Spectroscopic, Biological, Thermal, DNA Binding Ability, DFT Calculations, Natural Bond Orbital (NBO) and Non Linear Optical Properties (NLO) of Novel Co(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II) and Hg(II) Complexes with ONS Schiff base

Ayman A. Abdel Aziz\textsuperscript{a}, Fatma M. Elantabli\textsuperscript{b}, H. Moustafa\textsuperscript{c} and Samir M. El-Medani\textsuperscript{b,}\textasteriskcentered

\textsuperscript{a} Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Ain Shams University, Cairo 11566, Egypt.
\textsuperscript{b} Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Fayoum University, El-Fayoum, Egypt.
\textsuperscript{c} Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Cairo University, Giza, Egypt.

Abstract
The reaction of Co(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II) and Hg(II) with the synthesized N-(2-hydroxy-1-naphthylidene)-2-aminothiophenol Schiff base ligand (H\textsubscript{2}L) resulted in the formation of the five complexes; [Co(HL)\textsubscript{2}]H\textsubscript{2}O, 1; [M(HL)\textsubscript{2}] (M= Cu, Zn and Cd), (2-4) and [Hg(HL)Cl], 5. The ligand and its complexes were characterized based on elemental analyses, IR, \textsuperscript{1}H NMR, magnetic measurement, molar conductance, and thermal analysis. Kinetic and thermodynamic parameters were computed using Coats and Redfern method. Antibacterial activities of H\textsubscript{2}L and its complexes have been studied. The binding of Co(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) complexes to calf thymus DNA (CT-DNA) has been investigated using UV-Vis and fluorescence absorption spectra. The results indicated that the ligand and its complexes may bind to DNA by intercalation modes, with a much higher binding affinity of the complexes than that of the ligand. The equilibrium geometries of the studied complexes are investigated theoretically at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ level of theory, and it was found that these geometries are non planner. The calculated \(E_{\text{HOMO}}\) and \(E_{\text{LUMO}}\) energies of the studied complexes can be used to calculate the global properties; chemical hardness (\(\eta\)), softness (\(S\)) and electronegativity (\(\chi\)). The calculated nonlinear optical parameters (NLO); polarizibility (\(\alpha\)), anisotropy of the polarizability (\(\Delta\alpha\)) and first order hyperpolarizibility (\(\beta\)) of the studied complexes show promising optical properties.

Keywords: Asymmetric Schiff base; Metal complexes; DNA-binding studies; DFT calculations; NLO properties.
1. Introduction

It is well known in synthetic organic chemistry that a condensation reaction between amines and aldehydes results in the formation of Schiff bases having conjugated carbon–nitrogen double bonds. Schiff bases have great interest for their important properties, such as their catalytic activity in the hydrogenation of olefins [1], ability to reversibly bind oxygen in epoxidation reactions [2, 3], photochromic properties [4, 5] and complexing ability towards some toxic metals [6]. Furthermore, complexes of Schiff bases showed promising applications in biological activity and biological modeling applications [7-10].

Many investigations have been widely studied on metal complexes of Schiff bases containing N₄ and N₂O₂ donor sites, [11-15], while fewer studies were performed for those having an ONS donor atom [16-18]. For example, complexes of salicylideneimine-2-thiophenol with some divalent ions such as Co(II), Ni(II), Cu(II), Zn(II) and Ru(II) were investigated [19, 20]. Furthermore, ruthenium and osmium carbonyl complexes with the Schiff base, salicylideneimine-2-thiophenol, were also reported [21]. Structures of the two complexes were proposed on the basis of different spectroscopic methods. The studies suggested the coordination of metals to ligand via S and N atoms leaving the OH group free.

There is no systematic study of the electronic structure and nonlinear properties of many previously reported complexes. Such study is important for understanding the biological activity and NLO properties of these complexes. Non-linear optical properties (NLO) are the ability of any compound to convert light [with intense electric field (LASER)] of longer wave length into light of shorter wave length. One of the non-linear optical phenomena is the second harmonic generation (SHG) where intense light of longer wave length is converted to half wavelength value of the incident light, upon absorption by the non-linear optical material as shown below:

![Second-order non-linear crystal](image)

An interesting analytical application of N-(2-hydroxy-1-naphthylidene)-2-aminothiophenol Schiff base had been previously studied by our research group [22], and in view of the
diversified roles of Schiff base metal complexes, in the present work, Co(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II) and Hg(II) complexes were synthesized and fully characterized by different spectroscopic methods. The antibacterial and antifungal activities of the ligand and the complexes were performed. Furthermore, DNA binding interaction with calf-thymus DNA (CT-DNA) have been elucidated by electronic absorption spectral titration and steady state fluorescence competition studies. The geometrical parameters, NBO analysis and electrostatic potential are also calculated using B3LYP/LANL2DZ. The electronic dipole moment (µ) and first order hyperpolarizability (β) values of the studied complexes have been computed to study the NLO properties. Finally, global reactivity descriptors including electronegativity (χ), hardness (η), softness (S) of the studied complexes were calculated and analyzed, while molecular electrostatic potential (MEP) of some selected complexes were explored.

2. Experimental

2.1. Reagents

The metal salts Co(NO₃)₂.6H₂O, Cu(NO₃)₂.2.5H₂O, Zn(NO₃)₂.6H₂O, CdSO₄, and HgCl₂ were purchased from Aldrich. All chemicals were of analytical reagent grade and they were used without further purification.

2.2. Instrumentation

Infrared measurements were carried out on a Unicam-Mattson 1000 FT-IR spectrometer using KBr discs. Electronic absorption spectra were measured on a Unicam UV2-300 UV-VIS spectrometer. Nuclear magnetic resonance measurements were performed on a Spectrospin-Bruker AC 200 MHz spectrometer. Samples were dissolved in DMSO-d₆ using tetramethylsilane as internal reference. Magnetic susceptibilities of the complexes in the solid state (Gouy method) were recorded on a Sherwood Scientific magnetic susceptibility balance. Elemental analyses were performed on a Perkin-Elmer 2400 CHN elemental analyzer. Mass spectra of the solid complexes (70 eV, EI) were carried out on a Finnigan MAT SSQ 7000 spectrometer. Measurements of the thermogravimetric analysis TGA and DTG were carried out under nitrogen atmosphere with a heating rate of 10 °C/min using a Schimadzu DT-50 thermal. Electronic spectra were recorded on Shimadzu UV-Vis 1800 spectrophotometer. Fluorescence measurements were carried out on a Jenway 6270 Fluorimeter. The excitation source was a Pulsed Xenon Lamp. All conductivity measurements were performed in DMF (1x10⁻³ M) at 25 °C, by using Jenway 4010 conductivity meter.
2.3. Synthesis of $N$-(2-hydroxynaphthylidene)-2-aminothiophenol Schiff base ($H_2L$)

The ligand $H_2L$ (Scheme 1) was synthesized as reported in literature [23] by refluxing a mixture of (10 mmol, 1.72 g) of 2-hydroxynaphthaldehyde and (10 mmol, 1.1 mL) of 2-aminothiophenol in about 30 ml absolute ethanol. The reaction mixture was heated to reflux for 2 hours. The reaction mixture was left to cool at room temperature. The solid yellow product was separated and crystallized from hot ethanol and dried on vacuum line to give yellow crystals of the Schiff base ligand (yield 90%). TLC checked the purity of the ligand.

2.4. Synthesis of metal complexes

All complexes were prepared according to the following general procedure. Ethanolic solution of the metal salt (1 mmol, 25 mL) was added dropwise to an ethanolic solution of $H_2L$ ligand (1 mmol, 0.279 g, 25 mL) at room temperature with constant stirring. The produced precipitate was isolated by filtration, then washed several times with 3:1 ethanol-water mixture followed by ether. The formed complex was recrystallized from ethanol.

2.5. Antimicrobial activity

2.5.1 Bacterial susceptibility Screening

In vitro antibacterial activity of synthesized compounds was studied against Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria by the agar well diffusion [24]. Nutrient agar was used as the bacteriological medium. The compounds were dissolved in 10% aqueous dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) to a final concentration of 100 $\mu$g/100 $\mu$L. Pure DMSO was taken as the negative control and 100 $\mu$g/100 $\mu$L Streptomycin as the positive control. 100 $\mu$L of inoculum was aseptically introduced onto the surface of sterile agar plates and sterilized cotton swabs were used for the even distribution of the inoculum. Wells were prepared in the agar plates using a sterile cork borer of 6.0 mm diameter. 100 $\mu$L of the test and control compound were introduced in the well. The same procedure was used for all the strains. The plates were incubated aerobically at 35 °C and examined after 24 h [25, 26]. The diameter of the zone of inhibition produced by each agent were measured with a ruler and compared with those produced by the commercial antibiotic Streptomycin.

2.5.2 Fungal susceptibility Screening

The antifungal activity of the synthesized compounds was tested using agar well diffusion method. The potato dextrose agar plates were inoculated with each fungal culture (10 days old) by point inoculation. A well of about 6.0 mm diameter with sterile cork borer was aseptically
punched on each agar plate. The synthesized test compound (100 µg/100 µL) was introduced into the well; a negative control well was too made with 100 µL of the solvent DMSO and 100 µg/100 µL Nystatin as the positive control. The plates were kept in laminar flow for 30 min for pre diffusion of compound to occur and then incubated at 28 °C for 48 h. Resulting zone of inhibition (in mm) was measured using a Hi media zone scale [27].

2.6. CT-DNA interaction studies

All experimental involving CT DNA were performed in HCl/NaCl (5:50 mM) buffer solution (pH = 7.24). Tris-HCl was prepared using deionized and sonicated triple distilled water and kept at 4 °C for 3 days. The absorption ratio of CT DNA solutions A$_{260}$/A$_{280}$ was 1.9:1, indicating that the DNA was sufficiently free from protein [28]. The CT DNA concentration was determined via absorption spectroscopy using the molar absorption coefficient of 6600 M$^{-1}$ cm$^{-1}$ (260 nm) for CT DNA [29].

Stock solutions of metal complexes were prepared by dissolving them in dimethyl sulphoxide (DMSO) and suitably diluting them with the corresponding buffer to the required concentrations for all experiments. The extent of DMSO in the final concentration didn’t exceed 0.1 % in the tested solutions. At this concentration, DMSO was not found to have any effect on CT DNA conformation.

Absorption titration experiments were carried out by varying the CT DNA concentration in the range of (0-10 µM) and maintaining the H$_2$L and its Co(II) Cu(II) and Zn(II) complexes concentration constant at (100 µM). Upon measuring the absorption spectra, equal amount of DNA was added to both the complex solution and the reference solution to eliminate the absorbance of DNA itself. The reference solution was the corresponding buffer solution. Absorbance values were recorded after each successive addition of CT DNA solution and equilibration for ~ 10 min. Each sample was measured three times and an average value was calculated. The absorption data were analyzed for an evaluation of the intrinsic binding constant K$_b$ of the complexes with CT DNA.

DNA competitive binding studies with ethidium bromide solution (EB) were carried out keeping the concentration of EB (30 µM) and CT DNA (200 µM) constant and varying the concentration of the complexes (0-100 µM). Before measurements, the resulting solutions were shaken up and incubated for 30 min. The emission spectra were recorded in the wavelength range of 500-700 nm at 595 nm (478 nm excitation wavelength).
2.7. Computational methods:

All computations were carried out using Gaussian 09W software package [30]. Molecular geometries of all the studied complexes were fully optimized using B3LYP/LANL2DZ [31-33]. No symmetry constrains were applied during the geometry optimization [34, 35]. The choice of this basis set was due to its flexibility and the fact that the diffused p functions on the H-atom tend to compensate the anharmonic effects of the CH and NH stretches. By using HOMO and LUMO energy values for complexes, electronegativity and chemical hardness can be calculated as follows: \( \chi = (I+A)/2 \) (electronegativity), \( \eta = (I-A)/2 \) (chemical hardness), \( S = 1/2\eta \) (chemical softness) where I and A are ionization potential and electron affinity, and \( I = -E_{HOMO} \) and \( A = -E_{LUMO} \), respectively [36, 37]. NBO calculations have been performed at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ level using NBO 3.1 program as implemented in the Gaussian 09W software package in order to qualitatively measure the intramolecular delocalization in the studied system. Throughout this work MOs were constructed using the Gauss-view 5.08 visualization program [38]. The total static dipole moment (\( \mu \)), the mean polarizability \( \langle \alpha \rangle \), the anisotropy of the polarizability \( \Delta \alpha \) and the mean first hyperpolarizability \( \langle \beta \rangle \) using the x, y, z components were calculated by using the following equations [39-41]:

\[
\mu = (\mu_x^2 + \mu_y^2 + \mu_z^2)^{1/2} \quad (1)
\]

\[
\alpha = \frac{\alpha_{xx} + \alpha_{yy} + \alpha_{zz}}{3} \quad (2)
\]

\[
\Delta \alpha = \sqrt{\frac{(\alpha_{xx} - \alpha_{yy})^2 + (\alpha_{yy} - \alpha_{zz})^2 + (\alpha_{zz} - \alpha_{xx})^2}{2}} \quad (3)
\]

\[
\langle \beta \rangle = \beta_x^2 + \beta_y^2 + \beta_z^2 \quad (4)
\]

where

\[
\beta_x = \beta_{xxx} + \beta_{xyy} + \beta_{xzz} \quad (5)
\]

\[
\beta_x = \beta_{yyy} + \beta_{xxy} + \beta_{yzz} \quad (6)
\]

\[
\beta_x = \beta_{zzz} + \beta_{xzx} + \beta_{yyz} \quad (7)
\]
3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Schiff base characterization

The elemental analyses (C, H, N, S) data with molecular formula of the Schiff base ligand, H₂L, are presented in Table 1. The results are in good agreement with the suggested molecular formula, C₁₇H₁₃NOS. The structure of the Schiff base H₂L is represented in Scheme 1. The mass spectrum of the ligand (Fig. 1) shows a well-defined parent peak at m/z = 280 (P⁺), with a relative intensity of 17%. The IR spectrum (KBr pellets) of the solid H₂L free ligand (Fig. 2) displayed a strong, sharp band at 3262 cm⁻¹ corresponded to the stretching frequency of NH⁺ group [18, 42] where a proton transferred from SH group to the nitrogen of azomethine as suggested in literature [22]. This fact is identical with the present work where no stretching frequency band due to SH group is displayed. In addition, the IR spectrum of the solid ligand showed no band due to the OH stretching frequency referred to the presence of intramolecular hydrogen bonding between the OH and S-moieties [43] (Scheme 2). Furthermore, the IR spectrum displayed stretching bands at 1622, 1267 and 708 cm⁻¹ due to C=N, C-O and C-S moieties, respectively [44]. The ¹H NMR spectrum of a solution of the Schiff base ligand in DMSO displayed singlets at 10.54 and 8.44 ppm due to OH and CH=N protons, respectively (Fig 3-a, Table 3). The OH singlet was disappeared in ¹H NMR spectrum in the presence of D₂O (Fig 3-b). The singlet of SH signal was expected to be confused through the aromatic multiplets. So, the 1H NMR spectrum was expanded in the aromatic region. Accordingly, in the absence of D₂O (Fig 4-a) a broad singlet signal at 7.00 ppm was appeared due to SH proton. This signal disappeared in presence of D₂O (Fig. 4-b). These results confirmed the presence of SH and OH protons at 7.00 ppm and 10.54 ppm in the ¹H NMR spectrum of the ligand solution.

3.2. Complexes characterization

Thermal reaction of the metal ions Co(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II) and Hg(II)with N-(2-hydroxynaphthylidene)-2-aminothiophenol (H₂L) in ethanol resulted in the formation of the five complexes [Co(HL)₂]H₂O, [Cu(HL)₂], [Zn(HL)₂], [Cd(HL)₂] and [Hg(HL)Cl] (1-5). The conductivity measurements of the ligand and its complexes in DMF proved non-electrolyte character (Table 1). The IR spectra of the metal complexes displayed the ligand characteristic bands with appropriate shifts due to complex formation (Table 2). The IR spectra of the studied complexes exhibited v(OH) stretching frequency band in the range 3410-3463 cm⁻¹ indicating the presence of the OH group in the complex. The broad stretching band at 3463 cm⁻¹ in the
cobalt complex was referred to the presence of H\textsubscript{2}O moiety. The ν(OH) band of the OH group in cobalt complex may be confused within the broadband of the H\textsubscript{2}O molecule. The \textsuperscript{1}H NMR spectra of the three diamagnetic complexes 3, 4 and 5 displayed OH singlets at 9.45, 9.27 and 9.50 ppm, respectively. The higher field shift of these signlets with respect to that of the ligand (10.54 ppm) indicates the coordination of the metal ions to H\textsubscript{2}L ligand via the oxygen of the OH group without deprotonation. Furthermore, the IR spectrum of the complexes exhibited ν(C=N), ν(C-O) and ν(C-S) bands in the ranges 1602-1616 cm\textsuperscript{-1}, 1209-1216 cm\textsuperscript{-1} and 679-720 cm\textsuperscript{-1}, respectively, with lower shifts referred to the corresponding values for the ligand. These results indicate the coordination of azomethine nitrogen, hydroxyl oxygen and sulfur of thiol group of the H\textsubscript{2}L Schiff base to the metal ions in the complexes [14]. This is confirmed by the appearance of stretching frequency bands, in the IR spectra of the metal ion complexes, corresponding to M-O, M-N and M-S bonds in the ranges 487-505 cm\textsuperscript{-1}, 450-469 cm\textsuperscript{-1} and 407-427 cm\textsuperscript{-1}, respectively, (Table 2).

The cobalt and copper complexes showed paramagnetic properties and gave no \textsuperscript{1}H NMR spectrum. Magnetic susceptibility measurements of these two complexes at 298 K showed values of 8.56×10\textsuperscript{-6} e.m.u.g\textsuperscript{-1} for cobalt complex and 1.31×10\textsuperscript{-6} e.m.u.g\textsuperscript{-1} for copper complex with an effective magnetic moment (μ\textsubscript{eff}) of 3.61 BM and 1.40 BM, respectively. The μ\textsubscript{eff} value of the cobalt complex indicated a high spin d\textsuperscript{7} electronic configuration. This electronic configuration is in accordance with +2 formal oxidation state of the cobalt in the complex. Moreover, the μ\textsubscript{eff} value of the copper complex indicated a high spin d\textsuperscript{9} electronic configuration. This electronic configuration is in accordance with +2 formal oxidation state of copper in the complex. Accordingly, the studied metal complexes may have the structures represented in Scheme 3.

3.3. Thermogravimetric analysis

The thermal studies of the cobalt, copper, zinc, cadmium, and mercury complexes were carried out using thermogravimetry (TG) and differential thermogravimetry (DTG) techniques. The TG data of the reported complexes were listed in Table 4 and plotted as shown in Figures (S1-S5). The TG plot of CoC\textsubscript{34}H\textsubscript{34}N\textsubscript{2}O\textsubscript{2}S\textsubscript{2}(H\textsubscript{2}O) displayed three resolved and well-defined decomposition steps in the temperature range 92-879 °C. The first decomposition step occurred in the temperature range 92-190 °C, with a net weight loss of 2.63%, could be due to the elimination of one H\textsubscript{2}O molecule which confirms the presence of a hydrated water molecule in the complex. The second decomposition step occurred in the temperature range 206-548 oC with
a net weight loss of 59.56 % was due to the loss of a C$_{24}$H$_{12}$N$_2$SO moiety. On the other hand, the third decomposition step (548-879 °C, 28.38 %) was due to the elimination of C$_{10}$H$_{12}$SO species to leave metallic residue of cobalt.

The TG plot of the CuC$_{34}$H$_{24}$N$_2$O$_2$S$_2$ complex displayed also three decomposition steps in the temperature range 200-968°C. The first decomposition step occurred in the temperature range 200-387°C with a net weight loss of 30.87 % corresponded to the elimination of a C$_{15}$H$_{12}$ moiety. On the other hand, the second decomposition peak occurred in the temperature range 389-512°C with a weight loss of 19.63 % and corresponded to the material decomposition of C$_2$H$_8$N$_2$. In addition, a third decomposition step (514-968 °C, 39.83 %) was due to the elimination of C$_{14}$H$_4$S$_2$O species to give finally CuO + 3C solid residue.

The ZnC$_{34}$H$_{24}$N$_2$O$_2$S$_2$ complex was found to thermally decomposed in three well-defined steps in the temperature range 150-999°C. In the first decomposition step occurred in the temperature range 150-387°C with a net weight loss of 15.68% and corresponded to the elimination of two C$_6$H$_9$N species. The second decomposition step (388-528°C, 30.69 %) was due to the elimination of two C$_9$H$_6$NS$_2$ species. The third decomposition peak occurred in the temperature range 528-999°C (weight loss 24.47 %) could be due to the elimination of a C$_{11}$H$_6$O moiety to leave ZnO + 8C as a residue.

The CdC$_{34}$H$_{24}$N$_2$O$_2$S$_2$ complex decomposed in three well-defined steps with a total mass loss of 100 %. The first decomposition peak occurred in the temperature range 150-378 °C with mass loss of 58.05% corresponded to the loss of C$_{29}$H$_{11}$N$_2$ moiety. The second decomposition step (379-578 °C, 25.33 %) was due to the elimination of C$_4$H$_2$NSCl species. On the other hand, the third decomposition step occurred in the temperature range 578-999 °C with a weight loss of 16.62 % corresponded to the elimination of metallic cadmium leaving no solid residue.

The TG plot of the HgC$_{17}$H$_{12}$NOSCl complex displayed two decomposition steps in the temperature range 150-858 °C. The first decomposition step occurred in the temperature range 150-261 °C with a net weight loss of 35.89 % corresponded to the elimination of a C$_{13}$H$_{10}$O moiety. A second decomposition peak occurred in the temperature range 261-858 °C with a weight loss of 63.88 % corresponded to the material decomposition of [C$_4$H$_2$NSCl + Hg] giving no solid residue.

3.4. Kinetic data
The Coats-Redfern relation [45](equation 1) was employed in this work to evaluate the kinetic and thermodynamic activation parameters ($E^*$, $H^*$, $S^*$ and $G^*$) of the decomposition processes of the reported complexes.

$$\log \left[ \log \frac{w_{\infty}}{w_{\infty}-w} \right] = \log \left[ \frac{AR}{\varnothing E^*} \left( 1 - \frac{2RT}{E^*} \right) \right] - \frac{E^*}{2.303RT}$$  (8)

$w_{\infty}$ is the total mass loss of the decomposition reaction, $w$ is the mass loss up to temperature $T$, $\varnothing$ is the heating rate while $R$ is the gas constant. The plot of the left-hand side of equation (8) against $1/T$, considering $1-2RT/E^* \cong 1$, would give a straight line with definite slope and intercept. The activation energy ($E^*$) and the pre-exponential factor, $A$, could be calculated from the slope and the intercept of this line, respectively. On the other hand, the entropy ($S^*$), enthalpy ($H^*$) and free energy change ($G^*$) of activation, were calculated using the following equations:

$$S^* = 2.303 \left( \log \frac{Ah}{kT} \right)R$$  (9)

$$H^* = E^* - RT$$  (10)

$$G^* = H^* - TS^*$$  (11)

where, ($h$) is Planck’s constant and ($k$) is Boltzman constant. The kinetic parameters are listed in Table 5. The activation energies of decomposition were in the range 4.60-218.34 kJ mol$^{-1}$. The high positive values of the $G^*$ reflect the high stability of the investigated complexes. This behavior corresponded to the covalent character of the complexes [46, 47]. On the other hand, the negative values of $S^*$ for the degradation process (-5.40 to -283.26 kJ mol$^{-1}$) reveal more ordered activated complex and lower rate for the decomposition reactions than normal ones [48, 49].

### 3.5. Antimicrobial activity

The ligand (H$_2$L) and its metal complexes were screened against the bacterial stains $B.\ subtilis$, $S.\ aureus$, $E.\ coli$, $K.\ pneumoniae$ and fungal stains $C.\ albicansm$, $A.\ niger$. The results of inhibition are compared with standard antibacterial drug Streptomycin and antifungal drug Nystatin. The antimicrobial activity of H$_2$L ligand and its complexes bacteria and fungi is summarized in Table 6. The antibacterial activities of Cd(II) and Hg(II) complexes weren’t studied for their toxicity. It was clear that, Co(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II), complexes exhibit
significant activity against all bacterial and fungal stains, this may be due to the presence of the imine group may be one of the reasons for the biocidal action of both the ligand and metal complexes. From Fig.5, among the reported complexes, Cu(II) complex shows the highest biocidal activity than other complexes. Generally, all complexes show higher antimicrobial properties compared to the free H₂L ligand. This behavior was explained by Overtone’s concept and Tweedy’s chelation theory [50-52]. When chelation operates, the polarity of the metal ion gets suppressed to a greater extent. Due to this, the delocalization of π-electrons may increase on the whole chelation ring for the improvement towards better lipophilicity of complexes. This could definitely lead to the much better penetration of the complexes into lipid membranes than that of ligand. This can further block the metal binding sites on the enzymes of the microorganisms. Thus, in general, the complexes show better activity than their Schiff base ligand.

3.6. DNA binding studies

3.6.1. Absorption spectral studies

The application of electronic absorption spectroscopy is one of the most useful techniques to investigate the binding mode of DNA with metal complexes [53]. The electronic absorption spectra of the investigated ligand and its complexes consist of two or three well-resolved bands in the range of 259-500 nm. The high-energy absorption band appeared in the spectra of the ligand and its complexes below 350 nm are assigned to π-π* and n-π* transitions [54] and the band observed above 400 nm in the complexes spectra may be assigned to LMCT transition, usually observed in metal Schiff base complexes containing phenolated ligands due to “phenolate-to-M” charge transfer [55] or d-d transition. The absorption spectra of H₂L and its Co(II) and Cu(II) complexes in the absence and presence of CT DNA are given in Fig 6. With increasing concentration of CT DNA, all the complexes showed hypochromicity and a red-shifted charge transfer peak maxima, indicating the complexes are actively in associating with CT DNA. These spectral characteristics obviously suggested that the titled complexes most likely interact with DNA through a mode of stacking interaction between the aromatic chromophore of the complexes and the base pairs of DNA. For the quantitative investigation of the binding strength of the ligand and its complexes to CT DNA, the intrinsic binding constants Kᵣ of the complexes with CTDNA were calculated using the following function equation [56]:
\[
\frac{[\text{CT DNA}]}{(\varepsilon_a - \varepsilon_f)} = \frac{[\text{CT DNA}]}{(\varepsilon_b - \varepsilon_f)} + \frac{1}{K_b(\varepsilon_a - \varepsilon_f)} \quad (12)
\]

where \([\text{CT DNA}]\) is the concentration of CT DNA in base pairs, \(\varepsilon_a\) is the extinction coefficient obtained by calculating \(A_{\text{obs}}/[\text{compound}]\), \(\varepsilon_f\) corresponds to the extinction coefficient of the compound in its free form and \(\varepsilon_b\) refers to the extinction coefficient of the in the fully bound form, respectively. In plots \([\text{CT DNA}] / (\varepsilon_a - \varepsilon_f)\) versus \([\text{CT DNA}]\) (Fig. 6, inset), the intrinsic binding constants \((K_b)\) value, given by the ratio of the slope to the intercept of the linear fit of the data, were found to be \(0.722 \times 10^4\text{ M}^{-1}\), \(2.685 \times 10^4\text{ M}^{-1}\), \(3.078 \times 10^4\text{ M}^{-1}\), \(1.999 \times 10^4\text{ M}^{-1}\), for \(H_2L\) and its Co(II), Cu(II) and Zn (II) complexes, respectively, indicating a moderate intercalation between the complexes and CT DNA. These \((K_b)\) values are much smaller than the typical classical intercalators (e.g. EB-DNA, \(~10^6\text{ M}^{-1}\) \([57]\) and have the same level as those of some well-established intercalation agents \((~10^4)\) \([58, 59]\). The \(K_b\) value (Table 7) revealed that the comparative binding strength of the complexes with CT-DNA were in the order Cu(II) complex > Co(II) complex > \(H_2L\), suggesting that Cu(II) intercalates more strongly than other complexes.

3.6.2. Fluorescence spectral studies

Ethidium bromide (EB) was used to investigate the potential DNA binding mode of the ligand and its Co(II), Cu(II) and Zn (II) complexes. EB emits intense fluorescence at 595 nm in the presence of CT DNA due to its strong intercalation between the adjacent DNA base pairs. The addition of a second molecule which binds to DNA more strongly than EB would quench the DNA-induced EB emission \([60]\). The extent of quenching of the fluorescence of EB bound to DNA would reflect the extent of the DNA binding of the second molecule. The ligand, the complexes, and CT DNA independently or in combination do not give luminescence spectra in the buffer and DMSO. The emission spectra of DNA-bound EB in the absence and the presence of the ligand and its Co(II) Cu(II) and Zn(II) complexes are shown in Fig. 7. It was clearly seen that, the addition of the reported compounds to CT-DNA pretreated with EB caused an appreciable reduction in emission intensity, indicating that the complexes bind to DNA at the sites occupied by EB. The quenching of the EB bound to DNA by the complex is in agreement with the linear Stern–Volmer Eq. \([61]\):

\[
\frac{I_o}{I} = 1 + K_{SV} \frac{[\text{Compound}]}{[\text{CT DNA}]} \quad (13)
\]
where $I_0$ and $I$ represent the fluorescent intensities in the absence and presence of the complex, respectively, and $K_{sv}$ is the linear Stern-Volmer quenching constant. The $K_{sv}$ value is obtained from the slope of the $I_0/I$ versus [Compound]/[CT DNA] linear plot (Fig. 7, inset) and is found to be 0.67, 1.45, 1.98 and 1.03 for $H_2L$, Co(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) complexes, respectively, indicating that, the CT DNA binding affinity of Cu(II) complex is higher than those of other complexes. Also, the data revealed that DNA-bound EB can be more readily replaced by the complexes in the order Cu(II) complex > Co(II) complex > Zn(II) complex > $H_2L$, which is consistent with the above UV-Vis observations.

3.7. Molecule orbital calculations

In this section, we try to explore the optimized geometrical parameters (bond lengths, bond angles and dihedral angles), natural charges on active centers and energetic of the ground state for the studied complexes. From the elemental analysis and spectroscopic data, metal ions coordinated to the ligand via N, O and S-atoms forming the complexes. Two ligand moieties used in the coordination with Co(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II) forming [M(HL)$_2$] complexes, whereas, Hg(II) coordinated with one moiety of the ligand to form [Hg(HL)Cl] complex.

3.7.1 Geometry of the complexes

Tables 8, 9 and Fig. 8 present the optimized geometry, numbering system, vector of the dipole moment, energetics, dipole moment, bond lengths, bond angles and dihedral angles of all metal complexes studied in this work. In Co(II), Cu(II), Zn(II) and Cd(II) complexes, the metal ion coordinates with O40, C28, C27, C31, N32 and N52, C11, C10, C5 and O19 to form a six-member ring and with S39, C32, C33, N32 and N52, C53, C54, S59 to form a five-membered ring. In case of Hg-complex, the ion coordinated with S27, C22, C21 and N20 to form five membered ring and with O19, C5, C10, C11 and N20 to form six membered ring. Therefore, distortion from regular octahedral geometry is expected for all the studied complexes. Most M-N, M-S and M-O bonds show elongation upon complexation. The length of the coordinate covalent bonds between metal and ligand site, i.e. M-N, M-S and M-O, are too long compared to the typical MX bond lengths [62]. The too long M-O, M-S and M-N bonds in the complexes mean that the ionic character of these bonds is small. The calculated values of bond angles between metal ion and binding sites (Tables 8 and 9) N32MS39, N32MO40, O40MS59, S59MN52, N52MO19 and O19MS39 vary between 45° and 129° which compare nicely with the experimental data as obtained from X-ray analysis for Oh complexes [63], which indicate a
distorted octahedral geometry. The values of the dihedral angles around metal ion, i.e. MN32C31C27, MO40C28C27, MO40C28C29 and MN32C31H47, are far from 0° or 180° which indicate that the metal ion is not in the

3.7.2 Natural charges and natural population

The natural population analysis performed on the electronic structures of the studied complexes clearly describes the distribution of electrons in various sub-shells of their atomic orbits. The accumulation of charges on the coordinating sites and the accumulation of electrons in the core, valence and rydberg sub-shells and natural electronic configuration of the metal in the studied complexes are presented in Tables 10 and 11. The most electronegative charges are accumulated on N12, S19, O63, N43, S50 and O51. According to an electrostatic point of view of the molecule, these electronegative atoms have a tendency to donate electrons. Whereas, the most electropositive atoms such as; Co, Cu, Zn, Cd and Hg have a tendency to accept electrons. The central metal ion in the Co-complex received 1.6681e from the donating sites of the ligands with electronic configuration 3d⁷. In case of Cu-, Zn-, Cd-, and Hg-complexes the central metal ions received 1.1492e (3d⁹), 0.7358e (3d⁹), 0.76194e (4d⁹) and 0.9307e (5d⁹) from the active sites of the ligands respectively. Total Lewis (effective core, core and valence Lewis) and total non-Lewis (valence non-Lewis and Rydberg non-Lewis) of the studied complexes are presented in Table 12.

3.7.3 Global reactivity descriptors

They include HOMO, LUMO, energy gap (Eg), chemical hardness (η), electronegativity (X), chemical potential (V), electron affinity (A), ionization potential (I) and chemical softness(S). The frontier molecular orbital (FMO) energies of the studied complexes were calculated using B3LYP/LANL2DZ and presented in Fig. 9. HOMO energy characterizes the electron donating ability, while LUMO energy characterizes the electron withdrawing ability. Energy gap (Eg) between HOMO and LUMO characterizes the molecular chemical stability which is a critical parameter in determining molecular electrical transport properties because it is a measure of electron conductivity. The results in Fig. 9 and Tables 9 and 13 indicate that the smaller the energy gap the easier the charge transfer and the polarization occurs within the molecule. Furthermore, the order of increasing reactivity is: Co >> Zn > Cu > Cd > Hg. Using HOMO and LUMO energies, ionization potential and electron affinity can be expressed as I~ -E_HOMO, A~ -E_LUMO as shown in Tables 9 and 13. The variation of electronegativity (X) values is supported by
electrostatic potential, for any two molecules, where electron will be partially transferred from one of low $\mathcal{X}$ to that of high $\mathcal{X}$. The results show that the order of decreasing $\mathcal{X}$ (increasing CT within the molecules) is: Cu > Hg > Zn > Cd > Co.

The chemical hardness ($\eta$) = ($I$-$A$)/2, electronegativity ($\mathcal{X}$) = ($I$+$A$)/2, chemical potential ($V$) = - ($I$+$E$)/2 and chemical softness($S$) = ($1/2\eta$) values are calculated and presented in Tables 9 and 13. The results of small $\eta$ values for the studied compounds reflect the ability of charge transfer inside the molecule. Therefore, the order of increasing the charge transfer within the molecule is: Co > Hg > Zn > Cd > Cu. Considering $\eta$ values, the higher the $\eta$ values, the harder is the molecule and vice versa.

3.7.4-Non-linear optical properties (NLO)

So far no experimental or theoretical investigations were found addressing NLO for these classes of complexes; therefore, this triggered our interest to undertake this study. NLO is at the forefront of current research due to its importance in providing key functions of frequency shifting, optical modulation, switching, laser, fiber, optical materials logic and optical memory for the emerging technologies in areas such as telecommunications, signal processing and optical inter connections [64-66]. In order to investigate the relationship between molecular structure and NLO, the polarizibilities and hyperpolarizibilities of the studied complexes are calculated using B3LYP/LANL2DZ. Total static dipole moment ($\mu$), the mean polarizibility $\alpha$, the anisotropy of the polarizability $\Delta\alpha$ and the mean first-order hyperpolarizibility ($\beta$) of the studied complexes are listed in Table 14. The polarizibilities and first-order hyperpolarizibilities are reported in atomic units (a.u.), the calculated values have been converted into electrostatic units (esu) using conversion factor of $0.1482\times10^{-24}$ esu for $\alpha$ and $8.6393\times10^{-33}$ esu for $\beta$. Urea is a standard prototype used in NLO studies. In this study, Urea is chosen as a reference as there were no experimental values of NLO properties of the studied complexes. The magnitude of the molecular hyperpolarizibility $\beta$ is one of the key factors in NLO system. The analysis of the $\beta$ parameter show that Hg-complex is $\sim$ 12 times higher than (UREA), while Co(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II)complexes are 7, 2, 8 and 5 higher than the reference respectively. Therefore, the studied complexes are an efficacious candidate for NLO materials.

4. Conclusions

In this work, the reaction of some transition metal ions Co(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II) and Hg(II) with a Schiff base ligand has been studied. Elemental analyses, IR, $^1$H NMR, magnetic
measurement, molar conductance, and thermal analysis suggested the five complexes; [Co(HL)₂]H₂O, [M(HL)₂] (M= Cu, Zn and Cd) and [Hg(HL)Cl]. Kinetic and thermodynamic parameters reflect the high stability of the complexes. The parent ligand (H₂L) and its metal complexes were screened against some bacteria and fungi strains. Furthermore, DNA binding interaction with calf-Thymus DNA (CTDNA) have been elucidated by electronic absorption spectral titration and steady state fluorescence competition studies and the data revealed that, the complexes bind to CT-DNA in the order Cu(II) complex > Co(II) complex > Zn(II) complex > H₂L. The molecular geometry of the studied complexes in the ground state have been calculated by using DFT-B3LYP/LANL2DZ level of theory. The optimized structure of the studied complexes are non-linear with the metal ion is not in the same plane as the donating sites. The HOMO-LUMO energy gap helped in analyzing the chemical reactivity, hardness, softness, chemical potential and electro negativity. Natural charge distribution of the studied complexes was studied which indicated the electronic charge distribution in the complexes. The calculated dipole moment and first order hyperpolarizability results indicate that the complexes have a reasonable good non-linear optical behavior.

References


