**

TO MY BELOVED PARENTS, FRIENDS, AND FAMILY FOR THEIR PRAYERS  
AND MORAL ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGHOUT MY LIFE



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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February 2023

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Wastewater from washed rice water (WRW) is often recommended as liquid fertilizer in most Asian countries. However, WRW studies are very scarce and they lack scientific rigor, particularly on how the rice washing intensity, volumetric water-to-rice ratio (W:R), the kind and type of bacteria in the WRW after fermentation, and condition of the WRW before use could influence both the WRW nutrients and its effect on plant growth. Therefore, a series of experiments were carried out with the following objectives: 1) to determine the nutrient contents of WRW forms (fermented and unfermented) as affected by different washing intensities, rice to water ratio and fermentation periods, 2) to isolate, characterize, and identify the bacteria in WRW at different fermentation periods; 3) to evaluate the effect of continuous WRW application on the nutrient leaching losses and retention of three different soil textures and; 4) to evaluate the effects of the continuous use of fresh and fermented WRW under glasshouse conditions by examining their effects on the growth and yield of choy sum (*Brassica chinensis* var. *parachinensis*) and the soil chemical properties and microbial population of three contrasting soil textures over three planting cycles and, 5) to evaluate the best WRW (based on the glasshouse study) as a nutrient source and soil amendment on the growth and yield of choy sum in the field. The results showed that all nutritional elements of WRW increased (except P, Mg, and Zn) with longer fermentation and with higher W:R. Beneficial microbes were isolated from the WRW at different fermentation periods and identified using gene sequencing as *Bacillus velezensis*, *Enterobacter spp.*, *Pantoea agglomerans*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*. The identified isolates were positive to atmospheric nitrogen fixation, P- and K- solubilization, catalase enzyme and phytohormone production. 3-day fermented WRW had the significantly higher bacterial population ( $2.12 \times 10^8$  CFU mL<sup>-1</sup>), N fixation, P and K solubilizations, and phytohormone production, which all decreased with longer fermentation periods. Because WRW contains nutrients, a leaching study carried out indicated that the sandy clay loam soil had the higher cumulative leaching of K, P, Mg, Ca, NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>-N, and NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>-N of 666, 378, 140, 51, 45, and 27 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, respectively, while the clay and silt loam mostly

had a comparably lower nutrients leaching. The WRW was further evaluated in glasshouse with treatments as follows: 3-day fermented WRW (F3), 450 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK 15: 15: 15 (NPK), fresh WRW (F0), and tap water as control (CON), and three soil types: sandy clay loam, clay, and silt loam soils were arranged factorially in a randomized completely block design. Choy sum used as the test crop was grown in the same soils receiving similar treatments consecutively for three planting cycles. The results showed that NPK and F3 had the significantly higher plant height, number of leaves, leaf fresh and dry weight, and total leaf area by 5-61% as compared with the other treatments in all the planting cycles. Comparable plant growth and yield in F3 with NPK could be attributed to the beneficial bacteria in the WRW in addition to the nutrients present. The soil bacterial population increased with the continuous planting cycle for all treatments. The F3 had 73 % increase in soil bacterial population while the NPK had 25 % increase relative to their previous planting cycles. Based on the higher performance of the F3, it was selected for field evaluation. The field experiment had four treatments: 3-day fermented WRW (RW3), 450 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK 15: 15: 15 (NPK), 50 % NPK with RW3 (NPK+RW3), and tap water (CON), which were replicated thrice, and the experiment was conducted for three consecutive planting cycles on the same soil and choy sum was used as the test crop. The results showed that the NPK+RW3 had the significantly higher crop yield, nutrient contents, and nutrients uptake by 4-53 %, 9-25 %, and 36-71 %, respectively. The soil and plant nutrient contents and uptake were significantly positively correlated with one another. The presence of nutrient and beneficial microbes in the fermented WRW gave rise to the higher choy sum's growth. The continuous increase in the plant growth with successive planting cycles indicated the carryover effects of both the nutrients and beneficial bacteria applied into the soil through the fermented WRW application. Overall, combining the 50 % NPK recommended rate with RW3 gave a better growth and yield in the field, while the use of either NPK or fermented WRW alone had a comparable plant yield in both the glasshouse and the field. Therefore, addition of organic amendments to improve the water and nutrient retention of the soil for agricultural practices is encouraged; thereby, minimizing the nutrient leaching losses of the soils. This research suggests the use of 3-day fermented WRW to derive the microbial benefits contained in the WRW, and better WRW performance is obtained when combined with NPK fertilizer.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

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Air sisa dari air beras yang dibasuh (WRW) sering disyorkan sebagai baja cecair di kebanyakan negara Asia. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian WRW sangat terhad dan mereka tidak mempunyai ketelitian saintifik, terutamanya mengenai bagaimana intensiti mencuci beras, nisbah volumetrik air-ke-beras (W:R), kategori dan jenis bakteria di WRW setelah penapaian, dan keadaan WRW sebelum digunakan dapat mempengaruhi nutrien WRW dan kesannya terhadap pertumbuhan tanaman. Oleh itu, satu siri eksperimen telah dijalankan dengan objektif berikut: 1) untuk menentukan kandungan nutrien bentuk WRW (ditapai dan tidak ditapai) seperti yang terjejas oleh intensiti pencucian yang berbeza, nisbah beras kepada air dan tempoh penapaian, 2) untuk mengasingkan, mencirikan, dan mengenal pasti bakteria dalam WRW pada tempoh penapaian yang berbeza; 3) untuk menilai kesan aplikasi WRW berterusan terhadap kehilangan larut lesap nutrien dan pengekal tiga tekstur tanah yang berbeza dan; 4) untuk menilai kesan penggunaan berterusan WRW segar dan choy sum (*Brassica chinensis* var. *parachinensis*) dan sifat kimia tanah dan populasi mikroba dengan tiga tekstur tanah yang berbeza selama tiga kitaran penanaman dan, 5) untuk menilai WRW terbaik (berdasarkan kajian glasshouse) sebagai sumber nutrien dan pindaan tanah terhadap pertumbuhan dan hasil choy sum di ladang. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa semua unsur pemakanan WRW meningkat (kecuali P, Mg, dan Zn) dengan penapaian yang lebih lama dan dengan W:R. Mikroba bermanfaat diasingkan dari WRW pada tempoh penapaian yang berbeza dan dikenal pasti menggunakan penjujukan gen sebagai *Bacillus velezensis*, *Enterobacter* spp., *Pantoea agglomerans*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae* dan *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*. Isolat yang dikenal pasti positif terhadap penetapan nitrogen atmosfera, P - dan K - solubilisasi, enzim katalase dan pengeluaran fitohormon. Air beras yang dibasuh yang ditapai selama 3 hari mempunyai populasi bakteria yang jauh lebih tinggi ( $2.12 \times 10^8$  CFU mL<sup>-1</sup>), fiksasi N, larutan P dan K, dan pengeluaran fitohormon, yang semuanya menurun dengan tempoh penapaian yang lebih lama. Oleh kerana WRW mengandungi nutrien, kajian larut lesap yang dijalankan menunjukkan

bahawa tanah liat tanah liat berpasir mempunyai larut lesap kumulatif yang lebih tinggi iaitu K, P, Mg, Ca,  $\text{NH}_4^+\text{-N}$ , and  $\text{NO}_3^-\text{-N}$  daripada 666, 378, 140, 51, 45, dan 27 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, masing-masing, manakala loam tanah liat dan kelodak kebanyakannya mempunyai larut lesap nutrien yang lebih rendah. Lanjutan itu, WRW kemudian dinilai di rumah kaca dengan rawatan seperti berikut: WRW fermentasi 3 hari (F3), 450 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> NPK 15: 15: 15 (NPK), WRW segar (F0), dan air paip sebagai kawalan (CON), dan tiga jenis tanah: tanah liat berpasir, tanah liat, dan tanah liat lumpur disusun secara faktorial dalam reka bentuk blok sepenuhnya secara rawak. Choy sum yang digunakan sebagai tanaman ujian ditanam di tanah yang sama menerima rawatan serupa berturut-turut selama tiga kitaran penanaman. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa NPK dan F3 mempunyai ketinggian tanaman yang jauh lebih tinggi, jumlah daun, berat daun segar dan kering, dan jumlah luas daun sebanyak 5-61% dibandingkan dengan rawatan lain dalam semua kitaran penanaman. Pertumbuhan dan hasil tanaman yang setanding dalam F3 dengan NPK dapat dikaitkan dengan bakteria bermanfaat di WRW selain nutrien yang ada. Populasi bakteria tanah meningkat dengan kitaran penanaman berterusan untuk semua rawatan. F3 mengalami peningkatan 73% populasi bakteria tanah sementara NPK mengalami peningkatan 25% berbanding dengan kitaran penanaman sebelumnya. Berdasarkan prestasi F3 yang lebih tinggi, ia dipilih untuk penilaian lapangan. Eksperimen lapangan mempunyai empat rawatan: WRW fermentasi 3 hari (RW3), 450 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> NPK 15: 15: 15 (NPK), 50% NPK dengan RW3 (NPK+RW3), dan air paip (CON), yang direplikasi tiga kali, dan eksperimen dilakukan selama tiga kitaran penanaman berturut-turut di tanah yang sama dan choy sum digunakan sebagai tanaman ujian. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa NPK + RW3 mempunyai hasil tanaman, kandungan nutrien, dan pengambilan nutrien yang jauh lebih tinggi masing-masing sebanyak 4-53 %, 9-25 %, dan 36-71%. Kandungan dan pengambilan nutrien tanah dan tumbuhan berkorelasi positif antara satu sama lain. Kehadiran mikrob nutrien dan berfaedah dalam WRW yang ditapai menimbulkan pertumbuhan choy sum yang lebih tinggi. Peningkatan berterusan dalam pertumbuhan tumbuhan dengan kitaran penanaman berturut-turut menunjukkan kesan pengalihan kedua-dua nutrien dan bakteria berfaedah yang digunakan ke dalam tanah melalui aplikasi WRW yang ditapai. Secara keseluruhan, menggabungkan kadar yang disyorkan NPK 50% dengan RW3 memberikan pertumbuhan dan hasil yang lebih baik di lapangan, sementara penggunaan NPK atau WRW fermentasi saja memiliki hasil tanaman yang setanding di rumah kaca dan di ladang. Oleh itu, penambahan pindaan organik untuk meningkatkan pengekalan air dan nutrien tanah untuk amalan pertanian digalakkan; dengan itu, meminimumkan kehilangan pencucian nutrien tanah. Penyelidikan ini mencadangkan penggunaan WRW yang ditapai selama 3 hari untuk mendapatkan faedah mikrob yang terkandung dalam WRW, dan prestasi WRW yang lebih baik diperoleh apabila digabungkan dengan baja NPK.

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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 Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Auto analyzer
AAS	Atomic absorption spectrophotometer
ANOVA	Analysis of variance
CEC	Cation exchange capacity
CON	Control
EC	Electrical conductivity
ET	Evapotranspiration
FC	Field capacity
GMC	Gravimetric moisture content
PWP	Permanent wilting point
RCBD	Randomize completely block design
SE	Standard error
HSD	Honest significant difference
ICP-OES	Inductive couple plasma-optical emission spectroscopy
USDA	United state department of agriculture
VMC	Volumetric moisture content
W:R	Water-to-rice volumetric ratio
WRW	Washed rice water

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The world produced 502 million metric tonnes of rice in 2016 and used 498 million metric tonnes. Ninety percent (90%) of the world's rice was produced in Asia, where 87% of the world's rice was consumed (Omar et al., 2009). The paddy and rice industries in Malaysia frequently receive significant attention and emphasis from the government, due to its strategic importance as the nation's main food source (Fahmi et al., 2013). There were roughly 300,000 rice farmers in 2009 who rely on rice farming as their main source of income (Norsida & Sami, 2009). The most common staple food in the world is rice (Maclean et al., 2002). Rice is a staple food for about 50% of the world's population and serves as the food intake of 60% of Southeast Asian people (Anjum et al., 2007). In Malaysia, analyses of their food consumption patterns of the adult nutrition survey revealed that cooked rice was consumed by 97% of the population twice daily (Norimah et al., 2008). The classification of rice is based on the degree of milling it is being subjected to. They are being classified as brown rice, white rice, Arborio, Basmati, Sweet rice; Jasmine, Bhutanese red rice, and Forbidden rice (Abbas et al., 2011).

Washed rice water (WRW) is the water obtained after rice grain is pre-cooked or washed before cooking. Washed rice water contains water-soluble nutrients (Juliano, 1993). Researchers such as Malakar and Banerjee (1959) and Juliano (1985) reported that washed rice water contains many nutrient contents. Juliano (1985) reported that washing rice prior to cooking result in nutrient losses up to 7% protein, 65% crude fat, 30% crude fiber, 59% thiamine, 26% riboflavin, 60% niacin, 26% Ca, 47% P, 47% Fe, 11% Zn, 70% Mg, and 41% K washed from the rice, which means that these nutrients would end up being in the WRW. Washed rice water also tends to ferment with time, which suggests its nutrient contents could be further enriched, irrespective of its rice types.

Water demand is projected to increase yearly by 55% by 2050, with up to 80% of available surface and groundwater being used (OECD, 2012b). The need for food to feed the ever-increasing population will increase by 70% by 2035. The AQUASTAT database of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) stated that more than 50% of the global freshwater withdrawals are being thrown into environment as wastewater (WWAP, 2017). Wastewater reuse is a necessary practice to overcome water scarcity (Amoro et al., 2019). Increasing water scarcity has led to greater interest in non-potable water reuse elsewhere. The use of urban wastewater for agriculture can also be considered as a strategy to reduce water and nutrients demand for irrigation and fertilization which is a common practice in many countries (Amoro et al., 2019).



Jakarta Post (2017) reported the use of a centralized water collection system in a village in Central Bogor, Indonesia, where the town citizens collected washed rice water. The collected WRW was used to irrigate and fertilized their crops and vegetables. The report concludes that WRW can be used as a fertilizer; when WRW is used for irrigation, there is no need to fertilize the soil. To substantiate the scientifically unproven claims, research were conducted (Bahar, 2016; Istiqomah, 2012; Wardiah & Hafnati, 2014) on the use of WRW as fertilizer in Indonesia. The results indicated that the WRW increased the growth of their test crops significantly such as: tomato (Ariwibowo, 2012; Hariyadi, 2020; Istiqomah, 2012; Leandro, 2009), water spinach (Bahar, 2016; Karlina et al., 2013; Syuhaibah, 2017), eggplant (Bukhari, 2013; Yulianingsih, 2017), and pak choy (Wardiah & Hafnati, 2014). However, Wulandari et al. (2012) reported no significant influence of either white or brown rice water in the growth of lettuce (*Lactuca sativa* L.), with a significant increase in only the root weight. Similarly, a research was also carried out in Malaysia by Syuhaibah (2017) and found a significant effect of the WRW on water spinach growth. In addition, an experiment by Norimah et al. (2008) and Siti Narasimha et al. (2012) also indicated that the use of WRW as a good soil amendment that better promotes the growth of a plant growth-promoting rhizobacteria (PGPR) *Pseudomonas fluorescens*, which increases soil fertility. Washed rice water has also been studied for its potential use as a growth media for the bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Blondine & Yuniarti, 2008) and an alternative media carrier for *Pseudomonas fluorescens*. These bacteria help to control rust disease and to stimulate the growth of plants (Nurhasanah et al., 2010). Washed rice water can support the growth of useful microorganisms (bacteria) such as *Rhizobium*, *Azospirillum*, *Azotobacter*, *Pseudomonas*, *Bacillus* for plant growth, and soil fertility increased (Akib et al., 2015).

Choy sum (*Brassica chinensis* var. *parachinensis*) was used as the test crop in this study because it is a popular vegetable worldwide (Austin, 2007; Wiersema & León, 2016). It is also fast growing, easy to maintain, and has a short life cycle (Khairun et al., 2016). This crop has a short life cycle and may be harvested in a month. It is also high in vitamins and fibre (Chin, 1999). The optimal growing conditions for this crop are those with enough moisture (10 to 12 mm of water per day), 68 kg of nitrogen per hectare, and air temperatures between 23 and 35 °C (Vimala & Chan, 1999). Choy sum is nutritious and is especially rich in folate (Vitamin B9) and carotenoid (Houlihan et al., 2011; Wills et al., 1984). Like other vegetables of Brassicaceae (Cruciferae), choy sum also contains high levels of sulfur compounds that can reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases and some cancers (Lin & Harnly, 2010). Antioxidants were almost triple in steamed choy sum compared with raw (Wachtel-Galor et al., 2008).

## 1.2 Problem Statement and Justification

Water and nutrients are expensive and there is possibility of a potential loss of valuable resources for not reusing WRW as plant's nutrient source. Rice is a staple food for Malaysians, and it is estimated that Malaysians consume nearly 3 million tons of rice per year (Bee, 2019). As a conservative estimate, this would work out to at least 3 billion L of WRW produced per year by Malaysians, and this amount is unused and simply discarded. The reuse of WRW as a beneficial liquid plant fertilizer and soil amendment have been advocated because WRW contains nutrients that would have been leached from rice during the grain wash (Bahar, 2016; Supraptiningsih & Nuriyanti, 2019; The

Jakarta Post, 2017). However, currently, there are no scientifically rigorous studies that have clearly demonstrated the beneficial properties of WRW for agriculture use. Instead, most studies of WRW have been on reusing WRW as animal and human health supplements or for cosmetics (Kesare et al., 2021). Many write on the benefits of using WRW for hair growth, face cleansing and skin beauty (Cynthia, 2019; Reema, 2020)

Our in-depth review of literature on WRW reuse for agriculture found a total of only 41 papers, of which 90% of them are either unpublished research reports or published in non-peer review journals (Nabayi et al., 2021a). These studies also often do not report essential details on their research methodology. They also neglect carrying out crucial additional experiments or observations that would have helped explain their research findings or show that their findings are conclusive. In short, the reuse of WRW for agriculture is very rare, and even if advocated, the purported benefits are very often presented as anecdotal. To clearly demonstrate the benefits of WRW for agriculture, several persisting unknowns about WRW must be answered. This includes, the plant-available N and micronutrient contents in WRW; how would washing rice with different volumes of water and washing aggression affect the nutrient content in WRW; how would fermentation of WRW affect its nutrient contents, and more importantly, would its fermentation lead to higher presence of beneficial bacteria, particularly the N-fixing and P- and K-solubilizing bacteria, which in the long run, could promote beneficial soil bacteria, and increase WRW's worth as a natural fertilizer and soil amendment.

Our research findings will provide useful empirical data that could lead to a national or regional science-based policy or initiative to collect and reuse WRW as part of community or social programs. Reusing WRW would increase water use efficiency by reducing water wastages and lead to lower dependency on synthetic or mineral fertilizers, and ultimately, lower use of energy because, for instance, less fertilizers would need to be produced and less wastewater needs to be treated. Greater resource use efficiency and lower energy use are two key strategies in mitigating climate change and environmental damage.

### 1.3 Aims and Hypotheses of the Study

This research aims to evaluate the use of WRW as a liquid plant fertilizer and as soil amendment. The main objectives were as follows:

1. To determine the nutrient contents of WRW as affected by different washing intensities (50, 80, 100 rpm), fermentation periods (0, 3, 6, and 9 days) and rice to water (W:R) ratios (1:1, 3:1, and 6:1)
2. To isolate, characterize, and identify the bacteria in WRW at different fermentation periods.
3. To determine the effect of continuous WRW application on nutrient leaching losses and retention of three different soil texture.
4. To evaluate the effects of the continuous use of fresh and fermented WRW under glasshouse conditions by examining their effects on the growth and yield of choy sum (*Brassica chinensis* var. *parachinensis*) and the soil chemical properties and microbial population of three contrasting soil textures.

5. To evaluate the best WRW (based on the glasshouse study) as a nutrient source and soil amendment on the growth of choy sum in the field.

The hypotheses of this study were:

1. Fermented washed rice water would have more plant-available nutrients and, hence, would influence the plant growth more than fresh washed rice water;
2. Fermented washed rice water would have higher bacterial population and diversity and hence, is expected to have higher beneficial microbes;
3. Sandy soil would have higher leachate of nutrients, while the clay soil would have the least;
4. Lower leachate nutrient content (particularly NPK) would be observed in irrigating the plants with WRW than NPK treatment, and CON would have the lowest of all; The use of WRW is expected to have minimal effect on the plant growth in the first growing cycle; from the second onwards, a more significant influence would be observed; The use of WRW will have higher or similar effect on plant growth and yield with NPK in the long run.
5. The use of either NPK fertilizer or fermented WRW are expected to have a similar effect on plant growth and yield in the field because of they share a similar nutrients loss mechanism-leaching.

#### 1.4 Thesis Structure

The thesis is organized in the alternative form of Universiti Putra Malaysia's alternative thesis format, which is based on publication format.

**Chapter 1:** Background of the study, problem statement and specific objective of the study presented in this chapter.

**Chapter 2:** This chapter provides a detailed assessment of the literature review on the subject matter of this study. Furthermore, the research gaps identified throughout the review were emphasized inside the chapter. A published review paper on WRW has been presented in this chapter titled “**Wastewater from Washed Rice Water as Plant Nutrient Source: Current Understanding and Knowledge Gaps**”

**Chapter 3:** This chapter describes the methods applied in this research for material preparation, experimental procedures, and data collection.

**Chapter 4:** The first research article is presented in this chapter “**Chemical and Microbial Characterization of Washed Rice Water Waste to Assess Its Potential as Plant Fertilizer and for Increasing Soil Health**”. This chapter measured both the macro- and micronutrients in WRW, as well as the plant-available N forms of  $\text{NH}_4^+\text{-N}$  and  $\text{NO}_3^-\text{-N}$  (typically, only the macronutrients are analyzed by other studies). Second, this chapter determined how washing rice with several different volumes of water and washing intensities affect the chemical properties and nutrient content in WRW. Third, WRW will ferment over time, so this study additionally determined how fermentation led to higher nutrient content and higher microbial count in WRW.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter presents the second paper “**Fermentation of Washed Rice Water Increases Beneficial Plant Bacterial Population and Nutrient Concentrations**”. The chapter identified the bacteria from the WRW using gene sequencing. In addition, the study further explained how the fermentation of WRW promotes the growth of beneficial soil bacteria, particularly the N-fixing and P- and K-solubilizing bacteria, as well as the catalase- and indole acetic acid-producing bacteria.

**Chapter 6:** This chapter presents the third research paper titled “**Nutrient leaching losses from continuous application of washed rice water on three contrasting soil textures**”. Based on chapter 4, and 5, WRW was found to contain nutrients at different rate and proportions. Therefore, this chapter explained on a short-term basis, the nutrients leaching behavior of different soil texture when subjected to a continuous WRW application.

**Chapter 7:** Based on the higher nutrients and beneficial microbial content of the 3-day fermented WRW (Chapter 4 and 5), 0-day unfermented WRW and 3-day fermented WRW were selected to be evaluated, alongside the effects of applying conventional NPK fertilizer and control (only tap water). This chapter answers how strong would be the consecutive application effects (i.e., carryover effects) of WRW, where the continuous application of WRW over three consecutive planting cycles on the same soil could affect crop growth, soil chemical, and soil microbial counts. The results are presented in the fourth research paper “**Consecutive application effects of washed rice water on plant growth, soil chemical properties, nutrient leaching, and soil bacterial population on three different soil textures over three planting cycles**”

**Chapter 8:** This chapter answers objective 5: to evaluate the best WRW (based on the glasshouse study) as a nutrient source and soil amendment on the growth of choy sum in the field. Based on the previous chapter (Chapter 7), the 3-day fermented WRW was generally on a par with the use of mineral fertilizer in most plant and soil’s measured parameters, and as such it was selected for further evaluation in the field. In addition, a new treatment was introduced by combining the 3-day fermented WRW (RW3) with 50% NPK mineral fertilizer recommended rate to see how the use of the two would complement each other. In addition, the NPK+RW3 was chosen to determine whether the addition of NPK to WRW could further boost yields and improve soil health, so that their combined effects are higher than RW3 and NPK acting alone.

**Chapter 9:** In this chapter, a summary, and links between the published articles was given, followed by the contributions of the findings as well as the conclusions and recommendations for future research.

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