

Optimal Lipase-Catalyzed Esterification of Hexyl Laurate by Continuous Packed Bed Reactor

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ABSTRACT

Hexyl esters, a medium-chain ester, with a fruity flavor are primarily used in personal care formulations as an important emollient for cosmetic applications. Packed bed reactors, are the most frequently used reactors for immobilized lipases. They are best used continuously on a commercial scale so as to minimize labor and overhead costs. Enzymatic synthesis with a continuous packed bed reactor can either satisfy consumers' need for "natural quality" or lower production cost on industrial applications. The ability of lipase from *Rhizomucor miehei* (Lipase IM77) to catalyze the direct-esterification of 1-hexanol and lauric acid in organic solvent or in the absence of organic solvent by utilizing the packed bed reactor was investigated. Response surface methodology (RSM) and 3-level-3-factor fractional factorial design were employed to evaluate the effects of synthesis parameters, such as reaction temperature, mixture flow rate and substrate molar ratio (1-hexanol to lauric acid) on molar conversion (%) and production rate ($\mu\text{mol}/\text{min}$) of hexyl laurate by direct-esterification. The results showed that hexyl laurate was successfully synthesized by the continuous packed bed reactor.

Keywords : Esterification ; Hexyl esters ; Lipase ; Packed bed reactor ; Response surface methodology

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