Biosynthesis and Structural Characterization of Levan by a Recombinant Levansucrase From Bacillus Subtilis ZW019

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Abstract

Objectives

The yield of levan extracted from microbial fermentation broth is low, so in vitro catalytic synthesis of levan by levansucrase is expected to be one of the industrial production approaches of levan.

Results

A recombinant plasmid Pet-28A-AcmA-Z constructed in the previous study was used to produce levansucrase. The recombinant levansucrase could be easily purified in one step and the purified enzyme had a single band clearly visible in SDS-PAGE. The conditions for enzymatic reactions was optimal at pH 5.2 and 40 °C, and the activity of enzymes was stimulated by K⁺ and Ca²⁺. The yield of levan biosynthesis from 10% (w/v) sucrose with 6.45 U/g sucrose of levansucrase was 30.6 g/L. The molecular weight of the levan was about 1.56×10⁶ Da, as measured by GPC. HPIC analysis showed that the monosaccharide composition of the levan was fructose and glucose. The results of FTIR and NMR analysis indicated that the polymer produced by the recombinant levansucrase was β-(2, 6) levan.

Conclusions

The results of this study provide a basis for large-scale production of levan by enzymatic method.

1. Introduction

Levan is a fructan biopolymer, and its fructose chain is formed by β-(2,6) glycosidic bonds with some β-(2,1) linked branch chains (Bouallegue et al. 2020a; Xavier and Ramana 2017). Due to its excellent biocompatibility, biodegradability, renewability, eco-friendliness, and human compatibility, levan has a wide range of applications in the fields of food and pharmaceuticals (Barone and Medynets 2007; Chiang et al. 2009). In the food industry, levan is used as a stabilizer, encapsulating agent, water-holding agent, surface-finishing agent, thickener, emulsifier, flavor carrier, and prebiotic sweetener (Jang et al. 2001). In addition, levan can also increase the shelf life of food and be used as a fat substitute (Haddar et al. 2021). In the field of pharmaceuticals, levan have anti-hyperglycemia, anti-diabetes, anti-oxidation, anti-virus (Esawy et al. 2011), cholesterol-lowering (Yamamoto et al. 1999), anti-tumor (Srikanth et al. 2015a) and immunomodulatory bioactivities.

Levan is naturally produced by plants or microorganisms. Microbial levans have a much larger molecular weight (2 to 100 MDa) than plant-produced levans (2 to 33 kDa). Due to the low content of levan in plants and the high cost of natural extraction and separation, levan is not suitable for industrial production. So far, the production of levan is mainly biosynthesized by levansucrase using sucrose as substrate. Many microorganisms can produce levan, such as Zymomonas (Poli et al. 2009), Bacillus (Shih et al. 2010), Pseudomonas (Poli et al. 2009), and Acetobacter xylinum (Srikanth et al. 2015b), but most of their
production is too low to meet commercial needs. Therefore, levan production by enzymatic method may be an effective choice to solve the problem of low yield of wild strains.

In this study, we used the pre-constructed genetically engineered bacteria *Escherichia coli* BL21 to produce levansucrase (Genbank MT038999). The effects of temperature, pH, and metal ions on the activities of the purified recombinant enzyme were investigated to evaluate its potential to synthesize levan. The polymer was analyzed by means of high-performance ion chromatography (HPIC), Fourier transform infrared (FTIR), nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) techniques. The structure of the biosynthetic product was determined to be levan-type fructan.

2. Materials And Methods

2.1 Bacterial Strains and culture conditions details

*E. coli* strains DH5α and BL21 were cultivated aerobically at 37 °C in lysogeny broth (LB). Restriction endonucleases, Prime STAR Max DNA Polymerase, and DNA Ligation Kit were obtained from TaKaRa Biotechnology Co., Ltd. (Dalian, China) or New England BioLabs (Beijing, China). The DNA primers and Plasmid Mini Kit were obtained from Shanghai Sangon Biological Engineering Technology & Services Co., Ltd. (Shanghai, China). All other reagents were of analytical grade and were commercially available unless otherwise indicated.

2.2 Gene cloning, expression and purification of the recombinant levansucrase

In the previous study, we have constructed a levansucrase expression system using *E. coli* BL21 as the host (Wang et al. 2021). Briefly, the plasmid Pet-28A-AcmA-Z was used to clone the levansucrase gene from *Bacillus subtilis* ZW019, and the recombinant plasmid was transformed into *E. coli* BL21 by the heat shock method using chemically competent cells to construct the recombinant genetic engineering bacterium. The cells were then harvested by centrifugation at 12,000 rpm for 20 min at 4°C, and the precipitated fractions were labeled as intracellular components. The intracellular components were washed twice with 50 mM Tris/HCL buffer (pH 7.0) and subsequently disrupted by ultrasonic oscillation. The cellular debris and unbroken cells were separated by centrifugation at 12,000 rpm for 25 min at 4°C. The supernatant after centrifugation was labeled as the source of levansucrase, and the precipitate was labeled as inclusion bodies. The intracellular enzyme was purified by using GEM particles as purification material and Acma as purification label (Zhao, et al. 2020). After SDS-PAGE gel electrophoresis analysis, the correct expression of the enzyme was confirmed.

2.3 Measurement of the levan formation activity of levansucrase

In order to determine the levan formation activity, 1ml 5% phenol and 5ml concentrated sulfuric acid were added to the reaction system. The solution was placed at room temperature for 20 min, and then the
2.4 Effect of temperature, pH, metal ions on the activity of the recombinant levansucrase

The optimum temperature for the activity of levansucrase was detected by cultivating the reaction mixture at 20.0–60.0°C at pH 5.2 sodium acetate-acetate buffer using sucrose as the substrate (10% w/v), and the optimum pH for enzyme activity was tested at pH ranges (4.6–5.6). The effect of metal ions was detected by preprocessing the levansucrase in the 50 sodium acetate-acetate buffer (pH 5.2) containing 5 mM or 50 mM of K⁺, Ca²⁺, Cu²⁺, Mg²⁺, Fe²⁺, Fe³⁺, Ba²⁺, Zn²⁺, Ni²⁺ and Mn²⁺ at 40°C for 2 h. The activity of the preincubated sample at the most suitable conditions was taken as 100 %. All the experiments were performed in triplicate, and the error was expressed as the standard deviation of the three measurements.

2.5 Determination of kinetic parameters

Kinetic parameters of the levansucrase reactions were determined by varying the sucrose concentration (0.0078–0.125 M) at 40°C and pH 5.2. We used DNS (3,5-dinitrosalicylic acid) method to determine the released total reducing sugar concentrations (Miller 1959). Data were fitted to the standard Michaelis-Menten formula.

2.6 Preparation and purification of levan

The crude polysaccharide solution after the enzyme reaction was centrifuged at 4 °C 8,000 rpm for 30 min. The supernatant was added with three times the volume of precooled 95% (v/v) ethanol, and the polysaccharide was precipitated overnight at 4 °C. Then the polysaccharide was centrifuged according to the above conditions and redissolved in an appropriate amount of ultrapure water. The redissolved solution was dialyzed with ultrapure water at 4 °C for 72 h in a dialysis bag with a molecular weight of 14 kDa, and the water was changed every 8 h. Finally, the polysaccharide sample was obtained by lyophilization.

2.7 Monosaccharide Composition Analysis

In this study, high-performance ion chromatography (HPIC, ThermoFisher ICS5000) was used to determine monosaccharide composition. The 13 kinds of monosaccharide standard (fucose, rhamnose, arabinose, galactose, glucose, xylose, mannose, fructose, ribose, galacturonic acid, glucuronic acid, guluronic acid, and mannuronic acid) were prepared into 10 mg/ml standard solution, respectively. 4 mg of the sample was put into ampoule, and 1 ml 2 mol/L trichloroacetic acid (TFA) was added into it. The ampoule filled with the solution was put into an oven for hydrolysis for 2 h under the condition of 100 °C. The acid hydrolysis solution of 200 µL was transferred to a 1.5 mL EP tube for nitrogen blowing and drying, and 1 mL water was added for vortex mixing. The solution was centrifuged at 12,000 rpm for 5 min. The supernatant was added into IC for analysis. The detector used for ion chromatography analysis was an electrochemical detector. Chromatographic column type was DionexCarbopacTMPA20 (3*150)
and the detection temperature was 30 °C. Mobile phase: A: H$_2$O; B: 250mM NaOH; C: 50mM NaOH & 500mM NaOAC. The flow rate was 0.3 ml/min and the injection volume was 5 µL.

2.8 Levan structural characterization and identification methods

2.8.1 Molecular weight and purity of levan

The average molecular weight and purity of the levan were determined by gel permeation chromatography (GPC, Waters 1515) with Waters 2414 Refractive Index Detector. The ULTRAHYDROGEL 120, 250 and 500 PKGD columns were eluted with 0.1 M NaNO$_3$ at a flow rate of 1 mL/min. Samples (25 mg/L, 50 µL) were injected into the column. PEG standard compounds (Mp 330000, 176000, 82500, 44000, 25300, 20600, 12600, 7130, 4290, 1400, 633, 430 KDa) were provided by Polymer Standards Service-USA Inc.

2.8.2 Scanning electron microscope (SEM) of levan

The surface morphology of the levan was obtained by Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM, SU8020) technique. Freeze-dried pure levan was fixed to the SEM stubs with double-faced adhesive tape and coated with conductive gold in an ion sputtering apparatus. The microstructures of samples with different magnification were observed at an accelerating voltage of 10 kV. In this study, the SEM images of levan samples at magnification 400×1000×2000× were obtained.

2.8.3 Atomic force micrograph (AFM) of levan

The surface morphology and roughness of levan were obtained by Atomic force micrograph (AFM, Bruker Multimode8) analysis. The levan solution with a concentration of 1 mg/ml was prepared and stirred continuously for 1 h at 40 °C in an airtight bottle. Once cooled to room temperature, 5 µL of levan solution was absorbed into the mica sheet. The AFM images of levan were obtained in tapping mode after drying at room temperature.

2.8.4 Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR)

Fourier-transformed infrared spectroscopy is a common method for the determination of functional groups presented in levan. The levan and KBr powder were thoroughly mixed in a ratio of 1:100 to make a 1 mm thickness KBr pellet. The absorption spectrum of levan was recorded on a Thermo IS5 instrument (America) in the region of 4000 – 400 cm$^{-1}$.

2.8.5 Nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy (NMR)

Nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy is a convenient method to analyze the advanced structure of polysaccharides, which can provide more detailed information and can be reused without destroying the polysaccharide samples. $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectrum of the levan solution were recorded using a Bruker 600M spectrometer (Switzerland). 20 mg purified and freeze-dried levan was dissolved in D$_2$O, dissolving
and lyophilizing repeatedly to realize the exchange of H and D. The prepared sample was sealed in an NMR tube. All the experiments were performed at room temperature and all the data were analyzed with MestRenova software.

3. Results And Discussion

3.1 Purification of the recombinant levansucrase

In order to purify the protein, the GEM particles were combined with the Acma-labeled recombinase, centrifuged at 4°C 12,000 rpm for 30 min to collect the precipitate and dissolved in the constant volume of Tris/HCl (pH 7.2) buffer solution. As shown in Fig. 1, the purified enzyme had a single band clearly visible in SDS-PAGE (between 80kDa and 58kDa), indicating that no impurities were introduced in the purification process. GEM particle purification is a promising method, which can save purification time, simplify operation and decrease activity loss compared with traditional purification methods (Zhao et al. 2020).

3.2 Effect of temperature, pH, metal ions on the levan formation activity of the recombinant levansucrase

The levan biosynthesis ability of the recombinant enzyme was evaluated at various temperatures, ranging from 20 °C to 60 °C. As shown in Fig. 2A, the optimum activity temperature of the recombinase was 40 °C, and the activity of the recombinase was severely inhibited when temperatures below 30°C and above 55°C. The levansucrase from *Bacillus methylotrophicus* SK 21.002 showed the highest levan production at around 37 °C (Zhang et al. 2014). Lower optimum temperature for levan formation of 15 °C was reported for levansucrase from *Halomonas smymensis* AAD6T (Kirtel et al. 2018).

The effect of pH on the levan biosynthesis ability of the recombinant enzyme was studied at different pH values (4.6–5.6). The highest levan formation activity of recombinase was obtained at pH 5.2. As shown in the Fig. 2B, the activity was rather sensitive to pH which was only high at pH 5.2 but decreased sharply when pH below 5.0 or above pH 5.4. The optimum pH for levan synthesis was lower than that of levansucrase from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* B-512 FMC (Kang et al. 2005) and levansucrase from *Brenneria goodwinii* (Liu et al. 2017), and their optimum pH values were 6.2 and 6.0, respectively. The optimal pH for most levansucrases is between 5.0 and 6.5 (Belghith et al. 2012).

The effects of different concentrations and different kinds of metal ions on the levan formation activity of levansucrase were determined at pH 5.2 and 40 °C (Fig. 2C). 50 mM Ca\(^{2+}\) and K\(^{+}\) increased the activity to around 130% of the initial relative activity. However, metal ions such as Cu\(^{2+}\), Fe\(^{3+}\) and Zn\(^{2+}\) had an obvious inhibitory effect on the enzyme activity indicating that the recombinase was sensitive to the presence of Cu\(^{2+}\), Fe\(^{3+}\) and Zn\(^{2+}\). Levansucrase from *Bacillus methylotrophicus* SK 21.002 was tested for effects on metal ions on levan biosynthesis. 20 mM Mg\(^{2+}\) increased the enzyme activity to 115% of the
initital relative activity, while Cu$^{2+}$, Fe$^{2+}$, and Zn$^{2+}$ had a strong inhibitory effect on the enzyme activity (Zhang et al. 2014). Hg$^{2+}$ and Ag$^+$ decreased the activity of levansucrase from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* B-512 FMC by 92% and 86%, respectively, while Zn$^{2+}$, Fe$^{2+}$ and Cu$^{2+}$ slightly inhibited the activity of levansucrase (Kang et al. 2005).

Levan biosynthesis was carried out from 10% (w/v) sucrose at pH 5.2 and 40 °C, using the recombinant levansucrase of 6.45 U/g sucrose. The highest production reached to 30.6 g/L after 2 h, which was higher than 15 g/L for *Erwinia herbicola* and (Shih et al. 2005) and lower than 36 g/L for *B. polymyxa* (NRRL B-18475) (Han and Clarke 1990).

### 3.3 Enzyme kinetics

Different concentrations of sucrose solution were prepared with sodium acetate-acetate buffer. The reaction rate of levansucrase with different concentrations of sucrose solution was determined according to the method described in 2.5. According to the regression equation (Fig. 3), the Michaelis constant of levansucrase to sucrose was 25.63 mM. The Km value of the enzyme in this study was similar to the Km value (24mM) of the levansucrase from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* NTM048 (Ishida et al. 2016). Moreover, the Km value was much lower than that of levansucrase from *Halomonas smyrnensis* AAD6$^T$ (104.79 ± 4.17 mM) (Kirtel et al. 2018). Therefore, the affinity of levansucrase from different microbial sources to sucrose is very different.

### 3.4 Monosaccharide Composition Analysis

Monosaccharide composition analysis usually requires hydrolysis of polysaccharides or oligosaccharides with appropriate acids before derivatization for gas chromatography (GC) and high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) analysis, or high-performance ion chromatography (HPIC) analysis without derivatization. The resulting chromatogram is shown in Fig. 4. By comparing the retention time of sample monosaccharides with that of standard monosaccharides, it was determined that the sample polysaccharide was mainly composed of fructose and glucose, which accounted for 81.6% and 16.6%, respectively. This was consistent with the results of levan by Levansucrase from *Bacillus Methylotrophicus* SK 21.002 (Zhang et al. 2014). The monosaccharide composition of polysaccharides is related to many factors, such as the hydrolysis temperature of the sample can affect the extraction of ketose. When the temperature was 30–70°C, the free fructose was relatively stable; when the temperature rose to 120°C, the free fructose would rapidly degrade to 80% (Dong et al. 2015).

### 3.5 Molecular weight and purity of levan

Gel permeation chromatography is the most commonly used method to detect the purity and molecular weight of polysaccharides. The molecular weight of levan was obtained by comparing the retention time of levan with the standard substance with different molecular weights. The retention time of levan was 16.667 min and it has a single elution peak in gel permeation chromatography (Fig. 5), indicating that the polymer is a homogeneous component. Based on the linear regression curve of PEG standards, the
average molecular weight of levan was $1.56 \times 10^6$ Da by calculation. In general, the molecular weight of polysaccharides is related to many factors, including strain type, fermentation conditions, medium composition, and extraction method. Malang et al. (2015) have shown levans synthesized by raffinose as carbon source in *W. confusa* E5/2 − 1 have higher molecular weight than levans synthesized from sucrose. Levan produced by *Bacillus subtilis* was reported to have two levan distributions: a high molecular weight levan ($2.3 \times 10^6$ Da) and a low molecular weight levan ($7.2 \times 10^3$ Da) (Raga-Carbajal et al. 2016). The molecular weight of levan in this study is between the two. Levan with different molecular weights has different applications in medicine, cosmetics and food. For example, levan with low Mw produced from *Z. Mobilis* had a stronger antibacterial inhibition in vitro, while levan with high Mw produced from *Bacillus subtilis* NRC1aza had the strongest DPPH free radical scavenging activity (Porras-Dominguez et al. 2015).

### 3.6 SEM analysis

A scanning electron microscopy analysis was performed to observe the microstructure and surface morphology of the levan, which can help in understanding the physical properties of the levan. The surface morphology micrographs of levan at 400×, 1000×, 2000× were shown in Fig. 6. As observed by SEM images, levan in this study had a highly branched and porous structure. It was supposed that levan with a highly branched and porous structure was conducive to the formation of hydrated polymers and was most likely to be used in foods and cosmetics industries as texturing, thickening, stabilizing, and water-binding agent (Sun et al. 2018; Yang et al. 2018; Zhou et al. 2018). Besides, SEM images indicated that levan had a sheet-like smooth and glossy surface, which had the potential to prepare plasticized film (Feng et al. 2018). The part microstructure of the levan in this study was similar to the microstructure of glucan produced by *Leuconostoc pseudomesenteroides* XG5, which had a smooth and glittering surface and high branched structure (Zhou et al. 2018), but there were a little differences between levan from *Bacillus mojavensis* and *Brenneria* sp. EniD312 exhibited uniform porous network (Haddar et al. 2021; Xu et al. 2018).

### 3.7 AFM analysis

AFM is a useful tool for characterizing polymer morphology with high resolution and simple operation, which is developed on the basis of SEM. The topographical AFM images of levan exhibited many ellipsoidal or spheroidal particles and spike-like lumps (Fig. 7), which indicated that polysaccharides had a strong affinity with water molecules (Ahmed et al. 2013; Wang et al. 2019a; Xu et al. 2018). The maximum peak height of rounded lumps was 55.7 nm, the average roughness was 3.41 nm and the mean roughness was 1.48 nm. The maximum height of levan was much higher than the height of a single polysaccharide chain (0.1-1 nm) suggesting that the tightly packed molecular structure formed in AFM images may be caused by the intermolecular and intramolecular aggregation of levan (Sun et al. 2018). A similar result was reported for the EPS polymer from *Lactobacillus sakei* L3 (Wang et al. 2019b) but
different from *Lactobacillus reuteri* E81 glucan which had the tangled networks (Ispirli et al. 2019) and Mesona blumes gum EPS polymer which had an irregular shape like the worm (Tao et al. 2008).

### 3.8 FT-IR analysis

Fourier-transformed infrared spectroscopy is used to determine the glycoside bond configuration and the functional group on the sugar chain by using the relative vibrations within the molecule and molecular rotation information to analyze the structure of polysaccharides. Figure 8 showed the FT-IR spectrum of purified levan. The wide and strong peak at 3304 cm$^{-1}$ was caused by the stretching vibration of O-H (Moussa et al. 2017; Zhang et al. 2014), indicating the existence of intermolecular hydrogen bonding. The weak peaks at 2931 cm$^{-1}$ and 2887 cm$^{-1}$ were the results of C-H stretching vibration and bending vibration respectively (Yu et al. 2016). The strong absorption peak at 1644 cm$^{-1}$ was caused by the O-H bending vibration, which might be caused by the presence of water in the sample (Hao et al. 2016). The absorption peaks at 1122 cm$^{-1}$ and 1009 cm$^{-1}$ were caused by C-O-C stretching vibration (Guo et al. 2013), which were the characteristic peaks of carbohydrates. The absorption peaks at 923 cm$^{-1}$ and 809 cm$^{-1}$ represented symmetric stretching vibration of furanose and D-type C-H bending vibration of furanose respectively, which were typical signal peaks of furanose (Cai et al. 2019; Ni et al. 2018). Thus it was proved that a furan ring was contained in the polysaccharide structure. Preliminary analysis showed that the polysaccharide was composed of D-furanose.

### 3.9 NMR analysis

Nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy was introduced into the study and analysis area of sugar chemistry in the 1970s and played a great role in the analysis of polysaccharides with complex structures. Further analysis of the structure of purified polysaccharides was obtained by $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectra.

According to the $^{13}$C NMR spectra (Fig. 9A), the six obvious resonance signals were 104.19 ppm (C2), 80.27 ppm (C5), 76.28 ppm (C3), 75.18 ppm (C4), 63.36 ppm (C6), 59.88 ppm (C1), respectively. The 6 peaks proved that the monosaccharide component of this polysaccharide was hexose. The anomeric carbon signal region is usually located between 95 and 110 ppm, and the ring carbon signal region is located between 50 and 85 ppm. There was an obvious absorption peak of 104.19 ppm (C2) in the anomeric carbon region, which was the characteristic signal of β-configuration (Nasir et al. 2015). The signal at the 63.36 ppm (C6) confirmed the presence of the fructose β-(2,6)-linkage (Mamay et al. 2015). The chemical shift between C1 and C6 of inulin was usually very close, while that of levan's ring carbons (C3, C4, C5) were very close (Bouallegue et al. 2020b). These carbon chemical shifts of levan produced by levansucrase reported in other literatures were shown in Table 1, which were similar to the six signals in this paper.

According to the $^1$H NMR spectra (Fig. 9B), seven major proton signals were observed at 4.10 ppm (H3), 4.01 ppm (H4), 3.87 ppm (H5), 3.82 ppm (H6a), 3.68 ppm (H1a), 3.60 ppm (H1b), and 3.48 ppm (H6b),
respectively. All of them were in the ring proton region (3.4–4.2 ppm) indicating that the polysaccharide was composed of ketose (Cai et al. 2019; Yu et al. 2016). The ratio of peak areas was approximately 1:1:1:1:1:1:1 which meant the same amount of every kind of H atom. All the information indicated that the product synthesized by levansucrase was β-(2, 6) levan.

4. Conclusion

In this study, levan was synthesized in vitro with recombinant levansucrase from Bacillus subtilis ZW019 strain. The yield of levan reached 30.6 g/L. The synthesized levan has a molecular weight of $1.56 \times 10^6$ Da, and its structure is β-(2,6) fructose, containing furan ring. The results indicated that the genetically engineered E. coli strain could express levansucrase efficiently, and the recombinant levansucrase could be easily purified in one step. Moreover, the recombinant levansucrase showed high catalytic activity in vitro, and the composition and structure of the synthesized levan were highly similar to that of natural levan. In the future, we will further study the biological function of the levan synthesized by enzymatic method, and then explore the application way of the levan.

Declarations

Acknowledgements

Jingyue Wang: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing - Original Draft.

Xinan Xu: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing - Original Draft.

Fangkun Zhao: Investigation, Writing - Review & Editing, Formal analysis.

Nan Yin: Investigation, Formal analysis.

Zhijiang Zhou: Supervision, Software.

Ye Han*: Resources, Supervision, Project administration, Funding acquisition.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest and unanimously approve publication of the manuscript.

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### Tables

#### Table 1

| Microorganisms                        | C1  | C2  | C3  | C4  | C5  | C6  | References               |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------|
| Lactobacillus reuteri LTH5448         | 60.93 | 104.55 | 77.25 | 75.90 | 80.66 | 63.81 | (Ni et al., 2018)        |
| Leuconostoc mesenteroides NTM048      | 59.91 | 104.24 | 76.30 | 75.22 | 80.33 | 63.44 | (Ishida et al., 2016)    |
| Bacillus licheniformis ANT 179        | 62.58 | 106.80 | 78.96 | 77.83 | 82.89 | 65.99 | (Xavier & Ramana, 2017)  |
| Bacillus methylotrophicus SK 21.002   | 61.20 | 104.66 | 77.51 | 76.10 | 80.77 | 63.94 | (Zhang et al., 2014)     |
| Bacillus subtilis ZW019               | 59.88 | 104.19 | 76.28 | 75.18 | 80.27 | 63.36 | this study               |

### Figures
Figure 1

The levansucrase was purified by GEM. Lanes: M, molecular mass standards; 1\textsuperscript{Purified intracellular recombinant levansucrase.}
Figure 2

Effect of temperature (A), pH (B), metal ions (C) on the levan formation activity of recombinant levansucrase.

Figure 3

Michaelis–Menten kinetic parameters
Figure 4

Sugar analysis spectrum of purified levan.
Figure 5

Gel permeation chromatography of purified levan.
Figure 6

SEM images of purified levan at 400× (A,B), 1000× (C), 2000× (D) magnification.
Figure 7

AFM images of purified levan (A) planar and (B) cubic.
Figure 8

FT-IR spectra of purified levan.

Figure 9

(A) 1D 13C and (B) 1H NMR spectra of purified levan.