

Synthesis of 6-Anilino Derivatives of benzo[a]phenoxazin-5-one and related Aza Analogues via Palladium-catalyzed Buchwald-Hartwig Amination Reaction

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Abstract: The synthesis of new 6-anilino derivatives of angular phenoxazine dye was thoroughly investigated. This was accomplished by the condensation of 2-aminophenol with 2,3-dichloro-1,4-naphthoquinone in an alkaline medium to furnish a good yield of the intermediate, 6-chlorobenzo[a]phenoxazine-5-one (6). Buchwald Hartwig cross-coupling of the intermediate with various amines, viz: 2-amino-4-methylpyridine, 2-aminopyrazine, 2-amino-5-nitropyridine, 2-aminopyridazine, 2-amino-3-hydroxypyridine, aniline, 4-nitroaniline, 4-aminophenol and 2-aminophenol via water-mediated catalyst activation protocol in DMF/toluene solvents mixture at a temperature of 110 °C yielded the amino derivatives 6 (a-i) respectively. Structures were established by spectral analyses and micro-analytical data.

Keywords: benzo[a]phenoxazin-5-one, Buchwald-Hartwig amination, condensation, palladium catalysis

1. Introduction

Phenoxazine (1), also known as 2,3,5,6-dibenzoxazine is leaf-like crystal which is insoluble in ether, benzene, mineral acid and almost insoluble in water. Its solution shows purple or purplish-red fluorescence. It is a three ring structure compound in which two benzene rings are joined by oxygen and nitrogen atom at non-adjacent positions. The benzophenoxazines have also been prepared and characterized. The reaction of o-aminophenol with 2,3-dichloro-1,4-naphthoquinone was pioneered by Van Allen and Reynolds^[1]. The chemistry of phenoxazine and its derivatives has been extensively studied because of their versatile utility in industry, agriculture and medicine. In industries, they have been applied as organic dyes for dye-sensitized solar cells^[2-4], acid-base and redox indicators, polymerization retardants, metal extractant^[5] and chromophoric compound in host guest artificial protonic antenna system^[6]. It has been reported that polymers/oligomers containing a phenoxazine unit could be promising conducting and fluorescent materials.^[7,8] A report of the applications of the phenoxazines and their angular derivatives cannot be deemed complete without a portrayal of their medicinal properties. They are bioactive heterocyclic compounds with spectrum of biological activities ranging from anti-tumour^[9-11], anti-proliferative^[12-14], anti-viral^[15], anti-malaria^[16], anti-microbial^[17], anti-tubercular, anti-cataract^[5] to anti-bacteria^[18]. For example, the phenoxazine derivative, 2-amino-4,4α-dihydro-4α,7-dimethyl-3H-phenoxazine-3-one (2) prepared by the

reaction of 2-amino-5-methylphenol with bovine haemolysates was reported by Shimmamoto *et al.*^[11] to inhibit proliferation and induce apoptosis in the human leukemia cell lines K562, HL-60 and HAL-01 in dose-dependent manner. However, Iwala *et al.*^[15] and Shimizu *et al.*^[19] showed that compound (2) is handy in inhibition of multiplication of poliovirus in Vero cells between 0.25-2 µg with maximal activity at 1 µg, and exhibition of antimicrobial activity against non-tubercular mycobacteria respectively. 2-Amino-3H-phenoxazine-3-one was reported by Kohno *et al.*^[20] to have anti-inflammatory and immunoregulatory properties thereby providing a promising therapeutic strategy for the treatment of T cell-mediated inflammatory autoimmune disease as well as bacteria-induced chronic inflammatory disease. Some phenoxazine structural scaffolds are used as valuable pharmacophores for potent tubulin polymerization inhibitors^[14]. Naturally occurring phenoxazines are also known. They are found as the central core of a number of natural chemical compounds such as the antibiotic actinomycin D (2) (**Figure 1**) isolated from soil bacteria of the genus *Streptomyces*,^[20] the ommochromes like ommatin D (3) and xanthomatin (4) found in different arthropods and are responsible for coloration in the wings, cuticles and eyes of insects, and the orcein extracted from several species of lichen, commonly known as "orchella weeds", found in various parts of the world. Orcein is a reddish-brown dye, orchil is a purple-blue dye. Orcein is used as a stain in microscopy to visualize chromosomes,^[22] elastic fibers,^[23] Hepatitis B surface antigens,^[24] and copper-associated proteins.^[25]

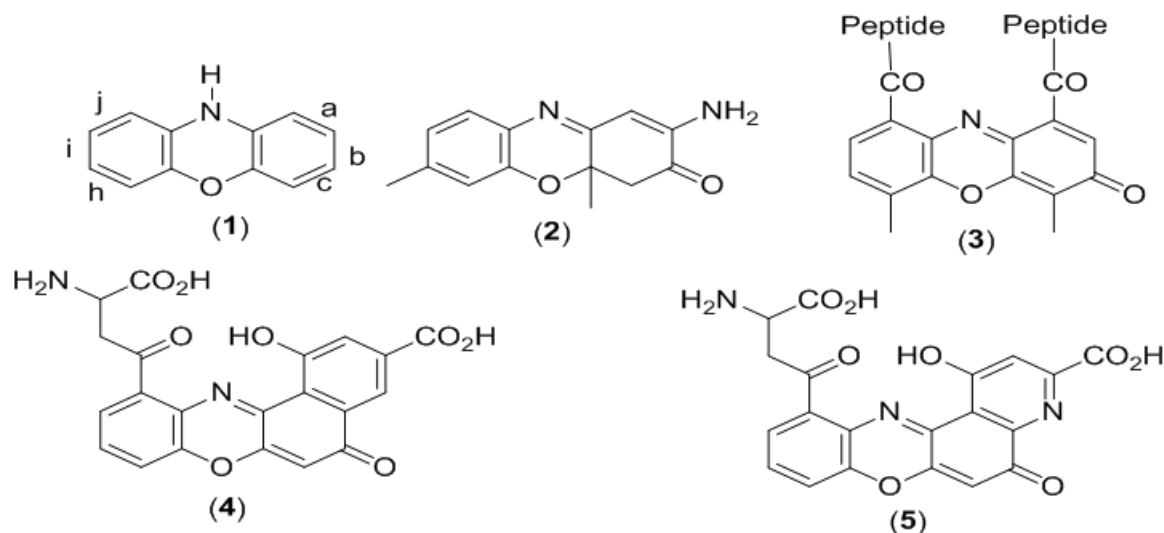


Figure 1

Extensive structural modifications of (1) and its derivatives are still in progress in an attempt to obtain new derivatives having more desirable properties. Although several synthetic routes to linear and angular phenoxazines have been reported, methods are often not applicable for the preparation of a wide variety of their derivatives with excellent yields and good pharmacological activity. Moreover, because of the current indispensability of benzophenoxazine rings as valuable molecular motif for the development of chemotherapeutic agents with high pharmacokinetic profile, it becomes imperative to investigate elegant and facile reaction protocols to synthesized possible derivatives with variety of functionalities.

2. Experimental Section

All coupling reactions were carried out under nitrogen atmosphere. Melting points of synthesized compounds were determined with a Fischer John's apparatus and were uncorrected. All compounds were characterized by ^1H -NMR, ^{13}C -NMR, IR and UV-Visible spectroscopy. UV-visible spectra were obtained on a UVI ultra-violet spectrophotometer (manufactured by UNICAM, serial number 061408) using marched 1cm quartz cells. The IR spectra were recorded on 8400S Fourier Transform Infra-red spectrophotometer using KBr pellets and the absorption were given in wave numbers (cm^{-1}). The ^1H -NMR and ^{13}C -NMR were determined using a Jeol FX 90Q spectrometer using TMS as internal standard (chemical shift in δ). The elemental analysis was carried out with CHN rapid analyzer. The purity of samples was determined using TLC and samples that showed traces of impurities were further purified by column chromatography on silica gel by employing a mixture of ethyl acetate and n-hexane as solvent for elution. Eluates were concentrated using a solvent extractor and air-dried.

6-Chlorobenzo[a]phenoxazin-5-one (6) :To a mixture of 2-aminophenol (4.0 g, 37.00 mmol) and anhydrous sodium acetate (8.2 g, 37.00 mmol) in benzene (100 mL) and DMF (10 mL) warmed to boiling temperature in a 250 mL two-necked flask equipped with magnetic stirrer, thermometer

and reflux condenser, was added 2,3-dichloro-1,4-naphthoquinone (8.2 g, 37.00 mmol). The entire reaction mixture was refluxed in a water bath at 80 °C for 6 h with continuous stirring. Thereafter, the reaction mixture was allowed to cool, the content poured into crushed ices (300 g) in a beaker, filtered and air-dried. The crude product was re-crystallized from ethanol-water mixture (2:1) to afford the final product as a yellow solid after treatment with activated charcoal. Yield = 6.71 g (65 %) ; m.p: 200-201 °C (lit. 202-203) ²⁶; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ϵ) : 203 (4.33), 209 (4.33), 884 (1.55), 888 (1.50) ; ^{13}C -NMR spectrum (400 MHz, DMSO) δ , ppm: 175.2 ($>\text{C}=\text{O}$), 146.7 (Ar-C), 144.7 (Ar-C), 140.7 (Ar-C), 138.3 (Ar-C), 138.3 (Ar-C), 136.0 (Ar-C), 132.8 (Ar-C), 130.1 (Ar-C), 118-115 ($>\text{C}-\text{N}$ -, $>\text{C}=\text{C}<$); ^1H -NMR spectrum (400 MHz, DMSO) δ , ppm: 6.70-6.63 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 6.57 (tr, 1H, Ar-H), 6.47 (d, 2 H, Ar-H), 6.45 (tr, 1H, Ar-H) ; IR (KBr) ν : 3371-3254 (N-H), 1650-1573 ($>\text{C}=\text{O}$), 1588 (C=C and C=N str) 1371-1288 (C-H bending), 830 (di-substituted benzene), 739 cm^{-1} (mono-substituted benzene). Anal. calcd for $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_8\text{ClNO}_2$: C 68.16, H 2.84, Cl 12.61, N 4.97, O 11.36; Found: C 68.00, H 2.99, Cl 12.60, N 4.90.

Preparation of the Ligand, 1,4-Bis (2-hydroxy-3,5-di-tert-butylbenzyl) piperazine:A mixture of piperazine (2.2 g, 25.5 mmol) and 40 % aqueous p-formaldehyde solution (4 g, 56.9 mmol) was dissolved in methanol (40 mL) and heated to reflux for 2 h over a water bath and cooled. To the cooled solution was added 2,4-di-tert-butylphenol (10.3 g, 50.41 mmol) in methanol (60 mL). The resulting solution was refluxed for further 12 h at 60 °C with continuous stirring under a water bath. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and product was re-crystallized from toluene to obtain the pure ligand as a white crystal of melting 260 °C (lit. >250 °C) ²⁶; yield 65%.

Water-mediated Activation of the Palladium Catalyst: To a dried flask flushed with nitrogen gas was added Pd (OAc)₂ (0.002 g, 0.001 mmol) dissolved in distilled water (1 mL), 1,4-bis (2-hydroxyl-3,5-di-tertbutylbenzyl) piperazine (0.003 g, 0.003 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (1 mL). The mixture was heated for 1 min at 80 °C and then allowed to cool to afford the water promoted active catalyst.

General Procedure for the Buchwald-HartwigCross-coupling: To the substrate 6-chlorobenzo[a]- phenothiazin-5-one (0.282 g, 1.0 mmol), the substituted amine (1.2 mmol) and the base K_2CO_3 (0.194 g, 1.4 mmol) in a mixture of DMF and toluene (2 mL: 2 mL) in a two-necked quick-fit flask equipped with magnetic stirrer, reflux condenser and thermometer, was added the resulting highly active green catalyst solution. The content was refluxed at 110 °C with continuous stirring for 3 h on a paraffin oil bath to afford the crude coloured products, **6 (a-i)**. Re-crystallization was done from 1:1 heterogeneous mixture of ethyl acetate and water to obtain the pure titled products in various yields. The purity of the product was determined using the thin layer chromatography (TLC) and melting point.

6- (4-Methylpyridin-2-ylamino) benzo[a]pheno- xazin-5-one (6a) :As a reddish-brown solid. yield = 0.30 g (85 %) ; m.p: 169-170 °C; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ϵ) : 206 (4.33), 207 (4.41), 879 (1.80), 886 nm (1.78) ; IR (KBr) cm^{-1} : 3533-3300 (NH str), 2980-2850 (CH str), 1635 ($>C=O$), 1577- 1560 (C=C and C=N str), 1284 (C-O-C), 843 (monosubstituted benzene). 1H -NMR (DMSO) δ_H : 7.91 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.89 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.79 (tr, 1H, Ar-H), 7.77 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.67-7.55 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.54 (tr, 1H, Ar-H), 6.43 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 5.85 (s, 1H, NH). ^{13}C NMR (DMSO) δ_C : 207.34 ($>C=O$), 134.19 (Ar-C), 130.95 (Ar-C), 126.0 (Ar-C), 125.78 (Ar-C), 112.30 ($>C=N-$, $>C=C<$). Anal. calcd for $C_{21}H_{13}N_3O_2$: C 74.26, H 3.84, N 12.38, O 9.42; Found: C 73.99, H 4.00, N 40.75.

6- (Pyridin-2-ylamino) benzo[a]phenoxazin-5-one (6b) :Crystallized as brown solid; yield = 0.25 g (74 %) ; m.p: 160-161°C; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ϵ) : 209 (4.41), 207 (4.41), 879 (1.80), 886 (1.78) ; IR (KBr) cm^{-1} : 3533-3300 (NHstr), 2980-2850 (CH str), 1635 ($>C=O$), 1577-1560 (C=C and C=N str), 1284 (C-O-C), 843 (monosubstituted benzene) ; 1H -NMR (DMSO) δ_H : 7.91 (d,1H, Ar-H), 7.89 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.79 (tr, 1H, Ar-H), 7.77 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.67-7.55 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.54 (tr, 1H, Ar-H), 6.43 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 5.85 (s, 1H, NH) ; ^{13}C NMR (DMSO) δ_C : 207.34 ($>C=O$), 134.19 (Ar-C), 130.95 (Ar-C), 126.0 (Ar-C), 125.78 (Ar-C), 112.30 ($>C=N-$, $>C=C<$).Anal. calcd for $C_{21}H_{13}N_3O_2$: C 74.26, H 3.84, N 12.38, O 9.42; Found: C 73.99, H 4.00, N 40.75.

6- (5-NitroPyridin-2-ylamino) benzo[a]pheno- xazin-5-one (6c) :As reddish-brown solid; yield = 0.17 g (45%) ; m.p: 204-205°C; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ϵ) : 205 (4.46), 339 (4.46), 849 (1.58), 886 (1.68) ; IR (KBr) cm^{-1} : 3072-3030 (NH str), 1680-1619 ($>C=O$), 1534-1440 (C=C and C=N str), 1552-1530 (NO_2), 1264 (C-O-C), 50-600 (monosubstituted benzene) ; 1H -NMR (DMSO) δ_H : 8.83-8.82 (d, 3H, Ar-H), 8.10 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 8.09 (tr, 2H, Ar-H), 8.07 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.52 (d, 2H, Ar-H), 6.48 (tr, 2H, Ar-H), 3.70 (s, 1H, NH). ^{13}C NMR (DMSO) δ_C : 205.99 ($>C=O$), 147.86 (Ar-C), 147.53 (Ar-C), 134.9 (Ar-C), 133.10 (Ar-C), 107.70 ($>C=N-$, $>C=C<$).Anal. calcd for $C_{21}H_{12}N_4O_4$:C 65.57, H 3.13, N 14.57, O 16.65; Found: C 65.50, H 3.19, N 14.50.

6- (Pyrazin-2-ylamino) benzo[a]phenoxazin-5-one (6d) :As an orange brown solid; yield = 0.15 g (45%) ; m.p: 200-201 °C; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ϵ) : 210 (4.41), 206 (4.41), 886 (1.78), 886 (1.78) ; IR (KBr) cm^{-1} : 3440-3280 (NH str), 1680 ($>C=O$), 1590- 1560 (C=C and C=N str),

1391-1370 (C-H str ofaromatic), 733 (monosubstituted benzene) ; 1H -NMR (DMSO) δ_H : 7.90 (d, 1H, Ar-H),7.89 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.79 (d, 2H, Ar-H), 7.77 (tr, 1H, Ar-H), 7.67 (d, 2H, Ar-H), 7.54 (tr, 4H, Ar-H), 6.38 (s, 1H, NH), 5.85 (s, 1H, NH). ^{13}C -NMR (DMSO) δ_C : 167.50 ($>C=O$), 134.20 (Ar-C), 133.02 (Ar-C), 131.21 (Ar-C), 130.95 (Ar-C), 126.01 (Ar-C),125.78 ($>C=N-$, $>C=C<$). Anal. calcd for $C_{20}H_{12}N_4O_2$: C 70.51, H 3.52, N 16.46, O 9.40;Found: C 70.47, H 3.51, N 16.45.

6- (3-Hydroxypyridin-2-ylamino) benzo[a]- phenoxazin-5-one (6e) :As purple coloured solid; yield = 0.17 g (49%) ; m.p: 190-191 °C; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ϵ) : 224 (4.73), 207 (4.73), 880 (2.06), 888 nm (2.03) ; IR (KBr) cm^{-1} : 3500-3400 (OH), 3349-3261 (NH str), 2940-2920 (C-H str of aliphatic), 1650-1643 ($>C=O$),1490 (C=C and C=N str), 846-727 cm^{-1} (monosubstituted benzene) ; 1H -NMR (DMSO) δ_H :9.50 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 8.99 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 8.49 (tr, 1H, Ar-H), 8.47 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 8.02-7.96 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.82-7.74 (tr, 2H, Ar-H), 5.53 (s, 1H, NH) ; ^{13}C NMR (DMSO) δ_C : 180.54-178.09 ($>C=O$), 158.20 (Ar-C), 157.40 (Ar-C), 135.08 (Ar-C), 133.70 (Ar-C),132.40 (Ar-C), 130.40 (Ar-C), 126.75 (Ar-C), 116.50-116.1 ($>C=N-$, $>C=C<$). Anal.calcd for $C_{22}H_{13}N_3O_3$: C 70.92, H 3.66, N 11.83, O 13.51; Found: C 71.00, H 3.58, N11.83.

6-Phenylaminobenzo[a]phenoxazin-5-one (6f) :As reddish brown solid; yield = 0.25 g 74%) ; m.p: 134-135 °C; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ϵ) : 224 (3.81), 206 (4.53), 880 (2.04), 891 nm (1.89) ; IR (KBr) cm^{-1} : 3390-3361 (OH), 3349-3261 (NH str), 1645 ($>C=O$), 1380-1360 (C-H str aromatic), 1590-1560 (C=C and C=N str), 836 (disubstituted benzene) 745 (monosubstitution) ; 1H -NMR (DMSO) δ_H : 7.72 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.70 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.69 (tr, 1H, Ar-H), 7.51-7.49 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.38 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.70 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.69 (tr, 1H, NH), 7.51-7.49 (m, 4H,Ar-H), 7.38 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 6.84 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 6.30 (s, 1H, NH). ^{13}C -NMR (DMSO) δ_C : 180.80 ($>C=O$), 149.45 (Ar-C), 148.82 (Ar-C),147.95 (Ar-C),142.49 (Ar-C), 134.30 (Ar-C), 129.39 (Ar-C), 128.50 (Ar-C), 125.85 (Ar-C),116.50-103.99 ($>C=N-$, $>C=C<$). Anal. calcd for $C_{22}H_{14}N_2O_2$: C 78.03, H 4.14,N 8.28, O 9.46;Found: C 78.03, H 4.14, N 8.29.

6- (4-Nitrophenylamino) benzo[a]phenox-azin-5-one (6 g) :As dark-red solid; yield = 0.32 g (84%) ; m.p: 192-193 °C; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ϵ) : 203 (4.33), 205 (4.53), 879 (1.76), 897 nm (1.89) ; IR (KBr) cm^{-1} : 3484-3348 (NH), 1634-1606 ($>C=O$), 1560-1471 (C-H str aromatic), 1560 (C=C and C=N), 1471 (NO_2), 1302-1107 (C-H bending), 1293-1014 (C-O-C), 836 (disubstituted benzene) 742 (monosubstitution) ; 1H -NMR (DMSO) δ_H : 7.95 (d, 2H, Ar-H), 7.93 (d, 2H, ArH), 7.69 (d, 2H, Ar-H), 7.53 (tr, 2H, Ar-H), 6.81 (d, 2H, Ar-H), 6.59 (tr, 2H, Ar-H),3.42 (s, 1H, NH) ; ^{13}C NMR (DMSO) δ_C : 156.30 ($>C=O$), 136.16 (Ar-C), 134.18 (Ar-C), 130.95 (Ar-C), 126.95 (Ar-C), 126.02 (Ar-C), 125.79 (Ar-C), 112.95 (Ar-C),125.85 ($>C=N-$, $>C=C<$). Anal. calcd for $C_{22}H_{13}N_3O_4$: C 68.87, H 3.39, N 10.96, O16.69; Found: C 69.00, H 3.26, N 10.94.

6- (4-Hydroxyphenylamino) benzo[a]pheno- xazin-5-one (6h) :As dark brown coloured solid;yield = 0.24 g (66%) ; m.p: 192-193 oC; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ϵ) : 204 (4.33), 207 (3.62), 880 (1.70), 891 nm (1.66) ; IR (KBr) cm^{-1} :3371-3250 (OH), 3436-3254 (NH str.), 1680-1658

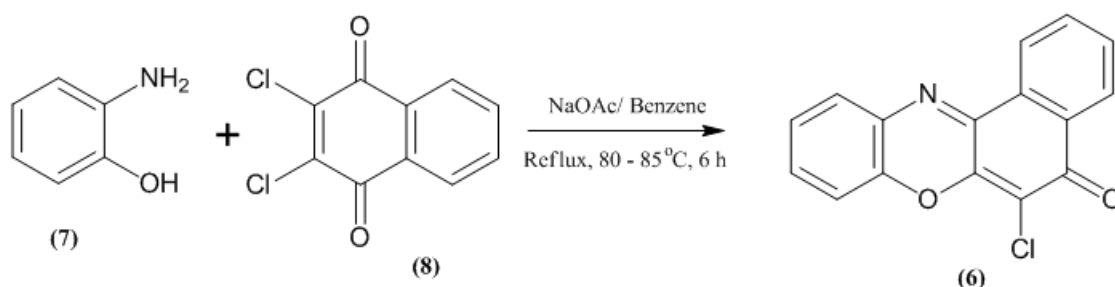
(>C=O), 1590-1560 (C=C and C=N), 1371-1288 (C-H bend) 850-830 (*p*-disubstitution), 742 (monosubstitution); ¹H-NMR (DMSO) δ_H: 8.52 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 8.10 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.90 (tr, 2H, Ar-H), 7.8-7.6 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.50-7.40 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.20 (d, 2H, Ar-H), 5.80 (s, 1H, OH); ¹³C NMR (DMSO) δ_C: 134.40 (Ar-C), 130.77 (Ar-C), 125.85 (Ar-C), 125.46 (Ar-C). Anal. calcd for C₂₂H₁₄N₂O₃: C 74.50, H 3.95, N 7.91, O 13.55; Found: C 73.99, H 3.97, N 7.95.

6- (2-Hydroxyphenylamino) benzo[a]-phenoxazin-5-one (6i): As black coloured solid; yield = 0.30 g (84%); m.p: 204-205°C; UV-visible (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ε): 203 (log ε 3.42), 220 (log ε 4.53), 877 (log ε 1.79), 897 nm (log ε 1.68). IR (KBr) cm⁻¹: 3440-3432 (NH), 2940-2920 (C-H str.), 1681-1672 (>C=O), 1590-1560 (C=C and C=N), 742 (monosubstitution); ¹H-NMR (DMSO) δ_H: 7.90 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.89 (d, 1H, Ar-H), 7.79 (tr, 2H, Ar-H), 7.77 (d, 2H, Ar-

H), 7.67 (tr, 2H, Ar-H), 7.55 (d, 2H, Ar-H), 7.53 (Ar-C), 6.3 (s, 1H, OH). ¹³C-NMR (DMSO) δ_C: 167.60 (>C=O), 135.71 (Ar-C), 134.15 (Ar-C), 130.93 (Ar-C), 125.99 (Ar-C), 125.77 (Ar-C). Anal. calcd for C₂₂H₁₄N₂O₃: C 74.50, H 3.95, N 7.91, O 13.55; Found: C 73.99, H 3.97, N 7.95.

3. Result and Discussion

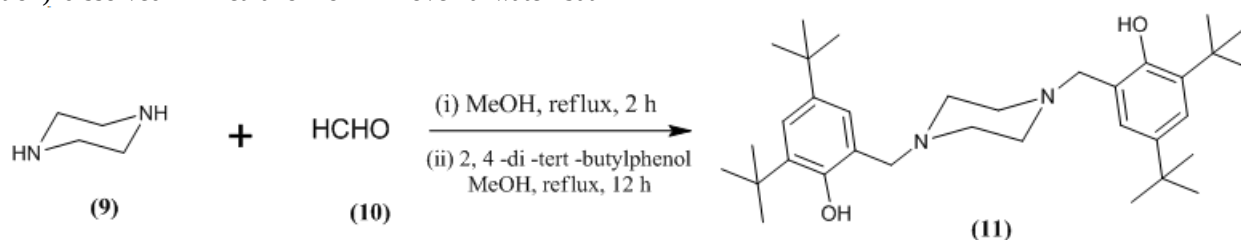
The intermediate, **6** was prepared by the condensation of 2-aminophenol (**7**) with 2,3-dichloronaphthalene-1,4-dione (**8**) in a basic medium using benzene/ DMF as the solvent (Scheme 1). The product was obtained as shiny yellowish solid after recrystallization from water-methanol. The structure assigned to the intermediate was consistent with their spectra and these were confirmed by the microanalysis.



Scheme 1

The coupling of the intermediate with the various substituted amines was achieved by the initial activation of the catalyst. A highly active catalyst was generated by heating the Pd (OAc)₂ in water with 1,4-bis (2-hydroxy-3,5-di-tert-butylbenzyl) - piperazine ligand (**11**) for 60 s at 80 °C in 1,4-dioxane. The ligand **11** was first generated by refluxing a mixture of piperazine **9** and *p*-formaldehyde **10** (40 % solution) dissolved in methanol for 2 h over a water bath

followed by the addition of methanolic solution of 2,4-di-tertbutylphenol (Scheme 2) as described in the experimentation section. The pre-activation was monitored by colour change from initial yellow to red, dark-red and then to greenish black in 0, 15, 30 and 60 min respectively. Consequently, the palladium (II) was reduced to the active palladium (0) in situ.



Scheme 2

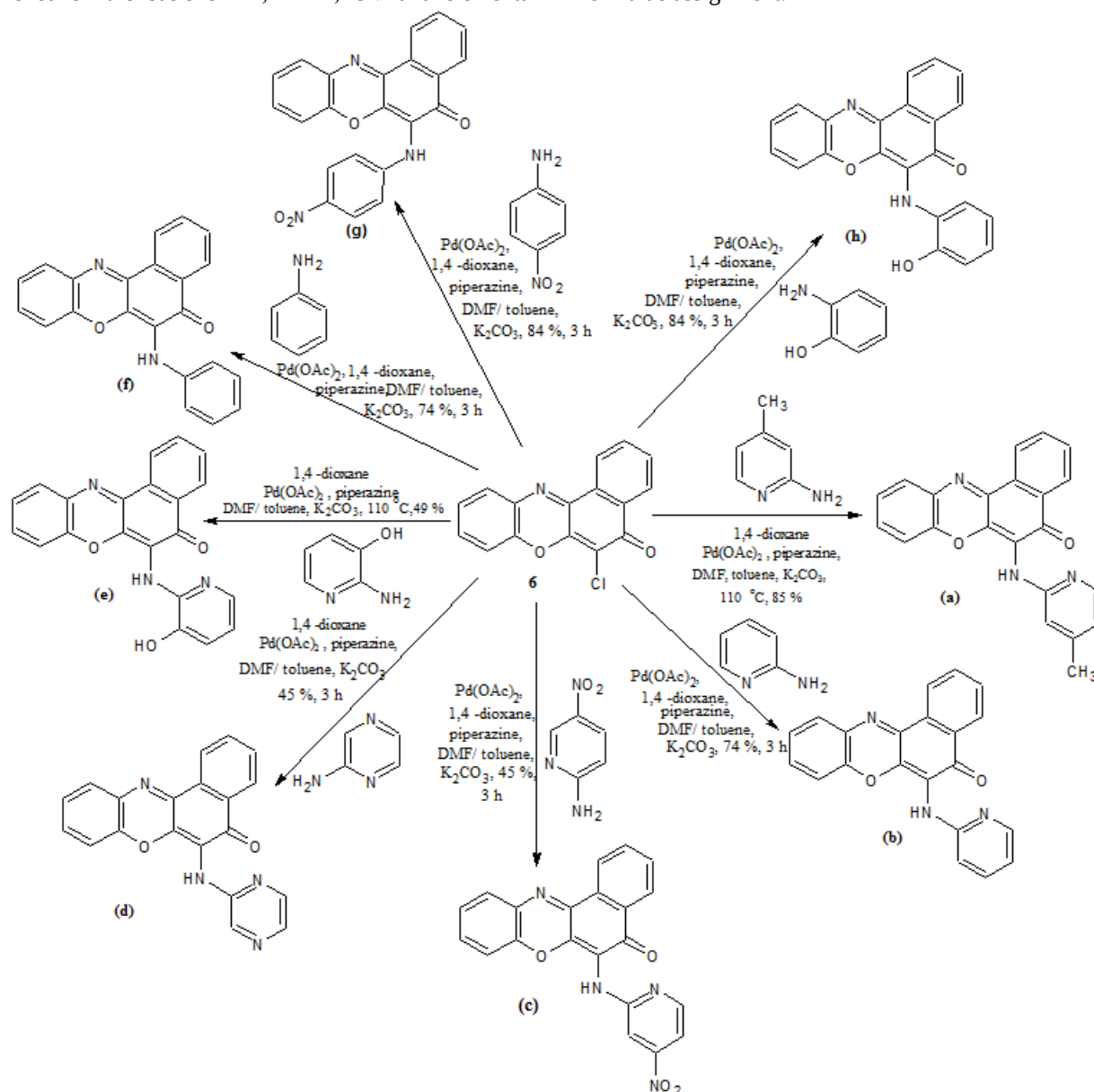
Thereafter, the active palladium catalyst was applied in the successful synthesis of benzo[a]phenoxazine derivatives (**6a-i**). The catalytic system in combination with either sodium acetate or K₂CO₃ and non-polar solvents (toluene) with little DMF (5mL) was employed in the preparation of the derivatives. The preliminary experiment was started by coupling 6-chloro-benzo[a]phenothiazine 285 mg (1 mmol) with 2-amino-4-methylpyridine 1.2 (mmol) and K₂CO₃ (3 mmol), and the reaction was run in toluene at 110 °C while the progress of reaction was monitored on hourly basis by TLC. Product formation was observed after 1 h with trace conversion which increased with time. However, after 3 h there was no change in TLC spot of product even after the reaction was left to run overnight. Isolated product yield of 85% with a conversion of over 80% was obtained after

work-up and purification by column chromatography on silica gel using EtOAc/water solvent mixture (1:1). The spectra and elemental analysis confirmed the identity of the isolated product of the coupling reaction as 6- (4-methylpyridin-2-ylamino) benzo[a]- phenoxazin-5-one (**6a**) with molecular formula C₂₂H₁₅N₃O₂.

The structure assigned to the 6- (4-methylpyridin-2-ylamino) benzo[a]phenoxazin-5-one was consistent with the UV-visible, IR, ¹H-NMR and ¹³C-NMR spectra. The structural assignment was confirmed by the micro-analytical result of compound. The reaction ran without addition of the ligand practically gave no conversion even when it was left overnight (24 h). Consequently, the ligand plays a crucial role in Buchwald-Hartwig cross-coupling reactions. While the use

of Na_2CO_3 gave lower product yields (24%), K_3PO_4 gave comparable yield to K_2CO_3 under the same conditions. It was also noticed that the reactions performed without prior solvent degassing with nitrogen gave comparable yield of products under these conditions. Although only $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ was used as the palladium source; it was believed that other palladium species such as PdCl_2 , $\text{Pd}(\text{NO})_2$ and $\text{Pd}_2(\text{dba})_3$ together with the ligand would make similar transformations. Consequently, the procedure was applied in coupling other intermediate to the other amines running the reaction for a maximum of 3 h under reflux (**scheme 3**) Each completed reaction was work-up by first extracting the crude product from water with dichloromethane followed by purification by column chromatography on silica gel. The molecular structures of the synthesized compounds were established on the basis of IR, NMR, UV and elemental

analysis which were in agreement with the assigned molecular structures and formula. The numbers of aromatic protons were accounted for in the ^1H -NMR of the synthesized compounds and were found at 9.50-6.43 ppm. The carbon nuclei were nicely represented in the carbon nuclear magnetic spectra with the carbonyl carbon signals found in a far distance low field from the others sp^2 hybridized carbon peaks except in **6 d**, **6 g** and **6 h**. The IR absorption maxima for carbonyl functional groups in synthesized compounds were in the range of 1681-1606 cm^{-1} . Furthermore, the UV-visible spectra data of compounds revealed bathochromic shifts as a result of increase in conjugation with compound **6 g** exhibiting the highest shifts. However, results from elemental analysis of compounds undoubtedly confirmed their molecular and structural formulae assignment.



Scheme 3

4. Conclusion

The present study has shown that the palladium-catalyzed Buchwald-Hartwig cross-coupling reaction offers an excellent route in the preparation of 6-anilino derivatives of angular phenoxazine dyes, **6 (a-h)**. Hence, the study has opened the window for further research to ascertain the medicinal potentials of these compounds as well as their applications in solar cells as sensitizers.

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