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3B QUANG TRUNG - HOAN KIEM - HANOI - VIETNAM
TEL: (+84-24) 38247058 FAX: (+84-24) 39348740
Email: tapchiduoclieu@nimm.org.vn; tapchiduoclieu@gmail.com

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**ALKALOID AND PHENOLIC COMPOUNDS
FROM THE STEMS OF *GOUANIA JAVANICA* MIQ.****Le Thi Loan^{1,*}, Dang Minh Tu¹, Ha Van Oanh², Nguyen Van Tai¹**¹National Institute of Medicinal Materials (NIMM), Hanoi, 11022, Vietnam;²Hanoi University of Pharmacy, Vietnam

*Corresponding author: vloandkh@gmail.com

Received March 25th, 2025 Accepted April 18th, 2025**Summary**

Five compounds were isolated from the stems of *Gouania javanica* Miq. collected in Dongnai province, including nuciferine (1), nuciferine *N*-oxide (2), lysicamine (3), vanillic acid (4), and scopoletin (5). The structures of these compounds were established by MS and NMR (1D- and 2D-NMR) spectral methods and by comparison with the published data. This is the first time these compounds were isolated from *Gouania* genus.

Keywords: *Gouania javanica* Miq.; Aporphine alkaloid; Coumarin; Phenolic acid.**1. Introduction**

The genus *Gouania*, belonging to the family Rhamnaceae, is mainly distributed in tropical and subtropical regions and comprises about 73 species. Some species are employed in traditional medicine. In Sierra Leone, *G. longipetala* leaves are given to pregnant women before and during labour for quick and easy delivery [1]. *G. longipetala* leaves and stem bark are used to treat coughs, burns and heal wounds [1]. In Thailand, the decoction of *G. leptostachya* leaves and stems is used to treat convulsions in women who have just given birth [2]. Phytochemical research results on some species such as *G. longipetala*, *G. ulmifolia*, *G. leptostachya*,... showed that they contain triterpenoids, flavonoids, and saponins [3],[4],[5],[6].

In Vietnam, 2 species, *G. javanica* and *G. leptostachya* are reported [7]. Both the leaves and stems of these two species are used to soak in wine as a massage medicine for injuries and bruises caused by falls and beatings [7]. While the species *G. leptostachya* has been shown by some studies to contain triterpenoid saponins and flavonoid compounds that have anti-inflammatory effects [8],[9], phytochemical studies on *G. javanica* are very limited. Qualitative results showed that *G. javanica* leaves contain alkaloids, flavonoids, glycosides, saponins, and triterpenoids [10]. Extracts from *G. javanica* leaves have been shown to inhibit the growth of microbial strains, such as

Candida albicans and *Aspergillus niger* [10]. Methanol extracts of *G. javanica* leaves were toxic to RAW264.7 cells [11]. Therefore, phytochemical studies of *G. javanica* Miq. will contribute to the chemical data as well as the basis for research on the biological effects of this species. In this study, we report the first isolation and structure elucidation of three alkaloids and two phenolic compounds from the stems of *G. javanica* Miq.

2. Materials and Methods**2.1. Plant material**

The stems of *Gouania javanica* Miq. (Rhamnaceae) were collected in Dongnai province in October 2023. The research sample (DK01) was taxonomically identified name by MSc. Nguyen Quynh Nga and MSc. Dang Minh Tu, Institute of Medicinal Materials. Voucher specimens (06.2023.HTV) were deposited in the Department of Phytochemistry and the Center of Medicinal Material Resources, National Institute of Medicinal Materials. Fresh samples were dried at 50°C, ground, and stored in sealed plastic bags until use.

2.2. General experimental procedures

The NMR spectra were obtained on a Bruker AM600 FT-NMR spectrometer (Karlsruhe, Germany) using TMS as an internal standard. The electrospray ionization mass spectroscopy (ESI-MS) was obtained on an LC-MS/MS (Shimadzu, Japan) and the HR-ESI-MS was obtained on Mass Spectrometer - Thermo Scientific LTQ Orbitrap

XL (Thermo Fisher Scientific, USA). *Silica gel* (Merck, 40-63 μm particle size) and C-18 reversed-phase *silica gel* (Fuji Silysia Chemical Ltd., 30-35 μm) were used for column chromatography (CC). Thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was carried out with *silica gel* 60F₂₅₄ and RP-18F_{254S} plates. Spots were detected under 254 and 366 nm UV light or by spraying with 10% sulfuric acid in 96% ethanol (EtOH) and heating.

2.3. Extraction and isolation

The stems of *G. javanica* (10.0 kg) were powdered and hot-extracted with 70% EtOH (3 times, 3 hours each time, ratio of solvent to sample 7:1 (L/kg)) at 70°C. The combined extracts were filtered and evaporated under reduced pressure to yield a brown residue (1.234 kg), which was suspended in distilled water and successively partitioned with organic solvents, then concentrated to yield *n*-hexane- (20.8 g), dichloromethane- (89.5 g), ethyl acetate (EtOAc)- (53.3 g), *n*-butanol- (302 g), and water-soluble fractions (612 g).

The ethyl acetate (EA) fraction (50 g) was separated using *silica gel* CC and eluted with a gradient of dichloromethane - MeOH (50:1 - 0:100, v/v) to obtain 12 fractions (E1-E12). Fraction E9 (3 g) was separated on a reversed-phase C₁₈ CC and eluted with 40% MeOH - 100% MeOH to give compounds **1** (13 mg), **2** (11 mg), and **3** (9 mg). Fraction E11 (10 g) was subjected to *silica gel* CC using EtOAc - MeOH (50:1 - 1:1, v/v) to obtain 8 subfractions (E11.1-E11.8). The subfraction E11.7 (0.8 g) was subjected to *silica gel* CC and eluted with dichloromethane - MeOH (10:1 - 1:1, v/v) to give compound **4** (10 mg).

The dichloromethane fraction (80 g) was separated using *silica gel* CC and eluted with a gradient of dichloromethane - MeOH (100:0 - 1:2, v/v) to obtain 16 fractions (D1-D16). The D5 fraction (2.05 g) was chromatographed over *silica gel* CC and eluted with dichloromethane - acetone (50:1 - 1:1, v/v) to obtain 10 subfractions (D5.1-D5.10). Compound **5** (11 mg) was purified from the D5.4 subfraction (152 mg) by crystallization in *n*-hexane.

Compound 1: Pale yellow crystals; HR-ESI-MS: $m/z = 296.16489$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, ^1H - and ^{13}C -NMR: see Table 1.

Compound 2: Pale yellow powder; HR-ESI-MS: $m/z = 312.15964$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, ^1H - and ^{13}C -NMR: see Table 1.

Compound 3: Pale yellow powder; HR-ESI-MS: $m/z = 292.09702$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, ^1H - and ^{13}C -NMR: see Table 1.

Compound 4: White powder; ESI-MS: m/z 167.05 $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^-$; ^1H -NMR (600 MHz, CDCl_3) δ_{H} : 7.59 (1H, dd, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1.8 Hz, H-6), 7.56 (1H, d, $J = 1.8$ Hz, H-2), 6.85 (1H, d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, H-5), 3.91 (3H, s, OCH_3); ^{13}C -NMR (150 MHz, CDCl_3): 123.1 (C-1), 113.9 (C-2), 148.7 (C-3), 152.7 (C-4), 115.8 (C-5), 125.3 (C-6), 170.0 (C-7), 56.4 (OCH_3).

Compound 5: White powder; ESI-MS: m/z 191.10 $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^-$; ^1H -NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3) δ_{H} : 7.59 (1H, d, $J = 9.5$ Hz, H-4), 6.91 (1H, s, H-5), 6.84 (1H, s, H-8), 6.27 (1H, d, $J = 9.5$ Hz, H-3), 3.93 (3H, s, 6- OCH_3); ^{13}C -NMR (125 MHz, CDCl_3): 161.3 (C-2), 113.5 (C-3), 143.3 (C-4), 107.5 (C-5), 144.0 (C-6), 149.7 (C-7), 103.2 (C-8), 150.2 (C-9), 111.5 (C-10), 56.5 (6- OCH_3).

3. Results and discussion

From the stems of *G. javanica*, five compounds (**1** - **5**) were isolated (Fig. 1).

Compound **1** was isolated as pale yellow crystals. The HR-ESI-MS spectrum of **1** gave a *pseudo*-molecular ion peak at $m/z = 296.16489$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$, corresponding to the molecular formula $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{21}\text{NO}_2$ (calcd. for $[\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{22}\text{NO}_2]^+$, 296.16451). The ^1H - and ^{13}C -NMR spectral data are shown in Table 1. The ^1H -NMR spectrum of **1** exhibited signals of 5 aromatic protons at δ_{H} 8.36 (1H, d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, H-11), 7.21-7.31 (3H, m, H-8, H-9, H-10), 6.63 (1H, s, H-3), 2 methoxy groups at δ_{H} 3.88 (3H, s, 2- OCH_3), 3.66 (3H, s, 1- OCH_3) and 1 *N*-methyl group at δ_{H} 2.54 (3H, s) along with aliphatic protons in the range of δ_{H} 2.48 - 3.19. The ^{13}C -NMR spectrum, combined with the HSQC spectrum of **1**, revealed signals of 19 carbons, including 12 aromatic carbons at δ_{C} values of 111.4 - 152.0; 3 methylene carbons at δ_{C} 53.3 (C-5), 35.2 (C-7), and 29.3 (C-4); 1 methine carbon at δ_{C} 62.4 (C-6a); and 3 methyl groups, one of which was attached to nitrogen at δ_{C} 44.0 (*N*- CH_3) and two attached to oxygen at δ_{C} 60.2 (1- OCH_3) and 55.9 (2- OCH_3). The MS and 1D-NMR spectral data indicated that **1** was an alkaloid. The positions of the methyl groups were determined through

HMBC interactions between the methyl proton at δ_{H} 2.54 (*N*-CH₃) with C-5 (δ_{C} 53.3) and C-6a (δ_{C} 62.4), the methoxy protons at δ_{H} 3.66 (1-OCH₃) with C-1 (δ_{C} 145.2), and the methoxy protons at δ_{H} 3.88 (2-OCH₃) with C-2 (δ_{C} 152.0), along with interactions of H-3 (δ_{H} 6.63) with C-4 (δ_{C} 29.3), C-3a (δ_{C} 128.4), C-1b (δ_{C} 128.7), C-1, and C-2. Based on the above analysis and in comparison with the literature [12], it could be concluded that compound **1** was nuciferine.

Compound **2** was isolated as a pale yellow powder. The HR-ESI-MS spectrum gave a *pseudo*-molecular ion peak at $m/z = 312.15964$ [M+H]⁺ corresponding to the molecular formula C₁₉H₂₁NO₃ (calcd. for [C₁₉H₂₂NO₃]⁺, 312.15942). The ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR spectral data of **2** are shown in Table 1. These data showed the similarity between compounds **2** and **1**, except for the significant changes in chemical shifts of *N*-CH₃ ($\Delta\delta_{\text{C}} = +11.9$ ppm), C-5 ($\Delta\delta_{\text{C}} = +11.4$ ppm), and C-6a ($\Delta\delta_{\text{C}} = +10.7$ ppm). In addition, the HR-ESI-MS spectrum showed a difference of 16 a.m.u corresponding with the difference of an oxygen

atom between the two compounds. This suggested that **2** was a *N*-oxide derivative of **1**. Based on the spectral analysis and comparison with those previously reported in the literature [13],[14], **2** was identified as nuciferin *N*-oxide.

Compound **3** was isolated as a pale yellow powder. The HR-ESI-MS spectrum gave a *pseudo*-molecular ion peak at $m/z = 292.09702$ [M+H]⁺ corresponding to the molecular formula C₁₈H₁₃NO₃ (calcd. for [C₁₈H₁₄NO₃]⁺, 292.09682). The ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR spectral data are shown in Table 1. These data showed that **3** was also an aporphine alkaloid with structural similarity of the A and D rings to those of compounds **1** and **2**. The difference between **3** and the alkaloids **1** and **2** was found in the B and C rings. Specifically, the B ring exhibited two olefinic protons at δ_{H} 8.09 (1H, d, $J = 5.4$ Hz, H-4) and 8.80 (1H, d, $J = 5.4$ Hz, H-5). For the C ring, no methylene group signal was observed, but instead, a signal of a ketone group appeared at δ_{C} 182. Based on these data and in comparison with the literature [15], **3** was identified as lysicamine.

Table 1. NMR data of compounds 1-3

No.	1		2		3	
	$\delta_{\text{H}}^{\text{a,b}}$ (mult., $J = \text{Hz}$)	$\delta_{\text{C}}^{\text{a,c}}$	$\delta_{\text{H}}^{\text{d,b}}$ (mult., $J = \text{Hz}$)	$\delta_{\text{C}}^{\text{d,c}}$	$\delta_{\text{H}}^{\text{d,b}}$ (mult., $J = \text{Hz}$)	$\delta_{\text{C}}^{\text{d,c}}$
1	-	145.2	-	147.6	-	154.4
1a	-	126.9	-	128.3	-	120.0
1b	-	128.7	-	120.8	-	123.2
2	-	152.0	-	155.2	-	158.9
3	6.63 (1H, s)	111.4	6.95 (1H, s)	112.5	7.61 (1H, s)	108.4
3a	-	128.4	-	126.5	-	138.0
4	2.68 (1H, dd, 15.6, 3.6) 3.16 (1H, m)	29.3	3.10 (1H, m) 3.51 (1H, m)	24.9	8.09 (1H, d, 5.4)	125.9
5	2.50 (1H, m) 3.02 (1H, m)	53.3	4.14 (2H, m)	64.7	8.80 (1H, d, 5.4)	144.5
6a	3.00 (1H, m)	62.4	4.87 (1H, m)	73.1	-	145.1
7	2.61 (1H, t, 13.2) 3.08 (1H, dd, 13.2, 3.6)	35.2	3.22 (1H, m) 3.45 (1H, dd, 13.8, 4.2)	30.5	-	182.0
7a	-	136.5	-	133.7	-	132.5
8	7.21 - 7.31 (3H, m)	127.9	7.45 (1H, br d, 7.2)	129.5	8.50 (1H, dd, 7.8, 1.2)	129.4
9		127.3	7.33 (1H, m)	129.5	7.66 (1H, t, 7.8)	129.9
10		127.0	7.37 (1H, m)	129.0	7.86 (1H, t, 7.8)	135.9
11	8.36 (1H, d, 7.8)	128.4	8.34 (1H, dd, 7.8, 1.2)	129.6	9.28 (1H, d, 7.8)	130.0
11a	-	132.2	-	132.3	-	135.9
<i>N</i> -CH ₃	2.54 (3H, s)	44.0	3.82 (3H, s)	55.9		
1-OCH ₃	3.66 (3H, s)	60.2	3.70 (3H, s)	60.8	4.09 (3H, s)	60.1
2-OCH ₃	3.88 (3H, s)	55.9	3.93 (3H, s)	56.5	4.16 (3H, s)	56.0

^a: CDCl₃, ^b 600 MHz, ^c 150 MHz, ^d CD₃OD.

Compound **4** was isolated as a white powder. The ESI-MS spectrum of **4** showed a *pseudo*-molecular ion peak at m/z 167.05 $[M-H]^-$, which indicated the molecular formula $C_8H_8O_4$. The 1H -NMR spectrum of **4** showed resonance signals of 3 aromatic protons at δ_H 7.56 (1H, d, $J = 1.8$ Hz, H-2), 6.85 (1H, d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, H-5), and 7.59 (1H, dd, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1.8 Hz, H-6) corresponding to an ABX system, and a resonance signal of a methoxy group at δ_H 3.91 (3H, s). The ^{13}C -NMR spectrum of **4** showed 8 carbons, including 1 carboxyl group (δ_C 170.0), 2 oxygenated aromatic carbons (δ_C 148.7 and 152.7), 1 carbon-linked aromatic carbon (δ_C 123.1), 3 aromatic methine carbons (δ_C 113.9, 115.8, and 125.3), along with one methoxy carbon (δ_C 56.4). The position of the methoxy group was determined at C-3 based on the chemical shift comparison between **4** and vanillic acid and isovanillic acid [16]. From the above spectral data, **4** was identified as vanillic acid.

Compound **5** was also isolated as a white powder. The ESI-MS spectrum of **5** showed a *pseudo*-molecular ion peak at m/z 191.10 $[M-H]^-$ which indicated the molecular formula $C_{10}H_8O_4$. The 1H -NMR spectrum of **5** showed two isolated aromatic protons at δ_H 6.84 (1H, s) and 6.91 (1H, s) and two doublets at δ_H 6.27 (1H, d, $J = 9.5$ Hz) and 7.59 (1H, d, $J = 9.5$ Hz) of a *cis*-double bond. Additionally, a signal for a methoxy group appeared at δ_H 3.93 (3H, s). The ^{13}C -NMR and DEPT spectra of **5** revealed 10 carbons: eight aromatic or double-bond carbons in the range of δ_C 103.2 to 150.2; one methoxy carbon (δ_C 56.5), and a lactone carbonyl group at δ_C 161.3. Based on these data, **5** was identified as scopoletin, which is in agreement with the literature [17].

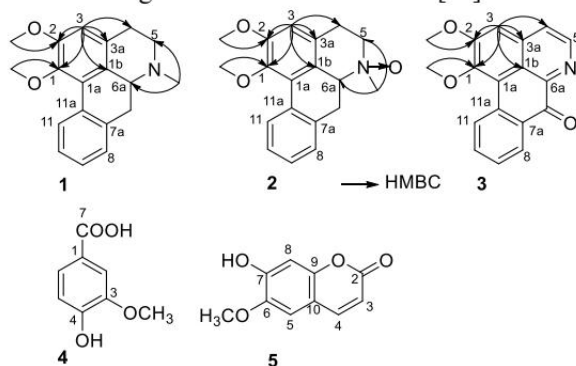


Fig. 1. Structures of isolated compounds from *G. javanica*

This is the first study on the chemical composition of *G. javanica* in Vietnam. As a result, five compounds were isolated from the stem of *G. javanica*, including three aporphine alkaloids (**1** - **3**) and two phenolic compounds (**4** and **5**). This is the first time they have been isolated from *Gouania* genus.

Nuciferine and its congeners are aporphine alkaloids found mainly in *Nelumbo nucifera* and *Nymphaea caerulea* species [18]. In addition, they are also found in some other species such as *Stephania tetrandra* and *Erythrina orientalis*.... [19]. In the Rhamnaceae family, nuciferine has been isolated from *Colubrina faralaoatra* [20]. In particular, these compounds are believed to be among the active substances in the seeds of *Ziziphus jujuba* Mill. var. *spinosa* that contributes to the anxiolytic and anti-insomnia effects of this medicinal herb [21],[22],[23],[24]. In addition, many studies have demonstrated that nuciferin and its derivatives have anti-inflammatory effects, reduce insulin resistance in diabetes [25], lowering blood lipids, and reduce obesity [26],[27].

In the present study, three alkaloid compounds were isolated in minor quantities (9-13 mg), indicating that they may not be the major constituents. Notably, this is the first report of the isolation of this class of compounds from species of the genus *Gouania*, constituting a novel finding and contributing to the phytochemical knowledge of this genus.

In addition, one coumarin (scopoletin) and one phenolic acid (vanillic acid) were isolated from the stems of *G. javanica*. These compounds are relatively common in various plant species, however, this is the first report of their isolation from *Gouania* species.

4. Conclusion

In summary, from the stems of *G. javanica*, 5 compounds have been isolated: nuciferine (**1**), nuciferine *N*-oxide (**2**), lysicamine (**3**), vanillic acid (**4**), and scopoletin (**5**). All these compounds were isolated from *Gouania* genus for the first time.

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