



Influence of Extraction Techniques on the Physicochemical Characteristics and Industrial Applications of Chayote (*Sechium edule*) Tuber Starch

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of different starch extraction methods properties of chayote (*Sechium edule*) tuber starch. Chayote, a tuberous plant rich in starch, was subjected to both physical and chemical extraction methods, with treatments including water, sodium hydroxide, and sodium metabisulfite. The study evaluated for particle size, bulk density, flow ability, pH, amylose, amylopectin content, water and oil absorption capacity, and starch paste clarity. Starch clarity was highest in treatments using sodium metabisulfite, with clarity values up to 73.26%, high clarity, suitable for transparent applications. Treatment T7, which used sodium metabisulfite, yielded the

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highest amylopectin content (70.46%), making it flexible and ideal for applications requiring low retrogradation, ensuring long-term stability in food products and other applications. such as edible coatings. The study concludes that chayote tuber starch shows great potential for industrial applications such as in coatings, baked goods, thickening agents, and biodegradable packaging materials, with the extraction method significantly affecting its physical and chemical properties. Treatment T7 is recommended for optimal starch yield, clarity, and amylopectin content, making it suitable for use in coatings and food formulations requiring flexibility and stability. These results are also important for producing innovative and sustainable products, providing options to traditional starch sources and encouraging the use of underutilized crops like chayote.

Keywords: Chayote tuber; starch; sodium hydroxide; sodium metabisulphite.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chayote (*Sechium edule*) is a perennial climbing plant native to Mexico and Latin America, domesticated by the Aztecs and Mayas (Coronel et al. 2017). It is widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical climates, with major producers including Mexico, Costa Rica, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic (Vieira et al. 2019). In India, chayote is grown in states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, and the North-eastern region, with Mizoram leading in production of 10,985 metric tons (Rai et al. 2006; Sanwal 2008). Known by various names, including *Chow-Chow*, *Isqush* (Nepali), and *Piskut* (Khasi), chayote is used primarily for consumption, with its fruit, leaves, stalks, and tubers all being edible (Hernandez-Uribe et al. 2011). Chayote tubers, produced after the first year of growth, are rich in starch and fiber, with tubers weighing 2.1–6.5 kg (Jimenez et al. 2007). The tubers contain 25.8% total solids, of which 59% is starch, and can be extracted with a purity of 90% (Cotonieto-Morales et al. 2015). Similar in structure to potato and cassava, chayote starch is a viable alternative to these starch sources (Shiga et al. 2015).

Starch extraction typically involves grinding the tubers, separating starch through sieving, and removing water via settling or centrifugation (Daiuto et al. 2005). Various methods, including physical, chemical, and enzymatic, affect starch's properties, with enzymatic extraction being time-consuming and costly. (Daiuto et al. 2005) found better starch recovery using oxalic acid/ammonium oxalate (18%) compared to water, pectinase, or NaOH treatments (10%).

Jimenez et al. (2007) and Hernandez-Uribe et al. (2011) isolated chayote starch using physical methods, showing comparable starch content to

potatoes and a purity level above 98%. Different extraction methods influence the yield and properties of starch, as seen in studies on sweet potatoes (Babu and Parimalavalli 2014). Recent studies suggest sodium metabisulfite improves starch recovery and whiteness (Kale et al. 2017; Xu et al. 2018). This study aims to compare the yield, physical and chemical properties of starch extracted from chayote tubers using both physical and chemical methods.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Medium-sized, undamaged and fresh chayote tubers were purchased from the local market in Ranipool, Sikkim. Sodium metabisulphite was purchased from a chemical supplier in Siliguri, India.

2.1 Starch Extraction

The general process for starch extraction from chayote tuber is presented in Fig. 1 and described in following section.

2.2 Physical Method of Extraction

The method described by Aila-Suarez et al. (2013) was followed for starch extraction. The chayote tuber was washed, peeled, and cut into 2x2 cm cubes. The cubes were blended with water (1:1, tuber: water) ratio for 2 minutes at low speed. The homogenate was sieved through a 250-micron sieve, washed until the water ran clear, and left to settle for 2 hours. The settled starch was drained, dried in a hot air oven at 40±5°C overnight, ground into a fine powder, sieved through a 150-micron sieve, and stored in an airtight container.

2.3 Chemical Method of Extraction

The method described by Neeraj et al. (2021) was followed the chemical extraction method. According to the method, chayote tuber cubes were soaked for 10 minutes separately in

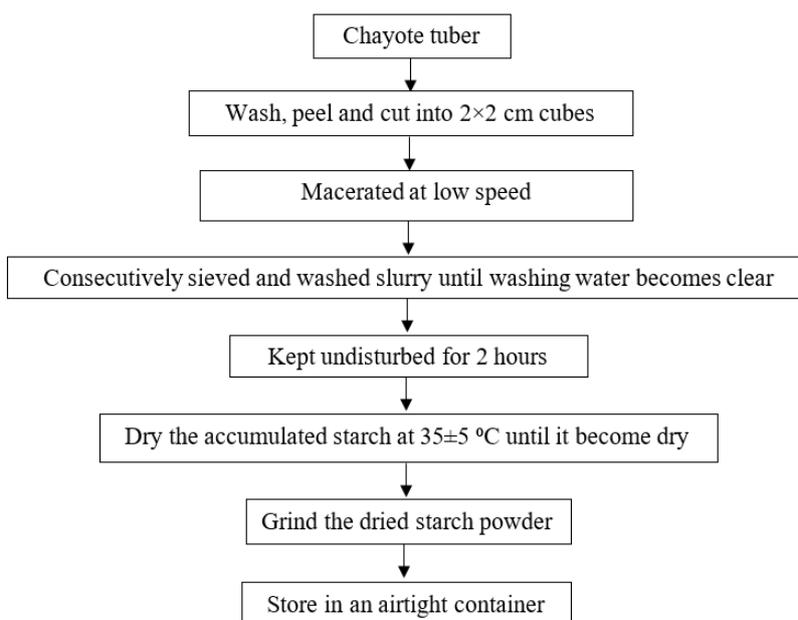


Fig. 1. General process flowchart for starch extraction from chayote tuber

different concentrations of sodium hydroxide (0.1%, 0.25%, 0.5%, 0.75%, and 1%) and sodium metabisulphite (0.01%, 0.025%, 0.05%, 0.075%, and 0.1%) solutions. The cubes were then macerated into slurry, sieved through a 250-micron sieve, and washed until the water ran clear. The slurry was left undisturbed for 2 hours to allow starch to settle, then excess water was drained, and the process repeated. The accumulated starch was dried overnight at $40\pm 5^{\circ}\text{C}$, ground into a fine powder, sieved through a 150-micron sieve, and stored in an airtight container.

2.4 Physical Properties

The physical properties of starch such as particle size, bulk density was determined as described by Bayor et al. (2013). The flow ability was determined by measuring the angle of repose as described by Alyami et al., (2020).

2.5 Chemical Properties

Total starch content was determined by the method described by Dubois et al. (1956) and the total starch content was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Total starch (\%)} = \frac{(\text{Abs} - \text{intercept} \times \text{dilution factor} \times \text{volume} \times 0.9)}{(\text{Weight of sample} \times \text{slope} \times 10000)}$$

Where, abs= absorbance

Amylose content was determined by the method reported by Babu and Parimalavalli (2014) and calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Amylose content (\%)} = 3.06 \times A \times 20$$

Where, A = Absorbance value

Amylopectin content was calculated using following formula:

$$\text{Amylopectin content (\%)} = (\% \text{ total starch} - \% \text{ amylose content})$$

The pH of the starch sample was determined by digital pH meter as described in Wijesinghe and Gunathilake (2020). Water and Oil Absorption Capacity of chayote tuber starch were determined by the method described by Abbey and Ibeh (1988); Babu and Parimalavalli (2014). Clarity of starch paste was measured using spectrophotometer as the method described by Sit et al. (2014).

2.6 Statistical Analysis

The data were the average of three determinations and presented as mean \pm SD. The observation taken for various treatments were subjected to individual Completely Randomized Design (CRD) analysis. The difference among the means were determined by comparing them with Critical Difference (CD) value at ($p < 0.05$).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Effect of Different Starch Extraction Methods on Physical Properties of Chayote Tuber Starch

The particle size, bulk density, and flow ability of starch extracted by different methods are shown in Table 1. Particle size ranged from 91.02 to 97.61 μm , with significant differences ($p < 0.05$). Larger sizes were observed in treatments T5, T3, and T2 (97.61, 97.46, and 97.22 μm), while smaller sizes appeared in T10, T7, and T9 (91.02, 91.46, and 91.69 μm). Bayor et al. (2013) reported similar results for sweet potato starch. Previous studies on chayote starch reported smaller granule sizes (7 to 50 μm by Jimenez et al., 2007 and 10 to 25 μm by Hernandez-Urbe et al., 2011). Differences may be due to variations in origin, cultivar, or extraction and measurement methods.

Bulk density is crucial for powders, as it determines how much starch can be incorporated into a solution, affecting coating thickness and consistency. In this study, bulk density ranged from 0.40 to 0.52 g/ml, with significant differences ($p < 0.05$). The lowest value was 0.40 g/ml (T6), and the highest was 0.52 g/ml (T10). Bulk density is inversely related to particle size larger particles result in lower bulk density, similar to findings by Kale et al. (2017) for sweet potato starch.

The flow ability of starch was assessed by measuring the angle of repose, which ranged from 45.63° to 56.73°, with significant differences ($p < 0.05$). The lowest angle was 45.63° (T10),

while the highest were 56.73° (T1) and 56.32° (T4). Finer particles, with a higher surface area-to-volume ratio, tend to have steeper angles due to stronger cohesive forces, causing the particles to stick together. Irregularly shaped particles also have a higher angle of repose than smooth ones. Jimenez et al. (2007) and Hernandez-Urbe et al. (2011) noted chayote starch's mixed particle shapes, contributing to higher angles. According to Mullarney et al. (2011), an angle of repose above 45° indicates poor flow ability. Chayote starch showed poor flow ability, with an angle of repose between 45.63° and 56.73°.

3.2 Effect of Different Starch Extraction Methods on Chemical Properties of Chayote Tuber Starch

The chemical properties of chayote starch, including total starch, amylose, amylopectin, pH, water and oil absorption, and paste clarity, are shown in Table 2. Total starch content ranged from 83.67% to 95.81%, with significant differences ($p < 0.05$). Treatment T8 had the lowest starch content (83.67%), while T7 had the highest (95.81%). Water and sodium metabisulfite treatments resulted in higher starch purity compared to sodium hydroxide. Similar findings were reported by Hernandez-Urbe et al. (2011) for chayote and potato starch. Kale et al. (2017) noted NaCl treatments improved starch purity by reducing residual protein, while this study found sodium metabisulfite (T7) yielded the highest starch content, possibly due to its bleaching effect. Varietal and extraction method differences also influence starch content (Julianti et al. 2018).

Table 1. Physical properties of chayote tuber starch extracted by different treatments

| Treatments | Particle size(μm) | Bulk density (g/ml) | Flow ability |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Physical method | | | |
| T1 Water (1:1) | 95.93±0.56 ^{def} | 0.44±0.02 ^{fg} | 56.73±0.44 ^a |
| Chemical method | | | |
| T2 NaOH (0.1%) | 97.22±0.81 ^{abc} | 0.43±0.01 ^{fghi} | 54.39±1.34 ^{cd} |
| T3 NaOH (0.25%) | 97.46±0.84 ^{ab} | 0.42±0.01 ^{ghij} | 55.55±0.32 ^{abc} |
| T4 NaOH (0.5%) | 96.35±0.26 ^{bcde} | 0.45±0.03 ^f | 56.32±0.20 ^{ab} |
| T5 NaOH (0.75%) | 97.61±0.22 ^a | 0.44±0.01 ^{fgh} | 50.76±1.24 ^f |
| T6 NaOH (1.0%) | 96.80±1.36 ^{abcd} | 0.40±0.01 ⁱ | 49.64±1.21 ^{gh} |
| T7 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.01%) | 91.46±0.15 ^{ij} | 0.49±0.01 ^{bcd} | 54.78±1.85 ^{bcd} |
| T8 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.025%) | 95.24±0.98 ^{efg} | 0.50±0.01 ^{abc} | 48.91±1.36 ^{gh} |
| T9 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.05%) | 91.69±0.75 ⁱ | 0.51±0.01 ^{ab} | 50.28±0.15 ^g |
| T10 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.075%) | 91.02±0.39 ^{ijk} | 0.52±0.01 ^a | 45.63±1.30 ^l |
| T11 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.1%) | 94.89±0.75 ^g | 0.50±0.01 ^{abcd} | 46.13±1.46 ⁱ |
| CD @ 5% | 1.242 | 0.022 | 1.926 |
| CV (%) | 0.77 | 2.46 | 2.20 |

Note: The values are the means of 3 replicates \pm standard deviation. Means in the columns that share the same lowercase letter for each determination are not significantly different ($p < 0.05$)

Table 2. Chemical properties of chayote tuber starch extracted by different treatments

| Treatments | Total starch content (%) | Amylose content (%) | Amylopectine content (%) | pH | Water absorption capacity(ml/g) | Oil absorption capacity(ml/g) | Clarity of starch paste (%) |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Physical method | | | | | | | |
| T1 Water (1:1) | 94.70±0.39 | 25.85±0.43 ^{bcde} | 68.55±0.28 | 8.10±0.04 | 1.09±0.07 ^a | 1.36±0.04 | 19.53±0.01 |
| Chemical method | | | | | | | |
| T2 NaOH (0.1%) | 87.42±0.38 ^{bc} | 26.53±0.30 ^{ab} | 61.44±0.04 ^b | 7.78±0.04 | 1.03±0.05 ^{abc} | 1.16±0.08 ^{abc} | 38.82±0.00 |
| T3 NaOH (0.25%) | 90.28±0.28 | 26.10±0.04 ^{bcdef} | 64.28±0.10 | 7.88±0.03 | 1.03±0.02 ^{abcd} | 1.12±0.08 ^{bcde} | 28.51±0.01 |
| T4 NaOH (0.5%) | 89.28±0.23 | 25.95±0.01 ^{bcdefg} | 63.54±0.28 | 8.96±0.06 | 1.04±0.03 ^{ab} | 1.17±0.10 ^{ab} | 63.64±0.55 |
| T5 NaOH (0.75%) | 87.34±0.07 ^{bc} | 25.72±0.27 ^{efgh} | 61.39±0.10 ^{bc} | 7.16±0.03 | 0.99±0.06 ^{abcde} | 1.23±0.06 ^a | 50.33±0.02 |
| T6 NaOH (1.0%) | 93.50±0.10 ^a | 25.48±0.11 ^{ghi} | 68.09±0.08 ^a | 7.60±0.01 | 1.34±0.13 ^e | 1.04±0.11 ^{dfghi} | 60.39±0.01 |
| T7 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.01%) | 95.81±0.09 | 25.24±0.10 ^{hij} | 70.46±0.22 | 6.30±0.03 | 0.95±0.06 ^{defgh} | 1.16±0.11 ^{abcd} | 67.91±0.01 |
| T8 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.025%) | 83.67±0.06 | 26.88±0.72 ^a | 56.05±0.06 | 6.97±0.08 | 0.91±0.08 ^{efghi} | 1.09±0.07 ^{cdefg} | 55.60±0.01 |
| T9 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.05%) | 87.58±0.29 ^b | 26.33±0.23 ^{abcd} | 61.36±0.13 ^{bc} | 4.93±0.02 | 0.86±0.07 ^{fgi} | 1.14±0.07 ^{abcde} | 46.55±0.02 |
| T10 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.075%) | 93.34±0.29 ^a | 24.88±0.68 ⁱ | 68.12±0.11 ^a | 6.44±0.06 | 0.97±0.05 ^{bcdefh} | 0.99±0.02 ^{ghi} | 73.25±0.04 ^a |
| T11 Na ₂ S ₂ O ₅ (0.1%) | 94.17±0.17 | 26.39±0.35 ^{abc} | 67.46±0.04 | 4.66±0.04 | 0.97±0.05 ^{cdefg} | 1.05±0.03 ^{cdefgh} | 73.26±0.03 ^a |
| CD @ 5% | 0.413 | 0.597 | 0.261 | 0.074 | 0.112 | 0.125 | 0.284 |
| CV (%) | 0.27 | 1.36 | 0.24 | 0.63 | 5.95 | 0.63 | 0.32 |

Note: The values are the means of 3 replicates ± standard deviation. Means in the columns that share the same lowercase letter for each determination are not significantly different ($\alpha < 0.05$)

The amylose content of chayote starch varied from 24.88% to 26.88%, with the lowest in treatment T10 and the highest in T8 (Table 2). Previous studies on chayote tuber starch reported different values, such as 12.9% (Jimenez et al. 2007) and 26.3% (Hernandez-Uribe et al. 2011), and taro starch varied between 8.7% and 14.9%, (Bidari et al., 2023) likely due to cultivar differences and testing methods. Amylose content in tuber starches typically ranges from 15% to 38% (Hoover et al. 2001). High-amylose starches are increasing attention due to their industrial use making them ideal for bakery items, coatings for fried foods, and edible films for preserving food products. (Zhong et al., 2022).

Amylopectin content in the starch ranged from 56.05% to 70.46%, with significant differences ($p < 0.05$). Treatment T8 had the lowest (56.05%) and T7 the highest (70.46%) amylopectin content. Jimenez et al. (2007) found 87.1% amylopectin in chayote starch, noting that an amylose-to-amylopectin ratio below 0.5 indicates predominance of amylopectin (Jimenez et al. (2007), which was also observed in this study. Different extraction methods can greatly affect the molecular structure of starch, especially the balance between amylose and amylopectin. Neeraj et al. (2021) reported similar findings for potato starch, with amylopectin content ranging from 79.7% to 88.6%, influenced by extraction methods. Sodium metabisulfite, work as a reducing agent, breaking down disulfide bonds in proteins and other impurities that can get twisted with starch molecules. By removing these impurities, sodium metabisulfite not only improves the purity of the starch but also helps prevent amylopectin chains from crystallizing or stiffening resulted in higher amylopectin. High amylopectin starches form gels with low retrogradation tendencies (Beynum and Roles 1985).

The pH of chayote starch ranged from 4.66 to 8.10, with significant differences ($p < 0.05$). Treatments T11 and T9 had the lowest pH (4.66 and 4.93), while T4 and T1 had the highest (8.96 and 8.10). Jimenez et al., (2007) similarly reported a pH of 8.12 for chayote starch extracted with water. Higher pH values indicate greater ionization, enhancing water interaction with amylopectin and amylose. The lower pH is due to the use of sodium hydroxide in the extraction process, contributing to its alkalinity.

Water Absorption Capacity (WAC) measures starch's ability to absorb water and swell, influencing food texture, consistency, and stability (Hannington et al., 2020). In this study, WAC ranged from 0.86 to 1.34 ml/g, with the highest in T4 (1.34 ml/g) and the lowest in T9 (0.86 ml/g). Previous study reported WAC for taro starch 2 ml/g (Tulu et al., 2023) and for potato starch 0.67 ml/g (Hellemans et al., 2017) Chayote tuber starch's high WAC indicates its hydrophilic nature, essential for food and industrial applications. This property is due to the hydroxyl groups in amylose and amylopectin, which form hydrogen bonds with water, enhancing water absorption and swelling (Moorthy, 2002).

Oil Absorption Capacity (OAC) is a key property for food texture, mouthfeel, and flavour retention, indicating starch's emulsifying potential (Ajatta et al. 2016). In this study, OAC ranged from 0.99 to 1.36 ml/g, with the highest in T1 (1.36 ml/g) and lowest in T10 (0.99 ml/g). While OAC is influenced by amylose content, no direct link has been established. Tuber starches generally have OAC between 0.962 and 1.152 g oil/g starch (Azima et al. 2020). Understanding OAC helps optimize chayote starch for specific food applications.

Starch paste clarity indicates the transparency of the gel after gelatinization, a key factor for food and textile industries (Moorthy 2002). In this study, clarity ranged from 19.53% to 73.26%, with T1 showing the lowest (19.53%) and T10, T11, and T7 the highest (73.25%, 73.26%, and 67.91%) (Table 2). Variations result from isolation methods and interactions between phosphate groups and sodium ions, affecting light transmittance (Bello-Perez and Paredes-Lopez 1996). Higher clarity can also be linked to fewer phenolic compounds in chayote, which keeps starch clean and white (Shiga et al. 2015).

4. CONCLUSION

Starch extraction from tubers is simpler compared to other sources, with cassava, potato, and maize starch being widely used industrially. There is potential to explore new tuber starches with similar properties. In this study, treatments T1 (21.62%), T4 (21.17%), and T7 (21.19%) gave higher starch yields, while treatments T7 (67.91%), T10 (73.25%), and T11 (73.26%) showed the highest paste clarity. Treatment T7 also had high amylopectin content, which

reduces retrogradation, maintaining flexibility in coatings over time (Beynum and Roles 1985). Based on yield, clarity, and amylopectin, treatment T7 is better for chayote starch extraction.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

I (Purnima M. Panchal) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

I have declared that no competing interests exist.

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