

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University

Collage of science

Department of Biology



المملكة العربية السعودية

جامعه الامام محمد بن سعود الإسلامية

كلية العلوم

قسم الأحياء

## Microbial Production of Hydrogen as a Future Fuel

A Graduation Research Project Submitted to the Department Biology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Completion of the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Biology

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**First semester, October 2024**

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23/10/2024, 20/4/1446

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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## Acknowledgement

First and foremost, we thank God for giving us the knowledge and the ability to complete our study for bachelor's degree and that what will make us reach our goals towered the future by achieve more and hit more goals.

We would like to thank and express our deep appreciation to our supervisor *Dr. Seham Moussa Mohamed Hamed*, Associate Professor of Microbiology for her academic advising and her support that give us the opportunity and encourage us to complete this research and also for providing us precious guidance throughout this research, and we extending all the thanks to the committee members in which their advises are important for us, and the gratitude to all of the Department of Biology, Faculty members, and colleagues for their help and support.

Finally, thanks are also extended to our families and friends who support us and encourage us to continue.

## **Abstract**

The rising demand for clean and sustainable energy sources has intensified research into alternative fuels. Among myriads of biofuels, hydrogen gas is considered as an emerging and a promising candidate due to its high energy content and zero-emission potential. Microbial production of hydrogen (biohydrogen) offers a sustainable and eco-friendly pathway, utilizing various microorganisms such as anaerobes, facultative anaerobes, aerobes, methylotrophs, photosynthetic bacteria and algae.

This approach leverages renewable resources due to its simple requirements for organic waste and sunlight, making it attractive for future energy systems. To turn organic resources into hydrogen, this process depends on microorganisms like anaerobic or photosynthetic bacteria. Wastewater and agricultural waste are examples of renewable resources that can be utilized as production feedstock.

Key microbial processes include dark fermentation, photofermentation, and microbial electrolysis cells, are explored for their hydrogen production capabilities. Despite significant progress, challenges remain, including low production yields, process optimization, and scaling up for industrial applications. Advances in genetic engineering, bioprocess design, and system integration are essential to overcoming these hurdles. Also, the development of mixed culture technologies and the utilization of by-products, research is concentrating on increasing the efficiency of microbial hydrogen production, which could eventually replace conventional fuels.

This review discusses the potential of microbial hydrogen production as a future fuel source, emphasizing its environmental benefits, technological challenges, and the prospects for commercialization in a decarbonized energy landscape.

## الخلاصة

لقد أدى الطلب المتزايد على مصادر الطاقة النظيفة والمستدامة إلى تكثيف البحث في مجال الوقود البديل. ومن بين عدد لا يحصى من أنواع الوقود الحيوي، يعتبر غاز الهيدروجين مرشحاً ناشئاً وواعداً نظراً لمحتواه العالي من الطاقة وانبعاثاته الصفرية. يوفر الإنتاج الميكروبي للهيدروجين (الهيدروجين الحيوي) مساراً مستداماً وصديقاً للبيئة، باستخدام العديد من الكائنات الحية الدقيقة مثل اللاهوائيات الاجبارية، واللاهوائيات الاختيارية، والهوائيات، والميثيلوتروف، والبكتيريا الضوئية والطحالب.

يستفيد هذا النهج من بعض الموارد البسيطة المتجددة في البيئة مثل النفايات العضوية وأشعة الشمس، مما يجعله جذاباً لأنظمة الطاقة المستقبلية. لتحويل الموارد العضوية إلى هيدروجين، تعتمد هذه العملية على الكائنات الحية الدقيقة مثل البكتيريا اللاهوائية أو الضوئية. تعد مياه الصرف الصحي والنفايات الزراعية أمثلة على الموارد المتجددة التي يمكن استخدامها كمادة خام للإنتاج.

تشمل العمليات الميكروبية الرئيسية لإنتاج الهيدروجين: التخمر اللاهوائي، والتخمير الضوئي، وخلايا التحليل الكهربائي الميكروبية. وعلى الرغم من التقدم الكبير، لا تزال هناك تحديات، بما في ذلك انخفاض الإنتاجية من غاز الهيدروجين، وتحسين العمليات، وتوسيع نطاق التطبيقات الصناعية. والتقدم في الهندسة الوراثية، وتصميم العمليات الحيوية، لذا فإن تكامل الأنظمة ضروري للتغلب على هذه العقبات. يركز هذا البحث على استعراض لبعض تقنيات استخدام البيئات المختلطة والاستفادة من المنتجات الثانوية لزيادة كفاءة إنتاج الهيدروجين الميكروبي، والذي قد يحل في نهاية المطاف محل الوقود التقليدي. كما يناقش هذا البحث إمكانات وطرق إنتاج الهيدروجين الميكروبي و أنواع الميكروبات المنتجة له كمصدر وقود مستقبلي، مع التركيز على فوائده البيئية والتحديات التكنولوجية كمصدر للطاقة الخالي من الكربون.

## List of Abbreviations

Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NADH)

acetylcoenzyme A (acetyl-CoA),

Hydrogen ( $H_2$ )

Dehydrogenase (DH)

Iron ( $Fe^{2+}$ )

Lead (Pb )

Nickel (Ni)

Zinc (Zn)

Chrome (Cr)

Cadmium (Cd)

Copper (Cu)

Sodium ( $Na^{2+}$ )

Magnesium ( $Mg^{2+}$ )

Biological oxygen demand (BOD)

Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD)

Hydrogen Producing Bacteria (HPB)

*Escherichia coli* (*E.coli*)

Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES)

Carbon dioxide ( $CO_2$ )

Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP)

Low Heating Value (LHV)

High Heating Value (HHV)

Oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>)

Dark fermentation (DF)

Microbial Electrolysis cell (MEC)

photosystem I (PSI)

photosystem II (PSII)

Photo Fermentation (PF)

Purple Non-Sulfur (PNS)

Citric Acid Cycle (TCA)

Atmosphere (atm)

Hydrogenase (HD)

Polyhydroxybutyrate (PHB)

Soluble Microbial Products (SMPs)

Formate Dehydrogenase (FDH)

reductase and hydrogenase enzymes (HD)

formate hydrogenlyase (FHL)

Methylene blue (MB)

Ultraviolet (UV)

## List of symbols

Milliliter per gram (ml/g)

Milliliter per liter (ml/l)

Millimoles (mmol)

Millimoles per gram (mmol/g)

Mega Joules kilogram (MJ kg<sup>-1</sup>)

Mega Joules liter (MJ L<sup>-1</sup>)

kilo-joules per gram (kJ/g)

Micromole (μmole)

## **Aim of Work**

The purpose of this review study is to outline microbial hydrogen production as a future fuel, to develop sustainable and environmentally friendly methods for generating energy from natural and renewable sources. Traditional hydrogen production methods typically rely on fossil fuels, which result in significant greenhouse gas emissions. In contrast, microbial hydrogen production relies on microorganisms such as bacteria and algae, which can produce hydrogen through biological processes like fermentation or photolysis. Overall, microbial hydrogen production may provide the following objectives

- Achieving clean and sustainable energy
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Improving production efficiency
- Future applications

The goal is to move towards a sustainable hydrogen economy that relies on clean and efficient production technologies

# **Chapter(I)**

## **Introduction**



# 1. Introduction

One of the main concerns of the twenty-first century is the requirement for fossil fuel which is keeping up with the rise in global energy demand needed for improving living standards and population expansion (Dince and Acar., 2015). For instance, in 2011 around seven billion people worldwide utilized 15 Terawatt (TW)-energy (Dince and Acar., 2015). It is anticipated that these figures would rise to 30 TW and nine billion people, respectively, by 2050 (Benterbusch and Husar., 2013; Vision., 2023).

As shown in Fig. 1, the global fuel shares for power generation, total primary energy supply (TPES), and the corresponding carbon dioxide emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>). 85% of the world's energy supply in 2011 came from fossil fuels (Dince and Acar., 2015). Nevertheless, it is not anticipated that fossil fuels would be able to meet the rising demand for energy due to their finite supply and nonhomogeneous distribution (Dince and Acar., 2015). Furthermore, when the readily available fossil fuel reserves are depleted, the remaining reserves become harder to extract, and the political unpredictability of the nations that control the world's fossil fuel supplies contributes to the ongoing rise in fossil fuel prices (Dince and Acar., 2015).

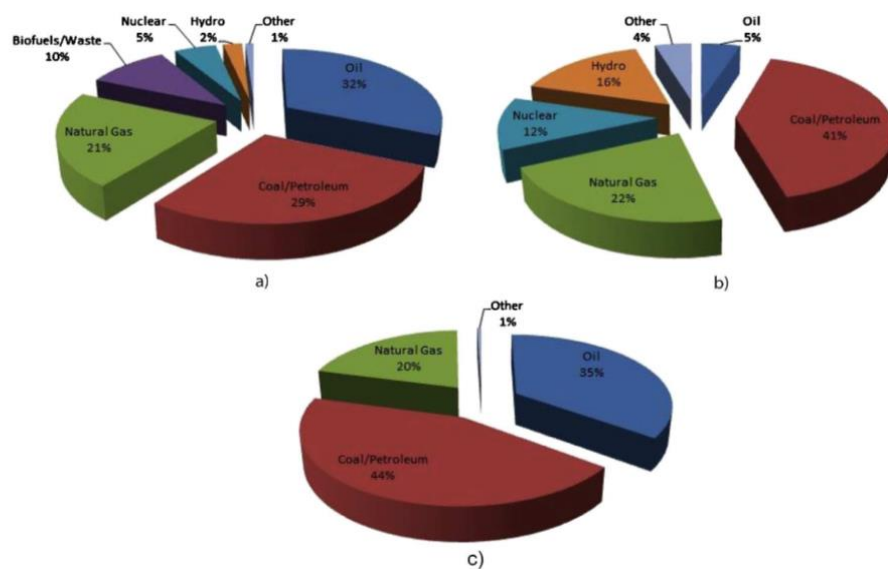


Fig. 1 shows (a) total primary energy supply (TPES), (b) electricity generation, and (c) CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (others include waste, geothermal, sun, wind, and heat) (Benterbusch and Husar., 2013).

## 1.1. Impact of CO<sub>2</sub> elevation on climate

Since the year 2000, there has been a noticeable increase in the rate of global climate change (Lee et al., 2020). During the industrial revolution, for instance, the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> content rose steadily to at least 400  $\mu\text{mol mol}^{-1}$  from 280  $\mu\text{mol mol}^{-1}$  in 1880 (Lee et al., 2020). The annual average temperature has increased by 0.8 since 1880 (NASA, 2019). According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP), the atmospheric temperature could rise by as much as 4.8 °C and the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration might reach 940  $\mu\text{mol mol}^{-1}$  by around 2100 (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change., 2014). These predicted rises in temperature and atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration is found to influence crop yield and quality (Yubi et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2017). Increasing CO<sub>2</sub> concentration may contribute to global warming and climate changes, leading to significant and unavoidable consequences such as increasing temperatures, shifting precipitation patterns, ocean acidification, rising sea levels as well as an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Therefore, finding renewable and clean energy sources to meet the energy demand has become paramount issue.

Renewable sources for clean energy production are considered as promising feedstocks, among which, hydrogen may be created through environmentally friendly, clean techniques. Furthermore, because of its abundance, purity and accessibility, hydrogen may be the first alternative to fossil fuels as a clean energy source in the future (Aydin et al., 2021). Hydrogen can be produced using a variety of clean, continuous energy sources, including biomass, solar, hydro, wind, and ocean energy (Aydin et al., 2021). To improve productivity and cut costs, several issues with each hydrogen generation technique must be considered (Aydin et al., 2021).

Scholars and researchers have worked closely to address the shortcomings of each hydrogen generating system (Aydin et al., 2021). The potential for a clean, sustainable energy source that can be created from local energy resources wherever in the world is presented by hydrogen generated from renewable energy sources (Aydin et al., 2021). In recent years, the use of hydrogen energy has grown in popularity (Tarhan et al., 2021). Fossil fuels can be replaced with this sustainable energy source (Singh et al., 2020). Hydrogen possesses a higher energy content and a lower environmental impact than fossil fuels, making it a viable alternative (Tarhan et al., 2021). Hydrogen is a colorless and odorless atom that is typically made up of an electron and a proton. Air has a greater density than hydrogen does (Tarhan et al., 2021).

Using hydrogen as fuel is one of these more environmentally friendly approaches that shows the most promise. When utilized as a fuel, hydrogen has a gravimetric energy density of  $2.5^{-3}$  times greater than that of the fossil fuels that are now most widely employed (see Table 1) (Tashie et al., 2021). Though there are still certain things that may be done better, hydrogen energy is clearly going to be a major energy source in the future (Tarhan et al., 2021). Hydrogen has several benefits, including: (i) high energy conversion efficiencies; (ii) emission-free production from water; (iii) abundance; (iv) various forms of storage (such as gaseous, liquid, or combined with metal hydrides); (v) long-distance transportation; (vi) ease of conversion to other forms of energy; and (vii) higher HHV and LHV (Low Heating Value (LHV), High Heating Value (HHV)) than most conventional fossil fuels (see Table 2) (Dince and Acar., 2015).

**Table 1:** Common fuels' volumetric and gravimetric energy densities (Tashie et al., 2021).

<b>Fuel</b>	<b>Gravimetric Energy Density (MJ kg<sup>-1</sup>)</b>	<b>Volumetric Energy Density (MJ L<sup>-1</sup>)</b>
Hydrogen (liquid)	143	10.1
Hydrogen (compressed, 700 bar)	143	5.6
Hydrogen (ambient pressure)	143	0.0107
Methane (ambient pressure)	55.6	0.0378
Natural Gas (Liquid)	53.6	22.2
Natural Gas (Compressed, 250 bar)	53.6	9
Natural gas	53.6	0.0364
LPG propane	49.6	25.3
LPG butane	49.1	27.7
Gasoline (petrol)	46.4	34.2
Biodiesel oil	42.2	33
Diesel	45.4	34.6
Kerosene	46.4	36.7

**Table 2:** Elevated and lowered heating values of hydrogen and typical fossil fuels at 25 °C and 1 atm (Dince and Acar., 2015).

<b>Fuel</b>	<b>HHV (kJ/g)</b>	<b>LHV (kJ/g)</b>
Hydrogen	141.9	119.9
Methane	55.5	50.0
Gasoline	47.5	44.5
Diesel	44.8	42.5
Methanol	20.0	18.1

As a result, hydrogen gas is regarded as the most promising and clean energy source of the twenty-first century (Zhang et al., 2021). Hydrogen is also a crucial chemical raw element that is utilized extensively in major industrial processes like the water-gas shift reaction, petroleum refining, and ammonia synthesis (Zhang et al., 2021). As a result, the creation of hydrogen has drawn significant attention worldwide (Zhang et al., 2021).

Water and carbohydrates are examples of source materials that contain the hydrogen element and can be used to make hydrogen, as hydrogen does not exist as

a molecule in nature (Zhang et al., 2021). Currently, conventional fossil fuels provide more than 96% of the hydrogen produced worldwide (Da Silva veras et al., 2017). Regrettably, most conventional methods for producing hydrogen from fossil fuels are linked to significant energy consumption and environmental contamination (Zhang et al., 2021). As a result, with increasingly stringent and pertinent environmental protection legislation in place worldwide, more focus is being placed on the deployment of innovative technologies for hydrogen production from nuclear and renewable sources (Suman, 2018). Nevertheless, using new or conventional technologies to produce hydrogen requires a certain amount of energy and resources, which will unavoidably influence the environment (Parkinson et al., 2019).

Fig 2. represents the biological components of living objects, such as plants, which are referred to as "biomass." It is a commonly utilized energy source in both developed and developing countries (Worku et al., 2024). About 3% of the primary energy needs of developed countries and 35% of those of developing countries are met by biomass, the most sophisticated renewable energy source (Mancusi et al., 2021). Biomass can be burned directly to provide heat or indirectly by converting it into several kinds of biofuel (Worku et al., 2024). For example, deer, twigs, and other remaining biomass from forests can be converted into biodiesel and ethanol, or alternatively, methane gas, which is a valuable energy source (Worku et al., 2024).

The growing percentage of waste materials and the consequent need to decrease them has led to an explosion in popularity for the biological approach of creating hydrogen during the past 20 years (Worku et al., 2024). Biological processes are catalyzed by microorganisms that live in an aqueous medium at ambient temperature, atmospheric pressure, and both (De sales et al., 2017). These methods can be applied in places where biowaste and biomass resources are easily accessible (Worku et al., 2024). These precursors' natural availability reduces the energy and transportation costs associated with the original raw material (Worku et al., 2024). The two primary biological mechanisms used to generate hydrogen are photofermentative processes and dark fermentative hydrogen synthesis (Worku et

al., 2024). Dark fermentation is one of the most well-known processes for creating bio-hydrogen (Worku et al., 2024).

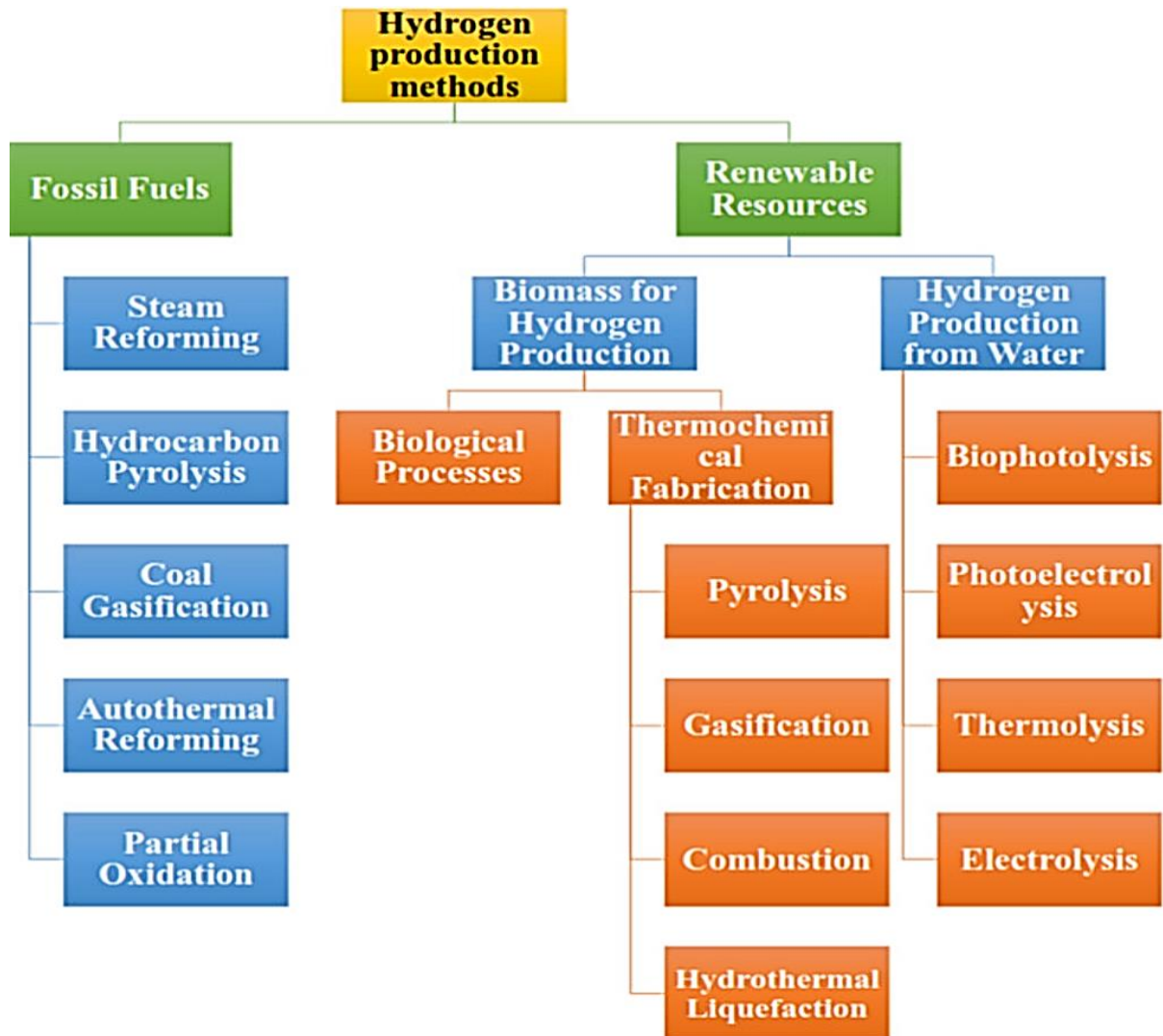


Fig. 2: Schematic diagram showing variable methods for hydrogen production (Worku et al., 2024).

# **Chapter (II)**

## **Literature Review**

## 2. Methods of Microbial Production of H<sub>2</sub> gas

H<sub>2</sub> is produced by a wide range of natural species, such as the archaea, facultative aerobic, anaerobic bacteria, cyanobacteria, and lower eukaryotes (protists and green algae) (Hallenbeck, 2012; Biochenko et al., 2004; Saifuddin and priatharsini., 2016). These organisms can work alone, in groups of related types, or in mixed cultures (Fig. 3) (Chandrasekhar et al., 2015). Typical heterotrophs in fermentation are the main biocatalysts that produce H<sub>2</sub> (Chandrasekhar et al., 2015). Certain dark fermentative bacteria are obligate anaerobes, which are further categorized according to their sensitivity to O<sub>2</sub> and their growth temperature (Fig. 3) (Chandrasekhar et al., 2015). These microorganisms can survive in environments lacking in oxygen and do not require solar energy as a source of energy (Chandrasekhar et al., 2015).

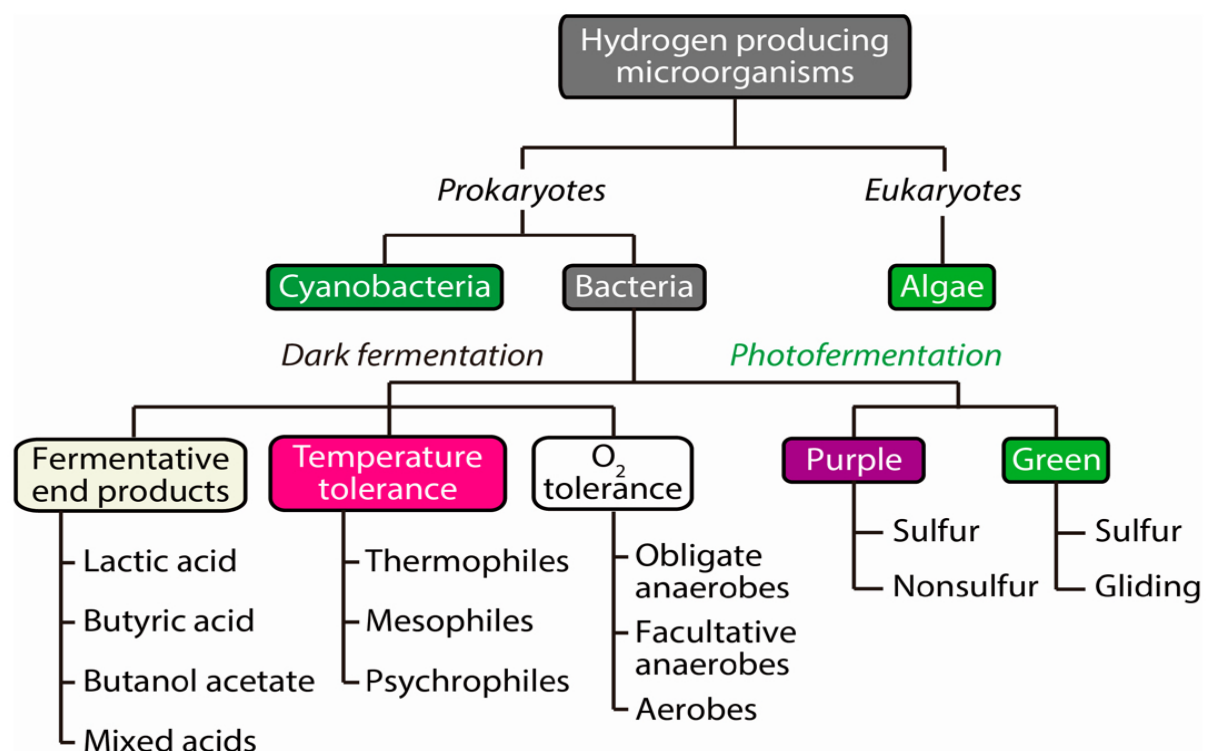


Fig. 3: Diagram illustrating the variety of H<sub>2</sub> generating via H<sub>2</sub>-producing microorganisms (Chandrasekhar et al., 2015).

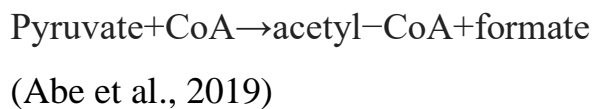


## 2.1. H<sub>2</sub> Production by Dark Fermentation

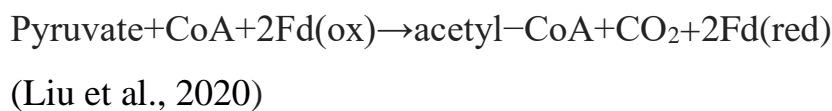
The most promising method for converting biomass into biohydrogen is dark fermentation (DF), which has a net energy ratio of 1.9 compared to steam methane reforming's 0.64 (Manish and Banerjee., 2008; Łukajtis et al., 2018).

Anaerobic bacteria can produce hydrogen when they thrive in a dark or carbohydrate-rich substrate (Agyekum et al., 2022). Most microbial hydrogen production is powered by the anaerobic metabolism of pyruvate, which is created through the breakdown of several substrates (Agyekum et al., 2022). Pyruvate degradation is catalyzed by one of two enzyme systems; formate lyase or Ferredoxin Oxygen Reductase (Manish and Banerjee., 2008; Łukajtis et al., 2018) as described in the following equations.

1. Pyruvate: formate lyase:



2. Pyruvate: Ferredoxin Oxygen Reductase



Anaerobic bacteria that are cultivated in the dark transform substrates in DF (Fig. 4) (Agyekum et al., 2022). Hydrogen is a crucial metabolic substrate for a number of anaerobic microbes (Agyekum et al., 2022). When present, these microbes can use hydrogen molecules high in gydroenergy to generate energy by exploiting the electrons released during hydrogen oxidation (Agyekum et al., 2022). In the absence of external electron acceptors, organisms produce excess electrons during metabolism as a result of protons being reduced to form hydrogen molecules (Agyekum et al., 2022). The main enzymes that control the metabolism of hydrogen are called hydrogenases (Łukajtis et al., 2018).

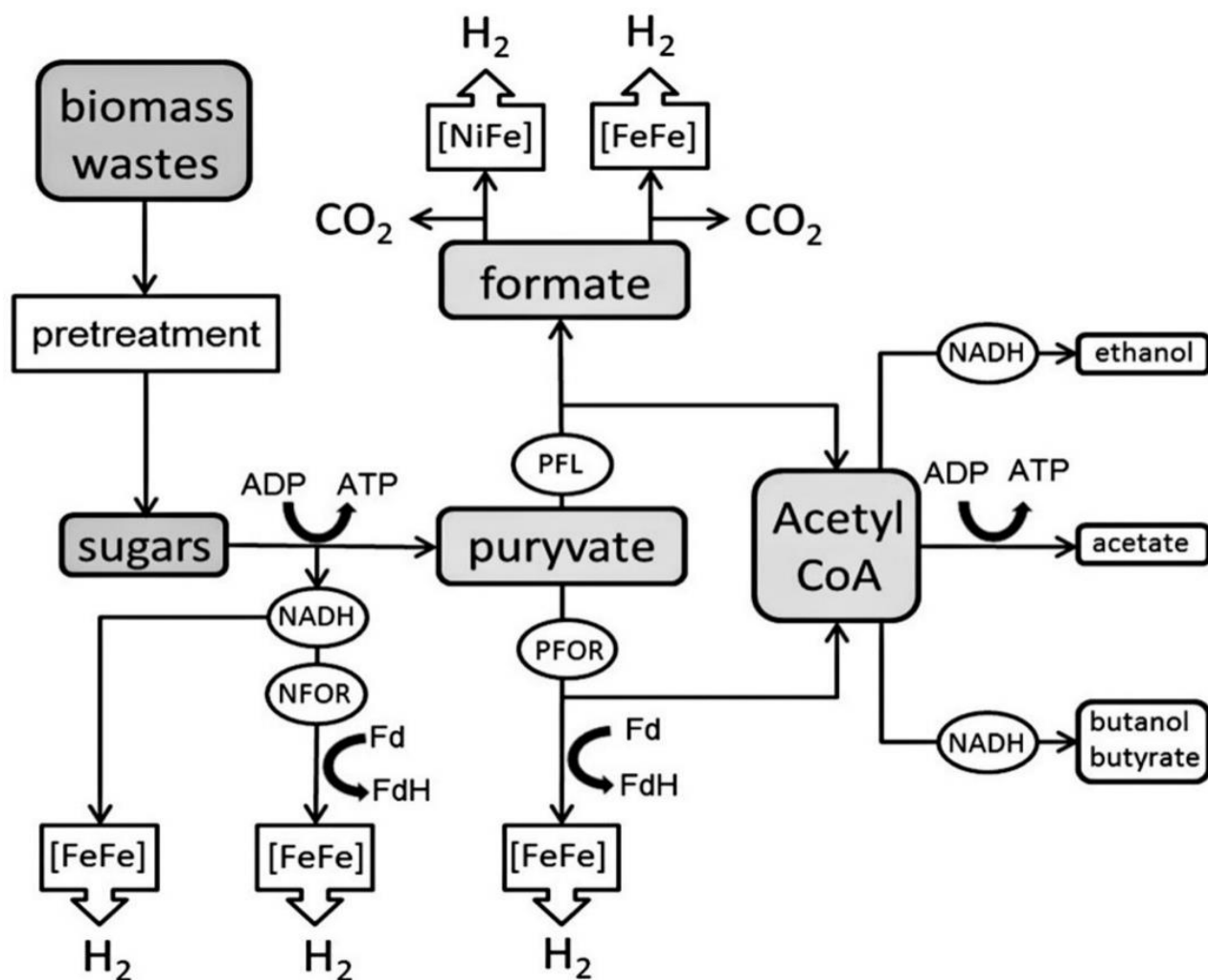


Fig. 4: Typical metabolic pathways used in dark fermentation to convert substrate to hydrogen (Łukajtis et al., 2018).

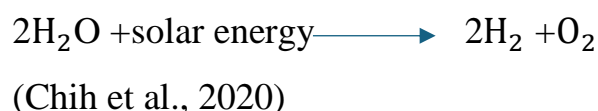
## 2.2. H<sub>2</sub> Production by Microbial Electrolysis Cell

One of the most promising methods for producing hydrogen is the microbial electrolysis cell (MEC) technology, which can also be used to manufacture hydrogen or other chemicals with added value from wastewater (Liu et al., 2005; Lu et al., 2016). When compared to alternative biologically based processes for producing hydrogen and water electrolysis, MECs offer a number of well-known advantages (Zhao et al., 2020). On the one hand, exoelectrogenic bacteria in MECs catalyze the organic compounds on the anode while requiring a far lower energy input than electrolysis, which oxidizes the stable water molecule (Azwar et al., 2014;

Chandrasekhar et al., 2015). Furthermore, MECs enhance the production of hydrogen by encouraging hydrogen capture (Zhao et al., 2020). Additionally, MECs enhance the production of hydrogen by encouraging hydrogen capture. When compared to the fermentation process (Chandrasekhar et al., 2020; Dawood et al., 2020), MEC produces a higher hydrogen yield because its performance is not light-dependent, unlike photo-fermentation, which is primarily governed by the physiology of microorganisms and physical-chemical transport processes (Hasnaoui et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2020).

### 2.3. H<sub>2</sub> Production by Biophotolysis

Algal and plant cells engage in direct biophotolysis, a process akin to photosynthesis (Da silva veras et al., 2017). In this case, the microbial photosynthesis mechanism uses a water molecule to convert solar energy into molecular hydrogen (as a chemical energy form) through a combination of biological and chemical processes (Fig. 5). As effective hydrogen-producing algae strains that use this method of hydrogen synthesis are *Chlorella* spp., *Chlorococcum* spp., and *Scenedesmus* spp. (Das et al., 2008; Paramesh et al., 2018).



Green algae are thought to be capable of producing biohydrogen in anaerobic environments (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021). Among these significant microalgal species is *Chlamydomonas* sp. (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021), which can both create hydrogen and use it as an electron donor (Das et al., 2008; Jiménez Llanos et al., 2020). Hydrogenase is an enzyme that is used in the biophotolysis of water to produce hydrogen (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021). In the process of biophotolysis, hydrogenase obtains electrons from ferredoxin, which can serve as an electron donor to help turn water into hydrogen gas (Nargarajan et al., 2017). The photosynthesis

process involves two parts: photosystem I (PSI) and photosystem II (PSII) (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021). While PSII splits water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen, PSI is charged with reducing  $\text{CO}_2$  (Srirangan et al., 2011; Barber., 2016). The water molecule releases two protons at the result of biophotolysis. Hydrogen can be produced when hydrogenase is present or when PSI reduces  $\text{CO}_2$  (Kim et al., 2011; Ghiasian., 2019). Because hydrogenase is absent in all green plants, PSI is involved in  $\text{CO}_2$  reduction. In the process of harnessing solar energy, PSII produced oxygen and electrons, which the PSI ferredoxin component then used to create hydrogen (Ni et al., 2006; Sekar et al., 2015).

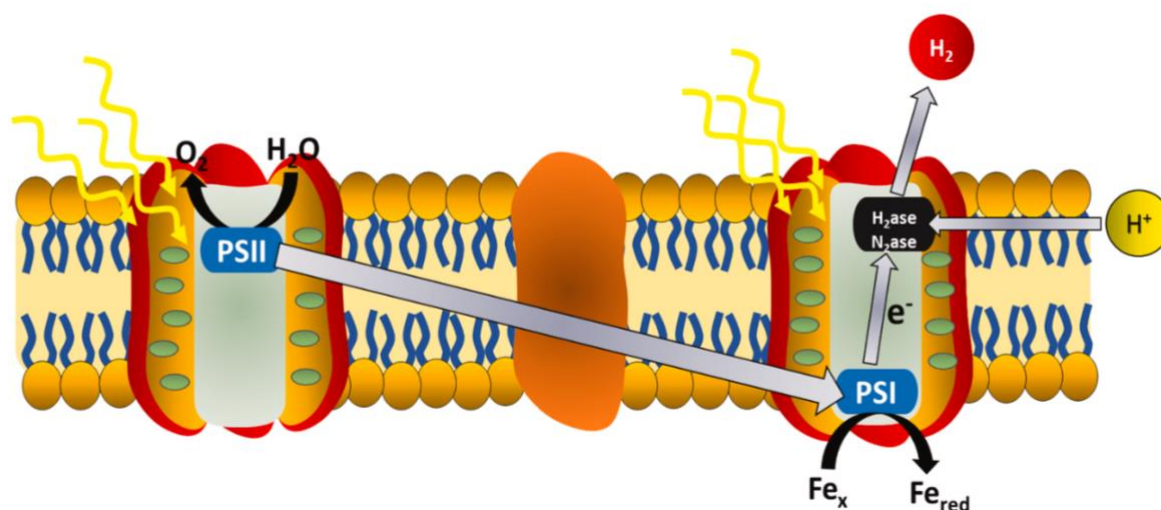


Fig. 5: Utilizing direct biophotolysis to produce biohydrogen (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021).

## 2.4. H<sub>2</sub> Production by Photo Fermentation (PF)

PF is the process by which photosynthetic bacteria convert organic substrates into hydrogen (Wang et al., 2009; Hallenbeck et al., 2016). PF is thought to be an effective and secure method of producing hydrogen (Redwood et al., 2009; Kumar et al., 2017). The mechanism of photochemical oxidation (PF) involves the use of electrons from water molecules by PSII (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021). These electrons are then used by [Fe]-hydrogenase in the direct biophotolysis process,

which results in the creation of photosynthetic hydrogen. In order to produce hydrogen by photofermentation, photosynthetic purple non-sulfur (PNS) bacteria use organic acids like butyrate, acetate, succinate, and malate as well as carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as a carbon source (Li et al., 2009; Doğan and M., 2016). Therefore, PF can produce hydrogen using a variety of substrates, such as organic acids, organic acid-rich wastewater, or organic acid-rich biomass (Basak et al., 2007; Mohan et al., 2019). Gram-negative PNS bacteria are commonly thought to be responsible for PF, including *Rhodobacter sulfidophilus*, *R. sphaeroides*, *R. capsulatus*, *Rhodospirillum rubrum*, and *Rhodopseudomonas palustris*.

Other environmental elements that affect the photosynthesis process include light intensity, carbon sources, and the level of anaerobiosis (Park et al., 2018). Nitrogenase and hydrogenase enzymes carry out PF in PNS bacteria via the TCA cycle (citric acid cycle) (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021). The nitrogenase enzyme is necessary for the TCA cycle-mediated photofermentative hydrogen generation process (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021). The process of oxidizing carbon substrate to CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sup>+</sup>, which are then transported via the TCA cycle, is the hydrogenase enzyme-linked photofermentative hydrogen generation process (Akhlaghi et al., 2020). As a result, nitrogenase and N<sub>2</sub> molecules are essential to the photofermentative hydrogen generation process, which is predominantly carried out by PNS bacteria (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021).

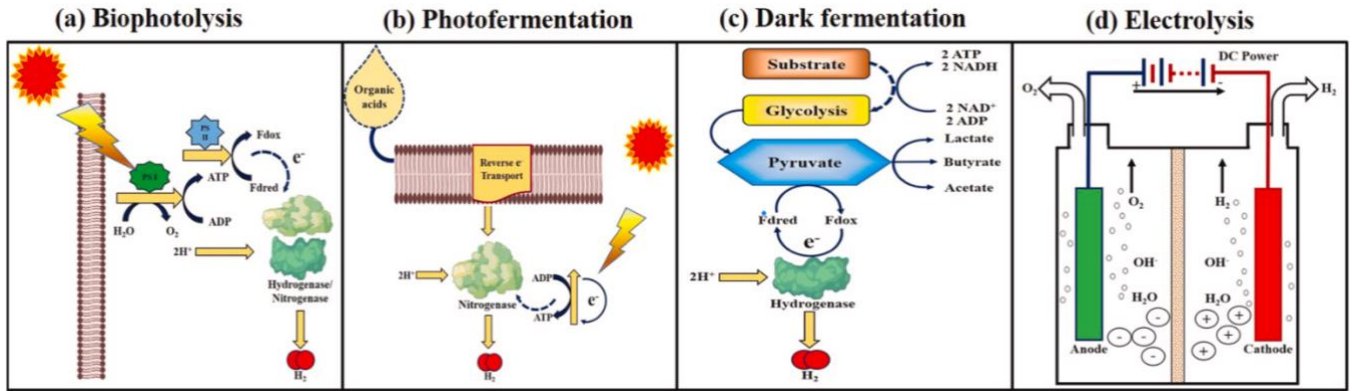


Fig 6. Schematic diagram illustrates variable methods of biological generation of hydrogen. a) biophotolysis, b) photofermentation, c) dark fermentation, and d) electrolysis (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2021).

### 3. Hydrogen Production by Anaerobes

#### 3.1 *Clostridia*

*Clostridium* strains are rod-shaped, gram-positive hydrogen-producing bacteria, commonly found in soil, water, and animal intestines. The majority of *Clostridium* strains are strictly anaerobic, the genus *Clostridium* is frequently employed in mixed-culture and pure-culture systems for dark-fermentative hydrogen production because of its great efficiency in hydrogen synthesis. Pretreatment is typically employed to inhibit the bacteria that consume hydrogen when mixed cultures are utilized as inoculum (Wang, and Yin, 2017).

Previous studies indicated that various pretreatment techniques such as base, aeration, ionizing radiation, acid, and heat shock influence *Clostridium* growth. Where microbial structure was found to be enriched under all pretreated groups. Furthermore, ionizing radiation and acid pretreatment were found to be more effective in enriching the genus *Clostridium*, with the highest occupation of 50-90% (Yin and Wang, 2016; Yang et al., 2019).

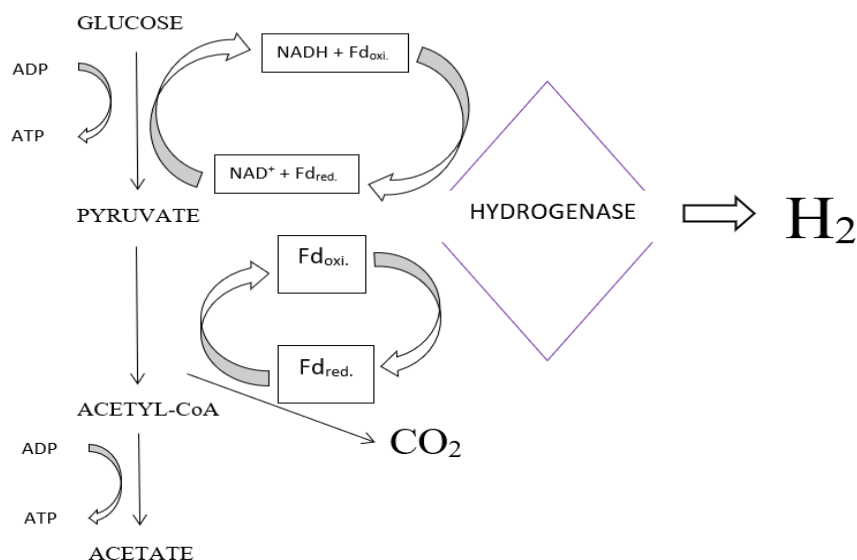


Fig 7. Diagram of hydrogen production by *Clostridium* sp. (Wang and Yin, 2021).

### 3.2 Methylootrophs

When NAD dependent Formate Dehydrogenase (FDH) was initially discovered from a methylootrophic bacterium in 1979 (Egorov et al., 1979; Tishkov, et al., 2023). This finding suggested a mechanism for NADH regeneration or H<sub>2</sub> production using organic fuel. A further study by Kawamura et al., (1983) and AlSayed et al., (2018) used the anaerobic bacteria *Methylomonas albus* BG8 and *Methylosinus trichosporium* OB3b to investigate the generation of H<sub>2</sub> by CH<sub>4</sub>. They looked at how H<sub>2</sub> is produced from a variety of organic substrates, including pyruvate, formate, formaldehyde, methanol, and methane.

Formate proved to be the most appropriate of these substrates for the anaerobic generation of H<sub>2</sub>. Following a 5-hour incubation period, *M. albus* and *M. trichosporium* generated 2.45 and 0.61  $\mu\text{mol H}_2/\mu\text{mol}$  of formate, respectively. It was proposed that NAD-dependent FDH and HD, which are constitutive and soluble enzymes for the strain, are part of the H<sub>2</sub> generating system. *Pseudomonas* AMI, another methanol-using bacterium, was also examined for its ability to produce H<sub>2</sub>,

however no H<sub>2</sub> evolved that was comparable to another strain, *Pseudomonas methylica*, that had previously been described (Gogotov et al., 1975; Sapountzaki et al., 2023).

Table 3. Growth parameters of different methylotrophic bacteria (Mosin, 2013).

Bacterial strains	The molar yield of dry biomass, g/mol of methanol	The specific growth rate, h <sup>-1</sup>	The level of carbon conversion of methanol, %	The quantity of consumed nitrogen, %
Ribulose-5-monophosphate pathway of carbon assimilation				
<i>Pseudomonas C.</i>	17.3	0.49	67.5	13.2
<i>Pseudomonas methanolica</i>	17.0	0.63	66.5	11.0
<i>Methylomonas methanolica</i>	15.7	0.52	62.0	11.7
Serine pathway of carbon assimilation				
<i>Pseudomonas 1</i>	12.1	0.17	47.5	11.37
<i>Pseudomonas 135</i>	12.1	0.14	47.5	11.48
<i>Pseudomonas AM1</i>	9.8	0.09	37.6	11.20
<i>Pseudomonas M-27</i>	13.1	0.11	51.5	9.40
<i>Pseudomonas roseus</i>	13.1	0.15	51.0	10.60





Fig. 8. Electron micrograph of rod-shaped obligate methylophilic bacterium *Methylobacterium methanicum* (Whittenbury et al 1970)

### 3.3 Methanogenic Bacteria

Since fossil oil is set to run out in the next decades, the flammable gas methane is thought to be a good substitute in the future (Ren et al., 2008; Qi et al., 2022). Methanogens are biocatalysts that may help to find solutions to future energy-related issues, by generating methane as a storable energy carrier. Methane generation is a characteristic shared by a very diverse set of *Archaeal methanogens* (Balch et al., 1979).

Methane has multiple applications such as energy storage, automobile fuel, electricity generation, and synthesis base chemical. Several nations have established natural gas networks (Ren et al. 2008; Shah, 2017). Methanotrophic bacteria can use methane as a carbon and energy source to create biomass, enzymes, polyhydroxybutyric acid (PHB), or methanol, depending on the required shift from chemical to biological processes (Strong et al., 2015). Biological methanation is already widely utilized in sewage water plants and biogas plants. It naturally occurs in wetlands, animal digestive tracts, oil fields, and other habitats (Garcia et al. 2000; Holmes and Smith 2016).

Even while methanogens are finding new uses, such as electromethanogenesis, there is still a lot of fundamental research being done on this extremely diverse and special group of methanogens, including strain characterisation and the creation of basic genetic tools (Blasco-Gomez et al. 2017). The group known as methanogenic archaea is incredibly diverse, and certain strains of the bacteria may thrive in harsh environments such as extremely high or low temperatures, high osmolarities, or pH levels. Thus, it is desirable to design and optimize methanogen-using procedures that are suitable to industry. This is true in many ways than only methane generation as a fuel with technical significance (Kondusamy and Kalamdhad, 2014).

### **3.4 Rumen Bacteria**

The anaerobic fermenter known as rumen is home to a wide variety of bacteria, protozoa, fungus, and archaea. According to estimates made by Kim et al., (2011) and Owens and Basalan, (2016) only a tiny portion of rumen bacteria have been grown and studied. The advancement of molecular biology techniques, like sequencing small subunit rRNA genes (Edwards et al., 2004; Hoggard et al., 2018) and more sophisticated metagenomic analysis (McCann et al., 2014), is rapidly expanding our understanding of this ecosystem. Many researchers have employed these modern technologies to explore the ruminal microbial community at various taxonomic levels throughout the years (McCann et al., 2014).

These technologies can offer a deeper description of the numerous microbial species in the rumen. The ruminal microbiota and its collective genomes have over 100 times more genes than the genomes of the host animal, providing them with genetic and metabolic capabilities, such as the ability to digest substances that are inaccessible to the host, that the host has not evolved on its own (McSweeney and Mackie, 2012). The food, breed, season, location, feeding techniques, feed additives, intake level, growth stages, and physiological conditions of the host animals, among

other things, can all have an impact on the diversity, density, and functions of the ruminal microbiota (Zanon et al., 2022).

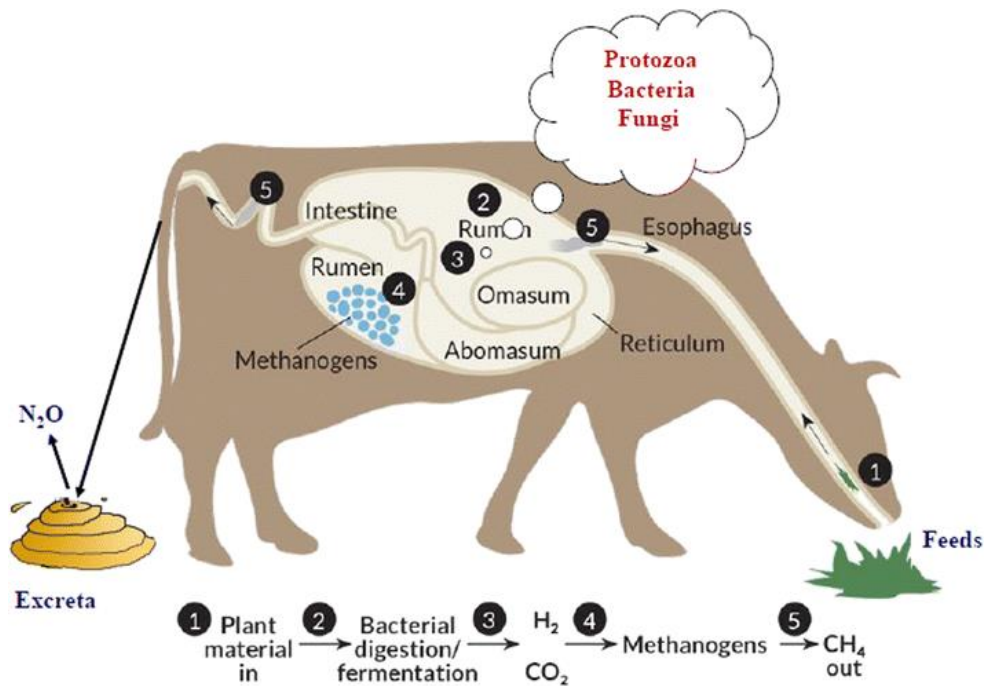


Fig 9. Hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) production by natural rumen bacteria

The ecological redundancy and resilience of the microbial community to withstand and bounce back from external or internal shocks, however, contribute to its general stability. While this consistency is important for animal nutrition and metabolism, it also presents significant obstacles to rumen function engineering through external intervention (Weimer, 2015). The rumen's microbial community ferments feed, which produces methane as a byproduct of biochemistry. The microbial community of ruminants with varying feed efficiency has been the subject of increasing investigation due to its strong correlation with reduced feed efficiency. According to studies by Myer et al., (2015), distinct microbial communities have been discovered in the animals that vary in methane output or feed efficiency. Gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the microecosystem that is related to methane generation in the rumen would provide targeted regulation of methane output. The environment and animal production are impacted by the products that are produced during rumen fermentation.

The release of CH<sub>4</sub> to the atmosphere, which is the primary [H] sink in rumen fermentation, represents an energy loss of 2–12% of ingested gross energy (Johnson and Johnson, 1995; Ungerfeld 2020). This was recognized early in ruminant nutrition research as an energy inefficiency in rumen fermentation and a chance to increase animal productivity (Cammack et al., 2018). Recently, there has been a greater focus on reduction of ruminant CH<sub>4</sub> emissions due to growing worries about climate change.

Enteric CH<sub>4</sub> emissions are thought to make up roughly 6% of all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, or CO<sub>2</sub>-eq, which is the amount of all greenhouse gas emissions divided by the potential for global warming (Gerber et al., 2013). Additionally, the host animal's post-absorptive metabolism is impacted by the volatile fatty acid (VFA) profile that is absorbed from the rumen (Bedford et al., 2020). The primary glucose precursor in ruminants, propionate, can be produced through fermentation by inhibiting methanogenesis (Buccioni et al., 2015).

For animals with high glucose requirements, like high-producing dairy cows during the early stages of lactation, increased propionate production may be beneficial. Conversely, propionate, a satiety signal in ruminants, has been shown to reduce milk fat content (Maxin et al., 2011; Allen, 2014). Accordingly, the percentage of milk fat rises when there is a greater supply of acetate (Maxin et al., 2011).

### **3.4 *Archaea***

Iron-sulfur proteins are the only type of microbial hydrogenase. These enzymes include reductase and hydrogenase enzymes (HD) connected to the oxidation or evolution of molecular H<sub>2</sub>, while nickel-containing hydrogenase connected to membrane-bound electron transport systems typically oxidize

hydrogen (Rousset, 2014; Rosenbaum and Müller, 2021). HD is a nickel lacking soluble enzyme that has been connected to ferredoxin or low potential cytochromes.

On the other hand, the hyperthermophilic archeon *Pyrococcus furiosus* generates H<sub>2</sub> from peptide and carbohydrates and has soluble nickel that contains hydrogenase (Adams, 1990 ; McTernan, 2015; Fiala and Stetter, 1986 ; Basak, 2020. Krishnan et al., (2023) investigated the isolated *P. furiosus* enzymes' ability to produce H<sub>2</sub> from pyruvate. They demonstrated that pyruvate-ferredoxin oxidoreductase participated in the generation of H<sub>2</sub> from pyruvate, and that electrons were then transferred from reduced ferredoxin to NADP using NADPH as an electron donor, the ferredoxin enzyme, also known as NADP-oxidoreductase (sulfide dehydrogenase), also decreased elemental sulfur.

Dihydrogenase is a sulfur reductase or sulfhydrogenase, facilitated the conversion of NADPH into H<sub>2</sub>. Comparing *P. furiosus*'s H<sub>2</sub> evolving system to those found in other bacterial systems, it seemed peculiar. This microorganism was said to grow best at 100 °C and make organic acid, CO<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>2</sub> from peptides or carbohydrates.

## **4. Hydrogen Production by Facultative Anaerobes**

### **4.1 *Escherichia coli***

In-depth research on *E. coli*'s anaerobic breakdown of formate into H<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> was done between 1929 and 1933 by Stickland (1929; Dey et al., 2013). It was discovered that *E. Col.* is capable of inducing the enzymatic activity known as "formate hydrogenlyase" (FHL), which breaks down formate anaerobically into equimolecular quantities of H<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> in the cell suspension (Stickland, 1929; Metcalfe, 2022). On the other hand, formate broke down in the presence of O<sub>2</sub> or methylene blue without releasing H<sub>2</sub>.

Aeration inhibited induction but had no influence on the FHL system's catalytic activity (Stephenson and Stickland, 1932; Xu et al., 2018). Subsequent

research revealed that the FHL system is a membrane-bound multienzyme system made up of an HD and an FDH connected by unknown electron carriers (Al Lawati, 2018; O'Hara et al., 1967). Unlike other FDH that can reduce methylene blue (MB), the FDH associated with H<sub>2</sub> generation was active on the one-electron dye benzyl viologen (BV).

The non-energy producing process was catalyzed by Cole and Wimpenny, (1966). Without producing H<sub>2</sub>, formate could be oxidized by FDH (MB) and connected to various anaerobic reductase systems (NO<sub>3</sub> → NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> and fumarate → succinate) with the creation of ATP as energy (Pinske et al., 2015; Ruiz-Herrera and Alvarez, 1972; Haddock and Jones, 1977).

Promoting the use of the formate hydrogenlyase (FHL) system for the synthesis of H<sub>2</sub> from formate and the transportation of H<sub>2</sub> as formate in the reversible reaction catalyzed by the bacterial FHL system HCO. It has been found that the immobilization of the *E. Coli* FHL system induces the continuous stoichiometric conversion of formate into H<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> (Nandi et al., 1992; Simon et al., 2015). They demonstrated the 96-hour synthesis of H<sub>2</sub> from 1.15 M formate, with a 25% efficiency loss per cycle.

A tiny amount of glucose, which was transformed into succinate acid, was necessary for the system to work. Additionally, formate (224 mg/g wet cell) was produced by the immobilized cell from a combination of H<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> Peck and Gest (Peck and Gest, 1957; Peiro, 2021). It has been previously reported that the addition of carbohydrates or C<sub>2</sub> chemicals related to carbohydrate metabolism was necessary to activate the FHL system for the activity of FHL to be present in the cell-free lysate of *E. Coli*. This study indicated that inhibiting other anaerobic reductases found in *E. coli* was necessary for the continuous lysis of formate (Nandi and Sengupta, 1996; Roger et al., 2021).

They postulated that there may be an electron leakage from the FHL system to the reductase due to an overlap between the redox potentials of the electron transport carrier as present in FDH to HD and those present in the anaerobic reductase systems (Fumarate  $\rightarrow$  Succinate, Tetrathionate  $\rightarrow$  Thiosulfate). In addition to preventing leakage, the presence of succinate or thiosulfate as the terminal reduction product promoted stoichiometric or prolonged formate lysis.

Stickland observed that washed *E. Coli* cells produced hydrogen gas ( $H_2$ ) from carbohydrates (Mai and Adams, 1994; Hafez et al., 2014). It can also catalyze lactose, galactose, arabinose, glycerol, and mannitol to produce  $H_2$  at a lower yield. Compared to the anaerobic breakdown of glucose, fructose, and mannose, which was comparable to that of formate. However, they suggested that formate had not been the intermediary in the  $H_2$  generation from glucose (Mai and Adams, 1994; Hafez et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, Ordal and Halvorson, (1939) and Wang et al., (2017) examined the creation of  $H_2$  from sugars and formic acid by regular and mutant strains of *E. coli* and demonstrated that the source of  $H_2$  from glucose was unquestionably formic acid, which is an intermediary in the bacterial production of  $H_2$ . Since formate is not the only byproduct of glucose, the anaerobic generation of  $H_2$  from carbohydrates by *E. coli* cells had low conversion rates. Growing *E. coli* produced 90 mmol of ethanol and acetate, 90 mmol of  $H_2$  and formate, and 15 mmol of  $CO_2$  and succinate from 100 mmol of glucose, according to observations on carbon balance (Blackwood et al., 1956; Bohnenkamp et al., 2021)

In the absence of any electron acceptor, such as nitrate or fumarate, it was discovered that pyruvate produced from glucose metabolized in two phases (Ruiz-Herrera and Alvarez, 1972; Schubert and Uden, 2023; Schuber and Uden, 2023)

## 4.2 *Enterobacter*

*Enterobacter aerogenes* has been identified to generate maximum production of 0.20 to 0.21 H<sub>2</sub>/h/l in a medium comprising of salts, glucose, and peptone at 38 to 40 °C (Pachapur et al., 2017; Tanisho et al., 1983). A later identification of the strain as *E. aerogenes* led to the optimization of H<sub>2</sub> production to 0.52 l H<sub>2</sub>/h/l of medium over a 23-hour period. The generation of H<sub>2</sub> followed a mol/mol glucose stoichiometry.

78% of studies were also conducted on the effects of pH and biomass yield on the strain's ability to produce H<sub>2</sub>. The maximum H<sub>2</sub> evolution rate at 38 °C was 13 mmol H<sub>2</sub>/g dry weight cell/h when glucose was the carbon source (Tanisho et al., 1989; Łukajtis et al., 2018).

At a mol/mol conversion rate, the strain produced H<sub>2</sub> using glucose, galactose, fructose, and mannose. For the same conversion rate, the strain also produced H<sub>2</sub> using dextrin. Moreover, production was seen in continuous culture for 26 days. At a rate of 0.8 mol H<sub>2</sub>/mol of glucose, the evolution of H<sub>2</sub> occurred at an average rate of 120 ml/h/l in the medium. It was thought that the accumulation of acids such as acetic, succinic, and lactic acids had an inhibitory effect, which caused the decrease in H<sub>2</sub> generation that was shown in the later phase.

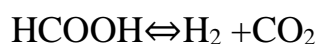
## 5. Production of hydrogen by Aerobes

### 5.1 *Alcaligenes*

The aerobic H<sub>2</sub> producing bacteria can use H<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> as their sole source of energy and carbon, respectively. The organisms contain a soluble NAD-reducing hydrogenase (HD) and can grow heterotrophically (Probst and Schlegel, 1977; Schneider and Schlegel, 1977; Cordero et al., 2019) showed that *Alcaligenes eutrophus*, growing heterotrophically on gluconate or fructose, developed molecular H<sub>2</sub> from organic substrate under anaerobic conditions. *A. eutrophus* contains soluble



NAD-reducing HD, which reduces NAD directly with H<sub>2</sub> and disposes of excess reducing agent in the form of H<sub>2</sub> when grown under anaerobic conditions. Electrons that come from the breakdown of organic substrates do not enter the respiratory chain (Klibanov et al.,1982; Hards and Cook, 2017). The immobilized cells of *A. eutrophus* examined reversible reactions.



During the decomposition of formate, a higher concentration of formate (>0.5 M) inhibited H<sub>2</sub> production. Although the immobilized cells had good storage stability, no sustained formate lysis by the immobilized cells could be detected.

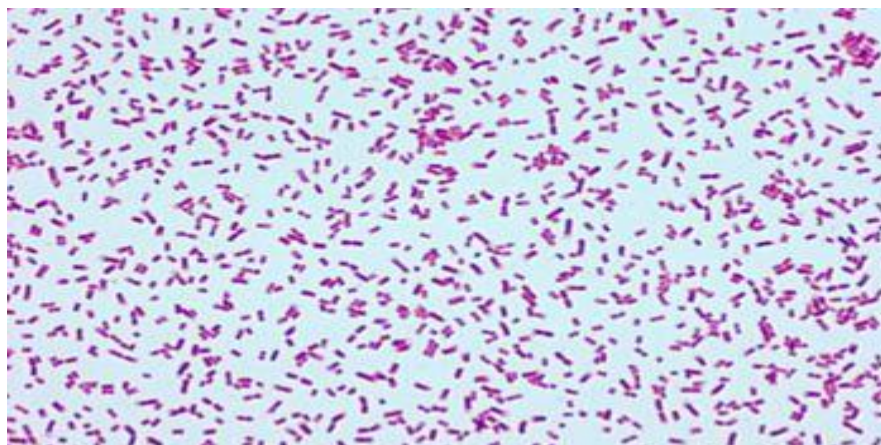


Fig. 10 Represent phenotypic examination of H<sub>2</sub> producing *Alcaligenes* bacteria (Adams and Moss, 2008)

## 5.2 *Bacillus*

The hydrogen-producing culture of *Bacillus licheniformis* (Kalia et al.,1994; Banerjee and Ghosh, 2020) from a mixed culture of H<sub>2</sub>-producing bacteria from cattle manure. In the batch culture, *B. licheniformis* produces 13 l H<sub>2</sub>/mol 3% (w/v) glucose in the medium (Kumar et al.,1995; Zhai et al., 2019). The cells were immobilized on brick dust and in calcium alginate beads. Alginate beads had an H<sub>2</sub> production efficiency of 16 L/mol glucose/day compared to 31 L/mol/day for cells

immobilized on brick dust. The immobilized cells were stable in the continuous system for 60 days and an average conversion ratio of 1.5 mol H<sub>2</sub>/mol glucose was achieved.

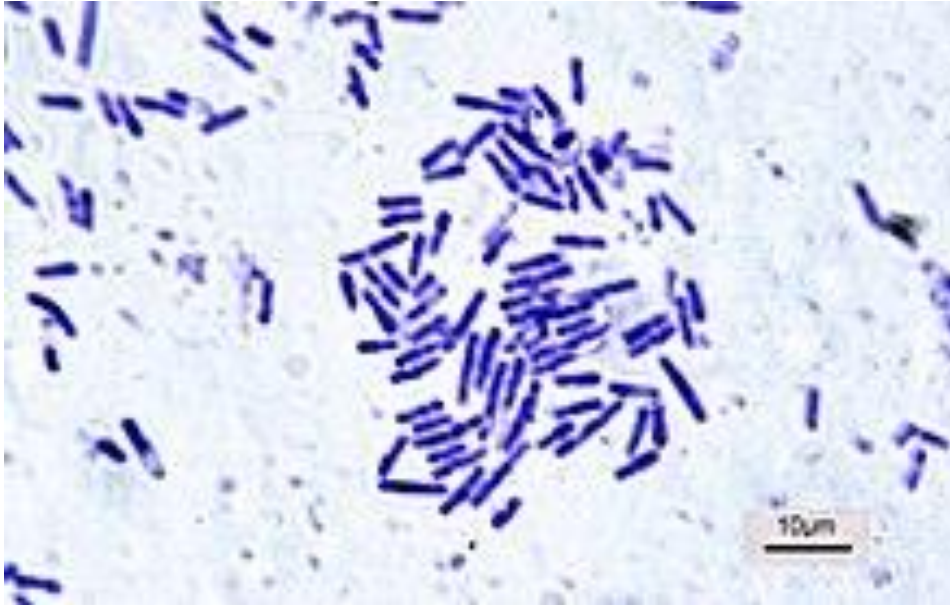


Fig. 11 represents phenotypic examination of *Bacillus* (Caulier et al., 2019)

## 6. Hydrogen Production by photosynthetic bacteria

The photosynthetic bacteria have a very diverse metabolic repertoire and have been recognized for many years to generate hydrogen when photofermentative growth. Here, recent advances in hydrogen production by these organisms are discussed and future directions are suggested. Photosynthetic bacteria that use certain organic wastes could be advantageous compared to other biological systems in the large-scale production of hydrogen along with high-quality dietary protein. One of the disadvantages of this system is its dependence on light, which requires the use of photobioreactors. This potentially significantly increases the cost of such a system. In another approach that avoids the use of light energy, the restricted oxidation phosphorylation driven microaerobic fermentation of organic acids to hydrogen, was demonstrated in principle. Further advances will likely require the use of metabolic engineering and more sophisticated process controls to achieve

higher stoichiometries, approaches that could be applied to other, light-dependent hydrogen production processes in these organisms.

Research has been intensified to find new fuel sources to replace fossil hydrocarbons. Hydrogen is considered the ideal and pollutant-free fuel of the future (Benemann et al., 1974; Cano et al., 2015). Biological production of hydrogen has been observed in many microbial species (Gray et al., 1965; Puyol et al., 2017). Photosynthetic bacteria have long been studied for their ability to produce hydrogen from organic acids in a light-dependent reaction called photofermentation. Hydrogen is produced from substrates where this is normally difficult from a thermodynamic point of view (Hallenbeck, 2011; Neczaj and Grosser, 2019). This is possible because additional energy can be supplied through bacterial photosynthesis (Fig. 12).

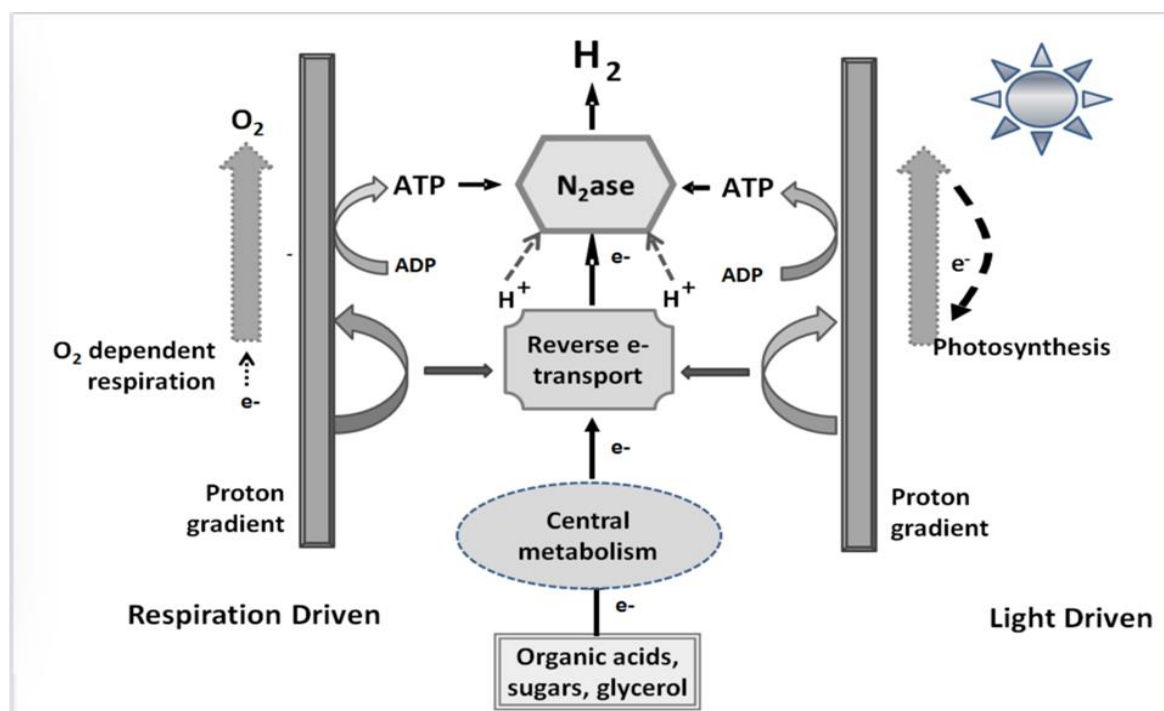


Fig 12. Integration of  $H_2$  production by photosynthetic bacteria with cellular metabolism. A schematic of the interactions with various metabolisms necessary for nitrogenase activity in the photosynthetic bacterium *Rhodobacter capsulatus*. ATP is supplied either by oxidative phosphorylation during microaerobic respiration (left) or by cyclic photophosphorylation (right). High energy electrons are generated from central

metabolism through reverse electron flow driven by proton gradients created during microaerobic respiration (left) or cyclic photosynthesis (right) (Chookaew et al., 2015).

For large-scale production, photosynthetic organisms that can harness solar energy offer several advantages over heterotrophs. Light-dependent production of hydrogen by photosynthetic bacteria was first observed in cultures of *Rhodospirillum rubrum* (Gest et al., 1949; Grechanik et al., 2020). Purple sulfur-free bacteria produce hydrogen and CO<sub>2</sub> through light-dependent decomposition of several organic compounds (Gest et al., 1962; Ormerod et al., 1961; Kushkevych et al., 2024).

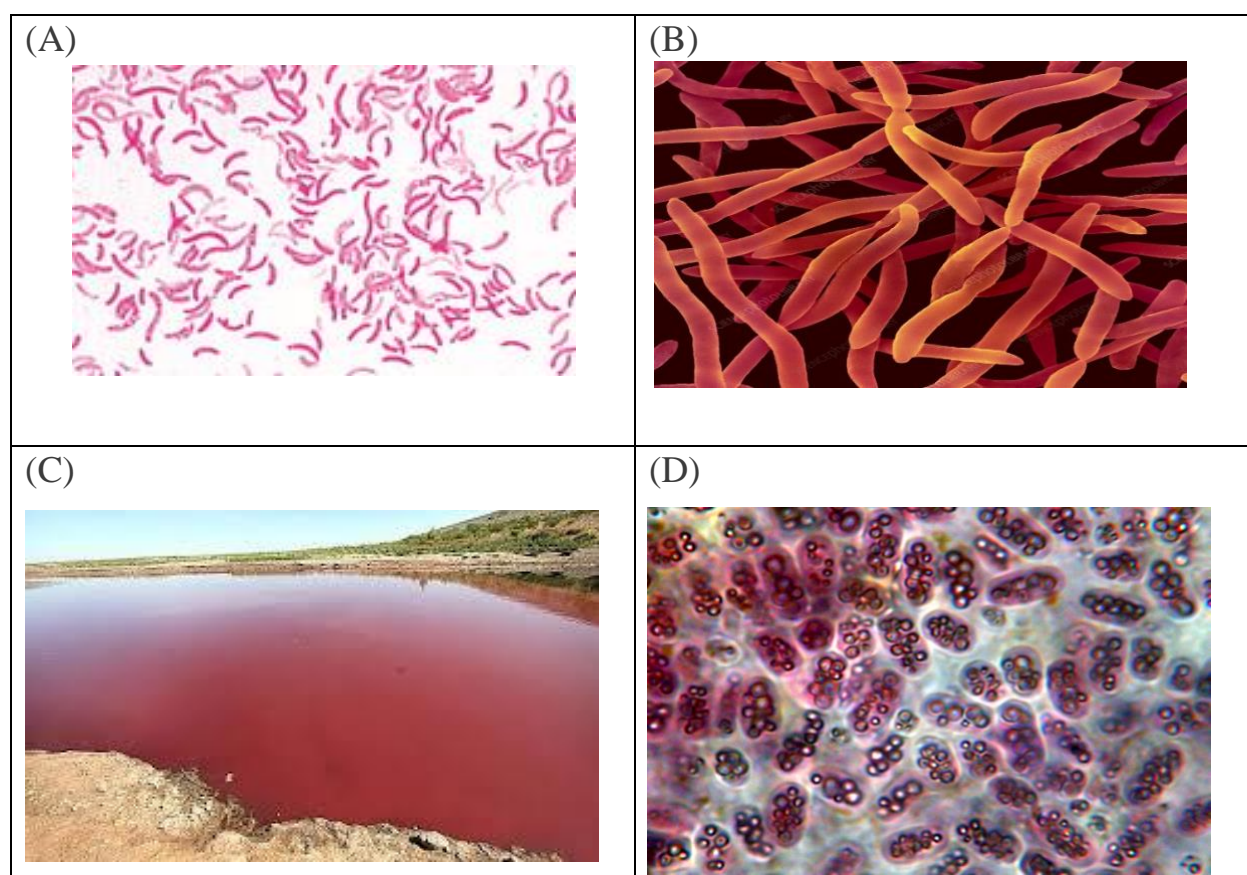


Fig. 13 (A, B) represents phenotypic examination of *Rhodospirillum rubrum* and (C, D) Purple sulfur-free bacteria produce hydrogen and CO<sub>2</sub> through light-dependent decomposition of several organic compounds (Narancic et al., 2018).



Since hydrogen evolution is inhibited by ammonium salts and molecular nitrogen in both photosynthetic bacteria and blue-green algae, Nitrogenase catalyzes the generation of hydrogen in both types of organisms. In addition to hydrogen, algae also produce oxygen. Before hydrogen can be used as fuel, it must be separated from oxygen and possibly other gases in an energy-intensive process.

However, in photosynthetic bacteria, the only gas produced besides hydrogen is CO<sub>2</sub>. This is a great advantage because the gas released can be reused without further processing. Algae can use water as a hydrogen donor, whereas purple non-sulfur bacteria require an organic substrate. High yields of hydrogen can be achieved, for example with lactic acid as a hydrogen donor (Hillmer et al., 1977; Wei et al., 2020).

There are also wastes containing lactic acid that are present in large quantities. The mutual relationship between algae and three bacteria a group at the University of Córdoba's study shows the highest hydrogen production obtained so far by this type of consortium (see Fig. 14)

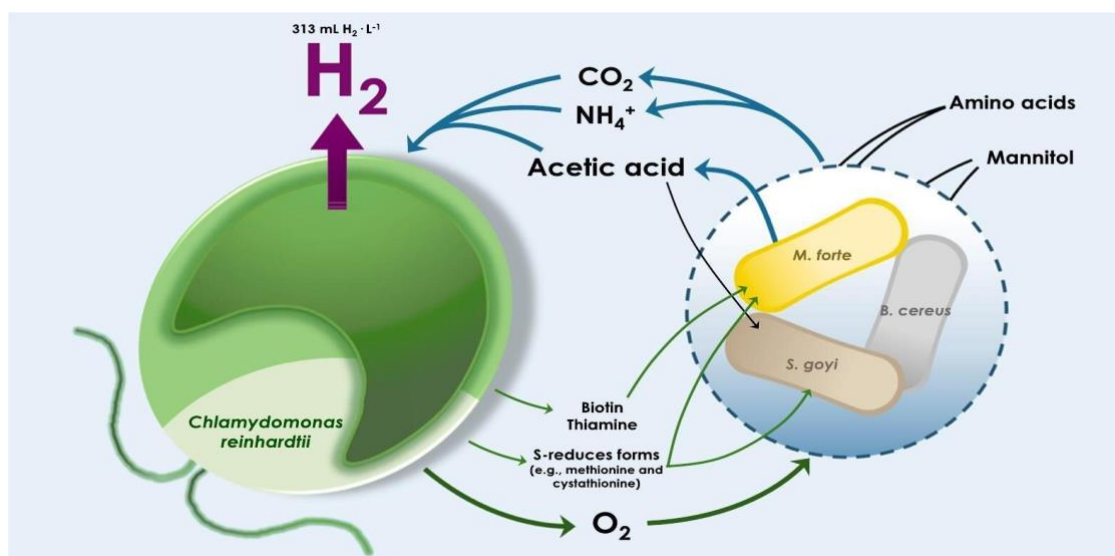


Fig. 14. A consortium of algae and bacteria boosts the production of green hydrogen and biomass while cleaning water (Fakhimi et al., 2019)

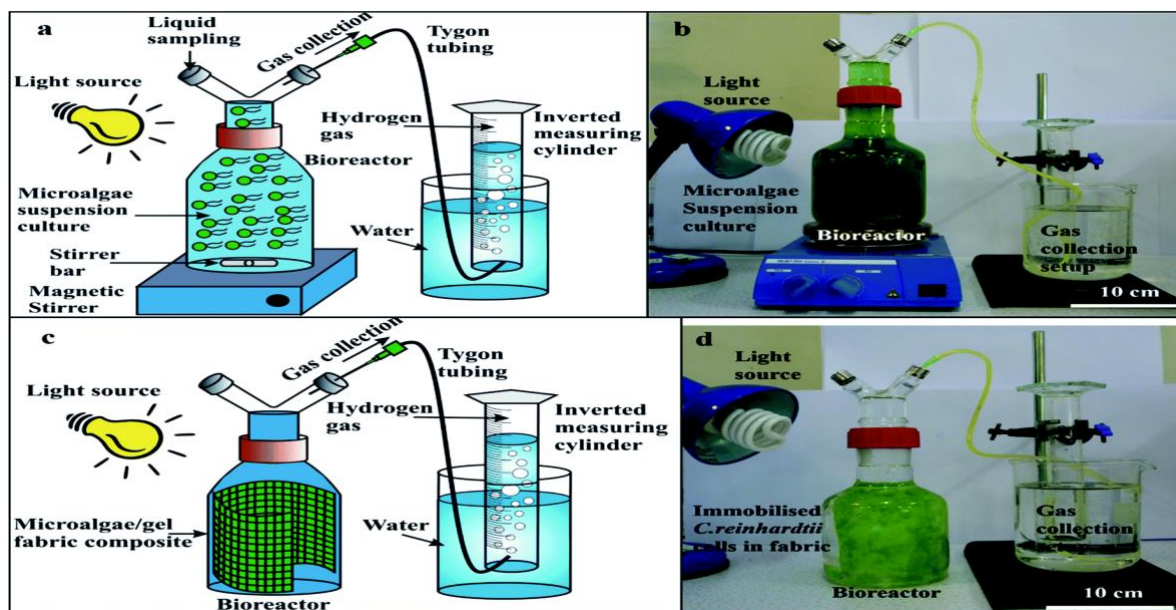


Fig. 15 Artificial leaf device for hydrogen generation from immobilised *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii* microalgae (Das et al., 2015)

## 6.1 Basic Mechanisms

Hydrogen normally evolved by aid of nitrogenase enzyme, which is normally active in  $N_2$  reduction and reduces protons to hydrogen (Masepohl and Hallenbeck 2010; Hammes, 2015). This reaction is ATP dependent and therefore energetically demanding. Normally, this demand can be met by the action of bacterial photosynthesis, where ATP is produced through the light-controlled generation of a proton gradient. This proton gradient is also used to create the low potential electrons required for proton reduction through a process of reverse electron flow. The synthesis of this enzyme is repressed under N-rich conditions (Masepohl and Hallenbeck, 2010; Zhang et al., 2020), so substrates usually need to be N-poor unless special permissive mutants are used (Adessi et al., 2012; Seefeldt et al., 2020). Knowledge about the metabolic pathways involved can be used through metabolic engineering in experiments to increase hydrogen yield (Hallenbeck et al., 2012; El-Dalatony et al., 2020). Fundamentally, it appears that blocking pathways redirecting NADH,  $CO_2$  fixation and polyhydroxybutyrate (PHB) synthesis should make more reducing agents available for nitrogenase and its reduction of protons to hydrogen.

## **6.2 Methods for improving hydrogen production by photosynthetic bacteria**

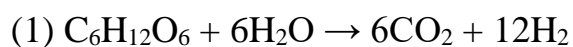
### **6.2.1 Photofermentations**

As mentioned previously, most studies on H<sub>2</sub> production by photosynthetic bacteria involved the use of organic acids, lactate, acetate and succinate as substrates (Han et al., 2013, Kobayashi et al., 2011, McKinlay et al., 2014). As already mentioned, these reactions only occur in the absence of ammonium, except in special mutant strains. While the metabolic advantage to the cell is not immediately apparent and might even appear contradictory considering how energy- intensive it is to repair carbon dioxide in the presence of an easily assimilable solid carbon source, various lines of evidence suggest that proton reduction to hydrogen under these conditions is necessary to achieve this to maintain cellular redox balance (Gordon and McKinlay, 2014). Recent results suggest that the formation of soluble microbial products (SMPs) is an additional factor limiting yields and that this can be overcome by adding a small amount of ethanol, an effect that is not currently fully understood (Kim et al., 2014). A reduction in SMP production would most likely contribute to an increase in hydrogen production, as this study showed, but a metabolic intervention that brings this about is not obvious since SMPs produced through various types of fermentation are a complex mixture of proteins, amino acids and nucleic acids appear to be organic acids, products of energy metabolism and cellular structural components (Kunacheva and Stucky, 2014)

### **6.2.2 Single and Two-Stage Systems**

Various systems have been studied that use photosynthetic bacteria in conjunction with fermentative bacteria to drive the near-complete conversion of

sugar to hydrogen. In principle, 12 moles of H<sub>2</sub> can be obtained from one mole of glucose (equation (1)).



However, a maximum of 4 moles of H<sub>2</sub> can be produced through dark fermentation alone, which corresponds to a yield of only 33%, while at the same time organic acids such as acetate and lactate are produced as by-products. Many of these substrates are products of other microbial fermentations, suggesting that photofermentative hydrogen production could be used to produce additional hydrogen following or alongside dark hydrogen fermentation (Hallenbeck, 2011; Keskin et al., 2011; Lo et al., 2011; oledo et al., 2018).

Photosynthetic bacteria can be used to convert these organic acids into additional hydrogen, either in a single combined process or in a two-step process. Although these systems are elegant in principle, in practice they are difficult to use and optimize. In combined systems, the very different culture requirements of the two different organisms are problematic, and in systems with two stages, the waste from the dark fermentation stage requires significant treatment and handling, both costly with inefficient processes, to get it to a state where it becomes a suitable, non-inhibiting substrate for the photosynthetic bacteria.

Originally, dark fermentation and photofermentation were coupled as two sequential stages to achieve complete extraction of available electrons for H<sub>2</sub> production, which should theoretically yield 12 moles of H<sub>2</sub> per mole of glucose (Equation (1)). For example, one study used a hyperthermophile, *Caldicellulosiruptor saccharolyticus*, to ferment molasses in a dark stage, followed using several different photosynthetic bacteria to produce hydrogen in a light-controlled process using organic acids produced in the previous stage (Ozgur et al., 2010; Pandit et al., 2014), more details are shown in (Table 5).

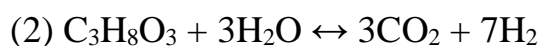


This approach is essentially of low efficiency considering the high energy input and potentially complex design of a bioreactor suitable for the two very different processes. Substantially similar results were observed using integrated systems to convert potato starch to hydrogen, achieving overall yields close to 5.6 (Laurinavichene et al., 2012; Laurinavichene et al., 2010; Venkata et al., 2016), or with a system consisting of *Clostridium butyricum* and *Rhodopseudomonas palustris* that converts sucrose to hydrogen (Lo et al., 2010; Ramkumar et al., 2021). Finally, a two-stage system was proposed for the conversion of glycerol, which is a waste of biodiesel production, into hydrogen, but the molar yields were quite low (Table 5) (Chookaew et al., 2015). In fact, a simple one-step process appears to be very effective, allowing an essentially stoichiometric conversion of glycerol to hydrogen (see below Table 5). Recently, a significant improvement in yields for a two-stage system to 9.4 mol H<sub>2</sub> per mol glucose was demonstrated by using capnophilic fermentation of glucose to lactate and hydrogen by *Thermotoga neapolitana* (Table 5) (Dipasqual et al., 2015). This is essentially possible because increased CO<sub>2</sub> partial pressure shifts the fermentation products toward more lactate at the expense of acetate, thus creating a more productive substrate for the photosynthetic bacterium without affecting the hydrogen yield of *T. neapolitana*. In an alternative approach, which is relatively new as it has been little studied, the direct photofermentation of sugars to hydrogen is being developed.

Although organic acids are preferred for photosynthetic bacteria, early reports of these organisms noted that some could grow on different sugars. However, the conversion of these substrates, which may be quite common in various waste streams (Keskin et al., 2011; Koyama et al., 2016) or as energy crops, into hydrogen has been little investigated to date (Abo-Hashesh et al, 2011, Cai and Wang, 2014).

An initial study showed that the direct conversion of glucose to hydrogen was possible using the photosynthetic bacterium *Rhodobacter capsulatus* JP91 alone and an H<sub>2</sub> yield of 3 moles of H<sub>2</sub> per mole of glucose was achieved (Abo-Hashesh et al, 2011; Balachandar et al., 2020). Later work using the response surface method or continuous culture operation further improved the hydrogen yields to 5.5 and 9 mol

H<sub>2</sub> per mol glucose, respectively (Ghosh et al., 2012, Abo-Hashesh et al., 2013) (Table 5). In a more practical demonstration of a possible one-step process, the conversion of suitably diluted waste from sugar refining (beet and sugar beet molasses) was shown (Keskin and Hallenbeck, 2012; Ghimire et al., 2015). Similar yields (7.07 ) were also found for a mutant strain of *Rhodovulum sulfidophilum* (Cai and Wang, 2014). Further increases in rates and yields can be sought through the use of metabolic engineering. Related research has shown that glycerol, a common waste product of the biodiesel industry, can be quantitatively converted into hydrogen through photofermentation, achieving a yield of 6.9 mol H<sub>2</sub> per mol of crude glycerol, which is 96% of the theoretical amount (Ghosh et al., 2012; oledo et al., 2018). (Table 5), as shown in equation (2).



Current results also show that *Rhodopseudomonas palustris* CGA009 can be effectively used for the conversion of ethanol to hydrogen in a biological reforming reaction. A yield of 2 mol H<sub>2</sub> per mol ethanol was achieved, which is comparable to a chemical steam reforming process (Liu et al., 2015)

**Table 4.** Recent studies on single stage and two-stage H<sub>2</sub> production

Microorganism		Substrate	Yield (mol H <sub>2</sub> /mol hexose or glycerol)	Major advantages/disadvantages	Reference
Single-stage	<i>Rhodobacter capsulatus</i> JP91	Glucose	3	Simpler operation; suitable for metabolism study; substrates limited to a few sugars and some organic acids	(Abo-Hashesh et al., 2011)
	<i>Rhodobacter capsulatus</i> JP91	Glucose	5.5		(Ghosh et al., 2012)
	<i>Rhodovulum sulfidophilum</i> P5	Glucose	7.07		(Cai and Wang, 2014)
	<i>Rhodobacter capsulatus</i> JP91	Glucose	9		(Abo-Hashesh et al., 2013)
	<i>Rhodobacter capsulatus</i> JP91	Sucrose	7		(Keskin and Hallenbeck, 2012)
	<i>Rhodopseudomonas palustris</i> CGA009	Glycerol	6.69		(Ghosh et al., 2012)
Two-stage	<i>Thermotoga neapolitana</i> DSM 4359T and <i>Rhodopseudomonas palustris</i> 42OL	Glucose	9.4	Broad substrate range; addition operational cost from treatment of fermentation effluents of first stage	(Dispasquale et al., 2015)
	Microbial consortium and mixture of <i>Rhodobacter capsulatus</i> B10 and <i>Rhodobacter sphaeroides</i> N7	Starch	5.3		(Laurinavichene et al., 2012)
	<i>Caldicellulosiruptor saccharolyticus</i> and <i>Rhodobacter capsulatus</i> YO3	Beet molasses	6.8		(Ozgur et al., 2010)
	Microbial consortium and <i>Rhodobacter capsulatus</i> B10	Potato	5.6		(Laurinavichene et al., 2010)
	<i>Clostridium butyricum</i> CGS55 and <i>Rhodopseudomonas palustris</i> WP3-5	Sucrose	5.8		(Lo et al., 2010)
	<i>Klebsiella</i> sp. TR17 and <i>Rhodopseudomonas palustris</i> TN1	glycerol	0.8		(Chookaew et al., 2015)

## **7. Hydrogen Production by Cyanobacteria**

Because of the non-renewable fossil fuels will eventually run out, and there has been extremely substantial environmental contamination brought on using fossil fuels. Therefore, it's imperative to locate renewable and environmentally acceptable alternative energy sources (Das and Veziroglu, 2001; Das and Veziroglu, 2008). Hydrogen is considered as a renewable and clean energy source since it may be created by variable methods. Furthermore, hydrogen is highly environmentally benign since it only releases water when burned as fuel or used to generate energy (Hawkes et al., 2002; Kapdan and Kargi 2006; Hassan et al., 2023).

Hydrogen, as an alternative energy source, holds great promise and has gained an increase of global interest in the past few years. The biological technique is recognized as being less energy-intensive among the many hydrogen production procedures because it may be done at room temperature and pressure (Nishio and Nakashimada, 2004; Kraemer and Bagley, 2007; Li et al., 2024). Photosynthesis and fermentation are the two primary methods of producing hydrogen through biological means, though photosynthetic machinery of microorganisms which convert solar energy into hydrogen in a process that is theoretically flawless. However, it is challenging to put into practice because of the low light utilization efficiency and challenges in building reactors for hydrogen generation (Hawkes et al., 2007; Das and Veziroglu, 2008).

The benefits of fermentative hydrogen production include its easy operation and quick hydrogen production rate on the one hand. It can also produce hydrogen by fermentative means using a variety of organic wastes as a substrate on the other hand (see Fig .16). Thus, fermentation-based hydrogen production is more practical and therefore more extensively employed than photosynthetic hydrogen synthesis. Furthermore, it is crucial to use fermentative hydrogen production to create hydrogen from organic waste production, since it can produce both extremely clean energy and cleanse organic pollutants. As a result, fermentative hydrogen production has drawn more attention lately (Li, and Fang, 2007; Mohanakrishna and Pengadeth, 2024).

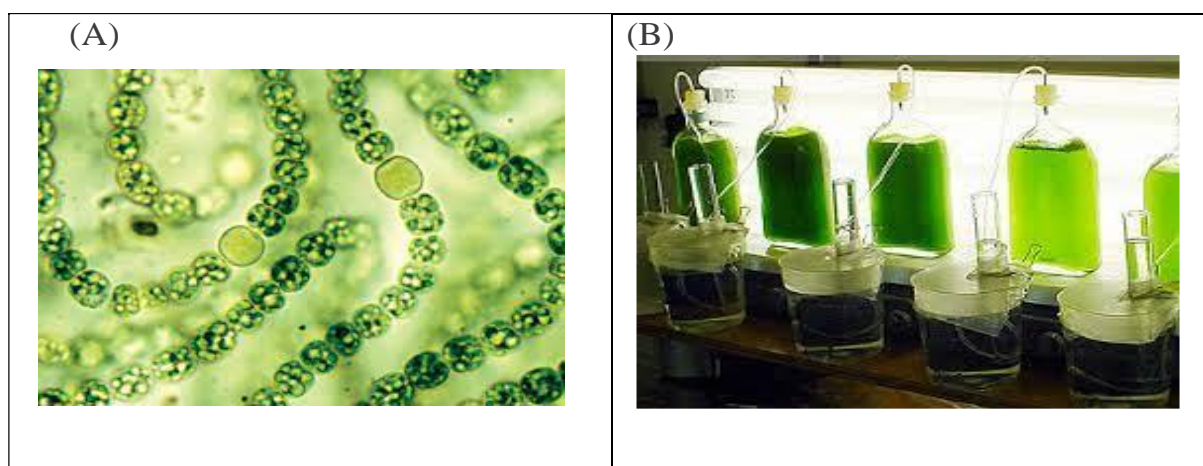


Fig. 16. (A) Phenotypic micrograph of photosynthetic cyanobacteria and (B) fermentative hydrogen production by cyanobacteria broth culture.

Fermentation-based hydrogen production is highly prevalent under anoxic environments. Electrons are created during the degradation of organic substrates by bacteria, and these electrons must be eliminated to preserve electrical neutrality. Protons can serve as an electron acceptor in anoxic settings to create molecular hydrogen (Das and Veziroglu, 2008; Akaniro et al, 2024)

Bacteria that create hydrogen can manufacture hydrogen from a variety of substrates, when fermentative hydrogen generation uses glucose as a model substrate. First, it is transformed into pyruvate by bacteria that produce hydrogen,

using the glycolytic route to produce nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NADH) in its reduced state, that further transformed by pyruvate–ferredoxin oxidoreductase and hydrogenase into acetylcoenzyme A (acetyl-CoA), carbon dioxide, and hydrogen. Additionally, pyruvate can be transformed into formate and acetyl-CoA, which can then be easily transformed into carbon dioxide and hydrogen. Finally, acetyl-CoA is transformed into a number of soluble metabolites, including ethanol, butyrate, and acetate (Hawkes et al, 2007; Li, and Fang, 2007; Jain et al, 2024).

Furthermore, the process of producing hydrogen through fermentative means is highly intricate and dependent on numerous variables, including pH, temperature, nitrogen, phosphate, metal ions, substrate, inoculum, and reactor type. Furthermore, in the past few years, research conducted all over the world have reported on the influence of these parameters on the formation of fermentative hydrogen (Li and Fang, 2007; Das and Veziroglu, 2008; Jain et al., 2024).

Similar to green algae, cyanobacteria have garnered significant interest from researchers studying biophotolysis as a means of producing hydrogen. Water in biological systems breaks down into oxygen and molecular hydrogen ( $H_2$ ) through a process called biophotolysis that occurs in the presence of light. Oxygendependent photosynthesis is a feature of photosynthetic microorganisms, including microalgae and cyanobacteria

Chlorophyll pigments in the thylakoid membrane of photosynthetic organisms absorb light and create molecular oxygen during photosynthesis. Then, with the aid of ATP and NADPH, carbon dioxide is transformed into triose phosphate through enzymatic processes. The physiological and morphological diversity of cyanobacteria allows them to produce hydrogen gas ( $H_2$ ) through both direct and indirect biophotolysis (Brentner et al., 2010; Kossalbayev et al., 2020). (see Fig. 17).

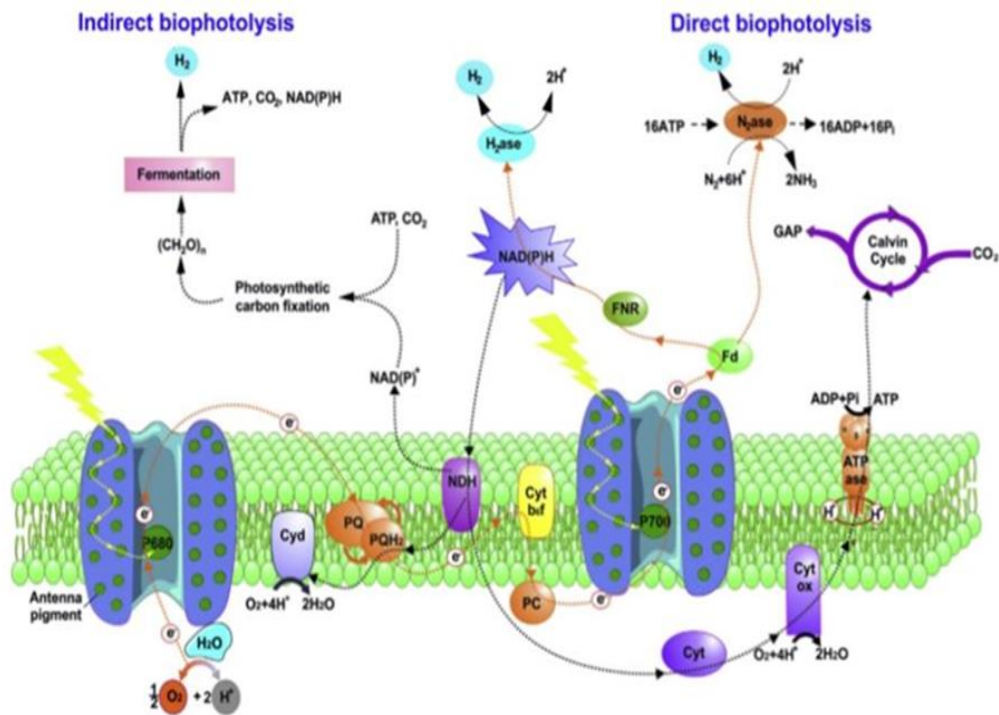


Fig. 17. Direct and indirect biophotolysis processes by photosynthetic microorganisms towards hydrogen production (Kossalbayev et al., 2020).

Water cleavage and further ferredoxin reduction are utilized in indirect biophotolysis, a sort of direct procedure, to fix carbon dioxide. The reduced carbohydrate molecule that results from this process can be employed to stimulate the release of hydrogen in a different reaction. This two-stage process divides the evolution of oxygen and hydrogen into distinct stages in space and time to prevent oxygen inhibition (Kossalbayev et al., 2020). Because different cyanogenases and hydrogenases are possessed by cyanobacteria, therefore, different species have different metabolic pathways to produce hydrogen (Khetkorn et al., 2012; Kufryk, 2013; Kossalbayev et al., 2020).

Both hydrogenase and nitrogenase can be synthesized by some cyanobacteria. Nitrogenase's action causes heterocystic cyanobacteria to release hydrogen, which is known to be the most promising form of hydrogen release because oxygen-producing photosynthesis and oxygen-sensitive proton reduction reactions are separated in space. However, since heterocyst formation is known to be

accompanied by a massive energy consumption, an energy-efficient method of producing biohydrogen is the production of hydrogen based on cyanobacteria that do not form heterocysts. The majority of research, nevertheless, focuses on the nitrogenase-dependent cyanobacteria that produce hydrogen using heterocysts. Insufficient data exists regarding the utilization of nitrogenase and hydrogenase enzymes in the production of hydrogen by non-heterocystotic cyanobacteria strains. Three strains of cyanobacteria that do not form heterocysts were studied: *Desertifilum* sp. IPPAS B-1220, *Synechococcus* sp. I12, and *Phormidium corium* B-26. The goal was to identify more productive strains of phototrophic microorganisms that are actively producing hydrogen (Kossalbayev et al., 2020).

It was discovered that the strains *Synechococcus* sp, I12 and *Phormidium corium* B-26 lacked nitrogen-fixing activity during an initial investigation of nitrogenase activity, The nitrogenase and hydrogenase of the strain *Desertifilum* sp, IPPAS B-1220 are present. The four strains are all of interest when looking for potential hydrogen producers that don't require a lot of energy, similar to nitrogen-fixing heterocystic cultures (Ikeuchi and Tabata, 2001; Carrieri et al., 2008; Kossalbayev et al., 2020).

## **8. Major Factors influencing hydrogen production**

There are many factors that increase the process of hydrogen production such as pH, temperature, substrates and other micro elements

### **8.1. Temperature**

One of the most significant variables influencing the activities of bacteria that produce hydrogen, and the fermentative production of hydrogen is temperature. It has been shown that raising the temperature within a certain range may enhance the capacity of bacteria that produce hydrogen during the fermentative hydrogen production process, yet it could diminish if temperatures rise to even higher levels (Wang and Wan,2008).; de Gois Araújo Tavares et al, 2023).



Data in Table 5 outlines a number of studies looking into how temperature affects the production of fermentative hydrogen, although the ideal temperature for the generation of fermentative hydrogen was not always the same, it often fell between the mesophilic (about 37 °C) and thermophilic (about 55 °C) (Li and Fang, 2007).

Table 5. The effect of temperature fermentative hydrogen production

Inoculum	Substrates	Reactor type	Temperature (°C)		Optimal index (value)	References
			Range studied	Optimal		
<i>Ethanoligenens harbinense</i> YUAN-3	Glucose	Batch	20–44	37	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.34 mol/mol glucose)	(Xing, et al., 2008)
Anaerobic sludge	Glucose	Batch	25–55	40	Maximum hydrogen yield (275.1 mL/g glucose)	(Wang and Wan, 2008)
Anaerobic sludge	Glucose	Batch	33–41	41	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.67 mol/mol glucose)	(Mu et al., 2006)
Anaerobic sludge	Sucrose	Batch	25–45	35.1	Maximum hydrogen yield (3.7 mol/mol sucrose)	Wang et al., 2005)
Anaerobic sludge	Sucrose	Batch	25–45	35.5	Maximum hydrogen yield (252 mL/g sucrose)	Mu et al., 2006)
Anaerobic digester sludge	Rice slurry	Batch	37–55	37	Maximum hydrogen yield (346 mL/g carbohydrate)	(Fang et al., 2006)
Municipal sewage sludge	Sucrose	Continuous	30–45	40	Maximum hydrogen yield (3.88 mol/mol sucrose)	(Lee et al., 2006)
<i>Thermoanaerobacterium thermosaccharolyticum</i> PSU-2	Sucrose	Batch	40–80	60	Maximum hydrogen yield (2.53 mol/mol hexose)	(Sompong et al., 2008)
Municipal sewage sludge	Starch	Batch	37–55	55	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.44 mmol/g starch)	(Lee et al., 2008)
Municipal sewage sludge	Xylose	Continuous	30–55	50	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.4 mol/mol xylose)	(Lin et al., 2008)
Cow dung	Cow dung	Batch	37–75	60	Maximum hydrogen yield (743 mL/kg cow dung)	(Yokoyama et al., 2007)
Cow waste slurry	Cow waste slurry	Batch	37–85	60	Maximum hydrogen yield (392 mL/L slurry)	(Yokoyama et al., 2007)
Anaerobic digester sludge	Organic waste	Semi-continuous	37–55	55	Maximum hydrogen yield (360 mL/ g VS)	(Valdez-Vazquez et al., 2005)

## 8.2. pH

Because pH may have an impact on both the hydrogenase activity and the metabolic route, it is a significant component that controls the activities of hydrogen-producing bacteria and the fermentative hydrogen production process, it has been shown that raising pH within a certain range may help hydrogen-producing bacteria create more hydrogen during the fermentative hydrogen generation process, but raising pH to much higher levels may actually reduce hydrogen production. Just the impact of starting pH on fermentative hydrogen production was examined in these investigations because the majority were batch mode experiments without pH control. A number of research examining the impact of starting pH on batch mode fermentative hydrogen production are compiled in Table 6 (Khanal et al., 2004; Ananthi et al., 2024).

Table 6 illustrates the degree of dispute on the ideal starting pH for fermentative hydrogen production, as an illustration, Khanal et al. (2024) recorded the ideal starting pH for fermentative hydrogen production was at pH value of 4.5 however, the value stated by Lee and colleagues was 9.0 (Lee et al., 2002). Furthermore, throughout the examination into how the initial pH affected the formation of fermentative hydrogen, sucrose was the most frequently utilized substrate. It is therefore advised to look into how the initial pH affects the formation of fermentative hydrogen utilizing organic waste as the substrate (Mu et al., 2006).

Table 6. The effect of pH on fermentative hydrogen production

Inoculum	Substrates	initial pH		Optimal index (value)	References
		Range studied	Optimal		
Compost	Sucrose	4.5–6.5	4.5	Maximum hydrogen yield (214 mL/g COD)	(Khanal et al., 2004)
Anaerobic sludge	Starch	5.0–7.0	5.0	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.1 mol/mol hexose)	(Lin et al.,2008)
<i>Clostridium butyricum</i> CGS5	Sucrose	5.0–6.5	5.5	Maximum hydrogen yield (2.78 mol/mol sucrose)	(Chen et al., 2005)
Waste activated sludge	Food wastewater	4.0–8.0	6.0	Maximum hydrogen yield (47.1 mmol/g COD)	(Wu and Lin,2004).
Anaerobic sludge	Starch	4.0–9.0	6.0	Maximum hydrogen yield (92 mL/g starch)	(Zhang et al., 2003)
<i>Thermoanaerobacterium thermosaccharolyticum</i> PSU-2	Sucrose	4.0–8.5	6.2	Maximum hydrogen yield (2.53 mol/mol hexose)	(Sompong et al.,2008)
Municipal sewage sludge	Xylose	5.0–9.5	6.5	Maximum hydrogen yield (2.25 mol/mol xylose)	(Lin and Cheng 2006)
Municipal sewage sludge	Xylose	5.0–8.5	6.5	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.3 mol/mol xylose)	(Lin et al., 2006)
Cow dung compost	Cornstalk wastes	4.0–9.0	7.0	Maximum hydrogen yield (149.69 mL/TVS)	(Zhang et al.,2007)
Cow dung sludge	Cellulose	5.5–9.0	7.5	Maximum hydrogen yield (2.8 mmol/g cellulose)	(Lin and Hung, 2008).
Municipal sewage sludge	Sucrose	5.5–8.5	7.5	Maximum hydrogen yield (2.46 mol/mol sucrose)	(Wang et al., 2006)
Anaerobic granular sludge	Glucose	3.88–8.12	7.5	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.46 mol/mol glucose)	(Davila-Vazquez et al., 2008)
Cracked cereals	Starch	4.0–9.0	8.0	Maximum hydrogen yield (120 mL/g starch)	Liu and Shen,2004).
Anaerobic digester sludge	Sucrose	3.0–12.0	9.0	Maximum hydrogen yield (126.9 mL/g sucrose)	(Lee et al., 2002)

### 8.3. Nitrogen and Phosphate

Since proteins, nucleic acids, and enzymes are highly dependent on nitrogen for growth, nitrogen is also essential for the production of hydrogen by bacteria, it is among the most important nutrients required for the development of bacteria that produce hydrogen. As a result, the development of hydrogen-producing bacteria and the creation of fermentative hydrogen benefit from an adequate degree of nitrogen input (Bisaillon et al., 2006; Kamshybayeva et al., 2023)

The studies looking into how nitrogen content affects fermentative hydrogen production are compiled in Table 7.

Table 7. The effect of nitrogen concentration on fermentative hydrogen production

Inoculum	Substrates	initial pH		Optimal index (value)	References
		Range studied	Optimal		
Escherichia coli	Glucose	0–0.2 g N/L	0.01 g N/L	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.7 mol/mol glucose)	(Bisaillon et al., 2006)
Dewatered and thickened sludge	Glucose	0.5–10 g N/L	7 g N/L	Maximum hydrogen production (150 mL)	(Salerno et al., 2006)
Grass compost	Food wastes	0–0.6 g N/L	0.4 g N/L	Maximum hydrogen yield (77 mL/g TVS)	(Lay et al., 2005)
Cracked cereals	Starch	0.1–2 g N/L	1g N/L	Maximum hydrogen yield (146 mL/g starch)	(Liu and Shen, 2004).
Compost	Glucose	2–8% yeast extract	4% yeast extract	Maximum hydrogen production (70 mmol)	(Morimoto et al., 2004)
<i>Enterobacter aerogenes</i> HO-39	Glucose	0–5% polyptoton	2% polyptoton	Maximum hydrogen production (58 mL)	(Yokoi et al., 1995)

### 8.4 Metal ion

Fermentative hydrogen synthesis requires a trace quantity of metal ions, even if in higher concentrations they may limit the activity of hydrogen-producing bacteria (Li and Fang, 2007; Gu et al., 2020). A summary of many studies examining the impact of metal ion concentration on fermentative hydrogen generation can be

found in Table 8. Given that hydrogenase requires  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  to function. Table 8 demonstrates that  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  was the metal ion that was studied the most for fermentative hydrogen generation (Wang and Wan, 2008).

Therefore, it is advised to conduct additional research on the impact of metal ion concentrations other than  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  concentration on fermentative hydrogen production. Furthermore, there is some debate on the ideal  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  concentration for fermentative hydrogen production. For instance, (Liu and Shen.,2004) found that 10 mg/L was the ideal  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  concentration for fermentative hydrogen generation But, Zhang et al.'s result indicated 589.5 mg/L (Zhang et al., 2005).

The discrepancy between this research regarding the inoculum, substrate, and  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  concentration range examined may have been the cause of this disagreement, Table 8 demonstrates that the most commonly utilized substrates in the study of the impact of metal ions on fermentative hydrogen generation were glucose and sucrose.

Consequently, utilizing organic waste as a substrate, research is being done on how nitrogen concentration affects the formation of fermentative hydrogen. Furthermore, the majority of the reviewed research examining the impact of metal ion concentration on fermentative hydrogen production were carried out in batch mode, as indicated by Table 8, and it is advised that more studies be carried out in continuous mode (Li and Fang, 2007; García-Depraect et al., 2023). The toxicity of heavy metals on the fermentation process that produces hydrogen was also examined in a number of research. According to Li and Fang's report, for instance, the following order represents the relative toxicity of six electroplating metals to fermentative hydrogen production:  $\text{Pb} > \text{Ni-Zn} > \text{Cr} > \text{Cd} > \text{Cu}$  (Li and Fang, 2007). Whereas Lin and Shei (2008) found that three heavy metals' proportional toxicity to the fermentation of hydrogen generation was in the subsequent order:  $\text{Zn} > \text{Cu} > \text{Cr}$ .

Table 8. The effect of metal ion concentrations on fermentative hydrogen production

Inoculum	Substrate s	React or type	Metal ion	Concentration (mg/L)		Optimal index (value)	References
				Range studied	Optimal		
Cracked cereals	Starch	Batch	Fe <sup>2+</sup>	1.2–100	10	Maximum hydrogen yield (140 mL/g starch)	(Liu and Shen,2004)
Anaerobic sludge	Starch	Batch	Fe <sup>2+</sup>	0–1473.7	55.3	Maximum hydrogen yield (296.2 mL/g starch)	Yang and Shen, 2006)
Grass compost	Food wastes	Batch	Fe <sup>2+</sup>	0–250	132	Maximum hydrogen yield (77 mL/g TVS)	(Lay et al., 2005)
Anaerobic sludge	Palm oil mill effluent	Batch	Fe <sup>2+</sup>	2–400	257	Maximum hydrogen yield (6.33 L/L substrate)	(Sompong et al., 2008)
Digested sludge	Glucose	Batch	Fe <sup>2+</sup>	0–1500	350	Maximum hydrogen yield (311.2 mL/g glucose)	(Wang and Wan,2008).
Anaerobic sludge	Starch	Batch	Fe <sup>2+</sup>	0–1763.8	352.8	Maximum hydrogen yield (131.9 mL/g sucrose)	(Lee et al., 2001)
Cracked cereals	Sucrose	Batch	Fe <sup>2+</sup>	0–1842.1	589.5	Maximum hydrogen yield (2.73 mol/mol sucrose)	( Zhang et al., 2005)
Anaerobic sludge	Glucose	Batch	Cu <sup>2+</sup>	0–400	400	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.74 mol/mol glucose)	(Zheng and Yu,2004).
Anaerobic sludge	Glucose	Batch	Zn <sup>2+</sup>	0–500	250	Maximum hydrogen yield (1.73 mol/mol glucose)	(Zheng and Yu,2004).
Hydrogen-producing bacterial B49	Glucose	Batch	Mg <sup>2+</sup>	1.2–23.6	23.6	Maximum hydrogen yield (2360.5 mL/L culture)	(Wang et al.,2007)
Digested sludge	Glucose	Batch	Ni <sup>2+</sup>	0–50	0.1	Maximum hydrogen yield (296.1 mL/g glucose)	(Wang, and Wan, 2008).
Digested sludge	Starch	Continuous	Ca <sup>2+</sup>	0–300	150	Maximum hydrogen yield (3.6 mol/mol sucrose)	( Chang and Lin,2006)
Municipal sewage sludge	Starch	Continuous	Ca <sup>2+</sup>	0–27.2	27.2	Maximum hydrogen yield (2.19 mol/mol sucrose)	(Lee et al., 2004)

## 8.5. Effects of microelements

Certain trace elements must be provided in order to ensure that a bacterium can carry out the metabolic pathways necessary for the creation of hydrogen efficiently. Because many enzymes require metal ions as co-factors, such as Na<sup>2+</sup>, Mg<sup>2+</sup>, Zn<sup>2+</sup>, and Fe<sup>2+</sup>, they can have an impact on how microbes produce hydrogen through metabolism. Important constituents of the main fermentative enzyme

hydrogenase include iron and nickel. Hexokinase and pyruvate kinase, two essential enzymes in the glycolytic cycle, are activated by magnesium (Caserta et al., 2015; Rodionova et al., 2017)

## 8.6. Effect of Substrates

The effectiveness of fermentative hydrogen production can be significantly impacted by the kind of substrate that is utilized. Simple sugars, which are extensively employed as substrates in the fermentation process to produce hydrogen, include glucose, maltose, and xylose. These sugars are easily biodegradable. Where, acid hydrolysis or enzymatic hydrolysis can convert starch into glucose and maltose, given that most microbes are unable to directly digest cellulose. For example, low hydrogen yields are obtained when cellulose is used as a feedstock. But using trash that is high in carbohydrates from the food or agriculture industries, the cost of producing hydrogen can be greatly decreased by using wastewater from industries like sugar manufacture, starch processing, and brewing.

The majority of research has focused on pure bacterial cultures that create hydrogen using six-carbon carbohydrates like glucose serving as frequent substrates. Five-carbon sugars like xylose can be also used by a few strains that produce hydrogen, although the yields of hydrogen produced are not very high. As an illustration, the newly isolated *Clostridium* sp. YM1, only 0.82 mol H<sub>2</sub> mol<sup>-1</sup> could be produced from xylose sugar, but 1.32 mol H<sub>2</sub> mol<sup>-1</sup> sugar from glucose (Yang et al., 2014)

a lactate dehydrogenase-deficient *Thermoanaerobacterium* strain's hydrogen yield from glucose and xylose was compared, and it was discovered to be 2.71 and 1.45 mol H<sub>2</sub> mol<sup>-1</sup> sugar, respectively, correspondingly. However, because of its high cost and limited availability brought on by the food crisis, pure glucose is not a suitable substrate for the synthesis of hydrogen,

For the creation of economically viable hydrogen on a big scale, renewable feedstock like organic waste shows greater promise. To illustrate, for every tone of

starch production requires 5–8 m<sup>3</sup> of cassava trash. This wastewater is a good substrate for producing hydrogen because it is high in BOD and COD (>10 g L<sup>-1</sup>) and rich in carbohydrates, organic waste. Besides, producing hydrogen at yields that are either higher than or comparable to those of pure substrates. Thus, the benefits of hydrogen production from zero-cost wastewater include cleaning the wastewater and generating clean energy at the same time without sacrificing efficiency. But a greater diversity of Hydrogen Producing Bacteria (HPB) is necessary due to the complexity of organic waste (Li et al., 2010).

## **9. Mixed Culture Technology.**

Pure cultures are constrained in their ability to metabolize complicated substrates; in contrast, mixed cultures, also known as co-cultures, offer a variety of benefits, including low stress tolerance, high yield and productivity, and a diversity of metabolic and genetic pools. More significantly, mixed cultures are typically chosen for industrial applications because of their practicality and simplicity of control in non-sterile situations, which significantly reduces processing expenses (Sivagurunathan et al., 2016; Kleerebezem and van., 2007). Natural consortia, artificial consortia, and synthetic consortia are the three broad categories into which mixed culture technology can be subdivided based on the mixed inoculums utilized.

### **9.1 Mixed Culture of Nature Consortia**

Numerous habitats, including soil, cow dung, municipal solid waste, activated sludge, and compost, are home to hydrogen producing bacteria (HPBs) (Wang et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2015; Yasin et al., 2013; Ren et al., 2010). In general, each of these sources (summarized in Table 6) can be utilized as an inoculum for the generation of hydrogen. But the nature consortia also include a range of non-hydrogen-producing microorganisms



that might potentially compete with or impede the activity of HPB in addition to HPB itself.

Lactate-producing bacteria, for instance, can prevent HPB by competing for substrates or by releasing bacteriocins. Other microorganisms that compete with HPB for nutrients include those that reduce nitrate, iron, or sulphate. More significantly, H<sub>2</sub>-consuming bacteria like homoacetogens and methanogens, which can convert hydrogen into acetate or CH<sub>4</sub>, can also be found in nature consortia. These bacteria can result in a low hydrogen yield (Yasin et al., 2013; saady 2013; Wong et al., 2014; Singh and Wahid., 2015).

Enrichment for the favorable HPB requires pre-treating the inoculum in order to maximize hydrogen production and yield. The pre-treatment approach often rests on the capacity of HPB, such *Clostridium* sp. to generate spores, which enable them to withstand severe environments more readily than non-spore forming bacteria (like methanogens) (Wong et al., 2014; Song et al., 2012).

Under the right circumstances, HPB endospores can germinate following pre-treatment. A few of the many approaches that have been tried for inoculum pre-treatment because they have been well studied (Song et al., 2012; Bundhoo et al., 2015). Pre-therapies can be broadly categorized into physical treatments including heat shock, freezing, thawing, UV radiation as well as microwave radiation.

Table 9. Hydrogen production by mixed culture of nature consortia.

Inoculum	Substrate	Hydrogen yield	HPRa) [mmol H <sub>2</sub> L <sup>-1</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> ]	Reference
Activated sludge	Glucose	1.93 mol H <sub>2</sub> mol <sup>-1</sup> glucose	3.89b)	(Guo et al., 2013)
Activated sludge	Alkaline pretreated-sludge	15.6 mL g <sup>-1</sup> volatile suspended solids	—	(Wang et al., 2018)
Activated sludge	Food waste	82.3 mL g <sup>-1</sup> volatile solids	0.66 b)	(Nathao et al., 2013)
H <sub>2</sub> -producing sludge	Food waste hydrolysate	85.6 mL g <sup>-1</sup> food waste	15.80 b)	(Han et al., 2015)
Anaerobic digester sludge	Coffee drink wastewater	1.78 mol H <sub>2</sub> mol <sup>-1</sup> glucose	123.21b)	(Jung et al., 2011)
Sewage sludge	Glucose	2.0 mol H <sub>2</sub> mol <sup>-1</sup> glucose	4.33 c)	(Sivagurunathan et al., 2014)
Thickened sludge	Sludge /ryegrass	60 mL g <sup>-1</sup> volatile solids	1.30 b)	(Yang and Wang., 2017)
Auto fermentation from synthetic wastewater	Sucrose	2.0 mol H <sub>2</sub> mol <sup>-1</sup> glucose	5.29 b) , 2.11c)	(Penteado et al., 2013)

a) HPR, hydrogen production rate; b) maximum HPR; c) average HPR.

Table 10. Studies of dark fermentation with mixed culture of artificial consortia.

Inoculum	Substrate	Hydrogen yield	HPRa) [mmol H <sub>2</sub> L <sup>-1</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> ]	Reference
<i>Enterobacter aerogenes</i> and <i>Clostridium butyricum</i>	Crude glycerol and Tween-80	32.1 mmol H <sub>2</sub> L <sup>-1</sup> of medium	—	(Pachapur et al., 2016)
<i>Enterobacter aerogenes</i> and <i>C. butyricum</i>	Crude glycerol	1.5 mmol H <sub>2</sub> mol <sup>-1</sup> glycerol	0.36 c)	(Pachapur et al., 2015)
<i>Escherichia coli</i> and <i>Enterobacter aerogenes</i>	Organic fraction of municipal solid waste	2.12 L H <sub>2</sub> L <sup>-1</sup> substrate	7.90 b)	(Sharma and Melkania., 2017)
<i>Clostridium thermocellum</i> and <i>C. thermosaccharolyticum</i>	Sweet sorghum stalks	5.1 mmol H <sub>2</sub> g <sup>-1</sup> substrate	—	(Islam et al., 2018)
<i>Caldicellulosiruptor saccharolyticus</i> and <i>C. kristjanssonii</i>	Glucose	3.7 mol H <sub>2</sub> mol <sup>-1</sup> glucose	11.6 b)	(Zeidan et al., 2010)
<i>Clostridium butyricum</i> and <i>Enterobacter aerogenes</i>	Crude glycerol and apple pomace hydrolysate	26.07 mmol H <sub>2</sub> L <sup>-1</sup> of medium	—	(Pachapur et al., 2015)
<i>Bacillus cereus</i> A1 and <i>Brevumdimonas naejangsanensis</i> B1	Corn starch	1.94 mol H <sub>2</sub> mol <sup>-1</sup> glucose	0.95b)	(Bao et al., 2013)
<i>Bacillus cereus</i> A1 and <i>Brevumdimonas naejangsanensis</i> B1	Cassava starch	1.72 mol H <sub>2</sub> mol <sup>-1</sup> glucose	1.25c)	(Wang et al., 2017)
<i>Bacillus cereus</i> A1 and <i>Brevumdimonas naejangsanensis</i> B1	Corn starch wastewaters	1.88 mol H <sub>2</sub> mol <sup>-1</sup> glucose	7.41b)	(Wang et al., 2016)

a) HPR, hydrogen production rate; b) maximum HPR; c) average HPR.

Also, chemical pre-treatments using substances like iodopropane, acid, alkali, and chloroform are used. Because heat shock is an easy, affordable, and efficient pre-treatment technique, it is most frequently employed to enrich spore-forming HPB such *Clostridium* sp. and *Bacillus* sp. Lactic acid bacteria, for instance, will be inhibited for 30 minutes at temperatures between 50 and 90 °C. (Noilke et al., 2002; Chang et al., 2011).

After 30 minutes of heating pre-treated waste activated sludge at 95 °C, the hydrogen output rose from 0.38 to 0.9 mol H<sub>2</sub> mol<sup>-1</sup> glucose. Nevertheless, some research has revealed concerns that heat shock treatment may inhibit certain non-

sporulating HPB, such as *Enterobacter* spp., and reduce hydrogen yield while partially suppressing some spore-forming H<sub>2</sub>-consuming bacteria, such as *Clostridium aceticum* and *Clostridium thermoautotrophicum* (Bakonyi et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2011). Thus, in order to maximize hydrogen yield, each shock parameter needs to be independently tuned.

## 9.2. Mixed Culture of Artificial Consortia

Numerous researchers have concentrated on artificially enriching hydrogen producing bacteria (HPB) by combining various pure bacterial cultures as the presence of inhibitory and H<sub>2</sub>-consuming bacteria limits the mixed culture of natural consortia (Wang et al., 2020). Compared to natural consortium mixed cultures, this artificial microbial mixed culture is more stable and has a higher hydrogen yield since it often has a fixed composition and well-characterized species (Wang et al., 2020). For instance, from activated sludge, Bao et al. (2012) recovered two HPB strains: *Bacillus cereus* A1 and *Brevundimonas naejangsanensis* B1

Wang et al., (2020) showed that, with comparatively high yields, a mixed culture of the two strains could directly produce hydrogen from raw cassava starch, unhydrolyzed maize starch, and even wastewaters made from corn starch (Bao et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016). Furthermore, Liu et al. (2012) created an artificial consortium for the fermentation of cornstalk waste by utilizing *Clostridium thermocellum* and *Clostridium thermosaccharolyticum* (Wang et al., 2020). When compared to the pure culture, they discovered that the mixed culture's hydrogen output was increased by 94.1% (Wang et al., 2020). However, building a stable and effective artificial consortium with three or more bacteria is extremely challenging because to the uneven growth rates of different bacteria and the imbalance between metabolite production and consumption (Weibel et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2020). To produce hydrogen from glycerol, Maru et al. (2013) for instance, created an artificial consortium made up of three strains: *Enterobacter* sp H<sub>1</sub>, *Enterobacter* sp H<sub>2</sub>, and *Citrobacter freundii* H<sub>3</sub> (Wang et al., 2020). The strains were mixed at a ratio of 1:1:1. In contrast

to the individual strains, the mixed culture produced significantly less hydrogen and failed to demonstrate any synergistic effects (Wang et al., 2020).

### 9.3. Mixed Culture of Synthetic Consortia

Mixed culture of synthetic consortia is an emerging field of study due to the rapid advancement of genetic engineering and synthetic biology. Synthetic consortia, in contrast to artificial consortia, are rationally created, engineered, and built in order to provide the consortia with more specialized and effective functions. Research on synthetic consortia has been conducted in various domains, including bio electrochemical systems (Liu et al., 2017) manufacturing of bioethanol (Zuroff et al., 2013) and bioremediation of the environment (Chen et al., 2014)

Despite the fact that genetic engineering of individual strains that produce hydrogen has been thoroughly examined and reviewed (Maeda et al., 2012; Kanai et al., 2015). The production of hydrogen by synthetic consortia has been documented in a small number of investigations. A similar study described the development of a dual-organism system for hydrogen production using genetic engineering (Waks and Silver, 2009).

To do away with format consumption, this required deleting two of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*'s format dehydrogenases, With the integration of an *Escherichia coli* PFL pathway to create a format-overproducing strain that has a 4.5-fold greater format content than the wild-type strain. Following that, *E. coli* produced 2.7 times as much hydrogen in the formate-rich wasted media as it did in the standard medium when it was employed for subsequent hydrogen generation. To be clear, this was not a mixed culture; rather, it was a two-step process, and there are still procedures to complete before creating a synthetic consortium (Waks and Silver, 2009).

A thorough grasp of cell-cell interactions in natural settings is necessary to construct a synthetic consortium. One of the main challenges impeding the creation

of artificial consortia for hydrogen generation has been this Lately, Wang et al., (2019)

carried out a thorough analysis of a consortium that produces artificial hydrogen and includes *Bacillus cereus* A1. also known as *Brevundimonas naejangsanensis* B1, According to their findings, strains A1 and B1 generated glucoamylase and  $\alpha$ -amylase, respectively, which worked in tandem to hydrolyze starch, in order to sustain strain B1's cell growth and hydrogen production, strain A1 converted starch to lactate, to increase the production of hydrogen, strain B1 gave back formate by acting as an electron shuttle to strain A1 (Fig. 18), This work improved our knowledge of intricate microbial relationships within a consortium that produces hydrogen and could be useful in the creation of more intricate artificial consortia. (Wang et al., 2019)

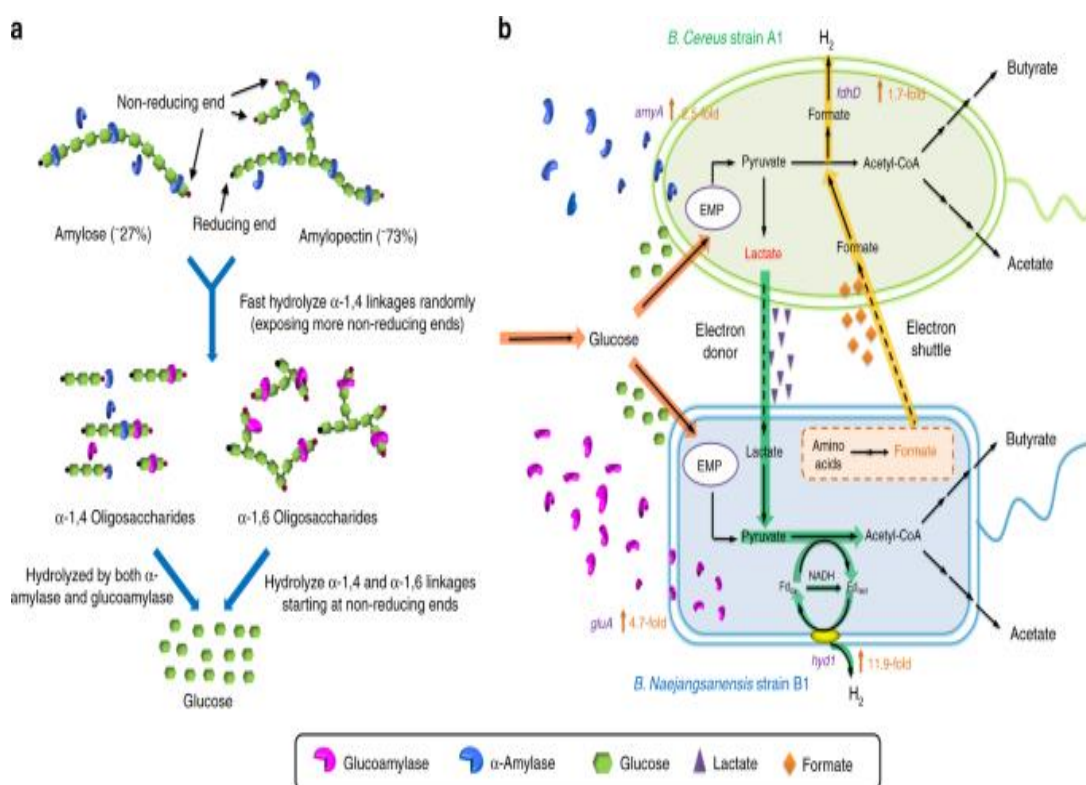


Fig. 18. Metabolite-based mutualism reported in a two-species microbial consortium enhances hydrogen production (Wang et al., 2019)

## 9.4 Cell Immobilization of Mixed Culture

Cell immobilization technology offers substantial advantages over suspended systems, especially in continuous processes, but many studies have concentrated on employing suspended-cell systems for dark fermentation. Immobilized-cell systems help prevent biomass washout issues, which frequently arise in continuous processes with low retention durations or high dilution rates. Additionally, cell immobilization can raise the biomass content, and carriers can be employed repeatedly while still producing hydrogen with high efficiency.

In addition, immobilized cells increase the tolerance to environmental perturbation and reduce the possibility of cell contamination (Singh et al., 2013; Singh and Wahid, 2015; Willaert, 2018). The immobilization technology can be applied to enhance mixed cultures' hydrogen generation. For example, hydrogen was produced from palm oil mill effluent using an immobilized mixed culture technique. The immobilized cell culture produced more hydrogen than the suspended cell culture, according to the study's findings (0.589 L H<sub>2</sub>/[L POME h] and 0.348 L H<sub>2</sub>/[L POME h], respectively)( Singh et al., 2013).

Additionally, in order to produce hydrogen, immobilized mixed culture of *Brevumdimonas naejangsanensis* and *Bacillus cereus* were assessed for multi-cycle use and hydrogen production, using three distinct carriers: maize stalk, activated carbon, and polyester fiber (Ma et al. 2017). They discovered that, with an average hydrogen output of 1.50 mol H<sub>2</sub> mol<sup>-1</sup> glucose, maize stalk performed the best out of the three carriers and could be utilized again for ten batches. Using this co-immobilization system in a two-step continuous process, Wang et al. (2018) discovered that, for 18 days without a startup time, the production of hydrogen in two distinct reactors rose linearly.

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