



# Probiotic Bacteria in Gastro-Intestinal Tract of Hybrid Catfish Fed Insect Protein Meal

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## Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. The study was developed and overseen by authors KMA and APM while authors AAA, YMM, MC and KII drafted the procedures, collected samples from the field and did laboratory analyses. The study's data analysis and literature search were managed by the authors, KMA, YMM, and KII. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## ABSTRACT

The evaluations of insects' protein as viable alternative protein source in fish diets are gaining more attention revealing that the protein has more comparative advantage than other protein sources. Therefore, this study was conducted to isolate and identify (using phylotypic and

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genotypic methods) bacteria isolates in the gastrointestinal tract (GIT) of African hybrid catfish fed supplemented grasshopper meal. Four feeding diets were adopted in this study; Diet A (conventional feed), Diet B (100% *Grasshopper meal*), Diet C (50% fishmeal and 50% *Grasshopper meal*) and Diet D (100% *Fish meal*). At the end of the 12- week experimental period, the fish were sacrificed for their GIT contents to determine bacteria diversity. In the catfish fed diet A, the bacteria isolates identified were *Streptococcus pyogenes*, *Enterobacter aerogene*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Shigella flexneri*, *Escherichia coli*, *Leuconostoc latis* and *Klebsella pneumonia*. In catfish fed diet B, *Bacillus subtilis*, *Lactococcus bulgaricus*, *Lysinibacillus macroides*, *Lysinibacillus capsici*, *Stenotrophomonas pavanii* and *Lysinibacillus sp* were isolated. Similarly, the fish fed diet C recorded the presence of *Bacillus subtilis*, *Lactococcus bulgaricus*, *Lysinibacillus sp.*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Lysinibacillus macroides*, *Stenotrophomonas pavanii* and *Enterobacter aerogene*. The bacteria isolated in the GIT of fish fed diet D were *Bacillus cereus*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Pedococcus acidilactis*, *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella typhi*, *Leuconostoc latis* and *Shigella flexneri*. Probiotic bacteria were more in fish fed with diets B and C, an indication that the different ratio of supplemented grasshopper meal is good for the fish, as they have the potentials to boost the fish immune system and improve the microbial balance of its gastro-intestinal tract.

**Keywords:** *Bacteria; freshwater fish; grasshopper; nutrition.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO] [1] reported that fish farming is rapidly becoming the bailout point of the protein need of Africans. In Nigeria, fish serves as the highest contributor of animal protein and accounts for over 34% of all the animal protein utilized in the country [2]. In Africa, Nigeria ranks top in terms of usage of aquaculture feed in both local and international sources as result of its fish production level [3]. Fish contributes immensely to world's protein as it improves nutrition with high biological value, high protein retention, presence of amino acids which is essential with low level of cholesterol [4]. The cost of fish production has increased astronomically due to the cost of fishmeal which is the major protein source, thereby making fish culture business more tedious with little profit or sometimes losses. In order to reduce the pressure on the use of fish as a protein source in catfish diet; studies have been advocating for the use of supplementary feed with insect protein having more comparative advantage [5-8].

Amongst the commonest edible insect in Nigeria is the grasshoppers (*Gomephocerippus rufus*) that are rich in amino acid profile just like the fishmeal [9]. Many studies have suggested that grasshopper meal can be used in the composition of animal and fish feed [8,9]. Similarly, research has shown that grasshoppers are high in protein, vital amino acids and presence of other nutrients [10]. Several studies have demonstrated that fishmeal dietary protein might be partly substituted in fish diets with various grasshopper meal without

impacting growth, feed utilization efficiency and reproduction [10,11]. Furthermore, this insect's dry matter includes around 64% crude protein, a significant quantity of important amino acids, lipids, minerals, vitamins and a low amount of anti-nutritional elements [11,12].

The gastrointestinal tract of an animal is made up of diverse and dynamic microbial ecology [7] which are vital in studying the nutrition, pathology and physiological functions of the animal [13]. Fish digestive system is rich in nutrients and provides a favorable growing environment for bacteria in comparison to the surrounding water [14]. The presence of bacteria in fish could play diverse roles; some might be beneficial (probiotics) as they will improve the immunity response and mechanism of physiology in the fishes [8]. However, some bacterial species could lead to post harvest spoilage and adverse health conditions [15].

Probiotics have been employed as a disease control method in aquaculture activities particularly those caused by infection of bacteria [16-19]. Lactic acid bacteria which originate in the GIT of fish are form of probiotic bacteria that are of benefit to fish health through greater nutrient utilization and antimicrobial capabilities [17]. Probiotics boost the immune response to pathogenic illnesses in fish [18-20]. Various studies have demonstrated that specific probiotic groups have antibacterial action in vitro on rainbow trout [21], common carp [22], Tilapia [23] and other species of freshwater fishes [24, 25]. *Lactococcus lactis*, *Enterococcus spp.*,

*Lactobacillus plantarum* and *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* are examples of bacteria that produce lactic acid which have probiotic potential in fishes [8,20].

Recently, the use of molecular and genetic tools as a means of species identification has gained attention worldwide as such 16S RNA techniques have been used in identification of bacteria to species level. Many microorganisms' diversity, distribution, and behavior have been studied via phylogenetic identification [26]. Many studies have employed phylogenetic trees to investigate the evolutionary history and the relatedness of bacteria populations [27]. Previously, phenotypic traits were more utilized in bacterial identification; however, most phylogenetic studies are now based on DNA sequencing (genotypic techniques) where the molecular information are presented as a phylogenetic tree [27]; thus, the adoption of the current trend in bacteria identification techniques in this study. The study was aimed at isolating and identifying bacteria species using both phylotypic and genotypic methods in the gastrointestinal tract of African hybrid catfish (*Clarias gariepinus* (female) & *Hetrobranchus bidorsalis* (male)) fed supplemented grasshopper meal after the 12-week trial period.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Study Area

This research was carried out in the aquaculture section of the Biological Garden, Department of Biological Science, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria, which lies between latitude of 9°06'74"N and longitude 6°56'98"E. The research site is located in North central Nigeria which falls within the savannah region.

### 2.2 Preparation and Formulation of Experimental Diet

The diet ingredients (Table 1) were crushed individually into the fine sizes using a grinding machine and appropriate quantities weighed (using a sensitive weighing balance) for the feed formulation. Following a thorough and accurate mixing of the components, starch was added to the feed to serve as a binding agent in holding the feed together. Hot water was added to create a dough-like mixture that ease the smooth pellets

using a pelleting machine. The pellets were sun-dried to reduce moisture before being wrapped in an air-tight polythene bag for storage in a dry environment.

Preparation of the feeds was through modified Pearson's square method [28] with all diet having equal amount of brown seaweed (*Sargassum muticum*) as shown in Table 1 [5] and varying amount of Grasshopper meal. Four feeding diets were used thus, diet A (Blue crown feed which is a commercial diet) diet B (100% Grasshopper meal), diet C (50% fishmeal and 50% Grasshopper meal) and diet D (100% Fish meal).

### 2.3 Fish Collection

A total of eight hundred fingerlings of hybrid catfish with an average live weight of 15g were purchased from a reputable fish farm (Alhassan fish farm in Abuja). The fishes were transported to biological garden of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University in a 50-litre filled plastic container. Acclimation was allowed for two weeks, during which they were fed with commercial fish feed pellets, before gradually introducing them to the formulated feed as they were fed twice daily (Morning and evening). After acclimation, the fish were randomly distributed to the experimental concrete tanks in two replicates, each with thirty-five (35) fingerlings in semi-static bioassay system. The tanks were drained bi-weekly to prevent accumulation of organic matter, as the fish were weighed to measure the growth parameters.

### 2.4 Experimental Set-Up

The experimental set-up consists of twelve (12) outdoor concrete tanks with a capacity of 1.3 m × 0.9 m × 1 m (1.17 m<sup>3</sup>). Each tank was assigned to each experimental diet containing different meal levels. The water level remained at 0.8 m throughout the experimental phase with replenishment at two days interval.

### 2.5 Sample Collection for Bacteria Isolation

After the 12-week feeding trial, twenty fish per diet were selected and sacrificed. Their gastrointestinal tracts were carefully removed and placed in sterile glassware. Each specimen was dissected aseptically to remove the gut contents for analysis.

**Table 1. Feed ingredients composition of the practical diets**

Ingredients	Diet A	Diet B	Diet C	Diet D
Fishmeal	(2mm of blue crown feed)	-	13.76	22.71
Grasshopper meal	-	31.64	13.76	-
Sargassum	-	3.00	3.00	3.00
Maize flour	-	53.36	57.48	62.29
Vitalyte	-	2.00	2.00	2.00
Baobab	-	5.00	5.00	5.0
Cassava flour	-	5.00	5.00	5.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## 2.6 Bacteria Isolation and Identification

Bacteria identification was characterized by phenotypic method in accordance with the description of Cheesebrough [29]. biochemical test (Gram staining test, indole test, catalase test, coagulase test, oxidase test, sugar fermentation test, citrate test and urease test) whilst, some of the isolates identified by phylotypic method were further subjected to genotypic method of identification using 16S rRNA technique and sequences compared in NCBI database.

The culture media (Nutrient agar, EMB agar, MRS agar, and MacConkey agar) were prepared and dispersed on a sterile Petri-dish according to the manufacturer's instructions. The Petri dishes were inverted to prevent condensation from droppings from the plate's cover onto the media's surface. The media were allowed to gel by chilling before being correctly labeled in accordance with Cintron [30]. Sterilized swab stick was rolled over the inoculation areas (fundus, duodenum, small intestine and large intestine (colon)) to maximize transfer of organism. For 24 hours, Petri plates were incubated at 37°C in line with the description of Cheesebrough [29]. All isolates were sub-cultured and transferred to slant medium to create a pure culture before performing various biochemical assays [29].

## 2.7 Molecular Characterization of Bacteria Isolate

After the series of biochemical tests for the isolate's identification, some isolates were subjected to further genotypic identification that involves DNA extraction, PCR (Polymerase chain reaction), Gel electrophoresis, Gel extraction and Sequencing using 16S rRNA.

Bacteria isolate was cultivated overnight in an Eppendorf tube, spun down at 14,000rpm for 2

minutes, supernatant was removed, and DNA was extracted using the CTAB technique [31]. After that, the DNA was resuspended in 100µl of sterile distilled water. The DNA concentrations in the samples were assessed, as well as the genomic purity. The DNA was then checked on a 1.0% agarose gel and visualized using a UV light source. The MJ Research Thermal Cycler was used for the PCR analysis (PTC-200 model). The primer utilized for PCR amplification was a 16S universal primer for bacteria, with the forward primer sequence being 5'AGAGTTTGATCCTGGCTCAG3' and the reverse primer sequence being 5'ACGGCTACCTTGTTACGACTT3'. The PCR mixture contains 1l of 10X buffer, 0.4l of 50mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 0.5l of 2.5mM dNTPs, and 0.5µl of 5mM 0.5µl of 5µM forward primer. The PCR profile utilized contains an initial denaturation temperature of 94°C for 3mins, followed by 30 cycles of 94°C for 60 seconds, 56°C for 60 seconds, 72°C for 120 seconds, and the final extension temperature of 72°C for 5 minutes and the 10°C hold forever. Before sequencing, the amplicons were further purified using Sodium Acetate washing methods. The pellet was re-suspended in 5µl of sterile distilled water. The PCR mix used was 0.5µl of BigDye Terminator Mix, 1µl of 5X sequencing buffer, 1µl of 16S Forward primer with 6.5µl of distilled water, and 1µl of the PCR product, for a total of 10µl. The Sequencing PCR profile is a Rapid profile, with an initial Rapid thermal ramp to 96°C for 1 minute, followed by 25 cycles of Rapid thermal ramp to 96°C for 10 seconds, Rapid thermal ramp to 50°C for 5 seconds, and Rapid thermal ramp to 60°C for 4 minutes, followed by Rapid thermal ramp to 4°C and hold forever. Prior to sequencing, the PCR sequence product was purified using 2M Sodium Acetate washing techniques. The pellet was re-suspended in 5µliters of sterile distilled water. A mixture of 9µl of Hi Di Formamide and 1µl of Purified Sequence was made and placed into an Applied Biosystem [32-34].

The resulting sequences were compared to the NCBI gene database using the BLAST search tool ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)). The proportion of sequence matching was also examined. The BLAST homology search yields varying percentages of maximal identity for all isolate sequences. The bacterial genomes were aligned using the BioEdit program, and the aligned sequences were saved in a FASTA format, which was then uploaded to the MEGA 11 software for phylogenetic analysis.

## 2.8 Phylogenetic Analysis

The evolutionary history was constructed using Saitou and Nei's [35] Neighbor-Joining technique. The best tree is given, and the evolutionary distances were determined using the Maximum Composite Likelihood technique and are measured in base substitutions per site [36]. This research comprises of seven nucleotide sequences. The following codon locations were included: 1<sup>st</sup> + 2<sup>nd</sup> + 3<sup>rd</sup> + non-coding. For various sequence pair all unclear locations were deleted (pair-wise deletion option). The final sequence dataset had 485 locations in total. The evolutionary analysis was performed using the MEGA11 software [36].

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Phenotypic Identification

Bacteria isolated based on different diets (A-D) is shown in Table 2 below. Fishes fed with diet B, C and D were fed with different levels of supplemented grasshopper, fish meal and brown seaweed meals. Fishes fed with Diet A (control feed) were fed with conventional feed (Blue crown feed), while Diet B fishes were fed with 100% *Grasshopper meal*, Diet C fishes were fed with 50% fish feed, 50% Grasshopper and brown seaweed meal. While Diet D fishes were fed with 100% *fish meal*. From table 1, the fish fed with Diet A the bacteria isolate identify are *Streptococcus pyogenes*, *Enterobacter aerogene*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Shigella flexneri*, *Escherichia coli*, *Leuconostoc latis* and *Klebsella pneumonia*. The bacteria isolates found in the gastrointestinal tract of fish fed with diet B are *Bacillus subtilis*, *Lactococcus bulgaricus*, *Lysinibacillus macroides*, and *Lysinibacillus capsici*, *Stenotrophomonas pavanii* and *Lysinibacillus* sp. In the fish fed diet C, *Bacillus subtilis*, *Lactococcus bulgaricus*, *Lysinibacillus* sp., *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Lysinibacillus*

*macroides*, *Stenotrophomonas pavanii* and *Enterobacter aerogene* where the bacteria isolates found in the GIT of of the fish. While the bacteria isolate in gastrointestinal tract of fish fed with diet D were *Bacillus cereus*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Pedococcus acidilactis*, *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella typhi*, *Leuconostoc latis* and *Shigella flexneri*. In term of bacteria diversity in the gastrointestinal tract, fishes fed with Diet A, C and D recorded highest with seven (7) species, while fish fed with diet B recorded six (6) species of bacteria each in term of diversity. Summary of each bacterial isolate presence in the gastrointestinal tract of fish are shown in Table 3.

### 3.2 Genotypic Identification

Genotypic identification: The Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) products obtained from the selected isolates following amplification and sequencing with the 16S rRNA were estimated at 1000bp in size (Plate 1). The percentage similarity of the nucleotide sequence of selected seven bacteria isolates are shown in Table 4.

The gene sequence of sample 1 strains was blast and compared with NCBI gene bank database and the homology shows 98.02% maximum identity with that of *Lysinibacillus capsici* strain with NCBI accession number NZ\_UAQE01000001.1. Sample 2 homology shows 99.47% maximum identity with that of *Stenotrophomonas pavanii* strain with NCBI accession number of NZ\_APO24684.1. Sample 3 strains homology shows 88.91% maximum identity with that of *Alcaligenes faecalis* strain with NCBI accession number of NZ\_CPO13119.1. Sample 4 homology shows 81.68% maximum identity with that of *Klebsiella pneumoniae* strain with NCBI accession number of NC\_016845. Sample 5 gene sequence homology shows 90.37% maximum identity with that of *Bacillus cereus* strain with NCBI accession number of NZ\_CP072774.1. The gene sequence of sample 6 shows homology of 98.02% maximum identity with that of *Lysinibacillus macroides* Strain with NCBI accession number of MN249381 and Sample 7 gene sequence homology shows 83.40% maximum identity with that of *Lysinibacillus subtilis* strain with NCBI accession number of MT968435\_1. The sequences were further aligned and phylogenetic trees for the isolates sequence strains were determined using the neighbor-joining method to know the genetic relatedness between all bacteria isolates strain encountered.

**Table 2. Biochemical characteristic of bacterial isolates from gastrointestinal tract of hybrid catfish fed supplemented grasshopper meal**

Diet	Colony morphology	Media	Gram	Shapes	Indole	Catalase	Citrate	Urease	Coagulase	Oxidase	Glucose	Lactose	Sucrose	Bacteria Isolates
A	Greyish black	NA	+	Cocci	-	+	+	-	+	-	A	A	A	<i>Streptococcus pyogenes</i>
	Pink colonies	MCK	-	Rod	-	+	+	-	+	-	AG	AG	AG	<i>Enterobacter aerogenes</i>
	Brown to black colonies	EMB	+	Cocci	-	+	+	+	+	-	A	A	A	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>
	Transparent and colorless	EMB	-	Rod	+	+	-	-	-	-	AG	NA	NA	<i>Shigella flexneri</i>
	Blue-black, with metallic sheen	EMB	+	Rod	+	+	-	-	-	-	AG	AG	AG	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
	Slimy, smooth, round grayish	MRS	+	Cocci	-	-	-	+	+	-	A	AG	NA	<i>Leuconostoc latiss</i>
	Rose pink	EMB	-	Rod	-	+	+	-	-	-	AG	AG	AG	<i>Klebsella pneumonia</i>
B	Grey white colonies	NA	+	Rod	-	+	+	-	-	+	AG	NA	A	<i>Bacillus subtilis</i>
	Creamy grey colonies	MRS	+	Cocci	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	A	NA	<i>Lactobacillus bulgaricus</i>
	Whitish grey	NA	+	Rod	-	-	-	+	-	+	AG	NA	A	<i>Lysinibacillus macrolides</i>
	Creamy whitish grey	NA	+	Rod	-	+	+	+	+	+	AG	NA	AG	<i>Lysinibacillus capsici</i>
	Yellowish smooth and circular	EMB	-	Rod	-	+	+	-	+	-	A	NA	A	<i>Stenotrophomonas pavanii</i>
	Whitish grey	NA	+	Rod	-	+	+	+	+	+	AG	NA	AG	<i>Lysinibacillus sp</i>
C	Grey white colonies	NA	-	Rod	-	+	+	+	-	+	AG	A	A	<i>Bacillus cereus</i>
	Brownish colonies	MRS	+	Cocci	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	A	NA	<i>Lactobacillus bulgaricus</i>
	Whitish grey	NA	+	Rod	-	+	+	+	+	+	AG	NA	AG	<i>Lysinibacillus sp</i>
	Brown to black colonies	EMB	+	Cocci	-	+	+	+	+	-	A	A	A	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>
	Whitish grey	NA	+	Rod	-	-	-	+	-	+	AG	NA	A	<i>Lysinibacillus macrolides</i>
	Yellowish smooth and circular	EMB	-	Rod	-	+	+	-	+	-	A	NA	A	<i>Stenotrophomonas pavanii</i>
	Pink colonies	MCK	-	Rod	-	+	+	-	+	-	AG	AG	AG	<i>Enterobacter aerogenes</i>
D	Grey white colonies	NA	-	Rod	-	+	+	+	-	+	AG	A	A	<i>Bacillus cereus</i>
	Brown to black colonies	EMB	+	Cocci	+	+	-	-	-	-	AG	A	A	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>
	Slimy, smooth, round grayish	MRS	-	Rod	-	-	-	-	+	-	AG	NA	AG	<i>Pedococcus acidilactici</i>

Bright pink to red colonies	MCK	+	Rod	+	+	-	+	-	-	AG	AG	AG	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
Brown to blue black	EMB	-	Rod	-	+	-	-	-	-	AG	AG	NA	<i>Salmonella typhi</i>
Slimy, smooth, round grayish	MRS	+	Cocci	-	-	-	+	+	-	A	AG	NA	<i>Leuconostoc latiss</i>
Transparent and colorless	EMB	-	Rod	+	+	-	-	-	-	AG	NA	NA	<i>Shigella flexneri</i>

KEY: + = Positive; - = Negative; AG= Acid and Gas production; A= Acid production; NA = No Acid and Gas production

**Table 3. Summary of the isolated bacteria species isolated from gastro-intestinal tract of fish fed grasshopper supplemented diet**

S/NO	Species	Diet			
		Diet A	Diet B	Diet C	Diet D
1	<i>Streptococcus pyogenes</i>	+	-	-	-
2	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	+	-	+	+
3	<i>Escherichia coli</i> ,	+	-	-	+
4	<i>Leuconostoc latis</i>	+	-	-	+
5	<i>Bacillus subtilis</i>	-	+	-	-
6	<i>Lactobacillus bulgaricus</i>	-	+	+	-
7	<i>Lysinibacillus capsica</i>	-	+	-	-
8	<i>Lysinibacillus macrolides</i>	-	+	+	-
9	<i>Lysinibacillus sp</i>	-	+	+	-
10	<i>Enterobacter aerogene</i>	+	-	+	-
11	<i>Shigella flexneri</i>	+	-	-	+
12	<i>Bacillus cereus</i>	-	-	+	+
13	<i>Klebsella pneumonia</i>	+	-	-	-
14	<i>Stenotrophomonas pavanii</i>	-	+	+	-
15	<i>Pedicoccus acidilactis</i>	-	-	-	+
16	<i>Salmonella typhi</i> .	-	-	-	+

Note: += present, -= absent

**Table 4. Similarity percentage of bacteria isolates**

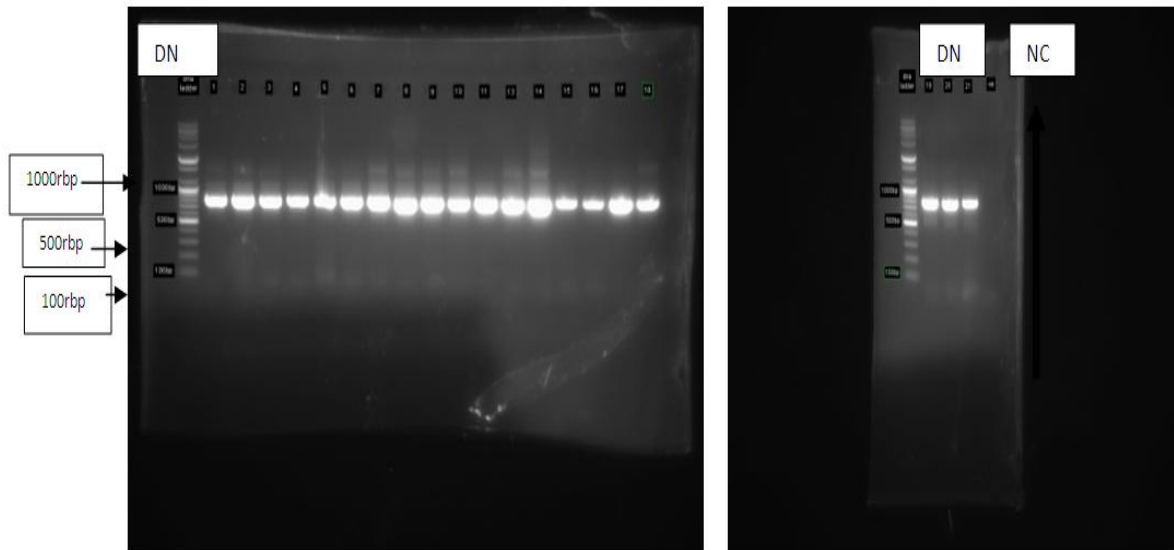
Sample	Similarity (%)	Nearest relatives	Accession number of nearest relatives in NCBI database
1	98.02	<i>Lysinibacillus capsici</i>	NZ_UAQE01000001.1
2	99.47	<i>Stenotrophomonas pavanii</i>	NZ_APO24684.1
3	88.91	<i>Alcaligenes faecalis</i>	NZ_CPO13119.1
4	81.68	<i>Klebsiella pneumonia</i>	NC_016845
5	90.37%	<i>Bacillus cereus</i>	NZ_CP072774.1
6	98.02	<i>Lysinibacillus macrolides</i>	MN249381
7	98.02	<i>Lysinibaccillus subtilis</i>	MT968435_1

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The demand for fish and other aquaculture products is increasing globally and has resulted in advancement in term of fish feed and nutrition, which function as catalysts for the long-term growth of the rapidly increasing aquaculture sector [37]. Probiotic dietary supplements have been shown to improve fish health and nutrition; however, these bacteria are mostly obtained from some terrestrial and warm-blooded hosts which limit their effectiveness in fish [19]. Most probiotics bacteria found in the GIT system of the relevant fish species will colonize more quickly within the main host [37]. Bacteria are numerous in nature, which may contribute to their abundance in the habitat where fish dwell [38], making it hard to avoid being part of their diet. Bacteria found their way into fish diet during preparation, consumption and may adapt in the gastro intestinal system and develop a symbiotic

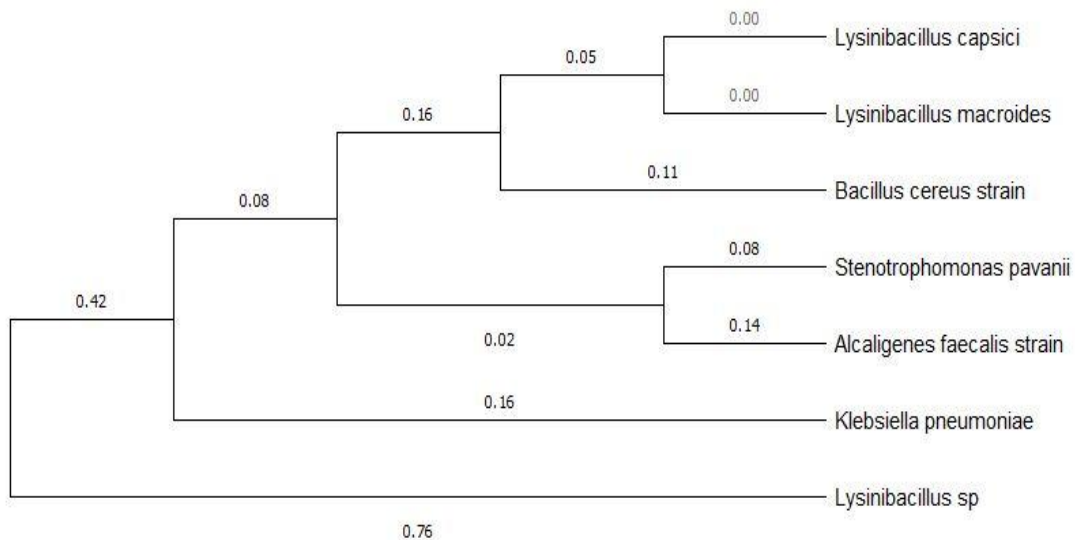
connection within the fish digestive tract [39]. Bacteria presence in the GIT of fish have been reported in fish diet containing insect protein [8] and has been observed to be substantially greater than in surrounding water; which is an indication that the digestive tracts of fish provide suitable habitat for their growth [39]. The presence of some facultative pathogen such as *Escherischia coli*, *Salmonella sp.*, *Streptococcus sp.* and *S. aureus* in the control feed which under unfavorable condition could results to disease in fish [5] as they have been implicated to be fish borne and causes infectious diseases in fish [15]. In aquaculture, *Pseudomonas sp* and *Enterobacter aerogenes* have been found to be an opportunistic pathogen [5,15]. They had been isolated in wounds, burns, eyes, ear infections and urinary infection in humans [15]. The presence of *Salmonella sp* is also an opportunistic pathogen in aquaculture, the species are also associated with food spoilage,





**Fig. 1. Binding profile of bacteria isolates**

Key: DN=DNA ladder, NC= Negative control, 1-21 products of bacteria isolates



**Fig. 2. Phylogenetic tree of some bacteria isolates**

*Salmonellosis* resulting in bacteraemia and severe typhoid in human or salmonella fever [40]. Similarly, *Escherischia coli* and *Shigella* sp. have been reported to be causative agent of gastroenteric disease such as diarrhea, vomiting, fever, colitis hemolytic urinary syndrome with renal failure. *Streptococcus pyogenes* have also been reported to cause pancreatic disease and eye lesion in fish respectively [41]. *Klebsiella pneumoniae* also inhabits the gastrointestinal tract of fish and causes infection wound at adverse level [42]. Most of these opportunistic bacteria species have been reported to be

natural microflora in GIT of fish and their presence in the experimental pond could be due to contamination through handling of the feed or water source which are related to fecal deposit [43].

The prevalence of probiotic species in the GIT of fishes fed supplemented Diet B, C and D as compared to Diet A which is the conventional feed has shown that the supplementary diet which is of insect nature and fish meal contain probiotics which can improve the diet and fish growth. The probiotic bacteria are identified as

those isolates of bacteria from *Bacillus*, *Lactobacillus* and *Lactococcus* species. This is in conformity with the work of Agustina *et al.* [20] who reported that bacteria species from *Lactococcus*, *Enterococcus* and *Lactobacillus* groups exhibit some antibacterial activity in GIT tract of fishes. Studies have shown that this group of bacterial improves the quality of water by influencing the microbial communities in fish intestinal tract and the fish culturing environment; as it is a good probiotic candidate for improving the aquaculture in terms of water quality and feed [44]. Similarly, *Lysinibacillus* sp and *L. macrolides* reported in D4 and D1 are also probiotic bacteria [8]. Rahman *et al.* [45] have reported that this group of bacterial shows potential for bioremediation in aquaculture.

The prevalence and abundance of probiotics in GIT of fish fed with Diet B and C as compared to their absence in the gastrointestinal tract of the fishes fed with Diet A is an indication that insect protein (especially grasshopper protein) is of good and quality feed and can be used to supplement fish meal in feed diet of fishes. The probiotic bacteria presence in the supplementary feed has the capacity to increase the health status as well as growth performance of fish [18,19,37].

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study established the efficacy of hybrid catfish fed with supplemented grasshopper meal by isolating probiotic bacteria in their GIT showing comparative advantage in probiotic bacteria as the insect protein decreased in the diets. The presence of the probiotic bacteria in GIT of hybrid catfish fed Diet B, Diet C and Diet D could be associated with the insect protein present in the diets; an indication that grasshopper meal are potentially good candidates to replace fishmeal in fish diet.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

## ETHICAL APPROVAL

This project was submitted and approved by research ethic committee of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai Niger state with reference number IBBUL/01/2019

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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