



**BIOFUNCTIONALITY, COLORIMETRIC COEFFICIENTS AND MICROBIOLOGICAL STABILITY OF BLACKBERRY (*Rubus fruticosus* var. Himalaya) JUICE UNDER MICROWAVE/ULTRASOUND PROCESSING**

**BIOFUNCIONALIDAD, COEFICIENTES COLORIMÉTRICOS Y ESTABILIDAD MICROBIOLÓGICA DEL JUGO DE ZARZAMORA (*Rubus fruticosus* var. Himalaya) PROCESADO POR MICROONDAS/ULTRASONIDO**

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**Abstract**

The bio-functionality of blackberry juice has acquired great relevance in the food industry, since it reduces the risk of chronic-degenerative diseases due to its high content of antioxidant compounds such as polyphenols/anthocyanins. However, conventional thermal processing decreases the content of these compounds. Hence, alternative technologies -as microwaves and ultrasound- are currently in research. The objective was to determine the effect of thermal and microwave/ultrasound processing on the physicochemical properties, polyphenols and anthocyanins, antioxidant capacity and microbiological stability of blackberry juice. Results showed that pH and °Brix increased in microwave/ultrasound processed juice (MUJ) compared to conventionally pasteurized juice (FPJ and SPJ) and raw juice (CJ). MUJ showed good microbiological stability after 30 days of storage at 4 °C as well as conventionally processed juices (FPJ and SPJ); nevertheless, in MUJ increased color parameters ( $L^*$  ( $a^*/b^*$ ),  $\Delta E^*$ ,  $H^*$ ,  $C^*$ ), content of polyphenols and anthocyanins (2665.97 mg GAE L<sup>-1</sup> and 427.49 mg C3G L<sup>-1</sup> respectively), as well as antioxidant bioactivity DPPH and FRAP (11.63 and 14.06 mM TEAC L<sup>-1</sup> respectively) were significant compared to other juices. Therefore, the microwave/ultrasound process might be used in order to obtain a functional beverage with high antioxidant capacity, safe for human consumption and preserving color characteristics after one month of storage.

**Keywords:** blackberry juice, microwaves/ultrasound, polyphenols/anthocyanins, antioxidant activity, microbial stability.

**Resumen**

La biofuncionalidad del jugo de moras ha adquirido gran relevancia en el campo de los alimentos, ya que puede reducir el riesgo de enfermedades crónico-degenerativas debido a su elevado contenido de compuestos antioxidantes como polifenoles/antocianinas. Sin embargo, el procesamiento térmico convencional disminuye el contenido de dichos compuestos, por lo que se están investigando tecnologías alternativas como microondas y ultrasonido. En este marco, se evaluó el efecto del procesamiento térmico y de microondas/ultrasonido sobre las propiedades fisicoquímicas, contenido de polifenoles y antocianinas, capacidad antioxidante y estabilidad microbiológica del jugo de zarzamora. Los resultados muestran que pH y °Brix incrementaron su valor en jugo procesado por microondas/ultrasonido (MUJ) respecto al jugo pasteurizado convencionalmente (FPJ y SPJ) y al jugo sin procesar (CJ). MUJ mostró buena estabilidad microbiológica durante 30 días de almacenamiento a 4°C al igual que los jugos procesados convencionalmente (FPJ y SPJ); sin embargo, en MUJ incrementaron significativamente parámetros de color ( $L^*$ ( $a^*/b^*$ ),  $\Delta E^*$ ,  $H^*$ ,  $C^*$ ), contenido de polifenoles y antocianinas (2665.97 mg GAE L<sup>-1</sup> y 427.49 mg C3G L<sup>-1</sup>), así como bioactividad antioxidante DPPH y FRAP (11.63 y 14.06 mM TEAC L<sup>-1</sup>) respecto a los demás jugos. Por lo tanto, la combinación de microondas/ultrasonido se podría utilizar para obtener una bebida funcional con alto contenido de antioxidantes, segura para el consumo humano y manteniendo su color después de un mes de almacenamiento.

**Palabras clave:** jugo de zarzamora, microondas/ultrasonido, polifenoles/antocianinas, antioxidante, estabilidad microbiológica.

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## 1 Introduction

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Currently, a holistic view focusing on the relationship of bioactive molecules-food processing-dietary intake-health is necessary. In this context, investigations on promising technologies for industrial processing of fruit juices have acquired great importance, especially in the field of functional foods, particularly that of fruits like berries, cherries, grapes, black currant, red onion, red cabbage, and blue corn, which are attracting the attention of consumers due to their high content of antioxidant compounds (polyphenols). Among berries, blackberry (*Rubus* sp. Rosaceae) is a fruit with high content of polyphenols (Luna-Ramírez *et al.*, 2017), especially anthocyanins (Hager *et al.*, 2008; Wen *et al.*, 2015). Anthocyanins have a wide range of biological properties, mainly to their antioxidant capacity and anti-inflammatory effect, which contributes in the reduction of risks in chronic-degenerative diseases like cancer (Dai *et al.*, 2009), obesity, diabetes, (Sun *et al.*, 2012; Tsuda, 2008), cardiopathies (Vauzour *et al.*, 2010), and neurologic disorders (Krikorian, 2012; Shih *et al.*, 2010).

However, heating process (pasteurization), the most commonly used method for fruit juice processing to ensure safety and storage stability, contributing to the degradation of thermosensitive components, such as polyphenols (anthocyanins) (Verbeyst *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, as an alternative technology to traditional systems, microwave and ultrasound-assisted processing has emerged (Aybastier *et al.*, 2013; Oancea *et al.*, 2013). Ultrasound technology is effective to produce functional juices from berries, since it preserves essential phytochemicals (Engmann *et al.*, 2015; Tiwari *et al.*, 2009) and enhances anthocyanin stability (Cavalcanti *et al.*, 2012). While microwave technology contributes to improve sensory properties such as color, inactivation of oxidative enzymes such as polyphenol oxidase, to increase the retention of anthocyanins and to improve bioavailability (Bo *et al.*, 2012; Brambilla *et al.*, 2011). Also, microwaves offer a rapid extraction of phenolic compounds, including anthocyanins, and prevents their degradation during processing. Because, it requires a less time allowing to extract greater concentration of those compounds (Teng and Lee, 2013).

Further, both technologies (ultrasound/microwaves) have been noticed that microorganism decline as *E. coli* and *S. cerevisiae* when are combined

(Hosseinzadeh-Samani *et al.*, 2016) due to ultrasonic waves disruptions bacterial wall by high temperature and pressure created by cavitation phenomenon resulting in localized cleansing effect by microregions (Hosseinzadeh-Samani *et al.*, 2016; Li and Farid, 2016; Santhirasegaram *et al.*, 2013), while microwaves rapidly increases temperature and pressure in the whole medium and inside of the cell causing break down of bacterial cell wall (Hosseinzadeh-Samani *et al.*, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2013), and consequently microorganism are destroyed.

Therefore, one of the main challenges for industrial processing of anthocyanins is to preserve high quantity and quality of these compounds in juices, which is affected by physicochemical factors during thermal processing and storage. Thus, the aim of the present work was to evaluate the effect of conventional thermal and microwave/ultrasound processing on color parameters, polyphenols and monomeric anthocyanins content, antioxidant capacity, and microbial load of blackberry juice, due to the great potential of applications that polyphenols (anthocyanins) represent for the industry of functional foods.

## 2 Materials and methods

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### 2.1 Blackberry fruits

Blackberries (*Rubus fruticosus* var. Himalaya) in mature stage were obtained from Jalancingo village, Veracruz, Mexico. Fruits were washed and frozen at -20 °C.

### 2.2 Blackberry mash and juice

Frozen blackberries were thawed to room temperature and crushed using a mortar. Then, 50 g of mash were centrifuged at 1260 g and 4 °C during 30 min, obtaining approximately 20 mL of juice.

### 2.3 Conventional heating process

Blackberry juice pasteurization was carried out by immersion in autoclave of 50 L capacity (steam heating). A first batch of blackberry juice (25 mL per bottle) was heated to 60 °C during 30 min (slow pasteurization), while a second batch was pasteurized to 92 °C for 10 s (fast pasteurization) (Azofeifa *et al.*, 2015; Zhang *et al.*, 2012). Temperature measurements

(Doric instrument, Mod. 400 A) were obtained using copper T-type thermocouples placed at 1/3 high of bottle. Juices were stored into sterilized amber bottles of 25 mL at 4 °C. Both pasteurization treatments were performed by triplicate.

## 2.4 Microwaves processing

Blackberry mash (50 g) was heated using a microwaves oven (Panasonic, 2450 MHz, and 453 W, as calculated according to Buffler method (Buffler, 1993) for 60 s. Briefly, the energy (E) for the microwaves was calculated using Eq. (1)

$$E = \frac{Wt}{m} \quad (1)$$

Where *W* is microwaves oven power in W; *t* is time of microwave exposure in s, and *m*, the sample amount in kg (Ortiz *et al.*, 2003). After heating, the blackberry mash was cooled in ice water until 20 °C. The juice was obtained by centrifugation at 1260 g and stored into sterilized amber bottles of 25 mL at 4 °C. Treatment was done by triplicate.

## 2.5 Ultrasound processing

Ultrasound treatment was assessed employing an ultrasonic homogenizer (Cole-Palmer Instrumental Company, VCX-750, USA) at 20 kHz frequency and 750 W power, equipped with a tip (13 mm, diameter) operating to 32 microns of amplitude, 5 s pulse (on/off) during 10 min (Tiwari *et al.*, 2009). Blackberry juice samples of 80 mL were placed in a 100 mL vessel for the treatment with ultrasound and temperature was maintained at 10 °C. Juice was stored into sterilized amber bottles of 25 mL at 4 °C. Treatment was done by triplicate.

## 2.6 Microwaves/ultrasound processing

The blackberry mash (50 g) was processed with microwaves and the juice was obtained by centrifugation and treated with ultrasound, then it was stored into sterilized amber bottles at 4 °C. Treatment was done by triplicate.

## 2.7 Physicochemical characterization

At the end, six different juices were obtained: unprocessed juice (CJ), juice processed with fast conventional pasteurization (FPJ), juice processed with slow conventional pasteurization (SPJ), juice

processed with ultrasound (UJ), juice obtained from mash heated with microwaves (MJ), juice obtained from mash heated with microwaves and then processed with ultrasound (MUJ). A bottle of each juice was stored for each day of sampling. These juices were characterized as follows.

### 2.7.1 Measurement of pH, °Brix and color index

The pH values were determined (Conductronic, pH-120). Total soluble solids (°Brix) content was obtained using a refractometer (Atago, HSR-500; Japan). Both analyses were performed by triplicate. Color levels were obtained using a color reader (CR-10, Konica Minolta Inc., Japan); thus, data were expressed as *L*\* (whiteness or brightness/darkness), *a*\* (redness/greenness), and *b*\* (yellowness/blueness). Thus, the chromatic model based on CIELAB system was used to calculate four color coefficients (Acosta-Montoya *et al.*, 2010; Cesa *et al.*, 2017; Marszalek *et al.*, 2015; Rodrigo *et al.*, 2007): coloration, total color difference ( $\Delta E^*$ ), hue angle (color angle, *H*\*) and chroma (color intensity, *C*\*) were acquired by:

$$\text{Coloration} = L^* \times \left( \frac{a^*}{b^*} \right) \quad (2)$$

$$\Delta E^* = \sqrt{(L^* - L_0^*)^2 + (a^* - a_0^*)^2 + (b^* - b_0^*)^2} \quad (3)$$

$$H^* = \tan^{-1} \left( \frac{b^*}{a^*} \right) \quad (4)$$

$$C^* = \sqrt{a^{*2} + b^{*2}} \quad (5)$$

Ten measurements were obtained from each different juice.

## 2.8 Biofunctional properties

### 2.8.1 Total phenolics content

Total phenolics content was determined according to Folin-Ciocalteu method (Singleton *et al.*, 1999). Absorbance measurement was done at 760 nm using a spectrophotometer (BOEGO, S-22; Germany). The amount of phenolics was expressed as mg of gallic acid equivalents per liter (mg GAE L<sup>-1</sup>). A standard curve (20-120 mg L<sup>-1</sup>) was obtained by linear regression ( $y = 0.0024x - 0.0066$ ,  $r^2 = 0.996$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Dilutions were 1:25. Analysis was carried out by triplicate.

### 2.8.2 Monomeric anthocyanins content

Monomeric anthocyanins content was carried out by means of differential pH method (Giusti and Wrolstad, 2005). Absorbance screening was from 400 to 700 nm using a plate reader (Thermo-Scientific, Multiskan-GO spectrophotometer). Anthocyanins content was expressed as mg of cyanidin-3-O-glycoside per liter (mg C3G L<sup>-1</sup>). Dilutions were 1:25. Analysis was performed by triplicate.

### 2.8.3 Antioxidant capacity

#### 2.8.3.1. DPPH assay

Radical scavenging activity was carried out by using the 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) method (Brand-Williams *et al.*, 1995). Absorbance was determined at 515 nm using a spectrophotometer (BOEGO, S-22; Germany). Trolox® (6-hydroxy-2,5,7,8-tetramethylchroman-2-carboxylic acid) standard curve was used for quantification. Results were expressed as millimole of Trolox® equivalent antioxidant capacity per liter (mM TEAC L<sup>-1</sup>). Standard curve (100-800 µM L<sup>-1</sup>) was obtained by linear regression ( $y = 0.0007x - 0.8437$ ,  $r^2 = 0.997$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Dilutions were 1:25. All determinations were carried out by triplicate.

#### 2.8.3.2. FRAP assay

Fe<sup>3+</sup>/Fe<sup>2+</sup> reducing antioxidant power was performed according to the method described by Benzie and Strain (1996). Absorbance was read to 593 nm using a spectrophotometer (BOEGO, S-22; Germany). Trolox® standard curve was used for quantification. Results were expressed as mM TEAC L<sup>-1</sup>. Standard curve (160-800 µM L<sup>-1</sup>) was obtained by linear regression ( $y = 0.0012x - 0.0841$ ,  $r^2 = 0.998$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Dilutions were 1:25. All determinations were done by triplicate.

## 2.9 Microbiological test

Counting of coliform, mould/yeast and aerobic mesophilic bacteria was carried out by using Mexican Official Standard methods (NOM-113-SSA1-1994, NOM-111-SSA1-1994 and NOM-092-SSA1-1994, respectively). Then, 1 mL of juice samples were diluted (10<sup>-1</sup>, 10<sup>-2</sup>) in peptone (0.1 %) sterilized water. Dilutions were placed by duplicate into plates of agar. Two assays were done per treatment. Results were expressed as colony-forming units per milliliter

(CFU mL<sup>-1</sup>). The inactivation effect and reduction of logarithmic cycles were estimated by log<sub>10</sub> N and log<sub>10</sub> (N<sub>0</sub>/N), respectively; where N<sub>0</sub> and N are microbe levels at initial and end times.

### 2.10 Statistical analysis

Data were acquired at times 0, 7, 15 and 30 days under storage at 4 °C. ANOVA Two-Way tests were carried out to evaluate significant differences. Tukey's test ( $p < 0.05$ ) was used for mean multiple contrast between treatments and times. Equations of linear regression were obtained for all standard curves. Coefficient of Pearson's correlation was estimated ( $p < 0.05$ ). Data analyses were supported by Prism 6 software (GraphPad, USA).

## 3 Results and discussion

### 3.1 pH, °Brix and color index

Fig. 1a shows the values of pH. Respect to unprocessed juice (CJ, pH= 3.16 ±0.01), the conventional heating process caused a little decrease of 0.03 units (pH 3.13); but microwaves (MWJ) and ultrasound processing (USJ) showed a rise of 2.5 and 3.5 % respectively (pHs 3.21 and 3.24). While, the combination of microwaves/ultrasound (MUJ) generated only an increase of 0.06 units. After 30 days of storage under refrigeration conditions, pH significant changes ( $p < 0.05$ ) between treatments were observed. A significant reduction of pH was reported by MUJ (3.7 %), MJ (3.7 %), UJ (5.2 %), FPJ (0.6 %), and CJ (1.9 %) respect to initial time, but not SPJ (0.03 %).

Although, there were pH variations between treatments by effect of storage time, pH values were kept under acidic conditions ( $3 < \text{pH} < 3.5$ ) in the range of typical berry juices ( $2 < \text{pH} > 4$ ) (Howard *et al.*, 2012; Luna-Ramírez *et al.*, 2017). Regarding this, in acidic medium, the flavylium cation is hydrated forming the carbinol pseudobase, which over time is converted into the chalcone pseudobase (Howard *et al.*, 2012; Patras *et al.*, 2010). Both juices processed by microwaves and ultrasound increased pH value. In the case of processing by ultrasound alone, this could promote chemical reactions, which cause changes in pH due to generation of new molecules in aqueous media (Martínez-Flores *et al.*, 2015).

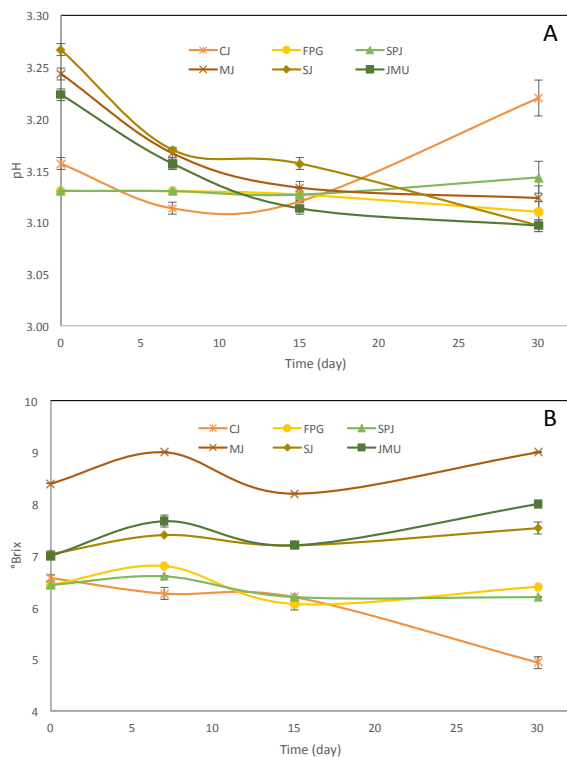


Fig. 1. pH (a) and °Brix (b) data of blackberry juice at day zero and after 30 days of storage at 4 °C. Bars represent mean  $\pm$ SD,  $n = 3$ ; Tukey's test,  $p \leq 0.05$  (\* statistically significant difference). CJ= Unprocessed, FPG= Fast pasteurization (92°C, 10 s), SPJ= Slow pasteurization (60 °C, 30 min), MJ= Microwaves (0.525 kJ/g, 60 s), UJ= Ultrasound (20 kHz, 10 min), MUJ= Microwaves/Ultrasound.

While, in microwaves, because of exposure to high energy, fast heating and temperature increase, association reactions (polymerization) could be occurring and generating pH modifications. On the other hand, the reduction of pH values after 30 days of storage can be explained by microbial and endogenous enzymatic activity (Martínez-Flores *et al.*, 2015). Thus, microwave/ultrasound processing improved anthocyanins stability of blackberry juice.

In the total soluble solids (°Brix) measurements significant variations ( $p < 0.05$ ) were observed between all treatments at day zero (Fig. 1b), except between both pasteurization process (FPJ and SPJ= 6.43  $\pm$ 0.06) and unprocessed juice (CJ= 6.57  $\pm$ 0.06). In relation to CJ, the treatments UJ and MUJ enhanced this parameter on 7.0 and 6.5 % respectively; but MJ caused a drastic rise of 27.9 %. While, UJ, MUJ and MJ increased 9.1, 8.7 and 29.9 %, respectively, in relation to both thermal processes. After one month

of storage, significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) between treatments were observed. A drastic reduction of total soluble solids content was observed in CJ (4.93 °Brix); while, SPJ decreased it significantly 0.23 units; but MJ (9.0 °Brix), UJ (7.53 °Brix), and MUJ (8.0 °Brix) had a drastic increase respect to initial time. FPJ did not report significant changes.

This important content of solids could be the result of plant cell wall breakage (Li and Farid, 2016; Martínez-Flores *et al.*, 2015) and release of cellular components to medium, mainly when blackberry juice was treated by microwaves. Microwave heating promotes the rupture of plant cell structure releasing their content; but in this case, the energy applied causes *in situ* movement and rotation of water molecules of the sample leading a fast heating in short time, which increases the pressure inside cell and, subsequently, collapses the cell wall (Li *et al.*, 2012; 2013). Hence, microwaves cause drastic rise of total soluble solids content.

Colorimetric estimations were performed to evaluate color changes in blackberry juice due to different processing. The observed color of blackberry juice is presented as a combination of a (red/green) and b (yellow/blue) coordinates associated with L (lightness/darkness) value. Changes of juice's color were evaluated by the coefficient of coloration, color difference (Marszalek *et al.*, 2015; Rodrigo *et al.*, 2007), color angle and color intensity (Acosta-Montoya *et al.*, 2010; Cesa *et al.*, 2017). In Fig. 2, differences of color parameters due to treatment by heating, microwaves/ultrasound, as well as 30 days after refrigerated storage (4 °C) are showed. All coefficients showed a dependence on L, a, and b; therefore, in blackberry juice an increase mainly in L (brightness) and a (redness) was interpreted as an improvement of the visual color, which is reflected in any of the determined colorimetric coefficients (Yousefi *et al.*, 2012).

At initial time, the coloration values, Eq. (2), were significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) among all treatments (Fig. 2a). A strong reduction of this value in juice processed by microwaves (MJ= 3.15  $\pm$ 0.33), rapid thermic processing (FPJ= 2.51  $\pm$ 0.31), and ultrasound (UJ= 3.56  $\pm$ 0.56) was observed respect to unprocessed juice (CJ= 6.03  $\pm$ 0.49) indicating that a ratio of FPJ:UJ:CJ of 1:1.48:2.4 was obtained. While, slow heating (SPJ= 6.03  $\pm$ 0.49) did not show variation, having the same effect of CJ. However, a drastic rise of this coefficient in juice processed by microwaves/ultrasound combination (MUJ= 18.56

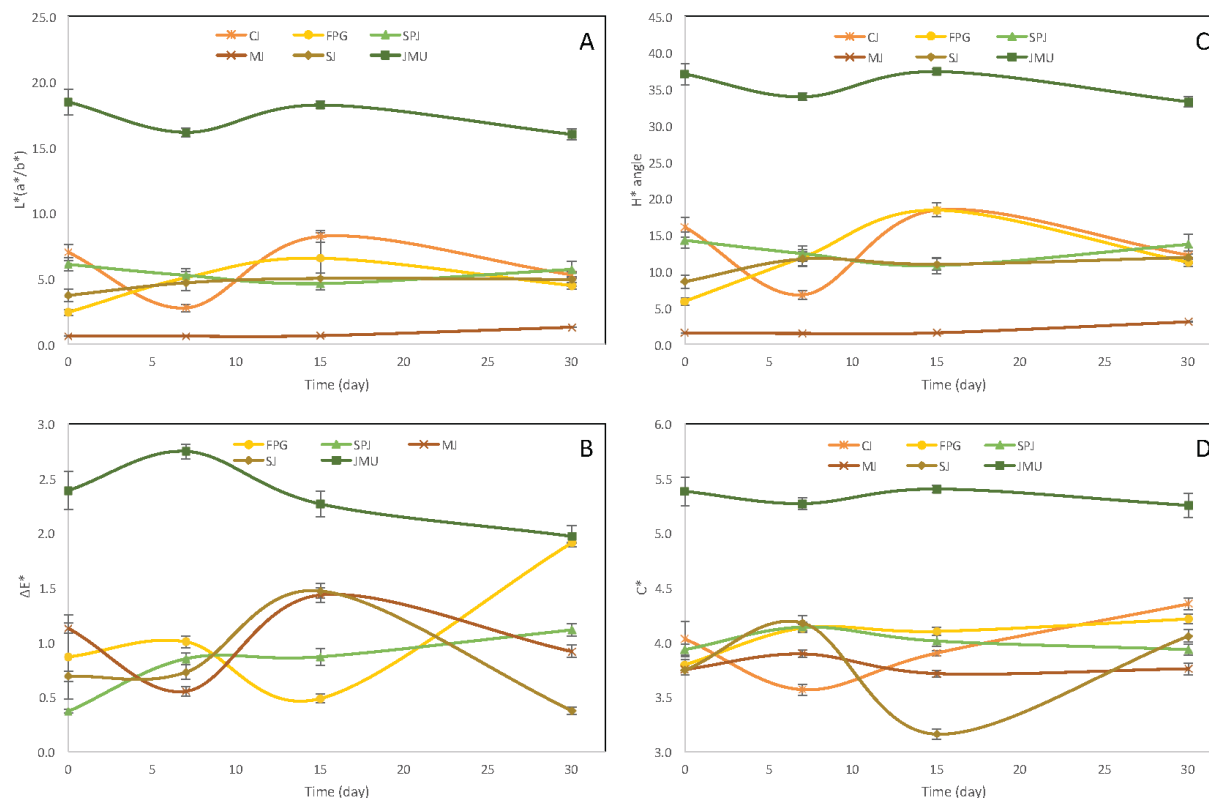


Fig. 2. Colorimetric index of blackberry juice, at day zero and after 30 days of storage at 4 °C. Coefficients  $L^*$  x  $(a^*/b^*)$  (a),  $\Delta E^*$  (b),  $H^*$ (c), and  $C^*$ (d). Bars represent mean  $\pm$ SD, n=3; Tukey's test,  $p \leq 0.05$  (\* statistically significant difference). CJ= Unprocessed, FPJ= Fast pasteurization (92 °C, 10 s), SPJ= Slow pasteurization (60 °C, 30 min), MJ= Microwaves (0.525 kJ/g, 60 s), UJ= Ultrasound (20 kHz, 10 min), MJU= Microwaves/Ultrasound.

$\pm 0.98$ ) was noted, been 7.4 times higher than FPJ providing more coloration which means that this process preserved the color better than the other methods. At day 30, SPJ ( $5.7 \pm 0.57$ ) and UJ ( $4.93 \pm 0.5$ ) were not significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) to CJ ( $5.28 \pm 0.25$ ), but FPJ ( $4.47 \pm 0.25$ ) and MJ ( $1.41 \pm 0.26$ ) showed significant decrease in their coloration. However, MJU ( $15.99 \pm 0.42$ ) maintained a higher coloration over the rest of the juices. Respect to time, all treatments showed significant changes after 30 days of storage at 4 °C, except SPJ. Nevertheless, CJ and SPJ was reduced in 1.57 and 0.33 units, respectively. While, FPJ, MJ and UJ had an increase of 1.96, 1.10 and 1.37 units, respectively. Although, MJU overdue 13.84 %, continued being the best coloration value in relation to those processing and time, which is important for juice storage, showing that only 13.84 % of color is lost after 30 days of storage.

Difference in color, Eq. (3), among treatments respect to unprocessed juice were recorded (Fig. 2b). At day zero, microwaves/ultrasound combination

showed the highest  $\Delta E^*$  value ( $2.38 \pm 0.18$ ), being significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) to juices processed by heating (FPJ=  $0.86 \pm 0.38$ , SPJ=  $0.50 \pm 0.36$ ), ultrasound (USJ=  $0.78 \pm 0.29$ ), and microwaves (MJ=  $1.25 \pm 0.4$ ). The microwave treatment reported significant difference with respect to both pasteurization process and ultrasonication. When data were collected after 30 days of storage at 4 °C, MJU ( $1.97 \pm 0.1$ ) this parameter was kept significantly better ( $p < 0.05$ ) respect to both pasteurization processes (FPJ=  $1.91 \pm 0.01$ , SPJ=  $1.11 \pm 0.06$ ), and juices treated only by microwaves (MJ=  $0.91 \pm 0.06$ ) or ultrasound (UJ=  $0.36 \pm 0.05$ ). Nonetheless, only FPJ and SPJ reported a significant rise respect to the initial value, while MJ, UJ and MJU presented a decline, although MJU continued being the best  $\Delta E^*$  value in relation of those process and time.

Hue angle (color angle), Eq. (4), displayed significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between all treatments at initial time (Fig. 2c).  $H$  angle

expresses color appearance according to similarity of red/yellow/blue/green combination (Cesa *et al.*, 2017). The highest value was obtained by combination of microwaves/ultrasound (MUJ= 37.03  $\pm$ 1.44). However, juice processed only by microwaves (MJ= 0.774  $\pm$ 0.82) or ultrasound (UJ= 8.3  $\pm$ 1.5) reported lower values than MUJ. Also, thermic processing (FPJ= 6.06  $\pm$ 0.75, SPJ= 13.2  $\pm$ 3.44) displayed low scores of  $H^*$  angle respect to MUJ and CJ. MUJ showed an increase of 20.98 degrees in relation to unprocessed juice (CJ= 16.05  $\pm$ 1.41). When  $H^*$  angle values were recorded after 30 days of refrigerated storage, significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) were maintained in MUJ respect to all treatments. However,  $H^*$  angle value of MUJ (33.26  $\pm$ 0.72) had a little but significant decrease in relation to day zero, while juice treated by microwaves (MJ= 3.35  $\pm$ 0.61), ultrasound (UJ= 11.48  $\pm$ 1.15), and rapid thermal processing (FPJ= 11.23  $\pm$ 0.62) significantly increased this parameter, but not slow heating treatment (SPJ= 13.69  $\pm$ 1.34). Also, unprocessed juice (CJ= 12.22  $\pm$ 0.56) showed a significant reduction. Therefore, MUJ continued being the best process by treatment and time.

Chroma (color intensity) values, Eq. (5), presented significant changes ( $p < 0.05$ ) between all treatments at day zero (Fig. 2d). Chroma expresses the color intensity defined by red/green/yellow/blue saturation (Cesa *et al.*, 2017). The highest value was found for microwaves/ultrasound combination (MUJ= 5.38  $\pm$ 0.13), but juices treated only by microwaves (MJ= 3.75  $\pm$ 0.05) or ultrasound (UJ= 3.74  $\pm$ 0.05) showed lower value than MUJ. Also, both juices processed by heat (FPJ= 3.79  $\pm$ 0.05, SPJ= 3.93  $\pm$ 0.05) had low values. Only MUJ was significantly better than unprocessed juice (CJ= 4.03  $\pm$ 0.16). After of 30 days of storage significant variations ( $p < 0.05$ ) were maintenance between all treatments. Respect to time, slow heating process (SPJ= 3.93  $\pm$ 0.05) not change. But, microwaves (MJ= 3.76  $\pm$ 0.05), ultrasound (UJ= 4.05  $\pm$ 0.06), rapid pasteurization (FPJ= 4.21  $\pm$ 0.05), and unprocessed juice (CJ= 4.35  $\pm$ 0.05) had a light increase. While, microwaves/ultrasound treatment (MUJ= 8.37  $\pm$ 0.19) displayed a decline; but despite of them, MUJ continued being the best process in relation to treatment and time.

The color is a sensory attribute very important in the visual appreciation of foods by consumers (Espinoza-Velazquez *et al.*, 2016). In berry juices, the attractive purple-red color is mainly given by anthocyanins (Cuevas-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2010; Cesa *et al.*, 2017). Regarding this, it is well known that in

foods processed by heat, the amount of monomeric anthocyanins decline (Hager *et al.*, 2008; Patras *et al.*, 2010; Zhang *et al.*, 2012), which strongly impacts nutritional and color quality (Patras *et al.*, 2010). Previously, Hager *et al.* (2008) reported that the percent of monomeric anthocyanins falls while polymeric color increases in blackberry juices and purees thermally processed. This correlation was also observed after long-term storage. In the case of microwaves, it is known that blanched effect causes color changes, which can be explained by cellular disruption as consequence of internal heating and pressure; causing important release of anthocyanins (Li *et al.*, 2013; Wen *et al.*, 2015; Zou *et al.*, 2012). Wrolstad (1980) reported than blanching by microwaves improves color stability and has a protective effect on total phenols and anthocyanins content in strawberry concentrate. However, this blanching stage also cause anthocyanins degradation as observed in strawberry puree (De Ancos *et al.*, 1999) depending on time and temperature exposure. While, in non-thermal processing such as ultrasound, polymerization of anthocyanins is low due to mechanical stress, which causes the breakdown of macromolecules (as polymeric anthocyanins) in the juice (Santhirasegaram *et al.*, 2013; Tiwari *et al.*, 2009). On the other hand, a microwaves/ultrasound combination results in better color parameters. Thus, the differences of color indexes among treatments and by storage time found in this work could be explained by degradation of monomeric anthocyanins and formation of polymeric anthocyanins.

Although, the four colors coefficients of the blackberry juice evaluated here are the most commonly used and they can be good estimators for this sensory feature, other coefficients based on tri-stimulus relations of L, a, b such as Lab, L/ab, La/b (Tiwari *et al.*, 2009), L/L<sub>0</sub>, a/a<sub>0</sub>, b/b<sub>0</sub> (Yousefi *et al.*, 2012; Cesa *et al.*, 2017) and browning could be considered also to enhance the capacity of resolution of colorimetric analysis.

### 3.2 Biofunctional quality: polyphenols and anthocyanins content, and antioxidant capacity

Polyphenols content expressed as mg GAE L<sup>-1</sup> (Fig. 3a) did not significantly increase in juices after conventional thermal processing (FPJ=1495.83  $\pm$ 20.83 and SPJ=1454.17  $\pm$ 18.04) respect to unprocessed juice (CJ= 1433.33  $\pm$ 20.83) at initial

time (day zero). Fast or slow heating conditions did not show significant differences, but a decrease of 10.21 % and 7.6 % in juice ultrasonicated (UJ= 1343.06  $\pm$ 49.23) was observed respect to FPJ and SPJ, respectively. The treatment of juice with microwaves (MJ= 1933.33  $\pm$ 65.05) displayed a significant increase respect to those treatments. However, a drastic rise in juice treated with microwaves/ultrasound combination (MUJ= 2665.97  $\pm$ 21.68) was observed, being 1.86 fold the content of polyphenolics of the control (CJ) and ranged 1.78-1.83 fold respect to fast and slow heating conditions, respectively. One month later, all samples stored at 4 °C displayed a significant rise in the content of polyphenolics being 94 % in CJ, 76 and 86 % in FPJ and SPJ, respectively, 74 % for MJ, 95 % in UJ, and 78 % for MUJ respect to initial conditions.

Monomeric anthocyanins content expressed as mg C3G L<sup>-1</sup> (Fig. 3b) displayed a behavior comparable to that regarding phenolic content. At initial time (day zero), CJ (150.43  $\pm$ 27.43), FPJ (168.66  $\pm$ 3.28), SPJ (148.55  $\pm$ 12.9), UJ (216.11  $\pm$ 31.71), and MJ (278.48  $\pm$ 35.3) were not significantly different among them, but a strong significant increase was observed in MUJ (427.49  $\pm$ 25.75). This non-significant relation was maintained after 30 days of storage at 4 °C between CJ (196.42  $\pm$ 50.78) and both conventional heating (FPJ= 138.32  $\pm$ 49.24, SPJ= 153.98  $\pm$ 49.12), UJ (206.58  $\pm$ 63.78), and MJ (319.44  $\pm$ 26.47); however, MJ displayed a significant value respect to conventional thermal process but not respect to UJ. While, MUJ (922.41  $\pm$ 94.11) experienced a reduction but was maintained over other treatments. Therefore, this continued to be the most convenient processing.

In relation to above mentioned, it has been observed that thermal processing of blackberry juice reduces anthocyanins content (Azofeifa *et al.*, 2015; Gancel *et al.*, 2011; Hager *et al.*, 2008). By contrast, it is expected that microwave- and ultrasound- assisted processing increases the amount of total polyphenolics and anthocyanins. In this work microwave treatment was very efficient for extraction of phenols while ultrasound treatment was less efficient in relation to conventional heating processing; however, combination of both processes resulted in higher recovering of phenolic compounds. These rises in phenols-extraction occurs due to ultrasound waves create microbubbles that collapse violently (cavitation bubbles) increasing local temperature and pressure and consequently disrupts plant-cell wall and delivering compounds as phenols/anthocyanins (Tiwari *et al.*, 2009); while, microwaves generates a rapid increase of temperature and pressure inside

the cell collapsing the plant-cell wall and releasing phenols/anthocyanins molecules (Li *et al.*, 2013). For them, ultrasound/microwaves combination improved the polyphenols extraction. Earlier researches have documented that ultrasound- and microwaves-processing can improve the extraction of phenols. Regarding this, Oancea *et al.* (2013) observed that anthocyanins content of ultrasonicated raspberry juice was similar to conventional extraction in shorter time. But, Ivanovic *et al.* (2014) reported an increase of anthocyanins in blackberry juice processed by ultrasound dependent of time and temperature. Whereas, Marzsalek *et al.* (2015) found less degradation of anthocyanins in strawberry puree, when this was processed by microwaves than by conventional heating.

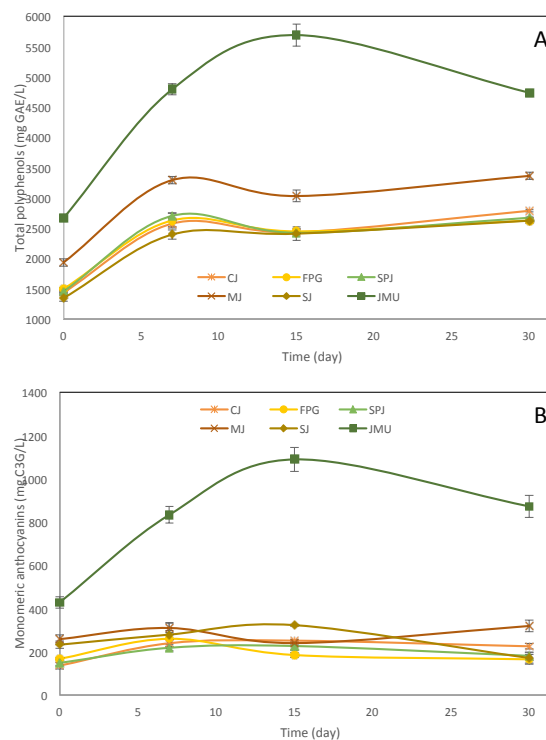


Fig. 3. Polyphenols (a) and monomeric anthocyanins (b) content of blackberry juice at day zero and after 30 days of storage (4 °C). Bars represent mean  $\pm$ SD, n=3; Tukey's test,  $p \leq 0.05$  (\* statistically significant difference); GAE= Gallic acid equivalent, C3G= Cyanidin-3-O-glicoside; CJ= Unprocessed, FPJ= Fast pasteurization (92 °C, 10 s), SPJ= Slow pasteurization (60 °C, 30 min), MJ= Microwaves (0.525 kJ/g, 60 s), UJ= Ultrasound (20 kHz, 10 min), MUJ= Microwaves/Ultrasound.



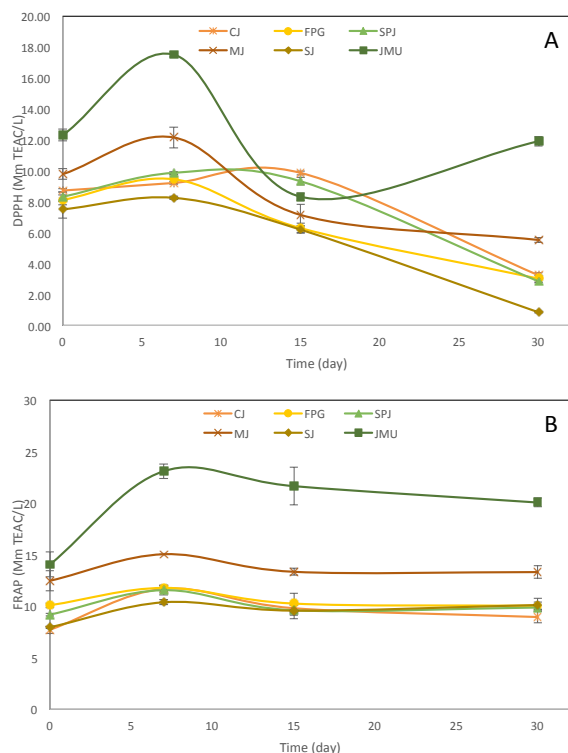


Fig. 4. Antioxidant capacity of blackberry juice at day zero and after 30 days of storage at 4°C expressed as mM TEAC L<sup>-1</sup> by DPPH (a) and FRAP (b) assay. Bars represent mean  $\pm$ SD, n=3; Test's Tukey,  $p \leq 0.05$  (\* statistically significant difference). TEAC= Trolox® equivalent antioxidant capacity; CJ= Unprocessed, FPG= Fast pasteurization (92 °C, 10 s), SPJ= Slow pasteurization (60 °C, 30 min), MJ= Microwaves (0.525 kJ/g, 60 s), UJ= Ultrasound (20 kHz, 10 min), MJU= Microwaves/Ultrasound.

This enhances of phenols has also been reported for carrot juice thermos-sonicated (Martínez-Flores *et al.*, 2015), apple juice sonicated (Abid *et al.*, 2014) and apple mash treated by microwaves heating (Gerard and Roberts, 2004). Additionally, variations in the content of phenolic acids, monomeric anthocyanins and antioxidant activity have also been observed during long-time storage at low temperatures in berry fruits and juices (Hellström *et al.*, 2013; Reque *et al.*, 2014; Türkben, 2010), which could be due to degradation of polymeric anthocyanins and reactions of copolymerization among monomeric anthocyanins and other polyphenols as acid-phenols or flavonoids.

Phenolic compounds mainly identified in blackberries are anthocyanins such as cyanidin-3-O-glicoside, cyanidin-e-O-rutinodside, cyanidin-3-O-arabinoside, pelargonidin3-O-glicoside (Cuevas-

Rodríguez *et al.*, 2010; Verberic *et al.*, 2014; Zhang *et al.*, 2012) and polyphenols such as quercetin, catechin, kaempferol, hydroxyxinnamic acids, and ellagic derivatives (Verberic *et al.*, 2014; Wen *et al.*, 2015). Investigations on the structure-activity relationship of polyphenols and anthocyanins indicate that these molecules act as reducing agents, hydrogen donating, "single oxygen quencher" and metal chelating (Leopoldini *et al.*, 2011; Rice-Evans *et al.*, 1996) agents. The action mechanism depends on the hydroxyl groups and their position in the molecule. Additionally, substitutions on hydroxyl groups can enhance or reduce the antioxidant capacity (Rice-Evans *et al.*, 1996). In the case of phenolic acids, the relative position of OH (-ortho, -metha, -para) respect to carboxylate group have strong influence on the antioxidant power, being  $m\text{-OH} > o\text{-OH} > p\text{-OH}$ . Moreover, greater number of OH groups on the ring can improve the antioxidant ability, but esterification on carboxylate group can diminish it (Rice-Evans *et al.*, 1996). In flavonoids, the antioxidant efficacy depends on hydroxyl groups, mainly on the 3-OH group in the C-ring, substitutions of hydroxyls, unsaturation of C-ring, and positions of OH-groups in B-ring (Dragan *et al.*, 2003; Farkas *et al.*, 2004; Rice-Evans *et al.*, 1996).

Nonetheless, like Madrigal-Santillán *et al.* (2013) point out each of these compounds in a fruit causes a synergistic effect, which can increase their antioxidant capabilities. Therefore, the antioxidant activity of blackberry juice can be attributed to accumulative effects of their polyphenolic compounds. Consequently, an increase of the total content of polyphenolic compounds and monomeric anthocyanins in blackberry juices represents better biofunctional quality of this food, since antioxidant capacity is associated directly to polyphenols (anthocyanins) quantity and quality.

Antioxidant activity (mM TEAC L<sup>-1</sup>) estimated by DPPH assay (Fig. 4a) did not display significant differences between CJ (8.28  $\pm$ 0.11), heating process (FPG= 8.12  $\pm$ 0.32, SPJ= 8.33  $\pm$ 0.3), microwave (MJ= 9.79  $\pm$ 0.34) and ultrasound treatment (UJ= 7.49  $\pm$ 0.55) at day zero; however, a significant increase was observed with MJU (11.63  $\pm$ 1.21) respect to those treatments. After 30 days of storage at 4 °C no significant difference was found between CJ (3.24  $\pm$ 0.16) and conventional thermal (FPG= 3.03  $\pm$ 0.22, SPJ= 2.85  $\pm$ 0.09); but there was a significant difference with relation to MJ (5.89  $\pm$ 0.65), UJ (7.99  $\pm$ 0.09) and MJU (11.92  $\pm$ 0.31) with the latter treatment being the best one.

While FRAP assay (Fig. 4b) showed that the juices treated by slow heating process (SPJ= 9.19  $\pm$ 0.13) and ultrasonication (USJ= 7.94  $\pm$ 0.1) had similar antioxidant capacity respect to unprocessed juice (CJ= 7.706  $\pm$ 0.36). Nonetheless, with the fast thermal process (FPJ= 10.08  $\pm$ 0.23) and when the mash was treated with microwaves (MJ= 12.46  $\pm$ 0.98) a significant increase of antioxidant effect was observed. The microwaves/ultrasound combination (MUJ= 14.06  $\pm$ 1.2) displayed the best antioxidant capacity. However, one month later, no significant changes between CJ (8.96  $\pm$ 0.58), FPJ (10.05  $\pm$ 0.34) and SPJ (9.88  $\pm$ 0.19) and UJ (10.12  $\pm$ 0.63) were found. In MJ (13.32  $\pm$ 0.61), it was observed a significant increase though the most drastic rise of antioxidant capacity was obtained in MUJ (20.07  $\pm$ 0.43) in relation to treatment and time. These phenomena occur because coloration is preserved better with MUJ than the other treatments, providing more reduction of the electron-donating antioxidants presented in the juice, with a higher antioxidant capacity determined by an efficiency of 142.74 %.

An increase in the content of polyphenols, mainly anthocyanins, is very important due to their antioxidant effect. The coefficient of Pearson's correlation ( $p < 0.05$ ) was estimated between the content of polyphenols, monomeric anthocyanins, and antioxidant capacity (DPPH and FRAP) at initial time. Results showed a strong positive correlation for all treatments with  $r^2$  ranging 0.88-0.973 ( $p < 0.05$ ). As mentioned above, high antioxidant capacity is directly associated to higher content of polyphenols (phenolic acids and flavanols) (Cardenas-Sandoval *et al.*, 2012; Quiroz-Reyes *et al.*, 2013), and particularly to the anthocyanins group in the blackberry juice. Previously, Wang and Jiao (2000) evaluated the scavenging capacity on reactive oxygen species ( $O_2^-$ ,  $^1O_2$ ,  $\cdot OH$ ,  $H_2O_2$ ) of different berry species, showing blackberry the highest antioxidant capacity. In the same year, Jiao and Wang found a positive correlation regarding antioxidant activity between oxygen radical absorbance capacity (ORAC) and oxygen radical scavenging enzyme activities of six blackberry cultivars. However, when blackberry juice was pasteurized, a decrease of DPPH scavenging capacity was observed (Azofeifa *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, Gancel *et al.* (2011) noticed that antioxidant capacity by ORAC and DPPH assays of blackberry juice industrially processed dropped. Processing of blackberry juice by ultrasound, dependent on time and temperature, showed a positive effect on antioxidant properties by FRAP and DPPH assays (Ivanovic *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, it has

been demonstrated that storage at 25 °C of processed blackberry products results in losses up to 75 % of monomeric anthocyanins and, consequently, loss of antioxidant capacity.

### 3.3 Microbiological quality: Coliforms, mould/yeast and aerobic mesophilic bacteria

Microbial load at day zero of unprocessed juice was 1.3  $\log_{10}$  and 1.7  $\log_{10}$  for mould/yeast and aerobic mesophilic bacteria, respectively; and were not found coliforms. The juice processed by heating, ultrasound and microwaves/ultrasound combination reduced microorganisms to undetectable; while, microwaves treatment decreased to undetectable mould/yeast and aerobic bacteria from 1.4  $\log_{10}$  (Table 1). This represented a significant reduction of 1.3  $\log_{10}$  cycles for mould/yeast. Regarding aerobic bacteria, this generated a decline of 1.75  $\log_{10}$  cycles by heating, ultrasound and microwaves/ultrasound, but microwaves only reduced 0.37 cycles. After 30 days, only in juices processed by heating and microwaves/ultrasound no microbial growth was observed. Nevertheless, in juices treated separately by microwaves or ultrasound, it was registered a mould/yeast growth of 3.42 and 2.03  $\log_{10}$ , respectively, while for unprocessed juice it was 4.76  $\log_{10}$ . Thus, FPJ, SPJ and MUJ had a reduction of 4.76  $\log_{10}$  cycles, but for MJ and UJ it was 1.35 and 2.73  $\log_{10}$  cycles. Both thermal processes and microwaves/ultrasound treatment were more effective on reducing microbial load.

The heating process is used in beverage industry for obtaining safe products to humans, but thermosensitive bioactive compounds such as polyphenols/anthocyanins as well as nutritional components are degraded through such treatment and, as consequence, biofunctionality is diminished. To minimize these changes of thermally sensitive compounds and reducing microbial load, it has been suggested ultrasonication as a good alternative (Aadil *et al.*, 2013; Alighourchi *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, microwave processing is better for improving the amount of bioactive compounds in juice and also contributes to microbiological stabilization (Marzsalek *et al.*, 2015). In the present work, at initial time the inactivation of microorganisms in the juice processed only by ultrasonication or microwaves, as well as the combination of both technologies reported comparable results to those from thermal processing; besides, over time only microwaves/ultrasound combination kept higher levels of inactivation.

Table 1. Effects of thermal treatment and microwave/ultrasound on microbial inactivation analysis of blackberry juice.

Storage day	Juice type	(log CFU/mL)		
		Coliform count	Aerobic plate count	Yeast and Mould count
0	CJ	ND	1.7±0.12d	1.3±0.01d
	FPJ	ND	ND	ND
	SPJ	ND	ND	ND
	MJ	ND	1.4±0.12e	ND
	UJ	ND	ND	ND
	MUJ	ND	ND	ND
30	CJ	ND	5.0±0.24a	4.76±0.12a
	FPJ	ND	ND	ND
	SPJ	ND	ND	ND
	MJ	ND	2.48±0.09b	3.42±0.10b
	UJ	ND	1.82±0.21c	2.03±0.12c
	MUJ	ND	ND	ND

Mean ±SD, n=4; Tukey's test,  $p < 0.05$  (letter different in-column represents significant difference). CFU=Colony-forming unit, ND=not detected, CJ= Unprocessed, FPJ= Fast pasteurization (92 °C, 10 s), SPJ= Slow pasteurization (60 °C, 30 min), MJ= Microwaves (0.525 kJ/g, 60 s), UJ= Ultrasound (20 kHz, 10 min), MUJ= Microwaves/Ultrasound.

This microbial decrease is possible due to mechanical damage on cellular membrane and wall of microbes by high pressure and temperature caused by ultrasound (Earnshaw *et al.*, 1995; Li and Farid, 2016; Tiwari *et al.*, 2009) and microwaves (Li *et al.*, 2012; 2013) effects. Previously, some authors have noticed that application of ultrasound (Martínez Flores *et al.*, 2015) or microwaves (Marzsalek *et al.*, 2015) to fruit juice is effective for inactivating microbes and oxidative enzymes. Hence, as was demonstrated in the present work, microwaves/ultrasound combination improves microbiological stability of blackberry juice for one month of storage.

## Conclusions

Blackberry juice processed by combination of microwave for 60 s and 210 W, followed by ultrasound for 10 min at 20 kHz and 750 W improved the amount of available polyphenols/anthocyanins by about 100%, when compared with the raw juice. Microwave/ultrasound combination improved microbiological stability of blackberry juice for one month of storage. In summary, microwaves in combination with ultrasound technologies present an alternative in the processing of fruit juices with high content of

antioxidant compounds and good microbial quality, as demanded by consumers and industry.

## Nomenclature

CJ	unprocessed juice
FPJ	Fast heating juice/rapid Pasteurization Juice
SPJ	Slow heating juice/slow Pasteurization Juice
MJ	Microwaves Juice
UJ	Ultrasound Juice
MUSJ	Microwaves/Ultrasound Juice
TEAC	Trolox® Equivalent Antioxidant Capacity
GAE	Gallic Acid Equivalent
C3G	cyanidin-3-O-glycoside equivalent
DPPH	2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl
FRAP	Ferric Reducing Antioxidant Power

## Symbols

L*	Lightness(+)/Darkness (-)
a*	Redness(+)/Greenness(-)
b*	Yellowness (+)/Blueness (-)
$\Delta E^*$	difference of color
H*	Hue angle
C*	chroma

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