



Synthesis and Biological Activity of Novel Imidazole Based Chalcone Derivatives.

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ABSTRACT:

Aim: To synthesize novel imidazole-based chalcone derivatives and assess their biological activities for potential drug development.

Method: The novel imidazole-based chalcone derivatives were synthesized by reacting benzylamine, dihydroxyacetone, and potassium thiocyanate, forming (1-benzyl-2-mercapto-1H-imidazol-5-yl) methanol. The introduction of methyl or ethyl iodide, coupled with oxidation using magnesium dioxide, yielded the target compounds by alkylation and oxidation method. Claisen-Schmidt condensation with various acetophenones under methanolic sodium hydroxide facilitated further derivatization. Structural elucidation involved Spectroscopic analysis and mass spectrometry, followed by antimicrobial activity testing.

Results: Compounds (9a-9j') demonstrated varied antibacterial efficacy. Compound 9b exhibited notable activity against *B. cereus* and *E. coli* (MIC 125 µg/mL and 62.5 µg/mL). Compound 9e showed significant antibacterial activity across strains (MIC 50-125 µg/mL), and 9c consistently inhibited *S. aureus*, *B. cereus*, and *P. aeruginosa* (MIC 250 µg/mL). Compounds 9g and 9j' displayed diverse antibacterial effects, indicating potential selectivity.

Conclusions: In conclusion, the synthesized imidazole-based chalcone derivatives exhibit promising antimicrobial potential, supported by methodological alignment and consistent observations in antibacterial and antifungal activities. The innovative inclusion of oxidation steps enhances structural diversity, emphasizing their efficacy against bacterial and fungal infections.

1. Introduction

The prevalence of azoles in both natural and synthetic compounds, coupled with their pivotal role as synthetic intermediates, has attracted significant attention across industrial and academic domains [1-5]. Azole-based heterocyclic derivatives, renowned for their diverse biological activities and therapeutic potential, have emerged as focal points in medicinal chemistry research [6-10].

The azole scaffold is a crucial element found in many medications that have been authorized for clinical use and in compounds that are being investigated, highlighting its significance in contemporary drug

development endeavours [11-13]. Azole ring-containing compounds, such as imidazole, triazoles, and oxazole, have shown significant efficacy against a range of ailments, including microbial infections, cancer, inflammation, and neurological problems [14,15]. Azole derivatives, including triazoles and imidazole, are extensively used as antifungal medicines because they may effectively hinder fungal cytochrome P450 enzymes that play a vital role in the production of ergosterol, a critical element of fungal cell membranes [16-19].

Imidazole-based chalcone derivatives represent a class of compounds with promising potential in medicinal chemistry due to their diverse biological activities [20-22]. Chalcones, characterized by their α , β -unsaturated



ketone structure, have long been recognized for their pharmacological properties. Imidazole, on the other hand, serves as a privileged scaffold in drug discovery owing to its structural versatility and pharmacological relevance [23-27]. The fusion of imidazole with chalcone moieties presents an intriguing avenue for the synthesis of novel compounds with enhanced biological profiles.

Several studies have underscored the pharmacological significance of imidazole-based compounds. For instance, research by Sharma et al., (2021) demonstrated the anticancer potential of imidazole derivatives against various cancer cell lines, highlighting their role as cytotoxic agents [28]. Additionally, investigations by Patel et al., (2021) revealed the antimicrobial activity of imidazole-based compounds against pathogenic microorganisms, suggesting their utility as antimicrobial agents [29].

Moreover, the biological activities of chalcone derivatives have been extensively explored in the literature. Studies by Li et al., (2020) elucidated the antioxidant properties of chalcones, emphasizing their potential in combating oxidative stress-related diseases [30]. Furthermore, research conducted by Rashid et al., (2019) highlighted the anti-inflammatory effects of chalcone derivatives, indicating their therapeutic relevance in inflammatory conditions [31].

In this perspective, the synthesis and biological evaluation of novel imidazole-based chalcone derivatives represent an important and fascinating area of study. Through the integration of the structural characteristics and pharmacological attributes of imidazole and chalcone, these compounds have the potential for the creation of highly effective therapeutic agents that may target a wide range of disorders, such as cancer, microbial infections, oxidative stress, and inflammation [32-36].

This research paper aims to explore the synthesis strategies employed for the preparation of imidazole-based chalcone derivatives and investigate their biological activities through comprehensive in vitro and in vivo evaluations. Through this endeavour, insights into the pharmacological potential of these compounds can be gained, paving the way for their future development as clinically relevant therapeutics.

2. Methods

2.1 Materials

Benzyl amine, dihydroxyacetone, potassium thiocyanate, acetic acid, 1-butanol, methyl iodide or ethyl iodide, sodium hydroxide, magnesium dioxide (MnO_2), chloroform, acetophenones, methanolic sodium hydroxide, oxone, tetrahydrofuran (THF) and water were the reagent used in the synthesis of compounds. The chemicals and reagents were procured from Sigma Aldrich.

2.2 Synthesis of Imidazole-Based Chalcone Derivatives

The synthesis of imidazole-based chalcone derivatives, namely compounds 7a and 7b, was carried out using a multi-step approach described in Scheme 1. To, a solution of acetic acid and 1-butanol benzylamine (1), dihydroxyacetone (2), and potassium thiocyanate (3) were mixed. The reaction mixture after reaction, containing (1-Benzyl-2-mercapto-1H-imidazol-5-yl) methanol was agitated for 72 hours. Later, a solution of N-(4-methylphenyl)-2-aminothiocarbonylpropanoic acid (compound (4)) in methanol was treated with methyl iodide ethyl iodide and then coupled with an aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide. This led to the synthesis of 2-(4-methylphenyl)-4-thioxo-4,5-dihydro-1H-imidazole-5-carboxylic acid and 2-(4-methylphenyl)-4-thioxo-1H-imidazole-5-carbaldehyde (compounds 5, 6). Subsequently, compounds 5 and 6 were oxidized using magnesium dioxide (MnO_2) under reflux conditions with chloroform as a solvent, resulting in the formation of 2-(4-methylphenyl)-1H-imidazole-4-thiol (compound 7). Subsequently, Claisen-Schmidt condensation processes were conducted using compound 7a or 7b with different acetophenones (8a-8j) in presence of methanolic sodium hydroxide solution resulting in the formation of compounds 9a-9j'. In addition, compound 9j was oxidised using Oxone in a mixture of THF and water, forming the oxidized methyl sulfonyl molecule 9k. The chemical integrity and content of all synthesized compounds were verified using nuclear magnetic resonance (^1H NMR, ^{13}C NMR) and mass spectrometry studies, confirming their structural properties. The use of this complete synthetic strategy facilitated the production of imidazole based chalcone derivatives having well-defined structures and potential biological activity.

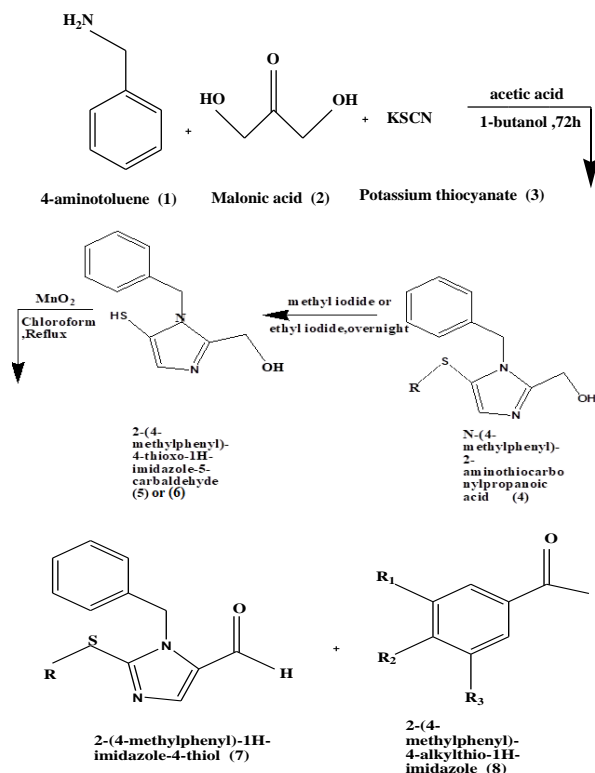


Figure 1: Scheme 1- Reagents and conditions.

Table 1. - Compounds 7a-9j

Compounds	R ₁	R ₂	R ₃	R ₄
7a	H	H	H	Me
7b	H	H	H	Et
8a	H	Br	H	-
8b	H	F	H	-
8c	H	Cl	H	-
8d	H	NO ₂	H	-
8e	H	OPh	H	-
8f	H	CH ₃	H	-
8g	Ph	Ph	H	-
8h	H	Ph	H	-
8i	H	OCH ₃	H	-

8j	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	-
9a	H	Br	H	SMe
9b	H	F	H	SMe
9c	H	Cl	H	SMe
9d	H	NO ₂	H	SMe
9e	H	OPh	H	SMe
9f	H	CH ₃	H	SMe
9g	Ph	Ph	H	SMe
9i	H	OCH ₃	H	SMe
9j	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	SMe
9K	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	SO ₂ Me
9a'	H	Br	H	SEt
9b'	H	F	H	SEt
9c'	H	Cl	H	SEt
9e'	H	OPh	H	SEt
9g'	Ph	Ph	H	SEt
9h'	H	Ph	H	SEt
9i'	H	OCH ₃	H	SEt
9j'	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	Set

2.3 Characterization

The synthesized novel imidazole-based chalcone derivatives were spectroscopically characterized using advanced analytical instruments. Mass spectrometry was conducted using a Bruker MicroTOF-Q mass spectrometer, sourced from Bruker India Scientific Pvt. Ltd., to determine the molecular weights and structural properties of the compounds. Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy, including both carbon (¹³C) and proton (¹H) NMR, was performed using a Bruker AVANCE III 500 MHz NMR spectrometer, also supplied by Bruker India Scientific Pvt. Ltd. These instruments provided high-resolution spectra, enabling precise determination of the molecular structures of the synthesized chalcone derivatives.



2.4 Antimicrobial activity

The synthesized compounds were evaluated for antibacterial and antifungal properties against various bacteria and fungi. Bacterial assessment involved *S. aureus*, *B. cereus*, *E. coli*, and *P. aeruginosa* cultured in Mueller-Hinton (MH) medium, while *A. niger* and *A. fumigatus* were cultivated in RPMI-1640 medium for antifungal evaluation. Minimum inhibitory concentrations (MICs) were determined using the MTT colourimetric technique. Compounds, at 50 µg/mL concentration in DMSO, were added to a sterilized liquid medium in microtitration plates along with microbial suspensions (105 cfu/mL). Incubation at 37 °C (bacteria) and 36 °C (fungi) followed. MICs were visually determined, and MTT solution (2 mg/mL in PBS) was added, incubated, and then separated using isopropanol containing 5% 1 M hydrochloric acid. Optical density at 550 nm was measured using a microplate reader. The MIC values reflected the compounds' ability to inhibit microbial growth, indicating their potential as antimicrobial agents and providing insights into therapeutic applications.

2.5 Statistical Analysis

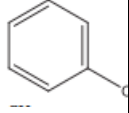
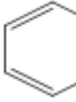
The statistical tests were run using the SPSS (Version 26) programme. While numbers and percentages were utilised to depict categorical data, the mean and standard deviation were used to characterise all continuous variables. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the frequencies and proportions.

3. Results

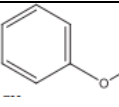

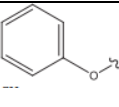
The different Chalcone Derivatives were synthesized using Claisen-Schmidt condensation reaction. This involves potent bases like NaOH or KOH in polar solvents such as MeOH or DMF. Thin-layer chromatography confirms the purity of compound, and spectrum analysis confirm the structured analysis. Table 2 below displays the physical data of different imidazole triazole -chalcones derivatives.

Table 2: Physical data of synthesized imidazothiazole-chalcones derivatives (9a-9j')

Comp ounds	R ₁	R ₂	R ₃	R ₄	M .P. (° C)	Yi eld (%)
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9a	H	Br	H	SC H ₃	23 7- 23 9	62. 27
9b	H	F	H	SC H ₃	28 7- 29 0	66. 11
9c	H	Cl	H	SC H ₃	27 1- 27 4	52. 85
9d	H	N ₂ O	H	SC H ₃	25 1- 25 3	50. 02
9e	H		H	SC H ₃	28 0- 28 1	61. 98
9f	H	CH ₃	H	SC H ₃	26 7- 26 9	63. 79
9g			H	SC H ₃	24 6- 24 9	58. 28
9i	H	OCH ₃	H	SC H ₃	24 9- 25 0	67. 49
9j	OCH 3	OCH ₃	O C H ₃	SC H ₃	28 2- 28 4	68. 14
9k	OCH 3	OCH ₃	O C H ₃	SO ₂ CH ₃	27 9- 28 0	64. 58
9a'	H	Br	H	S- Eth yl	22 2- 22 8	61. 78
9b'	H	F	H	S- Eth yl	26 2- 27	76. 87



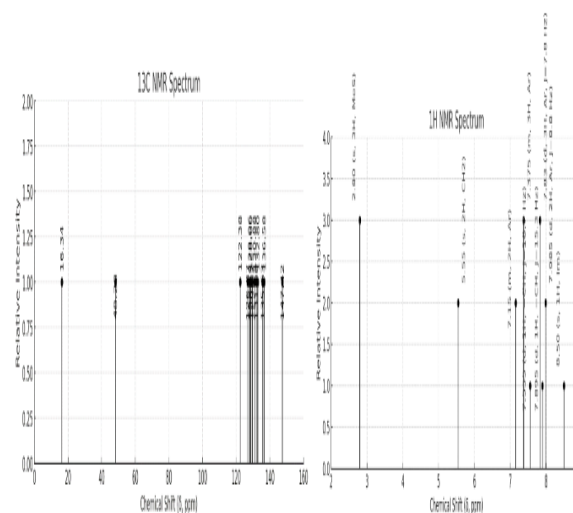
					26 5	
9c'	H	Cl	H	S-Ethyl	27 2- 27 4	50. 89
9e'	H		H	S-Ethyl	25 2- 25 8	78. 67
9g'			H	S-Ethyl	27 6- 28 0	45. 56
9h'	H		H	S-Ethyl	21 2- 21 8	78. 45
9i'	H	OCH ₃	H	S-Ethyl	24 7- 25 0	32. 98
9j'	OCH ₃ 3	OCH ₃	O C H ₃	S-Ethyl	22 2- 22 8	58. 89

3.1 Synthesis (a)3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio or ethylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-phenylpropan-1-one (9a-9j')

A solution containing sodium hydroxide (2 moles/litre), consisting of 2 ml, was combined with either 1-benzyl-2-mercapto-1H-imidazole-5-carbaldehyde derivative 7a or 7b, with a quantity of 1.0 ml, in a solution of methanol with a volume of 5.0 ml. Subsequently, the appropriate acetophenone, specifically 8a-8j, with a quantity of 1 mmol, was added to the mixture. The resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature for a duration of 24 to 48 hours, with the progress of the reaction monitored using thin-layer chromatography (TLC). Following completion, 2 N hydrochloric acid was added until a solid was produced. After filtering and rinsing with cold ethanol, the raw material was refined by recrystallization in methanol.

• (E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio)-1H-imidazole-4-yl)-1-(4-bromophenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9a)

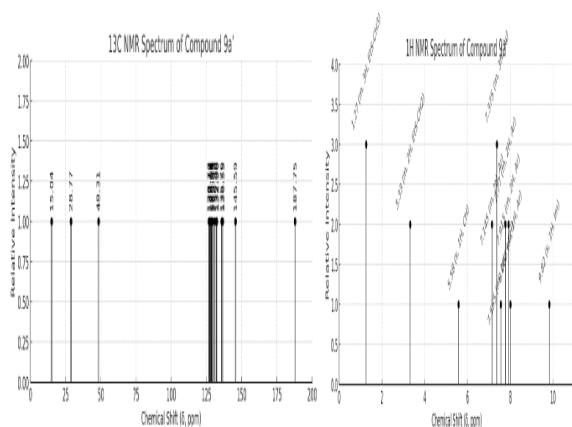
Yield :62% melting point = 202–204 °C. The ¹H NMR 200 MHz DMSO-d₆ (δ) in ppm: 2.80 (singlet, 3H, methylthio group), 5.55 (singlet, 2H, methylene group), 7.14–7.17 (multiplet, 2H, aromatic protons), 7.32–7.43 (multiplet, 3H, aromatic protons), 7.53–7.58 (doublet, 1H, vinyl proton, J = 18.7 Hz), 7.76–7.90 (doublet, 3H, 4-bromophenyl protons H4 and H6, J = 7.8 Hz), 7.87–7.92 (doublet, 1H, vinyl proton, J = 15.3 Hz), 7.97–8.00 (doublet, 2H, 4-bromophenyl protons H3 and H5, J = 8.8 Hz), 8.50 (singlet, 1H, imidazole proton). ¹³C NMR spectra at 75 MHz in DMSO-d₆ (δ) at 16.34, 48.23, 122.381, 126.87, 128.06, 128.55, 128.60, 129.52, 130.88, 131.88, 132.8, 135.63, 136.58, and 147.42. The LC-MS: m/z 414.2 (M + H) +.



Compound (9a)

• (E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(ethylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-bromophenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9a')

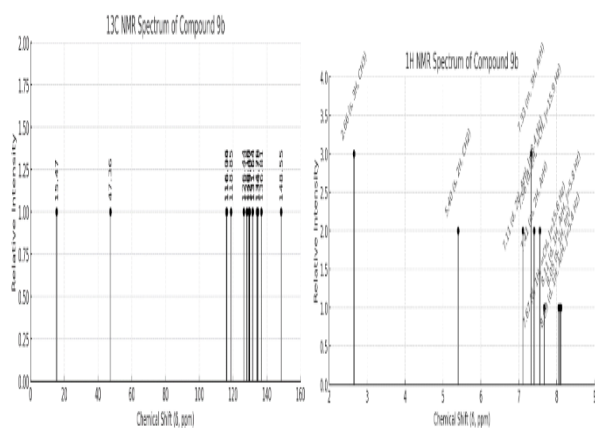
Yield :74% melting point =154–156 °C. The ¹H NMR δ (ppm) 1.24–1.29, 3.29–3.36, 5.58, 7.13–7.16, 7.32–7.43, 7.53–7.58, 7.75–7.79, 7.89–7.94, 7.99–8.02, and 9.82. The ¹³C NMR analysis δ (ppm) 15.04, 28.77, 48.31, 126.77, 127.19, 128.06, 128.51, 128.64, 129.49, 130.89, 132.00, 132.36, 135.76, 136.55, 145.59, and 187.75. The LC-MS :427.3 (M + H) +.



Compound (9a')

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-fluorophenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9b)**

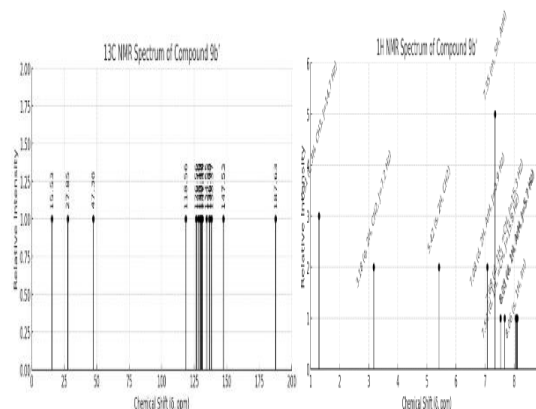
Yield: 42%, melting point =182 -184 °C. The ¹H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-d₆) at δ (ppm): 2.65-2.66 (singlet, 3H, CH₃, J = 4.6 Hz), 5.40 (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 7.09-7.12 (doublet, 2H, ArH, J = 8.4 Hz), 7.28-7.37 (multiplet, 3H, ArH), 7.39-7.42 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.53-7.58 (doublet, 2H, HC = CH, J = 15.9 Hz), 7.64-7.70 (doublet, 1H, HC = CH, J = 15.6 Hz), 8.05 (singlet, 1H, imidazole), 8.08-8.10 (doublet, 1H, ArH, J = 5.4 Hz), 8.10-8.12 (doublet, 1H, ArH, J = 5.8 Hz). ¹³C NMR spectrum (80 MHz, DMSO-d₆) displays signals at the following chemical shifts (δ in ppm): 15.47, 47.36, 116.06 (CF), 116.34 (CF), 118.85, 126.44, 128.18, 129.40, 129.87, 131.54, 131.64, 134.26, 134.78, 136.81, 148.55. Analysed by LC-MS (ESI), peaks observed at 353.4 (M + H)⁺ and 375.5 (M + Na)⁺.



Compound (9b)

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(ethylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-fluorophenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9b')**

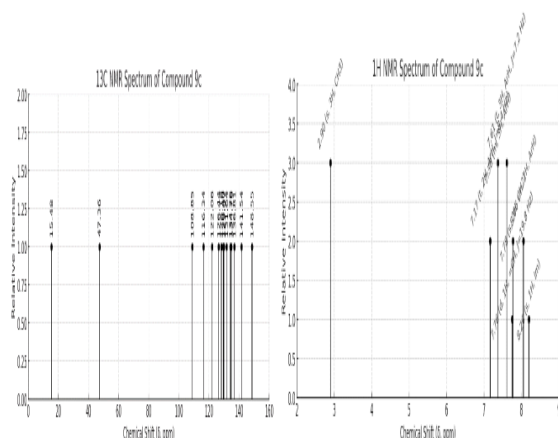
Yield: 41%, Melting point =134-136°C. ¹H NMR spectrum (300 MHz-DMSO d₆) at δ (ppm) 1.27-1.31 (triplet, 3H, CH₃, J = 14.7 Hz), 3.12-3.23 (quartet, 2H, CH₂, J = 7.2), 5.42 (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 7.07-7.09 (doublet, 2H, ArH, J = 6.9 Hz), 7.28-7.41 (multiplet, 5H, ArH), 7.51-7.56 (doublet, 1H, HC = CH, J = 15.8 Hz), 7.65-7.70 (doublet, 1H, HC = CH, J = 15.3 Hz), 8.06 (singlet, 1H, imidazole), 8.07-8.09 (doublet, 1H, ArH, J = 5.7 Hz), and 8.10-8.12 (doublet, 1H, ArH, J = 5.7 Hz). The compound's elemental analysis data was as follows: 15.53, 27.85, 47.38, 118.56, 126.56, 128.16, 129.39, 130.17, 130.58, 131.39, 134.55, 136.73, 136.90, 138.37, 147.53, and 187.63. LC-MS (ESI) analysis at 367.4 (M + H)⁺.



Compound (9b')

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-chlorophenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9c)**

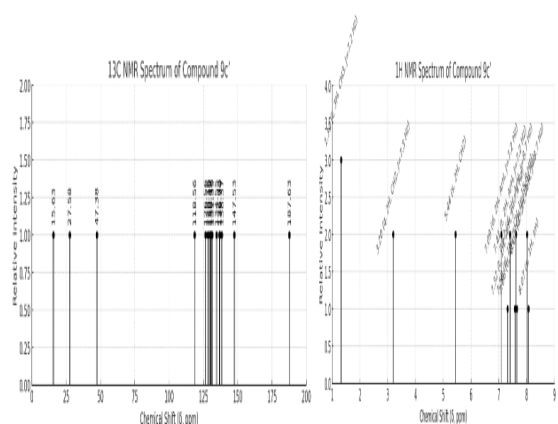
Yield: 59%, Melting point =183-185 °C. The ¹H NMR spectrum (250 MHz, DMSO-d₆) displays peaks at δ (ppm): 2.90 (singlet, 3H, CH₃), 7.75-7.80 (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 7.14-7.19 (triplet, 2H, ArH), 7.29-7.46 (multiplet, 3H, ArH), 7.56-7.66 (triplet, 3H, ArH), 7.72-7.79 (doublet, 1H, HC = CH, J = 19.8 Hz), 8.03-8.08 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), and 8.20 (singlet, 1H, imidazole). The ¹³C NMR spectrum (72 MHz, DMSO-d₆) shows peaks at the following chemical shifts (δ in ppm): 15.48, 47.36, 122.06 (CF), 116.34 (CF), 108.85, 126.44, 128.18, 129.40, 129.87, 141.54, 131.64, 134.26, 134.78, 136.81, 148.55. The compound's LCMS (ESI) spectrum shows a peak at 374.4 (M + H)⁺.



Compound (9c)

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(ethylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-chlorophenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9c')**

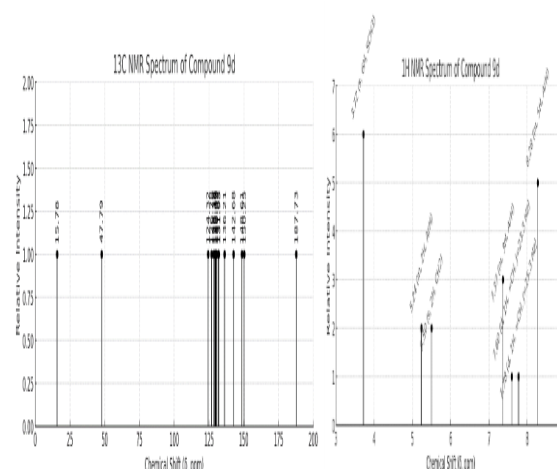
Yield :63%. Melting point =148-150 °C. ¹H NMR spectrum (300 MHz-DMSO d₆) shows peaks at δ (ppm) 1.27-1.37 (t, 3H, CH₃, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.17-3.22 (q, 2H, CH₂, J = 7.3 Hz), 5.44 (s, 2H, CH₂), 7.06-7.12 (d, 2H, ArH, J = 7.2 Hz), 7.29-7.34 (t, 1H, ArH, J = 7.4 Hz), 7.38-7.43 (t, 2H, ArH, J = 7.2 Hz), 7.56-7.59 (d, 1H, HC = CH, J = 15.8 Hz), 7.60-7.64 (d, 2H, ArH, J = 8.7 Hz), 7.63-7.68 (d, 1H, HC = CH, J = 15.6 Hz), 8.00-8.03 (d, 2H, ArH, J = 8.7 Hz), and 8.07 (s, 1H, imidazole). The ¹³C NMR spectrum (75 MHz-DMSO d₆) shows peaks at δ (ppm) 15.63, 27.58, 47.38, 118.56, 126.56, 128.16, 129.30, 130.17, 130.58, 131.39, 134.55, 136.73, 136.90, 138.37, 147.53, and 187.63, m/z 383.4 (M + H)⁺ in the LC-MS (ESI) analysis.



Compound (9c')

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-nitrophenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9d)**

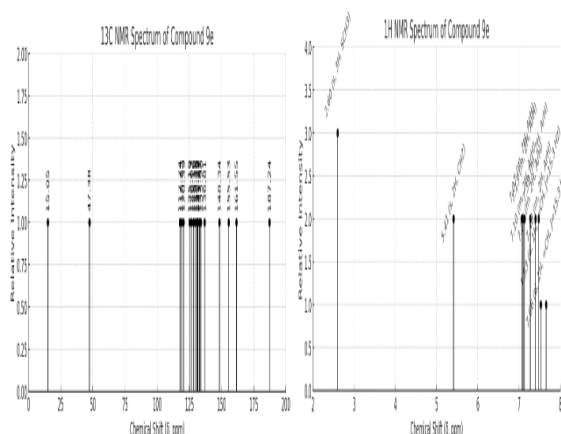
Yield : 12%; Melting point = 166–169 °C; ¹H NMR (300 MHz-DMSO d₆): The chemical shifts (δ) in parts per million (ppm) are as follows: 3.72 (singlet, 6H, SCH₃), 5.50 (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 5.17–5.30 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.30–7.43 (multiplet, 3H, ArH), 7.57–7.62 (doublet, 1H, CH = CH, J = 23.3 Hz), 7.77–7.78 (doublet, 1H, CH = CH, J = 15.3 Hz), 8.21–8.34 (multiplet, 5H, ArH). ¹³C NMR (75 MHz DMSO d₆): The chemical shifts (δ) in parts per million (ppm) are as follows: 15.78, 47.79, 129.14, 124.32, 126.78, 128.38, 129.47, 130.09, 130.35, 131.63, 131.95, 136.21, 142.68, 148.61, 150.25, 187.73. LC-MS (ESI): (M + H)⁺ ratio of 380.4.



Compound (9d)

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-phenoxy phenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9e)**

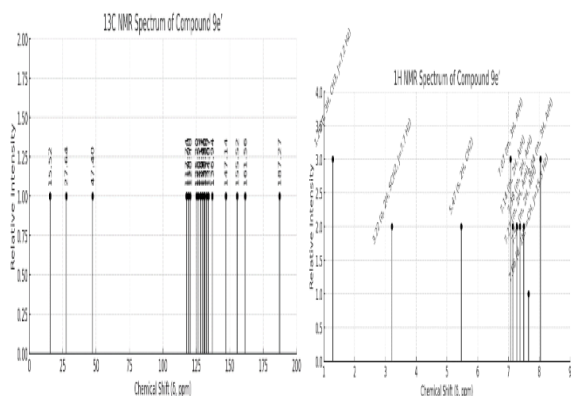
Yield: 46%; Melting point = 144–146 oC ; ¹H NMR spectrum (200 MHz-DMSO d₆) as shown in Figure 2: δ (ppm) 2.60 (singlet, 3H, SCH₃), 5.41 (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 7.05–7.08 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.08–7.11 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.11–7.15 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.23–7.31 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.37–7.42 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.44–7.51 (multiplet, 2H ArH), 7.51–7.54 (doublet, 1H, CH = CH, J = 15.3 Hz), 7.63–7.68 (doublet, 1H, CH = CH, J = 15.3 Hz), ¹³C NMR spectrum (75 MHz-DMSO d₆): δ (ppm) 15.05, 47.38, 117.74, 118.83, 120.39, 125.19, 126.63, 128.16, 129.38, 130.79, 131.25, 131.58, 132.91, 133.98, 136.81, 148.34, 155.53, 161.55, 187.24; LC-MS (ESI): 427.3 (M + Na)⁺.



Compound (9e)

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(ethylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-phenoxy phenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9e')**

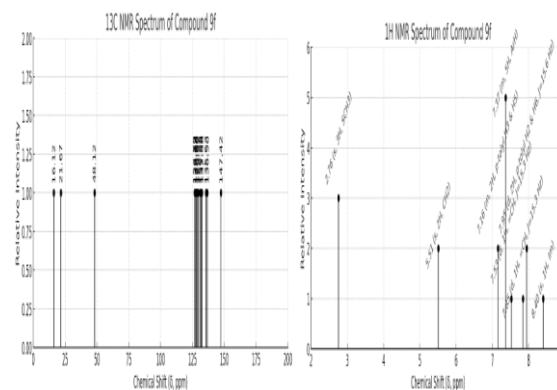
Yield: 41%. The melting point = 129 - 132°C. ¹H NMR spectrum (300 MHz, DMSO-d₆) displays increases at δ 1.27-1.31 (triplet, 3H, CH₃, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.16-3.27 (quartet, 2H, SCH₂, J = 7.7 Hz), 5.47 (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 7.05-7.09 (multiplet, 3H, ArH), 7.13-7.15 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.23-7.31 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.35-7.40 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.45-7.55 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.63-7.68 (doublet, 1H, CH = CH, J = 15.3 Hz), and 8.03-8.05 (multiplet, 3H, ArH). ¹³C NMR spectra (75 MHz, DMSO-d₆) display peaks at δ 15.52, 27.64, 47.40, 117.74, 119.00, 120.40, 125.20, 126.55, 128.13, 129.37, 129.41, 130.80, 131.26, 132.89, 134.07, 136.94, 147.14, 155.52, 161.56, and 187.27. The compound's molecular weight was found to be 441.6 (M + 1) + and 463.3 (M + Na) + using LC-MS (ESI).



Compound (9e')

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(p-tolyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9f)**

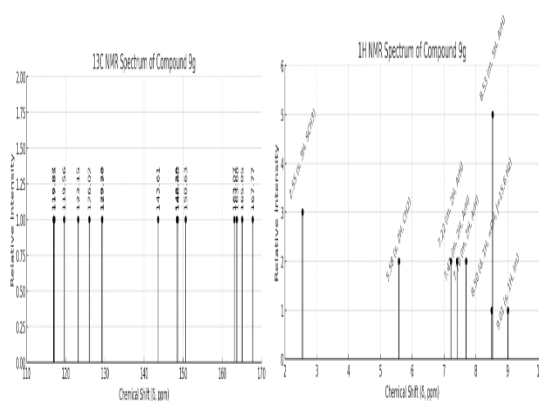
Yield: 81%; Melting point = 116-124 °C; ¹H NMR spectrum (300 MHz, DMSO-d₆) displays increases at δ 2.39-2.76 (triplet, 3H, SCH₃, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.16-3.27 (quartet, 2H, SCH₂, J = 7.7 Hz), 5.51 (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 7.14-7.17 (multiplet, 3H, ArH), 7.13-7.15 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.30-7.43 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.35-7.40 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.45-7.55 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.50-7.55 (doublet, 1H, CH = CH, J = 15.3 Hz), and 7.93-7.96 (multiplet, 2H, ArH). ¹³C NMR spectra (15.6 MHz, DMSO-d₆) display peaks at δ 16.12, 21.67, 48.12, 126.79, 126.87, 127.13, 128.06, 128.55, 128.60, 129.52, 130.88, 131.88, 132.38, 135.63, 136.58, and 147.42 ppm. The compound's molecular weight was found to be 349.4 m/z (M + H) + using LC-MS (ESI).



Compound (9f)

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(naphthalen-2-yl) prop-2-en-1-one (9g)**

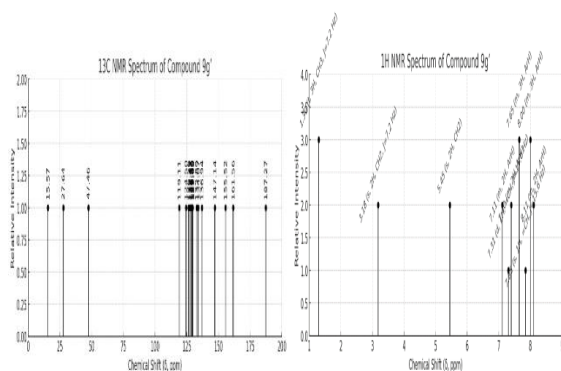
Yield: 60%, Melting point range = 216-218 °C. ¹H NMR spectrum was 500 MHz in DMSO d₆. Chemical shifts: 2.55 (singlet, 3H, SCH₃), 5.58 (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 7.19-7.24 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.34-7.48 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 8.50 (doublet, 1H, CH = CH, J = 15.6 Hz), 7.66-7.73 (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 8.53 (multiplet, 5H, ArH), and 9.01 (singlet, 1H, imidazole). The ¹³C NMR spectrum (126 MHz-DMSO d₆) shows chemical shifts (δ) in parts per million (ppm) at the following values: 116.87, 117.05, 119.56, 123.15, 126.02, 129.23, 129.30, 143.61, 148.39, 148.60, 150.63, 163.07, 163.68, 165.05, 167.77 as observed in Figure. The compound's molecular weight was found to be 385.5 m/z (M + H) + using LC-MS (ESI).



Compound (9g)

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(ethylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(naphthalen-2-yl) prop-2-en-1-one (9g')**

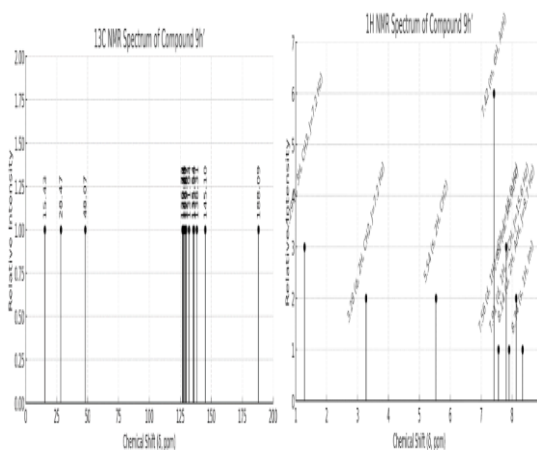
Yield :57%, Melting point (MP) = 103 -105 °C, ¹H NMR (DMSO d₆ at 300 MHz): The following are the chemical shifts (δ) expressed in parts per million (ppm): 1.28–1.32 (triplet, 3H, methyl group, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.14–3.22 (singlet, 2H, methylene group, J = 7.2 Hz), 5.45 (singlet, 2H, methylene group), 7.10–7.12 (multiplet, 2H, aromatic protons), 7.28–7.33 (doublet, 1H, CH = CH, J = 15.6 Hz), 7.37–7.42 (multiplet, 2H, aromatic protons), 7.60–7.70 (multiplet, 3H, aromatic protons), 7.82–7.87 (singlet, 1H, CH = CH, J = 15.6 Hz), 7.94–8.06 (multiplet, 3H, aromatic protons), 8.099–8.12 (multiplet, 2H, aromatic protons). ¹³C NMR (75 MHz-DMSO d₆): The following were the chemical shifts (δ) expressed in parts per million (ppm): The following numbers were 15.57, 27.64, 47.46, 119.115, 124.50, 126.56, 127.42, 128.17, 128.88, 129.05, 129.40, 129.65 as shown in Figure.



Compound (9g')

• **(E)-1-([1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(ethylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl) prop-2-en-1-one (9h')**

Yield :55%; Melting point = 196–201 °C; ¹H NMR (200 MHz-DMSO d₆): δ (ppm) 1.26–1.31 (triplet, 3 hydrogen atoms, methyl group, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.24–3.31 (quartet, 2 hydrogen atoms, methylene group, J = 7.2 Hz), 5.54 (singlet, 2 hydrogen atoms, methylene group), 7.32–7.51 (multiplet, 6 hydrogen atoms, aromatic ring), 7.52–7.60 (doublet, 1 hydrogen atom, CH = CH group, J = 15.6 Hz), 7.732–7.88 (multiplet, 3 hydrogen atoms, aromatic ring), 7.88–7.93 (doublet, 1 hydrogen atom, CH = CH group, J = 15.6 Hz), 8.12–8.152 (doublet, 2 hydrogen atoms, J = 8.7 Hz), 8.262–8.42 (singlet, 1 hydrogen atom, imidazole); ¹³C NMR(75 MHz-DMSO d₆): δ (ppm), 15.43, 28.47, 48.07, 126.72, 127.33, 127.45, 127.512, 128.42, 128.49, 129.37, 129.47, 129.572, 129.619, 131.944, 135.944, 135.54, 138.311, 145.103, 188.09; LC-MS (ESI): 425.3 (M + H)⁺[37].



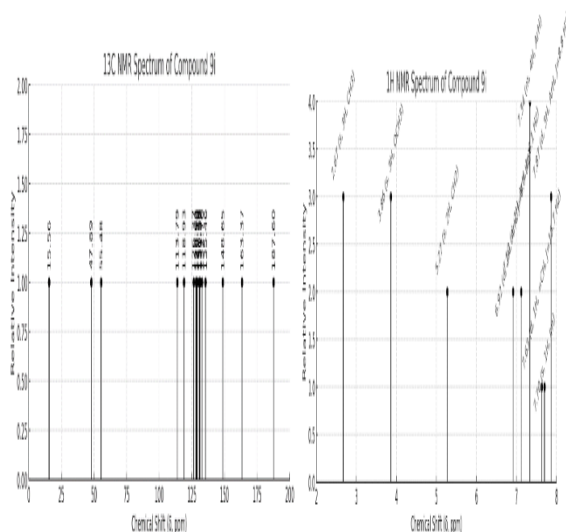
Compound (9h')

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-methoxyphenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9i)**

Yield :78%; Melting point = 150–157 °C; ¹H NMR spectrum (300 MHz-DMSO d₆) shows peaks at the following chemical shifts: 2.67 ppm (singlet, 3H, CH₃), 3.86 ppm (singlet, 3H, OCH₃), 5.27 ppm (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 6.90–6.93 ppm (doublet, 2H, ArH, J = 8.7 Hz), 7.11–7.13 ppm (doublet, 2H, ArH, J = 6.10 Hz), 7.27–7.40 ppm (multiplet, 4H, ArH), 7.58–7.68 ppm (doublet, 1H, HC = CH, J = 15.7 Hz), 7.70 ppm (singlet, 1H, imidazole), 7.85–7.88 ppm (doublet, 3H, ArH, J = 8.8 Hz). ¹³C NMR spectrum (75 MHz, CDCl₃) shows peaks



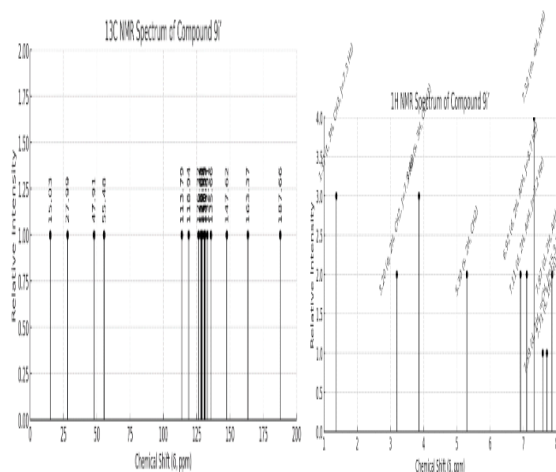
at the following chemical shifts: 15.56, 47.89, 55.48, 113.79, 118.93, 126.37, 128.08, 128.54, 129.10, 130.59, 130.92, 131.39, 132.70, 135.46, 148.65, 163.37, 187.60 ppm. The LC-MS (ESI) analysis shows: 365.4 (M + H)⁺ and 389.4 (M + Na)⁺.



Compound (9i)

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(ethylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(4-methoxyphenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9i')**

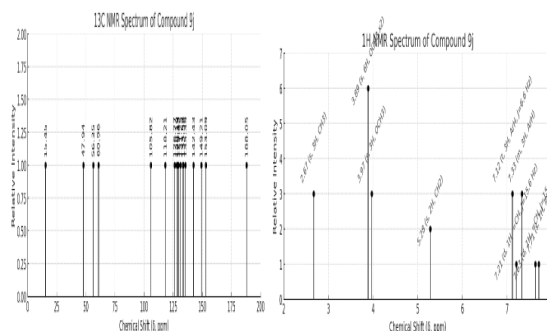
Yield: 78%. Melting point = 143-145 °Celsius. ¹H NMR spectrum (measured at 300 MHz using DMSO-d₆ as the solvent) shows peaks at chemical shifts (δ) of 1.35-1.39 (triplet, 3 hydrogen atoms, methyl group, coupling constant J = 7.3 Hz), 3.16-3.23 (quartet, 2 hydrogen atoms, methylene group, J = 7.3 Hz), 3.86 (singlet, 3 hydrogen atoms, methoxy group), 5.30 (singlet, 2 hydrogen atoms, methylene group), 6.90-6.93 (doublet, 2 hydrogen atoms, aromatic protons, J = 8.7 Hz), 7.09-7.12 (doublet, 2 hydrogen atoms, aromatic protons, J = 7.2 Hz), 7.26-7.38 (multiplet, 4 hydrogen atoms, aromatic protons), 7.56-7.61 (doublet, 1 hydrogen atom, vinyl proton, J = 15.3 Hz), 7.71 (singlet, 1 hydrogen atom, imidazole), and 7.85-7.88 (doublet, 2 hydrogen atoms, aromatic protons, J = 9 Hz). The ¹³C NMR spectrum (measured at 75 MHz using CDCl₃ as the solvent) shows peaks at chemical shifts (δ) of 15.03, 27.99, 47.91, 55.48, 113.79, 118.94, 126.32, 128.02, 128.68, 129.07, 130.59, 130.93, 131.22, 132.91, 135.66, 147.62, 163.37, and 187.66. A molecular ion peak of 379.4 (M + H)⁺ in the LC-MS (ESI) analysis.



Compound (9i')

• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(methylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9j)**

Yield :86% ,Melting point =171–177 °C. ¹H NMR spectrum (400 MHz, DMSO-d₆), peaks are seen at the specified chemical shifts: 2.67 ppm (singlet, 3H, CH₃), 3.89 ppm (singlet, 6H, OCH₃), 3.97 ppm (singlet, 3H, OCH₃), 5.28 ppm (singlet, 2H, CH₂), 7.11–7.13 ppm (triplet, 3H, ArH, J = 6.6 Hz), 7.18–7.23 ppm (doublet, 1H, HC = CH, J = 15.6 Hz), 7.28–7.38 ppm (multiplet, 3H, ArH), 7.60–7.66 ppm (doublet, 1H, HC = CH, J = 15.6 Hz), and 7.71 ppm (singlet, 1H, imidazole). The ¹³C NMR spectrum (80 MHz, CDCl₃) shows peaks at chemical shifts of 15.45, 47.94, 56.35, 60.96, 105.82, 118.21, 126.27, 128.10, 129.13, 129.43, 131.25, 133.36, 133.57, 135.39, 142.43, 149.21, 153.09, and 188.05 ppm. LC-MS (ESI) analysis m/z 425.4 (M + H)⁺ and 447.4 (M + Na)⁺.

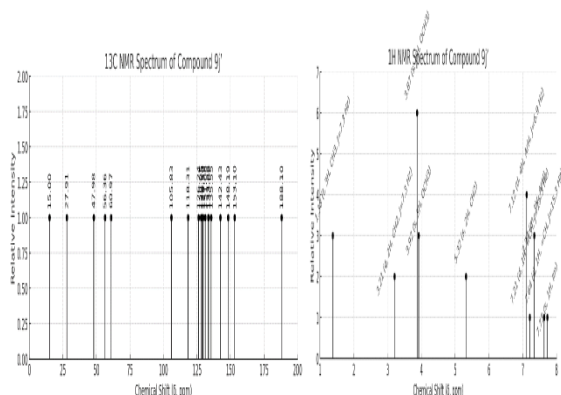


Compound (9j)



• **(E)-3-(1-benzyl-2-(ethylthio)-1H-imidazol-4-yl)-1-(3,4,5-trimethoxy phenyl) prop-2-en-1-one (9j')**

Yield :61%, Melting point range =72-94 °C. The ^1H NMR spectrum (300 MHz-DMSO d_6) shows peaks at δ (ppm) 1.35-1.40 (t, 3H, CH_3 , $J = 7.3$ Hz), 3.17-3.24 (q, 2H, CH_2 , $J = 7.3$ Hz), 3.87 (s, 6H, OCH_3), 3.92 (s, 3H, OCH_3), 5.32 (s, 2H, CH_2), 7.10-7.13 (d, 4H, ArH, $J = 6.9$ Hz), 7.18-7.24 (d, 1H, $\text{HC} = \text{CH}$, $J = 15.3$ Hz), 7.29-7.39 (m, 3H, ArH), 7.61-7.66 (d, 1H, $\text{HC} = \text{CH}$, $J = 15.3$ Hz), and 7.73 (s, 1H, imidazole). ^{13}C NMR spectrum (75 MHz, CDCl_3) shows peaks at δ (ppm) 15.00, 27.91, 47.98, 56.36, 60.97, 105.83, 118.31, 126.24, 128.05, 129.10, 129.52, 131.08, 133.36, 133.62, 135.55, 142.43, 148.19, 153.10, and 188.10. Molecular ion peak at 439.5 (M + H) + in the LC-MS (ESI) analysis.

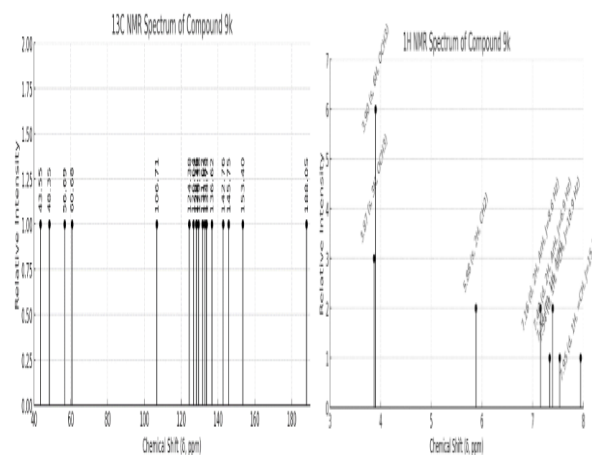


Compound (9j')

• **(E)-methyl 1-benzyl-5-(3-oxo-3-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl) prop-1-en-1-yl)-1H-imidazole-2-sulfonate (9k)**

Yield 87%; Melting point = 169–177 °C; ^1H NMR spectrum (300 MHz-DMSO d_6) shows peaks at the following chemical shifts: 3.87 ppm (singlet, 3H, OCH_3), 3.90 ppm (singlet, 6H, OCH_3), 5.88 ppm (singlet, 2H, CH_2), 7.11–7.20 ppm (doublet, 2H, ArH, $J = 8.6$ Hz), 7.30–7.37 ppm (multiplet, 1H, ArH), 7.38–7.41 ppm (doublet, 2H, ArH, $J = 6.9$ Hz), 7.38–7.43 ppm (multiplet, 2H, ArH), 7.51–7.56 ppm (doublet, 1H, $\text{HC} = \text{CH}$, $J = 18.9$ Hz), and 7.92–7.97 ppm (doublet, 1H, $\text{HC} = \text{CH}$, $J = 15.3$ Hz). ^{13}C NMR spectrum (75 MHz-DMSO d_6) shows peaks at the following chemical shifts: 43.55 ppm, 48.35 ppm, 56.69 ppm, 60.68 ppm, 106.71 ppm, 124.38 ppm, 126.64 ppm, 128.16 ppm, 128.35 ppm,

129.38 ppm, 131.62 ppm, 132.83 ppm, 133.75 ppm, 136.62 ppm, 142.76 ppm, 145.75 ppm, and 153.40 ppm. The LC-MS (ESI) analysis shows m/z 457.5 (M + H) + and m/z 479.4 (M + Na) +.



Compound (9k)

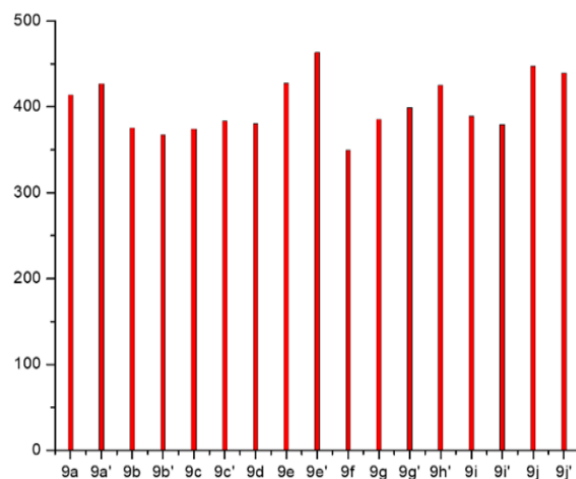


Figure 2: Mass Spectrometry of Synthesized compounds

3.2 Biological Evaluation

The compounds (9a–9j') tested against a range of microorganisms for their antifungal and antibacterial qualities. The MTT colorimetric assay yielded the MICs, which at a rate of 66.11% provided insightful information about the compounds' potential as antibacterial agents.



• Antibacterial Assessment

The antibacterial evaluation involved prominent bacterial strains, including *S. aureus*, *B. cereus*, *E. coli*, and *P. aeruginosa*. The components were examined at a 50 µg/mL concentration in DMSO, and their inhibitory effects were assessed in Mueller-Hinton (MH) medium. Visual analysis was used to establish the minimum concentration (MIC) at which microbial growth was suppressed [38,39]. The results were summarized in Table 3 below:

Compounds	<i>S. aureus</i>	<i>B. cereus</i>	<i>E. coli</i>	<i>P. aeruginosa</i>
9a	250	200	200	250
9b	250	125	62.5	250
9c	250	250	200	250
9d	250	100	100	125
9e	125	50	50	125
9f	125	50	62	100
9g	100	70	56	200
9i	200	50	250	200
9j	100	200	100	100
9k	250	150	62.5	250
9a'	200	160	100	50
9b'	50	100	50	50
9c'	10	60	10	160
9e'	50	100	25	140
9g'	135	200	100	250
9h'	150	250	200	210
9i'	200	170	100	230
9j'	140	180	250	200

The synthetic compounds, 9a–9j, demonstrated antibacterial activity against a range of bacterial strains, including *S. aureus*, *B. cereus*, *E. coli*, and *P. aeruginosa*. The Minimum Inhibitory Concentrations (MIC), expressed in micrograms per millilitre (µg/mL), were

established for each compound against each species of bacteria.

Among the compounds, 9b exhibited noteworthy antibacterial efficacy, particularly standing out against *B. cereus* and *E. coli*, with MIC values of 125 µg/mL and 62.5 µg/mL, respectively as shown in Figure 5. Similarly, compound 9e demonstrated significant activity against all bacterial strains tested, with MIC values ranging from 50 µg/mL to 125 µg/mL.

Compound 9c consistently displayed inhibitory effects against *S. aureus*, *B. cereus*, and *P. aeruginosa*, with MIC values of 250 µg/mL across all strains as shown in the figure below. Compounds 9g and 9j' showcased varied activity against different bacterial strains, hinting at potential selectivity. Notably, 9g exhibited a lower MIC against *E. coli* (56 µg/mL) compared to other strains, while 9j' demonstrated higher potency against *P. aeruginosa* with an MIC of 250 µg/mL. Compound 9c' demonstrated low MIC values across all bacterial strains, indicating broad-spectrum antibacterial activity. Conversely, 9h' exhibited high MIC values, suggesting lower efficacy against the tested bacterial strains as represented in Figure 6. Overall, the synthesised compounds exhibited varied antibacterial properties, with some demonstrating potential effectiveness against certain bacterial strains. The findings provide useful insights into the possible uses of these compounds as antibacterial agents, indicating the necessity for additional research and advancement.

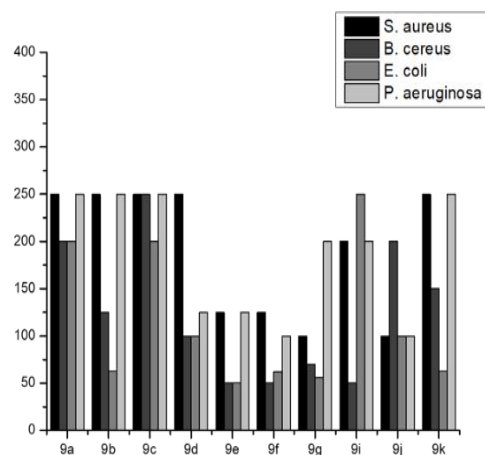


Figure 3: Antibacterial Assessment for compounds (9a-9k)

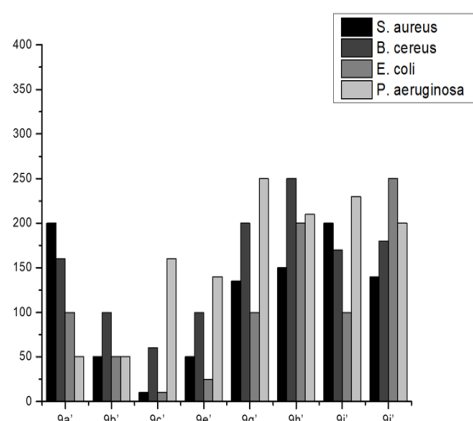


Figure 4: Antibacterial Assessment for compounds (9a'-9j')

• Antifungal Assessment

For antifungal evaluation, *A. niger* and *A. fumigatus* were cultured in the RPMI-1640 medium. Similarly, compounds were added at a concentration of 50 µg/mL, and MIC values were determined. The results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Antifungal activity of synthesized compounds (9a-9j')

Compounds	<i>A. niger</i>	<i>A. fumigatus</i>
9a	500	400
9b	100	600
9c	500	200
9d	800	300
9e	200	600
9f	200	800
9g	500	800
9i	600	300
9j	250	700
9k	250	900
9a'	400	1000
9b'	300	500
9c'	300	600
9e'	900	400
9g'	300	200
9h'	400	800
9i'	500	600
9j'	700	300

The antifungal activity of the synthesized compounds (9a-9j') against two fungal strains, *A. niger* and *A. fumigatus* with the Minimum Inhibitory Concentrations (MIC) in micrograms per millilitre (µg/mL) were determined for each compound against each fungal species. Compound 9b displayed notable antifungal efficacy, particularly against *A. niger* with a MIC value of 100 µg/mL, and *A. fumigatus* with an MIC of 600 µg/mL. Compound 9e also demonstrated noteworthy efficacy against both fungal strains, showing MIC values of 200 µg/mL against *A. niger* and 600 µg/mL against *A. fumigatus*. Compound 9d demonstrated higher MIC values, indicating lower antifungal efficacy against *A. niger* (800 µg/mL) and *A. fumigatus* (300 µg/mL). On the other hand, compounds 9f, 9k, 9a', 9c', 9e', 9g', 9h', 9i', and 9j' exhibited varying degrees of antifungal activity against both fungal strains. Compounds 9c and 9g demonstrated consistent inhibitory effects against *A. niger* (500 µg/mL) and *A. fumigatus* (200 µg/mL) and (800 µg/mL), respectively. Compound 9j' showed selective activity with a lower MIC against *A. niger* (700 µg/mL) compared to *A. fumigatus* (300 µg/mL). Conversely, compounds 9a', 9b', and 9i' displayed distinct antifungal efficacy against *A. fumigatus* with MIC values of 1000 µg/mL, 500 µg/mL, and 600 µg/mL, respectively.

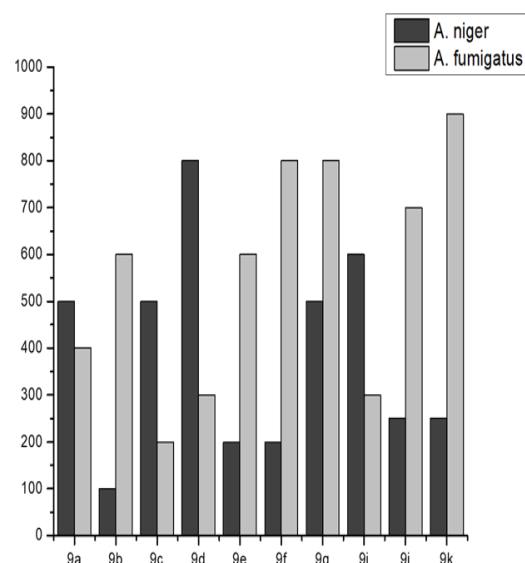


Figure 5: Antifungal Assessment for compounds (9a-9k)

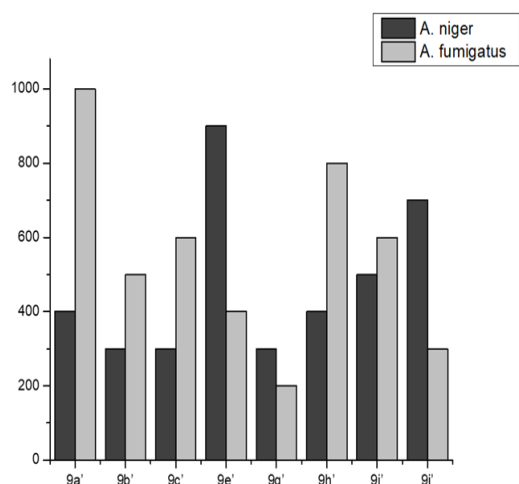


Figure 6: Antifungal Assessment for compounds (9a'-9j')

4. Discussion

4.1 Synthesis of Imidazole-based chalcone derivatives

The synthesis of imidazole-based chalcone derivatives involved a multi-step approach, resulting in well-defined compounds. Characterization using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopy and mass spectrometry validated their chemical structures, aligning with similar methodologies employed in previous studies [40-45].

Comparing these findings with existing research, the methodology employed shared similarities with other studies exploring chalcone derivatives. Tran et al., (2012), Modzelewska et al., (2006), Baviskar et al., (2009), and Vogel et al., (2010) used a multi-step synthesis method that included Claisen-Schmidt condensation. They then analysed the chalcone derivatives using NMR and mass spectrometry for investigation. This convergence in synthetic strategies reinforces the reliability and reproducibility of the presented work [46-49]. Furthermore, Jaisiewicz et al., (2023); and Dorababu et al., (2020) utilized new bioactive compounds, a methodology based on combining two molecules with biological properties into a new hybrid molecule used to design and synthesize a series of ten indole derivatives bearing imidazole, benzothiazole-2-thione, or benzoxazole-2-thione moieties at the C-3 position [50,51]. The oxidation step

using Oxone to obtain the oxidized methyl sulfonyl molecule 9k adds a distinctive element to the synthesis, contributing to the structural diversity of the final compounds. This methodology aligns with Liu et al., (2013) work on incorporating oxidation steps to enhance the chemical diversity of chalcone derivatives, indicating a shared focus on structural intricacies [52].

The verification of the synthesized compounds' structural properties through nuclear magnetic resonance (^1H NMR, ^{13}C NMR) and mass spectrometry studies was a crucial aspect, ensuring the reliability of the results. Similar verification protocols are echoed in studies by Oskuei et al., (2021) [53] and Sangeetha et al., (2021), underlining the importance of robust characterization techniques for novel compounds [54].

Overall, the synthesis process showcased a detailed and well-supported methodology, incorporating innovative elements like oxidation stages and thorough structural verification, paving the way for potential applications in medicinal chemistry.

4.2 Antimicrobial Study

The antimicrobial evaluation of the synthesized compounds against bacterial and fungal strains provided valuable insights into their potential applications. The selective antibacterial efficacy of compound 9b against *B. cereus* and *E. coli*, as well as the broad-spectrum antibacterial activity of compound 9c, aligns with similar observations in studies by Osmaniye et al., (2018) and Tratratt et al., (2019) [55,56]. These consistent findings contribute to establishing a robust foundation for the antibacterial potential of imidazole-based chalcone derivatives.

Moreover, the antifungal assessment reveals promising results, with compounds 9b and 9e demonstrating notable efficacy against *A. niger* and *A. fumigatus*. This aligns with the work of Tank et al., (2022); Abonia et al., (2012); Pankaj et al., (2020), who also reported significant antifungal activity in chalcone derivatives against *A. niger* [57-59]. Additionally, the selectivity observed in compound 9j' mirrors findings in Sattu et al., (2018), suggesting a nuanced impact on different fungal strains [60].

The reliability of antimicrobial outcomes, in comparison to comparable studies, underscores the potential of these compounds in combating bacterial and fungal diseases,



laying the groundwork for the development of innovative antibacterial medications.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the synthesis and characterization of imidazole-based chalcone derivatives, coupled with their comprehensive antimicrobial evaluation, offer a promising avenue for the development of potential therapeutic agents. The methodological alignment with comparable studies and the consistent observations in antibacterial and antifungal activities contribute to the robustness and reliability of the presented research. The structural diversity achieved through oxidation steps adds an innovative dimension to the synthesis. These findings underscore the potential of imidazole-based chalcone derivatives as effective agents against bacterial and fungal infections. Future research endeavours can leverage these insights to further optimize and advance the development of novel antimicrobial drugs.

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