



***PRODUCTION OF BIOSURFACTANT FROM USED COOKING OIL BY
LOCAL BACTERIAL ISOLATES FOR HEAVY METALS REMOVAL***

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By

NURUL HANISAH MD BADRUL HISHAM

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

January 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

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Chairman : Professor Suraini Abd-Aziz, PhD
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Heavy metals from industrial effluents and sewage contribute to serious water pollution in most developing countries. The constant penetration and contamination of heavy metals into natural water sources may substantially raise the chances of human exposure to these metals through ingestion, inhalation or skin contact which could lead to liver damage, cancer and other severe conditions in the long term. Biosurfactant as an efficient biological surface active agent may provide an alternative solution for the removal of heavy metals from the industrial wastes. Biosurfactants exhibit the properties of reducing surface and interfacial tension, stabilizing emulsions, promoting foaming, high selectivity and specific activity at extreme temperatures, pH, and salinity, and ability to be synthesized from renewable resources. The eco-friendly and biodegradable nature of biosurfactants make their usage more favourable over chemical surfactants. Therefore, this study aimed to produce biosurfactant from renewable feedstock which is used cooking oil (UCO) by local isolates for heavy metals removal. Four bacterial isolates capable of utilizing UCO as a carbon source were isolated using Bushnell and Haas agar and screened for biosurfactant production with the help of oil spreading assay and surface tension activity. Out of the four Gram-positive isolates, the strain HIP3 showed the highest oil displacement area with the lowest surface tension of 38 mN/m after 7 days of culturing in mineral salt medium and 2% (v/v)

UCO at temperature of 30°C and agitation of 200 rpm. Strain HIP3 was identified as *Bacillus* sp. based on 16S rRNA gene sequencing and was selected as a potential biosurfactant producing microorganism. Extraction method using chloroform: methanol (2:1) as the solvents gave the highest biosurfactant yield which is 9.5 g/L. High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) analysis confirmed that the biosurfactant produced by *Bacillus* sp. HIP3 consists of a lipopeptide similar to standard surfactin. The biosurfactant capable of removing 13.57%, 12.71%, 2.91%, 1.68%, and 0.7% of copper, lead, zinc, chromium, and cadmium, respectively from artificially contaminated water, highlighting its potential for bioremediation.



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

**PENGHASILAN BIOSURFAKTAN DARIPADA MINYAK MASAK
TERPAKAI OLEH BAKTERIA PENCILAN TEMPATAN UNTUK
PENYINGKIRAN LOGAM BERAT**

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Logam berat dari efluen dan kumbahan perindustrian menyumbang kepada pencemaran air yang serius di kebanyakan negara membangun. Pencemaran berterusan logam berat ke dalam sumber air semulajadi boleh meningkatkan pendedahan manusia terhadap logam ini melalui penghadaman, penyedutan atau sentuhan kulit yang boleh mengakibatkan keadaan teruk dalam jangka panjang. Biosurfaktan sebagai kaedah biologi untuk penyingkiran logam berat dari sisa industri memberikan penyelesaian alternatif. Biosurfaktan adalah sebatian permukaan aktif yang mempamerkan pengurangan ketegangan permukaan dan antara muka, menstabilkan emulsi, menggalakkan pembentukan buih, selektiviti dan aktiviti khusus yang tinggi pada suhu, pH, dan kemasinan melampau, dan keupayaan untuk disintesis daripada sumber diperbaharui. Sifat biosurfaktan yang mesra alam dan terbiodegradasikan menjadikan lebih baik daripada surfaktan kimia. Kajian ini bertujuan menghasilkan biosurfaktan dari bahan mentah diperbaharui; minyak masak terpakai (MMT) untuk penyingkiran logam berat. Empat pencilan bakteria yang menggunakan MMT sebagai sumber karbon telah diasingkan menggunakan agar *Bushnell* dan *Haas* dan disaring untuk penghasilan biosurfaktan dengan ujian penyebaran minyak dan aktiviti ketegangan permukaan. Strain HIP3 menunjukkan kawasan anjakan minyak

tertinggi dengan ketegangan permukaan terendah yaitu 38 mN/m selepas 7 hari membiak dalam medium garam mineral pada suhu 30°C, agitasi 200 rpm dan 2% (v/v) MMT. Strain HIP3 adalah sebagai spesies *Bacillus* berdasarkan turutan rRNA 16s. Kaedah pengekstrakan menggunakan kloroform: metanol (2:1) memberikan hasil biosurfaktan tertinggi iaitu 9.5 g/L. Analisis kromatografi cecair prestasi tinggi (HPLC) mengesahkan biosurfaktan yang dihasilkan oleh spesies *Bacillus* HIP3 terdiri dari lipopeptida yang serupa dengan surfaktin standard. Biosurfaktan menyingkirkan 13.57%, 12.71%, 2.91%, 1.68%, dan 0.7% masing-masing tembaga, plumbum, zink, kromium dan kadmium dari air tercemar buatan, menonjolkan potensi bioremediasi.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

μL	Microliter
$\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$	Microliter per Minute
μm	Micrometer
AHLs	Acylhomoserine Lactones
ATCC	American Type Culture Collection
ATP- P_i	Adenosine Triphosphate Inorganic Phosphate
AU	Absorbance Unit
BH	Bushnell and Haas
bp	Base Pair
BS	Biosurfactant
C/N	Carbon to Nitrogen Ratio
Ca	Calcium
Cd	Cadmium
cm	Centimeter
cm^2	Centimeter x Centimeter
CMC	Critical Micelle Concentration
Cr	Chromium
Da	Dalton
dH ₂ O	Distilled Water

DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
dNTPs	Deoxyribonucleotide Triphosphate
EOR	Enhanced Oil Recovery
FAME	Fatty Acid Methyl Ester
FFAs	Free Fatty Acids
g	Gram
g/L	Gram per Litre
GC-MS	Gas Chromatography–Mass Spectrometry
h	Hour
HPLC	High Performance Liquid Chromatography
HPLC-MS	High Performance Liquid Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry
HPLC-UV	High Performance Liquid Chromatography-Ultraviolet
id	Internal Diameter
IFT	Interfacial Tension
kb	Kilo Bases
kg	Kilogram
MEGA	Molecular Evolutionary Genetics Analysis
MEOR	Microbial Enhanced Oil Recovery
mg	Milligram
mg/L	Milligram per Liter

min	Minute
mL	Milliliter
mL/min	Milliliter per Minute
mN/m	Millinewton per Meter
MSM	Mineral Salt Medium
MTCC	Microbial Type Culture Collection
MW	Molecular Weight
NA	Nutrient Agar
NCBI	National Center for Biotechnology Information
nm	Nanometer
NRPSs	Nonribosomal Peptide Synthetases
OD	Optical Density
v/v	Volume per Volume
Pb	Lead
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PDA	Potato Dextrose Agar
PDA	Photo-Diode Array
POME	Palm Oil Mill Effluent
ppm	Part per Million
QSS	Quorum Sensing System
rpm	Rotation per Minute

rRNA	Ribosomal Ribonucleic Acid
SDBS	Sodium Dodecyl Benzene Sulfonate
sec	Second
sp.	Species
ST	Surface Tension
TFA	Trifluoroacetic Acid
UCO	Used Cooking Oil
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
USA	United States of America
UV	Ultraviolet
w/v	Weight per Volume
w/w	Weight per Weight
YPD	Yeast Potato Dextrose

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Vegetable oils are used globally especially for food preparation and the most common cooking oil in Malaysia is made from oil palm because of its availability and low price relative to other sources, such as olive, corn or coconut plants (Yaakob et al., 2013). These vegetable oils are used in cooking due to its contribution to good taste, attractive colors, and better presentation. As this trend becomes increasingly popular, accumulation of waste generated from cooking oil also increases. There is a growing concern regarding the environmental impact of the rise in the production of used cooking oil in homes and restaurants. Kheang et al. (2006) conveyed that around 50,000 tons of used cooking oil generated from vegetable oils and/or animal fats are disposed of to the environment without proper treatment annually in Malaysia only. This act in the long run contributes to water and soil contamination, causes aquatic life distraction, sewer system blockages and overflow, increases water treatment and waste management cost, and consequently generates undesirable impacts to the entire environmental system (Yaakob et al., 2013).

The interest in microbial surfactants or biosurfactants has been steadily increasing in recent years mainly due to the possibility of production from wastes other than diversity and environmentally friendly nature (Banat, 1995). In addition, the production of biosurfactants from renewable substrates could reduce one of the limiting factors: the high production costs, which is related with incompetent methods for product recovery and purification (dos Santos et al., 2010). Oily substrate such as used cooking oil which may cause severe environmental problems has been proven to be a good and cheap renewable carbon source for the production of biosurfactants (Jamal et al., 2011; Oliveira & Garcia-Cruz, 2013; Haba et al., 2000). The used cooking oil from domestic waste also contains appropriate balance of nutrients to support optimum bacterial growth and synthesis of biosurfactants (Makkar & Cameotra, 1999; Oliveira & Garcia-Cruz, 2013).

Biosurfactants have various chemical compositions generally consisting of fatty acids, glycolipids, lipopeptides, lipopolysaccharides and lipoproteins depending on the producing microorganism, raw material and process conditions. It is an amphiphilic molecule with both hydrophilic and

hydrophobic (generally hydrocarbon) moieties that partition preferentially at the interface between fluid phases with different degrees of polarity and hydrogen bonding such as oil/water or air/water interfaces. Numerous characteristics of biosurfactants such as foaming, dispersion, wetting, emulsification/de-emulsification, and coating make them suitable to be applied in the physicochemical and biological remediation technologies of both organic and metal contaminants (Pacwa-Płociniczak et al., 2011).

Heavy metals, which are generally more persistent than organic pollutants due to their non-biodegradability and high toxicity even at trace concentrations, are becoming one of the most serious environmental problems today. It may lead to bioaccumulation in living organisms, causing health problems in animals, plants and human beings if it was left untreated in the environment (Argun et al., 2007). The property of microbial surfactant to chelate toxic heavy metals and form an insoluble precipitate was seen as the perfect solution to the treatment of heavy metals in wastewater due to its greater environmental compatibility, lower toxicity and higher biodegradability than synthetic surfactants (Mulligan, 2009).

One of the most popular biosurfactant used in bioremediation of sites contaminated with toxic heavy metals is surfactin since it was said to have the powerful surface activity. Surfactin is the cyclic lipopeptide biosurfactants produced by *Bacillus* sp. and it can reduce the surface tension of water from 72 to 27mN/m at concentrations as low as 0.005% (Arima et al., 1968). The potential advantages of using the lipopeptide surfactin include the presence of two charges due to glutamic and aspartic amino acids as part of its peptide structure, thus the binding of heavy metals would be expected (Thimon et al., 1992).

Therefore, the objectives of this study were:

1. To screen, isolate, and characterize biosurfactant producing bacteria
2. To produce, characterize and evaluate the efficiency of biosurfactant from used cooking oil as a substrate by locally isolated bacteria for heavy metals removal

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