

Microalgae Biodiversity: Sustainable Biofactories for Food, Fuel and Therapeutics

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ABSTRACT

Microalgae refers to diverse range of microscopic algae that are of great economic, biomedical, environmental, industrial and agricultural resources for all life forms. Applied phycology is a promising field making use of the microalgae biodiversity as a response to the needs of times: food, green fuel and therapeutics resources. These photosynthetic prokaryotic cyanobacteria and eukaryotic microalgae are regarded as sustainable biofactories because of their great capability to convert dioxide and nutrients into biomass. The high composition and concentration of valuable metabolites in these microalgae mitigate our current demands for functional foods as needed by both animals and humans, nutrition and health therapeutics as well as bio-energy resources. Genomics and genetic

engineering along with morphometric and biochemical characterization are being used to analyze their metabolic pathways in order to improve their lipid synthesis and biomass accumulation. *Arthrospira platensis*, *Haematococcus pluvialis*, *Porphyridium* sp., *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii* and *Nostoc* sp. dominate the biomass production in open and closed system photobioreactors. They are in high demand as food, feeds, nutraceuticals, bioactive metabolite sources for antimicrobial, antiviral and antitumor treatments, bio-oil and biodiesel sources. This mini-review paper might spur the interest of Asian industries to establish microalgae production since most photobioreactors are in European and American countries.

Keywords: biodiversity, biofactories, biofuel, microalgae, therapeutics

Introduction

Phycology is a discipline focusing on the morphological, environmental physiological and genetic studies of photosynthetic algae. This includes the prokaryotic cyanobacteria, microscopic algae and seaweed macroalgae (R. E. Lee, 2018). Microalgae have an enormous biodiversity due to their photosynthetic capability as prokaryotic or eukaryotic algae. Out of the 10 million strains, only about 5% were carefully identified to have vast morphological features, widely distributed in natural and extreme habitats, simple cellular organization but complex biochemical compositions. They are currently regarded as highly valuable microorganisms due to their widespread utilization in agriculture, environment, pharmaceutical and biomedical industries (Mutanda et al., 2020; Susanti & Taufikurahman, 2021b). A thorough knowledge on their biodiversity could readily provide information on their cultivation, conservation and optimization of biomass production for natural, synthetic and biofuel products.

This review provides an update on the microalgal biodiversity using polyphasic approaches such as molecular genomics, physicochemical, advanced morphometric and physiological characterization. A thorough understanding of their biodiversity provides information on the current list of identified microalgae and the newly established species (Athulya & Anitha, 2020). This can also be of great help to reveal their multipurpose significance in conservation efforts and long term investigation in the stability of ecosystem dynamics (Gao & Lin, 2018; Susanti & Taufikurahman, 2021a). Several approaches on nutrient modification and optimum growth conditions are also included in this review that can be used by the academe and research industries to produce a cost-efficient microalgal biomass production and increase market profitability. It also discusses their potentials in bioengineering methods as valuable biofuel and biofertilizers including their large-scale production in bioreactors. Remarkable compounds such as primary and secondary metabolites reported to have variable therapeutic and nutraceutical activities for human and animals were also included in this review. The potentiality of cyanobacterial pigments for biotechnological applications as colorant in food and textile industries were also mentioned (Assunção et al., 2022). These syntheses may serve as a springboard to choose

interesting microalgae for future studies as potential markets and as exploited resources in a sustainable manner.

1. Biodiversity of Microalgae

Microalgae are unicellular, colonial or filamentous algae widely distributed in terrestrial, freshwater, marine or brackish environments. They possess unique metabolic plasticity that enables them to greatly adapt even to extreme environments (Forján et al., 2015). Some also serve as primary producers in the food chain of most aquatic habitats (Mehariya et al., 2021a; Molino et al., 2018). They also have diverse relationships with other organisms that generally serves as their hosts or they are mutually symbiotic (Susanti & Taufikurahman, 2021b). The so called aero-terrestrial or aerophil microalgae have interesting physiological features, desiccation tolerance and can be found thriving in soil, rock crevices, leaf surfaces, tree barks or in symbiosis with fungi. This includes the prokaryotic cyanobacteria from the orders Chroococcales, Oscillatoriales, Nostocales, Pseudanabaenales and the eukaryotic greens from the classes Trebouxiophyceae, Chlorophyceae, Ulvophyceae (Büdel, 2011; Hoffmann, 1989), Chlorokybophyceae, Zygnematophyceae (Lewis & McCourt, 2004), Klebsormidiophyceae (Holzinger et al., 2014), Coleochaetophyceae (Cook & Graham, 2016). The other colored microalgae includes the Xanthophyta, Eustigmatophyta, Bacillariophyta (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017), and the cosmopolitan diatoms. They can withstand environmental conditions of extreme pH values, temperatures, conductivity, salinity, humidity, light exposure and interrelationships with other organisms (Manoylov, 2014; Susanti & Taufikurahman, 2021b). There are also terrestrial cryophiles found in the snow and in spaces between ice crystals (Gray et al., 2020).

On the other hand, majority of the aquatic microalgae are being used commercially *since* they are easier to cultivate in liquid cultures (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017). Their morphology is consistent with any season composed of diverse cellular features, plastid morphology, biochemical and genetic composition (Sahoo & Seckbach, 2015). They range in size from the smallest 1.3 μm *Braarudosphaera* μm (Kamennaya et al., 2018) up to a 100 μm *Spirulina* (Becker, 2013).

Prokaryotic Microalgae

The blue-green algae, collectively known as cyanobacteria are the only photosynthetic representative prokaryotic algae thriving in a wide range of marine, freshwater and terrestrial habitats. They possess a Gram-negative four-layered cell wall, free floating 70S ribosomes, DNA, and thylakoids (R. E. Lee, 2018; Samiee et al., 2019). Cyanobacteria resemble more of the prokaryotic bacteria in terms of cellular structures but they are regarded as algae due to the presence of chlorophyll a, b, d, phycobiliproteins and carotenoids (Assunção et al., 2022). They have the simplest morphology of unicellular to colonial or multicellular to filamentous free-living algae enclosed in a mucilaginous membrane. Their cell size range from <1 µm in diameter for unicellular species up to 10 µm for the filamentous strains (Mehdizadeh Allaf & Peerhossaini, 2022). Several cyanobacterial species possess a trichome surrounded by a sheath. They also possess akinetes that developed from vegetative cells with an increased cytoplasmic density due to protoplasm full of food reserves such as glycogen and cyanophycin. At the same time, there is also a tremendous decrease in photosynthesis and respiration activities as akinetes become dormant upon maturity (R. E. Lee, 2018). Their heavily thickened wall made them survive in extreme and starvation conditions. Heterocysts, on the other hand, also possess a thickened cell wall similar to akinetes but with less dense granular cytoplasm since they do not contain photosynthetic apparatus. They are usually found along the filament and are only produced when there is insufficient amount of nitrogen. *Anabaena* and *Nostoc*, for instance, are filamentous cyanobacteria with heterocysts that activate their genes for nitrogen fixation and repressing genes for photosynthesis (Sukenik et al., 2019).

To date, there are 5749 identified cyanobacterial species found in AlgaeBase repository, with at least 140 genera and 273 species were newly described. The Phylum Cyanophyceae was categorized into seven Orders namely: Chroococcales, Gloeobacterales, Pleurocapsales, Synechococcales, Nostocales, Oscillatoriales, and Spirulinales (Guiry & Guiry, 2023; Strunecky et al., 2020). The unicellular coccoid to colonial forms of cyanobacteria generally belong to Chroococcales, Gloeobacterales and Pleurocapsales. Chroococcales cells are usually contained in a mucilaginous envelope. Its common representative is the algal bloom-forming *Microcystis*. On the other

hand, *Gloeobacter* genus from a monophyletic family belonging to Gloeobacterales, is the only cyanobacteria that lacks thylakoid (Guiry & Guiry, 2023). Little studies has been conducted with Pleurocapsales since they are endoliths that are difficult to observe (Roush & Garcia-Pichel, 2020). The notable representative of this order include *Pleurocapsa*, *Stainiera* and *Xenococcus* that exists as coccoids or pseudo-filaments, which form a complex colony. Whereas the most abundant Synechococcales are composed of unicellular, colonial and filamentous cyanobacteria. Its representative *Synechocystis* is a model organism that can grow in autotrophic and heterotrophic conditions in the absence of light, hence, constantly used in photosynthetic researches and biotechnological applications (Zhao et al., 2023). In the case of filamentous species, Nostocales, Oscillatoriales and Spirulinales are the most identified cyanobacteria where the latter have screw-like coiled trichomes without sheaths (Dvořák et al., 2017). *Nostoc*, *Anabaena* and *Fischerella* are the widely known Nostocales with heterocysts that fix nitrogen for their neighboring cells (Herrero et al., 2016; Zeng & Zhang, 2022). The most abundant linear filamentous cyanobacteria Oscillatoria, *Lyngbya*, *Phormidium* including those with complicated thylakoid arrangement belong to Oscillatoriales with the exception of a coccoid *Cyanothece* (Komarek et al., 2014; Kumari & Rai, 2022).

Eukaryotic Microalgae

The early eukaryotic microalgae were believed to have existed during the evolution of chloroplasts. Konstantin Mereschkowsky was the first biologist who proposed the endosymbiotic origin of chloroplast. A theory where a cyanobacterium was taken up by a phagocytic protozoan that was not consumed but only stored into food vesicle. This made the cyanobacterium an endosymbiont of the protozoan, giving the latter some of the photosynthates whereas the cyanobacterium benefited from having a stable environment. Through evolution, a mutation in the endosymbiont cyanobacterium resulted to its loss of cell wall probably to give way for easier transport of photosynthates and other compounds from the endosymbiont to the host protozoan. This in turn led to a theory that the plasma membrane of the endosymbiont became the inner membrane of the chloroplast while the membrane of the protozoan's food vesicle became the outer membrane of the chloroplast. In addition, the thylakoid membrane rearrangement and

further evolution of polyhedral bodies giving rise into a pyrenoid completely described its transition into a true chloroplast, with such structures clearly evident in the present-day red and green algae (R. E. Lee, 2018).

All eukaryotic microalgae are photosynthetic with chloroplasts made up of multiple flattened thylakoids containing chlorophyll a, b, c1, c2, c3, d, f, carotenoids and phycobiliprotein pigments (Miazek et al., 2015). Most of them possess cellulose cell walls surrounded by an amorphous layer and laminated polysaccharides (Passos et al., 2015). Some microalgae have silica, calcium carbonate scales and highly ornamented scales in their cell walls such as those in diatoms, coccoliths and Chrysophytes, respectively (Fawley & Fawley, 2020).

There are about 15 taxonomic phyla of micro algae that differ in terms of plastid type and photosynthetic pigments (Raven & Giordano, 2014; Solymosi, 2012). This include Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), Rhodophyta (red algae), Glaucophyta (blue algae), Prasinophyta (primitive green algae), Chlorophyta (green algae), Xanthophyta (yellow-green algae), Chrysophyta (golden brown algae), Phaeophyta (brown algae), Cryptophyta (cryptomonads), Haptophyta (haptophytes), Ochrophyta (Ochrophytes), Euglenophyta (euglenoids), Dinophyta (dinoflagellates), Raphidophyta (raphidophytes) and Bacillariophyta (diatoms) (John et al., 2011; Ruggiero et al., 2015). These groups exhibit variations in plastid anatomy, and pigment compositions (Susanti & Taufikurahman, 2021b).

2. Growth and Physiology of Microalgae

It is very important to understand the growth phases in microalgae, which includes its lag, exponential, declining relative growth, stationary and death/lysis phases. The lag phase is relatively short in liquid cultures. An increased biomass production is usually observed in the exponential growth phase where there is a moderate light intensity requirement (Farg & Price, 2013). The specific growth rates for aquatic and terrestrial microalgae ranges from 0.3 to 1.1 day^{-1} (Nascimento et al., 2013) and 0.37 to 1.15 day^{-1} (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017), respectively. Moreover, the production of secondary metabolites such as carotenoids and antioxidants relatively occur during the

declining or retardment growth phase where light, carbon dioxide and nutrient factors becomes limited (Forján et al., 2015).

In terms of irradiance, microalgae have high adaptability to various light intensities depending on the environments they are exposed to. The photosynthetic active radiance (PAR) from 400nm to 700 nm is the requirement for its optimal growth. High irradiances induce the biosynthetic production of polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA), carotenoids and vitamins (Forján et al., 2015). Aquatic microalgae generally adapted to low and intermediate light intensities and alternating light-time/dark-time fluctuations while terrestrial microalgae are adapted to low light requirements. Light quality also greatly influences the microalgae's light adaptation processes. The photosystem (PS) light harvesting complex (LHC) of most microalgae is governed by chlorophyll (*chlor a*, *chlor b* and carotenoids in blue and red light spectra (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017). Furthermore, there is an extremely LHC I in green algae that captures and transfers energy at a faster rate to the PS I core as reported in *Bryopsis corticulans* (Qin et al., 2019). Whereas cyanobacteria and red algae utilize only *chlor a*, carotenoids and their phycobilisomes protein complexes to enhance their photosynthetic capabilities. Phycobilisomes are granules found on the outer surface of thylakoids containing the light-harvesting phycobiliproteins (PBPs) namely, phycoerythrin, phycoerythrocyanin, phycocyanin and allophycocyanin differing in the orientation and number of attached phycobilin chromophore responsible for their color differences. These PBPs are accessory pigments that carry out PS II (Barsanti & Gualtieri, 2014; Lakatos & Strieth, 2017). In addition, recent evidence of a pigment-protein supermolecule composed of LHC and PS II has been identified in the red algae *Nannochloropsis granulate* (Umetani et al., 2018).

Major variables such as pH and temperature are also necessary for their growth conditions. The optimal pH range for microalgae are generally 7.0 to 10.0 (Filali et al., 2021), while the others thrive at acidic conditions below 3.0 (Acién et al., 2017). It greatly affects enzymatic activities and their entire metabolic processes Microalgae are classified as psychrophiles (growing optimally below 15°C), mesophiles (growing between 15°C-50°C), thermophiles (growing at above 50°C), or hyperthermophiles (growing optimally above 80°C) (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017; Varshney et al., 2015) as shown

in Table 1. The optimal temperature growth for cyanobacteria is 25°C–35°C while for chlorophytes is 27.5°C–35°C (Lürling et al., 2013). The upper temperature limit for cyanobacteria is 75°C while the threshold for eukaryotic algae is 62°C.

Table 1. Optimum growth temperatures for microalgae commonly used in biotechnology.

Classification	Growth temperature	Genus	Biotechnological Application
Mesophilic Cyanobacteria	45°C – 50°C	<i>Synechocystis</i> , <i>Gloeocapsa</i> , <i>Symploca</i> , <i>Plectonema</i> , <i>Lyngbya</i> , <i>Spirulina</i> , <i>Pleurocapsa</i> , <i>Calothrix</i> (Castenholz, 1981), <i>Chroocidiopsis thermalis</i> (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017)	Carotenoid production, heavy metal adsorption, H ₂ production, nutraceuticals (Antal & Lindblad, 2005; Hoseini et al., 2013; Melnic et al., 2011; Pokrovsky et al., 2008; Raungsomboon et al., 2008)
Thermophilic Cyanobacteria	52°C - 58°C	<i>Phormidium boryana</i> , <i>Thermosynechococcus elongatus</i> , <i>T. Vulcanus</i> , <i>Oscillatoria terebriformis</i> (Varshney et al., 2015)	CO ₂ mitigation from industrial flue gas and C-phycoerythrin production (Leu et al., 2013)
	55°C – 70°C	<i>Synechococcus lividus</i> (Castenholz, 1981)	Hydrogen peroxide production (Sheridan, 1973)
	55°C, 60°C	<i>Phormidium laminosum</i> , <i>Oscillatoria</i> , <i>Mastigocladus</i> (Castenholz, 1981)	Biomass for bioethanol production, lipid production, thermostable restriction enzyme, treatment of dye-rich wastewater, biosorption of chromium (VI) and Remazol

Classification	Growth temperature	Genus	Biotechnological Application
			Black B reactive dye, antimicrobial, removal of nitrate and phosphate ions from water (Patel et al., 2019; Piechula et al., 2001)
	62°C	<i>Synechococcus elongatus</i> (Miyairi, 1995)	CO ₂ assimilation (Patel et al., 2019)
Psychrophilic Chlorophyte	15°C	<i>Chlamydomonas raudensis</i> (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017)	Bioremediation (Cervera-Carles et al., 2020)
Mesophilic Chlorophytes	8°C – 28°C	<i>Haematococcus pluvialis</i> (Borowitzka et al., 1991)	Carotenoid production, antioxidant (Kathiresan & Sarada, 2009)
	45°C – 50°C	<i>Desmodesmus</i> , <i>Chlorella sorokiniana</i> , <i>Chlorella kessleri</i> , <i>Scenedesmus obliquus</i> , (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017)	Biofuel, lipid production, CO ₂ assimilation, carotenoid production, antioxidant (Patel et al., 2019)
Thermophilic Rhodophyte	56°C	<i>Cyanidium caldarium</i> , <i>Cyanidioschizon merolae</i> , <i>Galdieria sulphuraria</i> (Doemel & F, 1971)	Blue pigment phycocyanin (PC) used as a fluorescent marker in histochemistry, wastewater treatment (Patel et al., 2019)
Ice algae Extremophile	> 80°C	<i>Chloromonas</i> , <i>Chlorosarcina antarctica</i> , <i>Chlamydomonas</i> , <i>Chlainomonas</i> ,	2006; H. Ling & Seppelt, 1990; H. U. Ling, 1996, 2001, 2002) Glycerol, sucrose, glucose (Roser et al., 1992)

Classification	Growth temperature	Genus	Biotechnological Application
		<i>Desmotetra aureospora</i> , <i>Mesotaenium berggrenii</i> (Hoham, 1975; Hoham et al.,	

3. Plastids of Microalgae

One of the most essential structures during the growth of microalgae is the plastid development that contain various pigments, fatty acids, oils, starch and terpene metabolites (Choi et al., 2021). The plastid morphology and colors are highly diverse due to the abiotic factors exhibited by the various types of environment. Stress-inducing factors can also be applied in such as high temperature, salinity, pH or light intensity, nutrient deprivation of N, Ca, K, C, Si or addition of heavy metals (Susanti & Taufikurahman, 2021b) in order to produce the expected high valuable compounds (Markou & Nerantzis, 2013).

4. Genomes of Microalgae

Out of the 40,000 algal species reported (S. Khan et al., 2017), only 62 algal genomes have been sequenced and deposited at the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) repository (Nelson et al., 2019). The earliest microalgae that had been sequenced include the chlorophyte *Ostreococcus tauri*, haptophyte *Emiliana huxleyi* and dinophyte *Karenia brevis* with genome sizes of 12.6 Mbp, 168 Mbp and 10,000 Mbp, respectively. Post-genomic approaches such as transcriptomics, proteomics and other omics technology are being used to understand the various physiological, metabolic and signal transduction pathway in microalgae similar to the "Marine Microbial Transcriptome Project" (Keeling et al., 2014), Tara Oceans (Sunagawa et al., 2020), and Prometheus portal for interkingdom comparative

genomic analysis (Ko et al., 2020). The transcriptomic data from these projects speeds up the development and production of microalgae-derived metabolites.

There is a need for microalgal sequencing since their genomes could be mined for agro-industrial, environmental and biomedical insights. As the cost of next generation sequencing technology are getting low, identification of gene functions at the transcriptomic, proteomic and metabolic levels are also rapidly developing. This progression in microalgal genomics led to faster exploitation of the biotechnological applications of microalgae. The collection of microalgal genomes will also help resolve the geographic distribution (Yun et al., 2019), differences in habitat alkalinity (Nelson et al., 2019), pigment compositions (Narang et al., 2021), viral load (Hunter, 2021; Jeanniard et al., 2013; Kimura & Tomaru, 2015; Sun & Ku, 2021) and biosynthetic metabolites of various microalgae species.

5. Biotechnological Applications of Microalgae

Microalgae are generally used as model organisms for genetic studies and gives a promising ingenious biotechnological solutions since they accumulate organic materials that enables to them to accumulate high biomass. On the average, their biomass doubles every 2 to 5 days, and a yield of 20 kg/m²/year (Vaz et al., 2016). This in turn results to their numerous potentials in the production of bioactive metabolites and bioenergy chemicals (S. Khan et al., 2017; Kuo et al., 2021). This is also due to high demand for pharmaceuticals, renewable biomaterials, food supplements, nutraceuticals, additive, substitutes, feeds, textile dyes and mordants (Novoveská et al., 2019). Microalgae produced high valuable, carotenoids (Chagas et al., 2015; Hopkins et al., 2019; Hosseinzadeh Gharajeh et al., 2020), phycobilin (Solymosi, 2012; Tan et al., 2021), exopolysaccharides (EPS), eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) (Adarme-Vega et al., 2012; Asgharpour, 2015; S. Khan et al., 2017) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) (Diao et al., 2018; Song et al., 2020).

The current product estimation of dry biomass from microalgae is 56,456 tonnes dominated by the cyanobacterium *Arthrospira* at 56,208 tonnes while the rest are the green microalgae *Haematococcus pluvialis*, *Dunaliella salina*, *Chlorella vulgaris* and *Tetraselmis* sp. at 248 tonnes (Cai et al., 2021). Table 2 summarizes the bioactive metabolites and pharmacological properties of the different strains of microalgae.

The production of algal biomass is increasing globally reaching about 32.67 Mt fresh weight in 2016, where 97% of which is based on aquaculture cultivation (Dos, 2019). There is a very high cultivation of microalgae in European countries dominated by France, Germany, Spain and Italy where they utilize photobioreactors with fermenters or open ponds for production (Araújo et al., 2021).

Microalgae are also widely used as bioindicators and bio-remediators (Sahoo & Seckbach, 2015) in bio-film photobioreactors and bioengineering (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017). The commonly used system in the large-scale production of algal biomass are open ponds as shown in Figure 1 (Acién et al., 2017; El-Baz & Baky, 2018; Narala et al., 2016) since it is less expensive when it comes to construction, maintenance and operation (Costa & de Morais, 2014; Lakatos & Strieth, 2017). Open systems are practically designed with shallow depth for a fast and efficient penetration of light energy. The culture mixing of algae that demands for a lesser energy requirement is the topmost benefit derived from an open raceway pond. However, since they are open systems, many organisms such as heterotrophic microbes, small and large predators can contaminate the culture. The weather seasons also greatly affects the algal growth which means different conditions and requirements must be applied for a specific season. Another issue as well for open commercial systems is poor mixing that results to lower biomass productivity (Dunford, 2015).



Figure 1. Open pond systems of microalgae cultivation (Acién et al., 2017; El-Baz & Baky, 2018; Narala et al., 2016).

On the other hand, many countries prefer to use the closed photobioreactors in order to reduce contamination and achieve higher productivity rate (Amaro et al., 2011) as shown in Figure 2 (Masojídek & Torzillo, 2008; Mohr, 2013; Schreiber et al., 2017). This photobioreactors can be operated and maintained at a highly-controlled environment. It also requires lesser space, which in turn, decreases contamination rates while increasing light availability (Narala et al., 2016). There are several categories and classification of closed photobioreactors based on the vessel orientation and according to their geometrical configuration. Flat panel and tubular designs have been commonly used for large scale production of algal biomass that are sources for high value products (Dunford, 2015).



Figure 2. A closed-system type of photobioreactors. A. Tubular photobioreactor in Klötze, Germany Photo[®] Jörg Ullmann (Masojidek & Torzillo, 2008), B. Flat-plate photobioreactor known as "Hanging Gardens" developed by ecoduna-produktions GmbH in Bruck/Leitha, Austria Photo[®] ecoduna (Mohr, 2013), and C. Foil photobioreactor set-up by the NOVAgreen company in Bergheim-Neideraussem, Germany (Schreiber et al., 2017).

5.1 Microalgae-derived compounds as Functional FOOD

The chemical composition, antioxidant capacity, high protein concentration, volatile substances, fatty acid and carotenoid profiles of microalgae render them ideal source of nutraceuticals that gives tremendous benefits for both animal and human health (Ward & Singh, 2005).

In the study conducted by Nascimento and colleagues (2020) on the lipophilic, aqueous, carotenoid extracts of *Scenedesmus obliquus* and *Phormidium autumnale* biomass showing its high polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) content and higher antioxidant properties (Nascimento et al., 2013). Omega-3 fatty acids derived from microalgae have better organoleptic qualities compared to those derived from fish (Mendes et al., 2009). These lipid products will then be incorporated to most milk and dairy products. *Arthrospira*, on the other hand, has high protein content and good nutritional value of (Forján et al., 2015).

There are non-toxic microalgae that can be directly consumed just like in the case of people from the low-income countries utilizing *Spirulina* harvested from lakes that gave them sufficient nutritional value and health benefits (Habib et al., 2008; Piccolo, 2012). There are also several microalgae extracts that are being used as food additives or feeds in aquaculture and farm feeds industries. They are utilized for larvae nutrition and play an important role in fish, mollusks and crustaceans breeding process due to their high protein content and PUFA (Cai et al., 2021; Forján et al., 2015).

5.2 Microalgae-derived compounds as Biofuel

The addition of CO₂ to illuminated growing microalgae cultures enhances their biomass for oil production. There are several ongoing researches exploring the biosynthetic pathways of triglycerides in potential microalgae species (Forján et al., 2015) using genomic, transcriptomic, metabolomic as well as genetic manipulation to improve oil productivity (Cadoret et al., 2012). Researchers firmly believed that microalgae are appropriate sources for biofuel production due to their high lipid content, faster growth, photoautotrophs that fixes CO₂ from the air converting it into lipids and carbohydrates and some species are very capable of accumulating large amounts of triglycerides that is deemed appropriate for biodiesel production (Kumar et al., 2010; Scott et al., 2010). Thirty-eight percent biomass *Arthrospira platensis* has been used as a substrate for the production of bioethanol (Alfarisi, 2020; Markou & Nerantzis, 2013). On the other hand, biomethane is produced by microalgae species under anaerobic conditions. This is greatly possible due to the high lipid, protein and starch compounds in several microalgae species (Forján et al., 2015) usually done in a two-step

process. This includes anaerobic digestion of microalgae biomass that enhances the biogas production using a mixture of methane and CO₂. This in turn is followed by enrichment of methane biogas with the aid of *Arthrospira platensis* that functions to remove CO₂ in the biogas compound (Converti et al., 2006; El-Kassas et al., 2015).

5.3 Microalgae-derived compounds as Therapeutics

Microalgae are known sources of Vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B6, B9, B12, C, E, nicotinic acid, biotin, folic acid, pantothenic acid that are added to cosmetic products or improve the culinary qualities of fish like the improvement of coloring in salmonid flesh (Guerin et al., 2003). They also possess various bioactive metabolites such as carotenoids, alkaloids, terpenoids, phenols, PUFAs gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), arachidonic acid (AA), EPA and DHA that have antimicrobial, antiviral, antioxidant and antitumor activities (Das & Madhavi, 2011; Varfolomeev & Wasserman, 2011). This spurred the interest of the pharmaceutical industry to explore microalgae with biotherapeutics potential. Table 2 shows the summary of highly valuable biochemical metabolites derived from various microalgae.

Table 2. Microalgae-derived compounds and bioactive metabolites (Lakatos & Strieth, 2017; Raanan et al., 2016; Susanti & Taufikurahman, 2021).

Taxonomy	Microalgae species	Biochemical Compounds/ Application	References
Eustigmatophyceae	<i>Nannochloropsis oculata</i>	Biodiesel, Hydrocarbon (HC), Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA), Bio-oil	(Adarme-Vega et al., 2012; Asgharpour, 2015; Culaba et al., 2020; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Raanan et al., 2016; Raja et al., 2014; Saad et al., 2019)
Euglenaceae	<i>Euglena viridis</i>	Organic Extract	(Das & Madhavi, 2011)

Taxonomy	Microalgae species	Biochemical Compounds/ Application	References
Bacillariophyceae	<i>Chaetoceros muelleri</i>	Fatty acids	(Mendiola et al., 2007)
	<i>Navicula directa</i>	Naviculan polysaccharide as antiviral	(J.-B. Lee et al., 2006)
	<i>Phaeodactylum</i> sp.	EPA, Bio-oil	(Adarme-Vega et al., 2012; Asgharpour, 2015; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Raja et al., 2014)
	<i>Phaeodactylum tricornutum</i>	Organic extracts, EPA, PUFA as antimicrobial	(Desbois et al., 2009)
	<i>Skeletonema costatum</i>	Fatty acids	(Naviner et al., 1999)
	<i>Thalassiosira pseudonana</i>	EPA	(Forhan et al., 2015)
Rhodophyceae	<i>Porphyridium cruentum</i> <i>Porphyridium</i> sp.	Ethanol extracts, EPA, Sulfated polysaccharides as antiviral	(Adarme-Vega et al., 2012; Asgharpour, 2015; Huheihel et al., 2002; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Raja et al., 2014; Rodriguez-Garcia & Guill-Guerrero, 2008)
Prymnesiphyceae	<i>Isochrysis galbana</i> <i>Isochrysis</i> sp.	EPA	(Adarme-Vega et al., 2012; Asgharpour, 2015; Gouveia et al., 2008; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Lazarus & Bhimba, 2008; Raja et al., 2014)

Taxonomy	Microalgae species	Biochemical Compounds/ Application	References
Chlorophyceae	<i>Botryococcus braunii</i>	Biodiesel, HC, antioxidant	(Culaba et al., 2020; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Saad et al., 2019; Sathasivam et al., 2019)
	<i>Chlamydomonas</i> sp.	Vitamins	(M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Sathasivam et al., 2019)
	<i>Chlamydomonas reinhardtii</i>	Model organism, methanol and hexane extract	(Culaba et al., 2020; Ghasemi et al., 2007; Saad et al., 2019)
	<i>Chlamydomonas nivalis</i>	Antioxidant	(M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Sathasivam et al., 2019)
	<i>Chlorella autotrophica</i>	Sulfated polysaccharides	(Fabregas et al., 1999)
	<i>Chlorella pyrenoidosa</i>	Polypeptides	(Wang & Zhang, 2013)
	<i>Chlorella sorokiniana</i>	Ethanol, extracts as antitumor	(Chung et al., 2012)
	<i>Chlorella</i> sp.	Biodiesel, HC, Bio-oil, Food product, Vitamins, antitumor compounds such as sterols, polypeptides, glycoproteins	(Chung et al., 2012; Culaba et al., 2020; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Saad et al., 2019)
	<i>Chlorella stigmatophora</i>	Hydro and liposoluble extracts	(Guzmán et al., 2001)

Taxonomy	Microalgae species	Biochemical Compounds/ Application	References
	<i>Chlorella keslerii</i>	Biogas	(Culaba et al., 2020; Saad et al., 2019)
	<i>Chlorella vulgaris</i>	Feed, food additives, Carotenoid production, anti-hypertensive metabolites lutein and peptides	(Cha et al., 2008; Hozawa et al., 2007; Martins et al., 2021; Panahi et al., 2016)
	<i>Desmodesmus</i> sp.	Biodiesel, HC	(Culaba et al., 2020; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Saad et al., 2019)
	<i>Chlorococcum</i> sp.	Astaxanthin, Bioethanol	(Culaba et al., 2020; Saad et al., 2019S.-J. Lee et al., 2003)
	<i>Coccomyxa onubensis</i>	Lutein as antioxidants	(Garbayo et al., 2012)
	<i>Dunaliella salina</i>	β -carotene as anti-inflammatory and astaxanthin production	(M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Lavy et al., 2003; Raja et al., 2014; Sathasivam et al., 2019)
	<i>Dunaliella tertiolecta</i>	EPA, Carotenoid and Lipid production	(Chagas et al., 2015; Hopkins et al., 2019; Hosseinzadeh Gharajeh et al., 2020)
	<i>Haematococcus lacustris</i> <i>Haematococcus</i> sp. <i>Haematococcus pluvialis</i>	Food product, Carotenoid production, Antioxidant, PUFA as antimicrobial	(Caporgno & Mathys, 2018; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Niccolai et al., 2019; Raja et al., 2014;

Taxonomy	Microalgae species	Biochemical Compounds/ Application	References
			Rodríguez-Meizoso et al., 2010; Sathasivam et al., 2019)
	<i>Muriellopsis</i> sp.	Lutein as antioxidants	(Garbayo et al., 2012)
	<i>Scenedesmus S. obliquus</i>	Bio-oil, Vitamins, Carotenoid and Lipid production	(Culaba et al., 2020; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Nascimento et al., 2013; Saad et al., 2019; Sathasivam et al., 2019)
	<i>Tetraselmis</i> sp.	EPA, Food product, Bio-oil	(Adarme-Vega et al., 2012; Asgharpour, 2015; Caporgno & Mathys, 2018; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; Niccolai et al., 2019; Raja et al., 2014; Sathasivam et al., 2019)
	<i>Phormidium autumnale</i>	Carotenoid and Lipid production	(Nascimento et al., 2013)
Ulvophyceaea	<i>Trentepohlia arborum</i>	Carotenoid production	(Chen et al., 2015)

Taxonomy	Microalgae species	Biochemical Compounds/ Application	References
Dinophyceae	<i>Cryptocodinium cohnii</i>	Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)	(Diao et al., 2018; Song et al., 2020)
	<i>Gymnodinium</i> sp.	Extracellular Polysaccharide (EPS)	(Umemura et al., 2003)
Bangiophyceae	<i>Anabaena</i> sp.	Hydrosoluble extracts, Biogas	(Culaba et al., 2020; Najdenski et al., 2013; Saad et al., 2019)
	<i>Aphanizomenon flos-aqua</i>	Dietary supplement	(Cadoret et al., 2012; Jensen et al., 2000)
	<i>Cyanidium</i> sp.	phycocyanin production	(Eisele et al., 2000; Moon et al., 2014; Raja et al., 2014)
	<i>Galdiera</i> sp.	phycocyanin production	(Eisele et al., 2000; Moon et al., 2014; Raja et al., 2014)
Cyanophyceae	<i>Arthrospira platensis</i>	Food products/ additives, phycocyanin production, PUFA as antimicrobial, anti-hypertensive metabolites lutein and peptides	(Caporgno & Mathys, 2018; Colla et al., 2004; Eisele et al., 2000; Hozawa et al., 2007; Moon et al., 2014; Niccolai et al., 2019; Raja et al., 2014; Sathasivam et al., 2019)
	<i>Gloeocapsa</i> sp.	EPS	(Najdenski et al., 2013)

Taxonomy	Microalgae species	Biochemical Compounds/ Application	References
	<i>Leptolyngbya</i> sp.	Carotenoid production	(Kuhne et al., 2013)
	<i>Nostoc</i> sp. <i>Nostoc ellipsosporum</i> <i>Nostoc linckia</i> <i>Nostoc spongiaforme</i>	Food products, Cryptophycin and Cyanovirin as antiviral, Borophycin as antimicrobial and cytotoxic activities against colorectal cancer	(Burja et al., 2001; Caporgno & Mathys, 2018; Magarvey et al., 2006; Niccolai et al., 2019; O'Keefe et al., 2010; Sathasivam et al., 2019)
	<i>Synechococcus</i> PCC 7002	Metabolic model organism, Cyanovirin	(Hendry et al., 2016; Ludwig & Bryant, 2012; O'Keefe et al., 2010)
	<i>Synechococcus</i> PCC 6803	Model organism	(Ikeuchi & Tabata, 2001; Yu et al., 2013)
	<i>Synechococcus elongatus</i>	Saccharose as bioethanol	(Ducat et al., 2012)
	<i>Synechocystis</i> sp.	PUFA as antimicrobial	(Najdenski et al., 2013; Plaza et al., 2010)

Conclusion

This review carefully evaluated the current abundance, cultivation techniques, and biotechnological applications of prokaryotic and eukaryotic microalgae. It also pointed out the numerous microalgae natural products and metabolites such as PUFAs, carotenoids, EPAs, EPSs, DHA, and lutein among others produced from microalgal biorefinery.

The relatively easier and cost-effective means of culturing microalgae is most likely a probable alternative to harvesting traditional products from plants. Numerous cultivation techniques and strategies for large-scale biomass production can be applied in order to extract the chemical compounds and natural products that can contribute to food, biofuel, and biotherapeutics industries for farm and agriculture development, for human health benefits and for sustainable green resources.

However, there is still a vast diversity of microalgae with potential for biotechnological processes that are yet to be screened and validated for better cultivation. Gene editing and genetic manipulation tools are current breakthroughs, which can be developed for increasing the potentiality of microalgae as a natural, sustainable source in the biofuel, pharmaceutical and agricultural industries.

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