## **Review Article**



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## Microbes from Antarctica as a source for understanding cold adaptive Halal enzymes

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Abstract: Enzymes are widely used in various industries as they exhibit many outstanding benefits. They function to accelerate the reaction process which is more advantageous compared with chemicals as catalysts. However, the halal status of enzymes has been argued especially in food industries. This is because some of the enzymes originate from animal sources. The main concern with this issue is regarding the compatibility of these sources with the Islamic law. Beside animals and plants, microorganisms also play a vital role in producing various types of enzymes naturally. In relation to their halalness, enzymes extracted from microbes are considered as halal. Antarctica is a new frontier with a diverse microbial community that shows a potential for bio prospecting. The extremophiles existing in this region produce enzymes that can function in extreme conditions. Some of these enzymes suit the industrial requirement. The microorganisms obtained from Antarctica are very useful for harnessing and bio prospecting of such enzymes due to their great potential and diverse applications in many industrial fields in the future.

Keywords: Antarctica; cold-active enzyme; psychrophiles; biotechnology; Halal

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## Introduction

The contribution of enzymes is very crucial either in different industries or in daily life applications (Choi et al., 2015; Juturu & Wu, 2014; Adrio & Demain; 2014). Generally, an enzyme is a tool to help accelerate the reaction process. It has been used as a biocatalyst to substitute the chemical catalyst (Fersht, 1999). Although the biocatalyst is costlier, it shows more efficiency, selectivity and environmental friendliness compared with the chemical catalyst (Blamey et al., 2017; Nealon et al., 2015).

However, the involvement of this biocatalyst in the food industry has been debated in terms of its halal status (Adapa et al., 2014). The word 'Halal' is a Quranic term that means permissible or lawful by the Islamic law and mostly refers to foods and drinks (Featherstone, 2015; Riaz & Chaudry, 2003). The opposite of Halal is Haram which means prohibited or unlawful. Halal in the food industry is very important especially for Muslim consumers. The awareness about halal food manufacturing or processing has been issued in some publications (Vanany et al., 2018; Ismail et al.; 2018; Thadathil & Velappan, 2014). In order for a product to acquire the Halal certificate or be labelled as Halal, there are many aspects to consider, starting from the raw material until the end product including the packaging process (Wahab, 2004). The food ingredients, additives and process aiders must fulfill the Halal requirements. As the enzyme is also involved in food processing, it must be certified as Halal as well in order to certify the end products. Many enzymes have been applied in various food industries including dairy, cheese, syrup, starch, baking, brewing, meat, wine and juice (Liu et al., 2015, Merin & Morata, 2015; Ranjan et al., 2016; Dura & Rosell, 2016; Wang et al., 2016). Some classes of enzymes that are important in the food industry include alpha-amylase, glucoamylase, betaglucanase, lipase, papain, chymosin, proteases, pectinase, lactase, decarboxylase, glucose oxidase and cellulase, amyloglucosidase and phytase (Wang et al., 2016; Ranjan et al., 2015; Hosseinipour et al., 2015; Tapre & Jain, 2014).

### Halal and Non-Halal Enzymes Sources

The most important criteria for the enzyme to be certified as Halal is its source. The sources of enzymes can vary between plants, animals or microorganisms. Since some of the enzymes are extracted from animals, their Halal status has been skepticized. These enzymes could be labelled Haram if the sources are not fully compliant with the Islamic laws. Some of the enzymes that are extracted from animals include catalase, chymotrypsin, lipase, rennet, trypsin, chymosin, reductase and cathepsin (Table 1). The Islamic law has listed the following sources as Haram according to the Quran and Hadith; i) carrion, ii) blood, iii) pig, iv) animal not slaughtered by the name of Allah S.W.T, v) animal killed by beating or fallen, vi) donkey, vii) fangs or claw predators, viii) poisonous animals and ix) animals living both in water and on land (Kashim et al., 2015).

However, if the enzymes are extracted from plants, it is evident that the sources are Halal. But as mentioned earlier, in order to certify an enzyme as Halal, the extracting process, the chemical and the aider used must also be certified as Halal.

One of the important sources of enzymes is microorganisms. Generally, there are four stages in producing enzymes industrially from microorganisms. There is the selection

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of the enzyme, formulating the medium and the process of production and purification of the enzyme. For the production process stage, most industries in advanced countries use the submerged and solid-state fermentation (Pandey et al., 1999). This process is preferable because of its lower cost of production and low contamination compared with others. Besides, the production rate of the enzyme can be increased by optimizing the conditions for the growth of the microorganisms. When dealing with microorganisms that can cause a pathogenic effect on humans, the hygienic production process is an important part of the Halal concept. This is because the concept of Halal Tayyib also refers to the quality of the product and the safety of the consumers (Alzeer et al., 2018). Scholars have discussed and listed the Halal requirements for the fermentation process including the hygienic process, waste control and elimination of contaminants (Riaz & Chaudry, 2003).

**Table 1.** Enzymes extracted from animals for industries and biotechnology applications

Enzymes	Microorgan- ism	Opt. Temp	References	
Catalase	Bubalus bubalis	30	Nadeem <i>et al.</i> , 2015	
	Camelus dromedarius	25-40	Al-Bar, 2012	
	Bos taurus	30	Alptekin <i>et al.</i> , 2008	
Chymotrysin	Bos taurus	25	Wirnt 1965	
Limaga	Bos taurus	37	Shahani <i>et al.</i> , 1976	
Lipase			Wilcox et al.,	
	Sus scrofa	37	2014	
Chymosin	Bos buffali	37	Malak <i>et al.</i> , 1996	
	Capra hircus	30	Kumar et al.,	
Trypsin	Ovis ammon	60	2006	
	Sus scrofa	37	Li et al., 2012	
	Boops boops	55	Deepthi <i>et al.</i> , 2001	
Cathepsin	Sus scrofa	37	Barkia <i>et al.</i> , 2010  Ramos <i>et al.</i> , 2008	
	Sus scrofa	37		
Carboxylester- ase	Bungarus fasciatus			
Acetylcholines- terase	Crotalus atrox	37	Henke <i>et al.</i> , 2003	
Phosphodies- terase  Metalloprotein- ase	Crotalus atrox	55	Godoy et al., 2005	
	Sus scrofa	37		
			Bowman et al., 2001	
	Sus scrofa	37	Willis <i>et al.</i> , 1988	
Lyase			Schauer & Wember, 1996	
			Poyck et al., 2008	
Syntase				

<sup>\*</sup>Opt. Temp. – Opitmum temperature

Fermentation is the best alternative way to substitute enzymes extracted from animals. For example, rennet is an important enzyme in cheese production. The source of rennet is originally from the calf. As an alternative, scientists have extracted bromelain from pineapples, transformed it into a microorganism and proceeded with the fermentation process for a large-scale production (Arshad et al., 2014).

Some enzymes have very specific characteristics that distinguish them from other common or conventional enzymes. They have the capability to operate under abnormal or extreme conditions such as temperature, salinity, pH etc. These unique features of an enzyme can be very beneficial if it is applied appropriately. Most enzymes that are equipped with these qualities are extracted from extremophiles microorganisms (Siddiqui, 2015; Dalmaso et al., 2015; Urbieta et al., 2015). Various classes of enzymes with these characteristics have been extensively investigated and applied in different fields.

## Antarctica as a New Halal Enzymes Source

The Antarctic is located at the South Pole of the Earth and to date, there is no single permanent population on it – Figure 1. The Antarctic is an isolated region that is surrounded by the Southern Oceans. This continent also covers some sub-Antarctic islands like Campbell Island, Heard Island, and South Georgia, some of which are north of the Antarctic Convergence (Anisimov et al., 2001).

After the World War II, there were about seven scientific expeditions to the Antarctic to study microbial diversity. Through the French expedition on 1903–1905, the first microorganism had been discovered on this continent and is isolated from the penguin's intestines (Tsiklinsky, 1908). Besides, an interesting finding that has been discovered from the Blood Falls outflow is a type of active bacteria that lives by harvesting energy from the bedrock or respiring from Fe (III) or SO42– (Mikuchi et al., 2009).

This sub glacial environment is part of the Earth's biosphere that remains largely unexplored. The number of scientific studies has been rising in order to enhance the understanding of microorganism communities that survive the harsh Antarctic environment (Matsui et al., 2017).



**Figure 1.** Antarctica is more pristine than the Arctic because it lacks any human activity. The picture was taken during Chilean Antarctica Expedition 2018 (Photo courtesy of N.F.Hadry Nordin)

Many researchers have switched their focus to the discovery of the cold-active enzyme extracted from psychrophiles because it shows more valuable potentials compared with the

mesophilic enzyme. Generally, the advantages of this cold-active enzyme are many. It has a high efficient catalytic activity at low and moderate temperatures compared with the mesophilic enzyme (Cavicchioli et al., 2011). It also has a thermolabile characteristic which means it yields higher activities at lower temperatures, but deactivates when the temperature is increased. For that reason, its inactivation can be easily controlled, thus minimizing the loss of volatile compounds and undesirable chemical reactions. Furthermore, it confers a lower activation energy and maintains the working efficiency at a low temperature and therefore reduces and saves the energy consumption and production cost. Besides, its specific and selective activity can shorten the processing time and reduce the concentration of the enzyme used (Siddiqui & Cavicchioli, 2006).

In the food industry, enzymes play many important functions in preparing and processing the food. There are some potential cold-active enzymes that can replace the commercial enzymes. This is because a high temperature processing may change the original taste of the foods. By employing enzymes with a lower energy activation and a lower working temperature, this can reduce undesirable chemical reactions while processing the food. Thus, any spoilage in the nutritional value or bacterial contamination can be avoided (Gerday et al., 2000). The most prominent feature of enzymes is that they preserve the original taste and condition of the food. For instance, in cheese making, rennet is very important in the process. Rennet contains more than 90% chymosin and other components like pepsin and lipase which function to solidify the milk (Kumar et al., 2001). The optimum temperature for this enzyme is around 45°C. If a cold-active enzyme can substitute the rennet, the production cost of cheese can be reduced by decreasing the energy used to maintain the enzyme's optimum temperature. Table 2 shows the latest finding of the cold-active enzymes that are extracted from microorganisms which inhibit Antarctica.

## **Cold-Active Enzyme Applications**

Harnessing enzymes for bio prospecting is very beneficial for industrial applications nowadays. Generally, there are six classes of enzymes; Oxidoreductases, Transferases, Hydrolases, Lyases, Isomerases and Ligases.

#### Oxidoreductases

Alcohol dehydrogenase is the most potential subclass for industrial and biotechnology applications in oxidoreductases. This enzyme has been studied in vinegar production through acetic acid fermentation from ethanol (Zheng et al., 2015), ethanol biosensor (Gomez-Anquela et al., 2015) and lignocellulosic biomass for renewable fuel production (Quaglia et al., 2013). In addition, it is also mostly used as a biocatalyst in enantioselective chemical synthesis for agriculture and pharmaceutical industries (Elleuche et al., 2013). Cold-active alcohol dehydrogenase can possibly be used in synthesizing enantiomer with high vapour pressure in order to minimize the loss of this volatile compound in the processing. Another subclass, oxygenase is widely studied for bioremediation and biodegradation process (Tavakoli & Hamzah, 2017; Al-Alaq et al., 2016). Psychrophiles that exhibit cold active oxygenase have the potential for bioremediation application in countries with a colder environment. Currently, NAD(P)+-independent oxidoreductase is studied for microbial fuel cell. However, the currently available oxidoreductases require an optimum temperature of 30°C and above (Ren et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2017). By using cold-active enzymes in the process, the optimum temperature can be reduced, and the energy can be saved.

**Table 2.** Latest findings of cold-active enzymes extracted from

		Opt.		
Enzymes	Microorganism	Temp.	References	
Amino-	Psycrobacter sp	55	Bujacz et al.,	
transferase			2015	
Cellulase	Antarctica bacterium	40	Wang <i>et al.</i> ,	
			2015	
Chitinase	Lecanicillium mus- carium	40	Fenice, 2016	
	Pseudoalteromonas sp	30	Wang et al.,	
Glutare-	т зешошеготониз зр	30	2014	
doxin		4.0	Shi et al.,	
	Pseudoalteromonas sp	40	2014	
Glutathi- one-s-trans-			Yu et al.,	
ferase	Rhodotorula mucilag- inosa	50	2015	
Phytase	Antarctic microbes	20-40	Matsui <i>et al</i> .,	
			2017	
Protease	Arthrobacter agilis	30	Kim et al.,	
	3		2017	
Amylase	Antarctic psychro-	30	Li et al.,	
•	philic strain		2015	
Agarase	Halorubrum lacuspro- fundi	50	Karan et al.,	
		30	2013	
Galactosi-	Exiguobacterium ant- arcticum	30	Crespin et	
dase	Micrococcus antarcti-		al., 2016	
	cus	25	Miao et al.,	
Glucosidase			2016	

\*Opt. Temp. – Opitmum temperature

#### **Transferases**

For the transferases enzyme class, hydroxymethyltransferase (SHMT) is important enantiomers synthesis (Angelaccio et al., 2012). SHMT is involved in the reversible conversion of L-serine and tetrahydropteroylglutamate (H4PteGlu) to glycine and 5,10-methylenetetrahydropteroylglutamate (5,10-CH2-H4PteGlu) (Florio et al., 2011). Processing in lower temperatures can minimize the retroaldol reaction and maintain synthesis with a maximized capacity. In this situation, cold-active SHMT from the psychrophiles has a lot of advantages. Besides, cold-induced glutathione s-transferase (GST) has been successfully extracted

from the Antarctic bacterium strain and has the potential to be applied in agricultural industries (Wang et al., 2017). Researchers discovered that GST increases the plant tolerance towards salt, stress and lower temperature environments (Seppanen et al., 2000). A potential transgenic plant with a high resistance toward cold temperatures could be valuable for agricultural purposes especially in colder countries. In addition, aspartase is a common enzyme that has been used to produce food additives and artificial sweeteners such as aspartame.

## **Hydrolases**

Among all classes of enzymes, hydrolase is the most popular class in terms of its biotechnological and industrial applications. Cold-active protease has been implemented in a wide range of applications such as washing powders, food industries and pharmaceuticals because it can achieve a higher activity level at lower temperatures (Joshi & Satyanarayana, 2013). Cold-active alpha-amylase has been extracted and characterized for a detergent formulation that is suitable for laundry washing with ambient temperature (Ranjan et al., 2016; Roohi et al., 2013; Caf et al., 2014). In the food industry, enzymes play several important functions in the preparing process. There are some potential cold-active enzymes that can replace the current commercial enzymes; for example,  $\beta$ -glucosidase in plant-based food (Mioa et al., 2016), protease for meat tenderizer (Mageswari et al.. 2017), and esterase for food fermentation (Esteban-Torres et al., 2014). By using cold-active enzymes, undesirable chemical reactions that may occur at higher temperatures can be reduced while processing the food. Thus, any spoilage in the nutritional value or bacterial contamination can be avoided while preserving the original taste and condition of the food (Gerday et al., 2000). A novel finding of glucosidase from the Antarctic regions showed that this enzyme can directly convert cellulose into glucose and produce ethanol without fermentation (Crespin et al., 2016). Significant to this cellulosic ethanol, the conversion can be made at a lower temperature and the production cost can be reduced. In the molecular study, enzyme phosphatase is absolutely important, especially in DNA studies. Researchers have discovered a cold-active alkaline phosphate that has been extracted from shrimp in the northern region called Pandalus borealis (Nilsen et al., 2001). This shrimp alkaline phosphate (rSAP) is a heat labile enzyme that can be deactivated at 65°C in 5 minutes. Recently, a metagenomic study has discovered another cold active alkaline phosphatase extracted from psychrophiles (Lee et al., 2015). Therefore, this enzyme can be produced commercially at a lower cost by using bacteria rather than shrimp.

### Lyases

From a biotechnological perspective, enzyme decarboxylase from the lyases class has a significant function in the food industry and feedstock production. In cheese manufacturing, decarboxylase has a role in the aroma development in the cheese ripening process (Wang et al., 2017). By using a cold-active enzyme, it can preserve the texture of the cheeses because storing them at a high temperature for a long period will deteriorate their texture. Keto-acid decarboxylase contributes to the production of biofuel. Generally, these long chain branch alcohols like isobutanol, 2-methyl-1-butanol or 3-methyl-1-butanol are synthesized through fermentation processes like ethanol. But through biosynthesis amino acid

pathways, the production can be done without fermentation (Atsumi et al., 2008). The discovery of cold-active 2 keto acid decarboxylase with an optimum activity at 35 °C is advantageous in order to yield large-scale renewable energy at a lower cost (Wei et al., 2013).

#### **Isomerases**

In biotechnology applications, the isomerases class is important in the manufacturing of artificial sweeteners. Glucose isomerase is responsible for the conversion of D-glucose to D-fructose. The Thermostable enzyme has been characterized and improved in order to optimize the production of high fructose corn syrup (Liu et al., 2015). In addition, sucrose isomerase has been used in the production of artificial sweeteners such as isomaltulose (Mu et al., 2014). Besides, in the biofuel technology, xylose isomerase is an important enzyme in the production of ethanol as a clean and renewable source of energy. A recent study shows that this enzyme has been engineered in yeast to optimize ethanol production from lignocellulosic hydrolysates (Ko et al., 2016). Nevertheless, cold-active isomerases have many beneficial aspects economically and environmentally. Also, they are energy saving and easier to manoeuvre. There were fewer discoveries of cold-active isomerase, but triose phosphate isomerase (TIM) was among the earliest crystal structures of cold-active enzymes extracted from psychrophilic bacterium to ever be elucidated (Alvarez et al., 1998).

## Ligases

The final class are ligases. DNA ligase is important to join two DNA components together, especially in the recombinant process. Cold-adapting DNA ligase has been discovered and works efficiently at a lower temperature of  $18^{\circ}\text{C}$  compared with the commercial DNA ligase which requires a higher temperature of  $30^{\circ}\text{C}$  (Georlette et al., 2000). Besides, its thermolabile property makes the enzyme easier to deactivate without putting the DNA structure at risk of degradation. Another cold active ligase that has been isolated from the same microorganism, Pseudoalteromonas haloplanktis is  $\gamma$ -glutamyl-cysteine ligase (Albino et al., 2014).

#### Conclusion

It is very beneficial to harness, and bio prospect these enzymes due to their remarkable potentials and diverse applications in many industrial fields in the future. However, identifying and extracting specific cold-active enzymes with high stability levels is required. Besides, through genetic strain modification and improvement, these cold-active enzymes would play an important role in various biotechnological industries and applications. In the future, these valuable enzymes in biotechnology applications would have the potential to enhance the enzyme market alongside the thermostable enzymes.

#### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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