



## FTIR, FTRaman, UV–Visible and NMR spectroscopic studies on 3,3',4,4'-tetrachloroazoxybenzene, an azoxybenzene derivative with toxic effects

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### ABSTRACT

We have synthesized 3,3',4,4' Tetrachloroazoxybenzene (TCAOB) and, later, characterized it by using infrared, Raman, <sup>1</sup>H, <sup>13</sup>C NMR and UV–visible spectroscopies. The structural, topological and vibrational properties of four *Cis* and three *Trans* isomers were theoretically predicted by using the hybrid B3LYP together with the 6-31G\* and 6-311++G\*\* basis sets. The 69 normal modes of vibration for all TCAOB isomers were assigned by using the scaled quantum mechanical force field (SQMFF) procedure and their experimental vibrational spectra and normal internal coordinates. The high stabilities of all *Cis* and *Trans* isomers are supported by the  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$ ,  $n \rightarrow \sigma^*$ ,  $n \rightarrow \pi^*$  and  $\pi^* \rightarrow \pi^*$  electronic transitions calculated by NBO studies while the AIM analyses reveal for the *Trans* forms the existence of intra-molecular C–H...O hydrogen bonds, as suggested by the broad IR band observed in the higher wavenumbers region. The low gap energy for the *Trans I* isomer supports their higher reactivity probably due to the repulsion of the more electronegative Cl and O atoms as a consequence of their proximities. In addition, the force constants for all *Cis* and *Trans* isomers were calculated by using both levels of theory. Here, the comparisons of the predicted IR, Raman, NMR and ultraviolet–visible spectra with the corresponding experimental ones demonstrate good concordances. The existence of the N=O groups in all TCAOB isomers support the differences in their properties, as compared with those reported for TCAB.

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### 1. Introduction

The structural, electronic, topological and spectroscopic studies related with the 3,3',4,4'-tetrachloroazoxybenzene (TCAOB) derivative are of great chemical and industrial interest but principally they are of interest to the human health because the presence of four Cl atoms and an azoxy group in their structure confers to it toxicological properties [1–3]. The use of these azoxybenzene derivatives as an herbicide agent produce to the people that work in contact with it, different effects such as, skin disease named chloracne, as reported by Kaufman et al. [1] and Bartha and Pramer [2]. Singh et al. have reported that in mice

chronically exposed to these derivatives they developed a number of neoplastic and nonneoplastic lesions, including carcinoma of the urinary tract [3,4]. However, from an industrial point of view these derivatives have particular applications because they present photo-chemical and physical properties for which these derivatives are broadly used in multiple applications [5–15]. Structurally, these derivatives have geometrical isomers, known as *Cis* and *Trans* conformations where the mechanisms of isomerization were studied by different authors [16–18] and, where their *Trans* structures were determined for some derivatives by using X-ray diffraction [19–21]. Chemically, the irradiation photochemical of azoxybenzene by using light of wavelength less than 400 nm generate 2-hydroxyazobenzene where the photoproduct of this irradiation photochemical can be investigated by using the Raman spectroscopy, as reported by Badovinac et al. [5]. Hence, the vibrational spectroscopy is a useful tool technical to identify toxic

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products as TCAOB and all their derivatives. Recently, the two *Cis* and *Trans* isomers of 3,3',4,4'-tetrachloroazobenzene (TCAB) [22] have evidenced different structural and vibrational properties and, also different absorption bands. Others studies, for instance, show that the activation energy for transforming *Cis* to *Trans* forms varies with the solvent, thus, in ethanol by heating is 24.8 kcal/mol while in n-heptane the value decrease at 19.4 kcal/mol [23]. In this context, the aims of this work are to study: (i) the structural properties of TCAOB of their stable isomers and (ii) their vibrational properties in order to perform the complete assignments of their isomers because, so far, these were not reported probably as a consequence of their toxic properties. With those purposes, first, the TCAOB derivative was synthesized and then characterized it by using FTIR, FT-Raman, multidimensional NMR and UV–visible spectroscopies. Simultaneously, DFT calculations were performed in order to optimize their isomers and later, to predict their structural, electronic and topological properties by using the NBO and AIM programs [24–27]. Here, the hybrid B3LYP method was used together with the 6-31G\* and 6-311++ G\*\* basis sets [28,29]. Finally, the properties for all the TCAOB isomers were compared among them and, later, with those reported for TCAB [22] by using the same levels of theory.

## 2. Experimental methods

### 2.1. Synthesis

3,3',4,4'-tetrachloroazoxybenzene was obtained according to protocol of Gagnon and Newbold [30] by using the following procedure.

3,3',4,4'-Tetrachloroazobenzene (0.640 g, 0.002 mol) was dissolved in glacial acetic acid (300 ml) at 80 °C, and then 30% hydrogen peroxide (8 ml) was added. Further additions of 30% hydrogen peroxide (8 ml) were made every 15 min during the first 2 h, when a further 20 ml was added. The heating was continued at about 65 °C, then after 3 h 12 ml, and after 20 h 10 ml of 30% hydrogen peroxide was added. Heating was continued until TLC analysis showed disappearance of the starting azo compound (26 h). The solution was cooled to room temperature and poured into an excess of water (300 ml). The precipitate was filtered, dried and crystallized twice from ethanol. Yield 0.488 g (73%), m.p. = 138.5–139 °C. (Lit. 137.5–138.5 °C).

### 2.2. Equipments

The IR spectrum of the TCAOB solid was recorded in KBr pellets with a resolution of 1 cm<sup>-1</sup>, and 64 scans between 4000 and 400 cm<sup>-1</sup> on a FTIR GX1 spectrophotometer, equipped with a globar source and a DGTS (Deuterated TriGlycerine Sulfate). The Raman spectrum was recorded from 2000 to 200 cm<sup>-1</sup> on a Bruker RF100/S spectrometer equipped with a Nd: YAG laser source (excitation line 1064 nm, 800 mW power) and a Ge detector at a resolution of 1 cm<sup>-1</sup>, 200 scans.

Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded on a Bruker 300 AVANCE spectrometer at 300 MHz for <sup>1</sup>H and 75 MHz for <sup>13</sup>C in CDCl<sub>3</sub> solutions containing 0.03 vol % TMS as internal standard. GC-MS spectrum was recorded on a 5973 Hewlett-Packard selective mass detector coupled to a Hewlett Packard 6890 gas chromatograph equipped with a Perkin-Elmer Elite-5MS capillary column (5% phenyl methyl siloxane, length = 30 m, inner diameter = 0.25 mm, film thickness = 0.25 μm); ionization energy, 70 eV; carrier gas: Helium at 1.0 ml/min. UV spectra were collected on a UV–Visible 160 A Shimadzu spectrophotometer.

## 3. Computational details

First, the initial *Cis* and *Trans* structures of TCAOB were modelled with the GaussView program [31] and, later, both species were optimized by using the B3LYP/6-31G\* and 6-311++G\*\* methods with the Gaussian09 program [32]. With these optimized structures the potential energy surface (PES) curves associated with the rotation around the C1–N12 bond, described by the C2–C1–N12–N13 dihedral angles and with the rotation around the N13–C14 bond, described by the N12–N13–C14–C15 dihedral angles were studied for those levels of theory. The PES for the *Cis* and *Trans* forms of TCAOB are observed in Fig. S1 and S2 using B3LYP/6-31G\* level of theory (Supporting Material). For the *Cis* form, the DFT calculations show the presence of four stable conformers with geometries C<sub>i</sub>, named *Cis-I*, *Cis-II*, *Cis-III* and *Cis-IV*. For the *Trans* form Fig. S2 shows two conformers named *Trans-I* and *Trans-II* by using the C2–C1–N12–N13 dihedral angle while a third stable conformer called *Trans-III* is obtained by using the N12–N13–C14–C15 dihedral angle. All the *Cis* and *Trans* structures of TCAOB and the atoms numbering can be seen in Figs. 1 and 2, respectively. The natural atomic population (NPA) charges and the bond orders for the all structures were calculated with the NBO 3.1 [25] program while the topological analyses were performed by using the AIM2000 program [27]. The Merz-Kollman (MK) charges were also studied in order to calculate the molecular electrostatic potentials [33]. Here, the force fields were computed with the SQMFF procedure using both levels of theory and scale factors valid for the 6-31G\* basis set [34]. The natural internal coordinates for the *Cis* and *Trans* forms of TCAOB were similar to those reported for TCAB [22]. Then, the force fields in cartesian coordinates were changed to “natural” internal coordinates with the MOLVIB program [35]. The complete vibrational assignments were performed considering energy distributions (PED) ≥ 9% with the SQMFF procedure [34]. The Gauge-Independent Atomic Orbital (GIAO) method [36] at B3LYP/6-31G\* level of theory was used to predict the <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C chemical shifts of all the species using Trimethylsilane (TMS) as reference. The Time-dependent DFT calculations (TD-DFT) at the B3LYP/6-31G\* level of theory was employed to predict the UV–visible spectrum of TCAOB in ethanol solution by using the Gaussian 09 program [32]. On the other hand, the energies of the frontier orbitals were used to calculate the gap energy values and some interesting descriptors in order to predict their reactivities and behaviors at the same level of theory [37–40]. The properties were analyzed for all the forms and then they were compared with those reported for TCAB [22].

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Geometry

The total energies and relative, the dipole moment values and populations for all isomers of TCAOB calculated with the B3LYP method at different levels of theory can be seen in Table 1. The calculations with both basis sets predict the energies of the three *Trans* forms significantly higher than the corresponding to the *Cis* forms, as reported by Chen and Chieh for azobenzene and stilbene [41]. Also, it is observed that the differences energies between *Trans* forms by using 6-31G\* basis set are between 0.26 and 0.21 kJ/mol in gas phase and increase in solution to values between 0.31 and 0.21 kJ/mol, by using the same basis set. The difference energies of the *Cis* isomers in relation to the *Trans* ones in both media are very high, although slightly decreases in solution and, for these reasons, their populations are practically zero. Despite the low populations for the *Cis* forms they were also

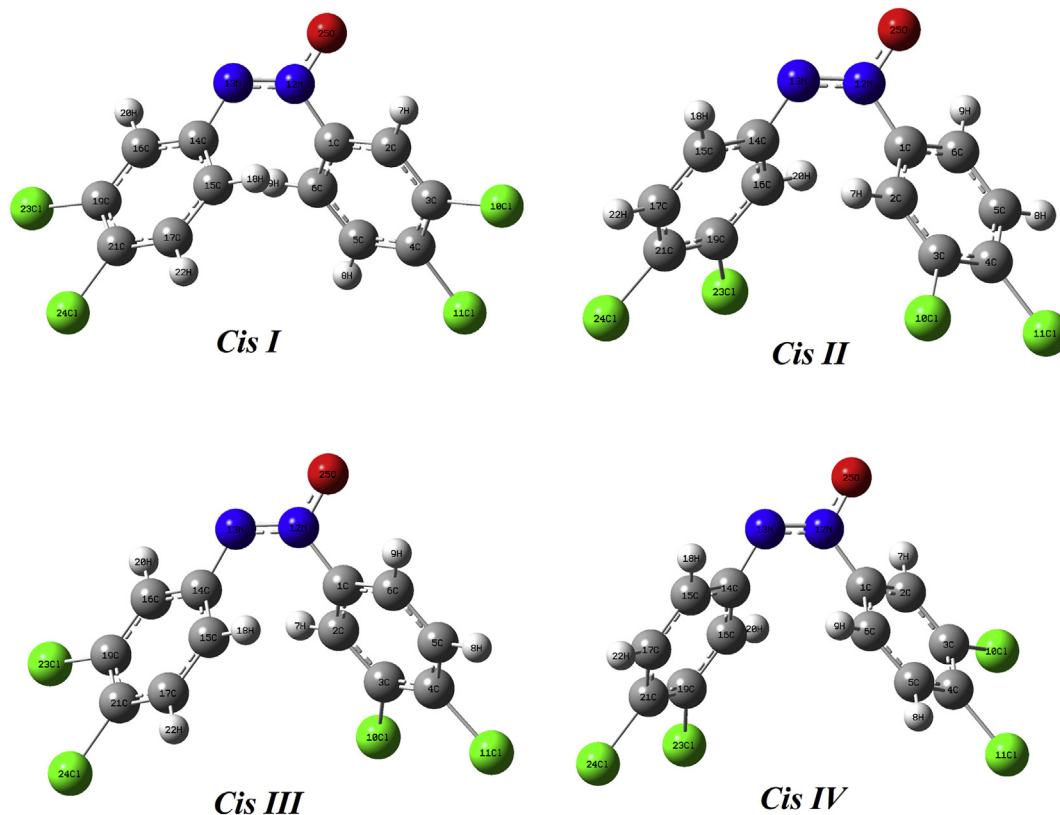


Fig. 1. Molecular structures of Cis isomers of TCAOB and atoms numbering.

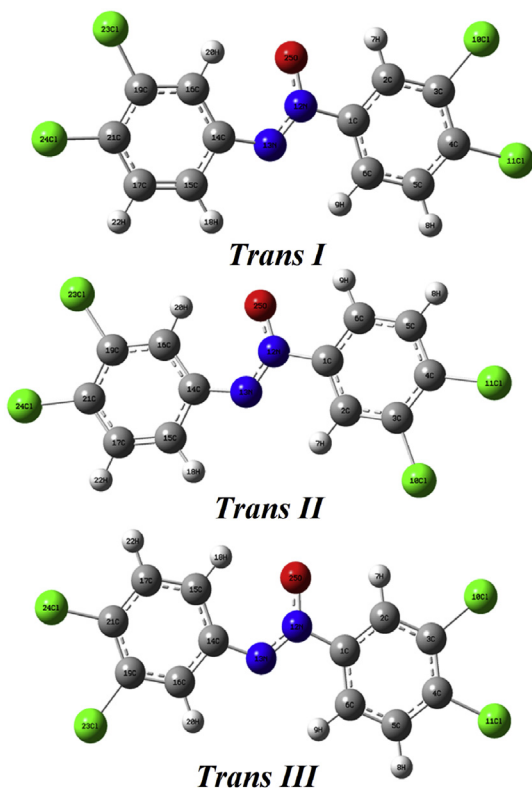


Fig. 2. Molecular structures of Trans isomers of TCAOB and atoms numbering.

considered in this study because it is known the existence of isomerization process among them, as reported by different authors for these derivatives [16–18] and by us for TCAB [22]. Comparing the energy values of all isomers, we observed that the *Trans-II* isomer has the lowest value which is consistent with the study of the *trans*-1,2-bis(3-chlorophenyl) diazene oxide form [21], whose structure is similar to the *Trans II* isomer of TCAOB. In that work the authors have reported that the molecule adopts a thermodynamically stable configuration in which the two groups are oriented in position *Trans* chlorophenyl with respect to the N=N bond. Table S1 and S2 shows a comparison of the calculated geometrical parameters for the *Cis* and *Trans* conformations of TCAOB by using both basis sets with the experimental values reported for *cis*-azobenzene [42], azobenzene [43], 3-(4-Chlorophenyl)quinazolin-4(3H)-one [44], *trans*-Diphenyldiazene oxide [20] and *trans*-1,2-bis(3-chlorophenyl) diazene oxide [21] by means of root mean square deviation (rmsd) values. The better rmsd values for bond lengths and angles values are obtained when these parameters are compared with the azobenzene compound, as expected because it is a similar compound. Note that the bond N12–C1–C2 and N12–C1–C6 angles and the dihedral N13–N12–C1–C2 and N13–N12–C1–C6 angles have different values in both *Cis* conformers. For the *Trans* conformations a better correlation in the bond angles is observed when their values are compared with the parameters reported by Martínez and Bernès [20] in an experimental study for *trans*-Diphenyldiazene oxide than the experimental parameters obtained to *trans*-1,2-bis(3-chlorophenyl) diazene oxide [21]. This observation could be related to that in the chlorinated compound, the authors consider that the oxygen atom is disordered over two inversion-related positions N12–O25 and N13–O25. For TCAOB, the bond lengths

**Table 1**  
Calculated total energy ( $E$ ) and relative ( $\Delta E$ ), dipolar moments ( $\mu$ ) and populations for all TCAOB isomers.

Isomers	B3LYP method							
	6-31G*				6-311++G**			
	E (Hartrees)	$\mu$ (D)	$\Delta E$ (kJ/mol)	Population Analysis(%)	E (Hartrees)	$\mu$ (D)	$\Delta E$ (kJ/mol)	Population Analysis(%)
<i>Cis I</i>	-2486.2904	2.42	64.3	0	-2486.5699	2.69	57.9	0
<i>Cis II</i>	-2486.2903	1.14	64.5	0	-2486.5701	1.38	57.6	0
<i>Cis III</i>	-2486.2902	3.15	64.8	0	-2486.5699	3.21	58.2	0
<i>Cis IV</i>	-2486.29041	2.61	64.3	0	-2486.5701	2.76	57.7	0
<i>Trans I</i>	-2486.3148	3.53	0.26	31.9	-2486.5919	3.53	0.31	32.9
<i>Trans II</i>	-2486.3149	1.88	0.0	35.5	-2486.5920	1.83	0.0	35.7
<i>Trans III</i>	-2486.3148	1.26	0.21	32.6	-2486.5920	1.26	0.21	31.4

N12–N13 have the intermediate values between single and double bond. Besides, in the chlorinated compound the C1–C2 and C1–C6 distances and C1–N12–N13 and N12–N13–C14 angles are similar, hence, it is possible to consider that the O atom can be in either of the two N atoms.

#### 4.2. Molecular electrostatic potentials, atomic charges and bond orders

Due to the interesting photo-chemical and physical properties expected for TCAOB the studies of their stabilities are of great aid to analyze the isomerization process [5–15]. Thus, the stabilities and electrostatic interactions of all the isomers of TCAOB were studied through the NPA and MK charges and molecular electrostatic potentials (MEP). The results are presented from Table S3 to S5, respectively. Here, the higher molecular potentials are observed on the Cl, N and O atoms of TCAOB conformers and the values are approximately the same in all the *Cis* and *Trans* conformers, as can be seen in Table S3. The detailed analysis of all the charges shows that in general the NPA charge on N12 atom do not change to both conformational forms. On the contrary, the NPA charges on N13 atom for the *Cis* forms are slightly lower than those corresponding to the *Trans* forms of TCAOB, as shown in Fig. S3, hence, this figure shows clearly the variations of the calculated MK and NPA charges on the N12 and N13 atoms corresponding to all isomers of TCAOB at B3LYP/6-31G\* level. We can see that the MK charges on N12 and N13 atoms inversely vary between the two groups of isomers. On the one hand, MK charges on the N12 atoms are higher for *Cis* isomers than for the *Trans* forms, while for the N13 atoms are higher for the *Trans* forms.

The bond order values expressed as Wiberg indexes for all isomers can be seen in Table S6 while in Table S7 and Fig. S4 show the variations of these values only for the C–N, N=N, N=O, and C–Cl bonds corresponding to the seven isomers in gas phase. Here, the higher values are observed in the N12=N13 bonds corresponding to both isomers but the *Cis* isomers present the higher values than the *Trans* ones. A similar tendency are observed in the BO values corresponding to the N12=O25 bonds. On the other hand, we observed that in the C14–N13 and C1–N12 bonds the corresponding BO values are higher in the *Trans* isomers than the *Cis* ones. In relation to the BO values corresponding to the C–Cl bonds, we observed different behaviors in both isomers, thus, for instance, the higher values for all isomers are observed on the C4–Cl11 bonds while the lower values in the C19–Cl23 bonds. A very important observation is the different BO values that present the C21–Cl24 bonds in all isomers, where the higher values are observed in the *Trans* forms probably because the position of these bonds are near to the N=O bonds in these isomers which are different from the *Cis* ones, as observed in Figs. 1 and 2. Hence, these differences among the isomers could be probably attributed to a result of resonance occurring within the molecule.

#### 4.3. NBO and AIM studies

The stabilities of all TCAOB isomers and their topological properties were studied by using NBO [25] and AIM [27] calculations in order to investigate the existence of different donor–acceptor and intra-molecular interactions in these isomers. Those studies are of importance taking into account the photochemical properties that present these derivatives when they are used in the industry as light-triggered switches [5,6,9]. Table S8 shows the second order perturbation energies  $E^{(2)}$  (donor  $\rightarrow$  acceptor) corresponding to the most important delocalizations for all TCAOB isomers. Four contributions of the stabilization energies are observed in all isomers, by using both basis sets, they are:  $\Delta ET_{\pi \rightarrow \pi^*}$ ,  $\Delta ET_{n \rightarrow \sigma^*}$ ,  $\Delta ET_{n \rightarrow \pi^*}$  and  $\Delta ET_{\pi^* \rightarrow \pi^*}$  of which the first three contributions favors to the *Cis* forms while the latter to the *Cis II*, *Trans II* and *Trans III* forms. Fig. S5 shows a description graphic of these delocalizations. Note that the all *Cis* forms have the only two  $\pi N12-N13 \rightarrow nO25$  and  $\sigma N12-O25 \rightarrow nO25$  delocalizations that are not present in the *Trans* forms. Moreover, the transitions  $\Delta ET_{\pi^* \rightarrow \pi^*}$  have the higher values in all *Cis* and *Trans* isomers and, for this reason, the total contribution shows that same tendency, as observed in Fig. S5.

The topological properties [26] are useful parameters to study the intra-molecular interactions of all TCAOB isomers by using the AIM2000 program [27]. In general, the exhaustive analysis shows a somewhat dependence of the topological properties with the size of the basis set when increase at 6-311++G\*\*. Here, the analysis of the topological properties in the bond critical points (BCPs) and ring critical points (RCPs) for all isomers in gas phase by using both basis sets are presented from Table S9 to S11. Accordingly, the results show for the *Cis* isomer with both basis sets two ring critical points, RCP<sub>1</sub> and RCP<sub>2</sub> while for the *Trans* forms a third ring critical point RCP<sub>3</sub> it is observed, as shown in Table S9. Now, we can identify the ring bonded to the oxidized nitrogen atom as RCP<sub>1</sub> while the ring bonded to another nitrogen atom is RCP<sub>2</sub>. RCP<sub>3</sub> observed only in the *Trans* isomers are related to H bonds formed, as clearly is observed in Table S10 with both basis sets. Note that the nature of these H bonds are different in the three *Trans* isomers, thus, in *Trans I* and *II* are formed the C16–H20...O25 bonds while in the *Trans III* isomers the C15–H18...O25 bonds. Note that the topological properties of these H bonds change when the size of the basis set increase from 6-31G\* to 6-311++G\*\*. Fig. S6 shows the variations of the calculated density, Laplacian and  $\lambda_1/\lambda_3$  ratio values corresponding to RCP<sub>1</sub> and RCP<sub>2</sub>. The figure shows clearly that the higher ( $\rho$ ) values are calculated by using 6-31G\* basis set on both rings of the *Trans I* form. Therefore, the C16–H20...O25 interaction and RCP<sub>3</sub> are only observed in these *Trans* isomers. These AIM results are in complete agreement with the experimental resulted observed by Kavitha et al. [21] by X-ray diffraction in the crystal packing of *trans*-1,2-bis (3-chlorophenyl) diazene oxide, where the molecules are linked by intra and inter-molecular C–H...O hydrogen bonds.



#### 4.4. Vibrational analysis

The population analyses suggest that only the *Trans* isomers of TCAOB can be present in the solid phase of this compound, as indicated in Table 1, but taking into account that the isomerization process between both isomers was experimentally reported [16–18,22], in this study, all the *Cis* isomers were also considered. These TCAOB isomers have 69 normal vibration modes showing all activity in both IR and Raman spectra. The assignments of the experimental bands to the expected normal vibration modes were made on the potential energy distribution contributions (PED)  $\geq 9\%$ , by using the symmetry coordinates and, taking into account the assignments for TCAB [22] and the calculation's results. The observed and calculated wavenumbers and assignments for all TCAOB isomers in gas phase by using SQM/B3LYP/6-31G\* calculations are presented in Table 2. The comparisons of the experimental infrared and Raman spectra for TCAOB, by using B3LYP/6-31G\* theory level, with the corresponding average predicted demonstrate good correlations as observed respectively in Figs. 3 and 4. The broad IR band centred in approximately  $3440\text{ cm}^{-1}$  is easily assigned to the inter-molecular C–H $\cdots$ O hydrogen bonds, as was observed by X-ray diffraction in the crystal packing of *trans*-1,2-bis(3-chlorophenyl) diazene oxide [21] and, as reported by us for TCAB [22]. Therefore, the group of the IR and Raman bands between  $3200$  and  $2851\text{ cm}^{-1}$  are justified by both *Cis* and *Trans* forms, as can be seen in both average spectra for the isomers series. The strong bands between  $1500$  and  $1000\text{ cm}^{-1}$  in the experimental IR spectrum can be easily attributed to the presence of the *Trans* forms while probably in this region these bands overlap those bands associated to the *Cis* forms. On the other hand, the comparisons between the experimental IR spectra for TCAB [22] and TCAOB in the  $4000/2800$  and  $2000/350\text{ cm}^{-1}$  regions (Figs. S7 and S8) show clearly the differences attributed to the N=O group in TCAOB. Thus, in the region of higher wavenumbers we observed an increase in the band centred in  $3440\text{ cm}^{-1}$  probably because the presence of the N=O group generate higher numbers of H bonds in TCAOB. Also, a shifting of the bands assigned to the CH stretching modes is observed in this region. In the  $2000/350\text{ cm}^{-1}$  region we observed a notable increase in the intensities of some bands observed between  $1800/1500$  and  $1400/600\text{ cm}^{-1}$  while other bands decrease their intensities, as those located between  $1300$  and  $900\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . Below, brief discussions of some bands are presented.

##### 4.4.1. Assignments

**4.4.1.1. C–H modes.** The CH stretching modes belong to the two rings for all isomers of TCAOB can be easily assigned to the IR and Raman bands observed in the  $3200/3000\text{ cm}^{-1}$  region while the corresponding in-plane deformation modes are associated to the IR and Raman bands between  $1462$  and  $1097\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The IR and Raman bands between  $978$  and  $817\text{ cm}^{-1}$  are attributed to the out-of-plane deformation modes because in TCAB these modes were assigned between  $935$  and  $817\text{ cm}^{-1}$ .

**4.4.1.2. CCl modes.** In TCAB, the C–Cl stretching modes were assigned between  $606$  and  $442\text{ cm}^{-1}$  [22]. Here, for the *Trans* isomers these modes are clearly assigned between  $795$  and  $372\text{ cm}^{-1}$  while for the *Cis* forms they are assigned between  $782$  and  $401\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . SQM calculations predicted some C–Cl in-plane deformation modes at higher wavenumbers than the corresponding out-of-plane deformation modes, hence, in all isomers they were assigned as predicted by calculations and, as indicated in Table 2.

**4.4.1.3. Skeletal modes.** The N=N stretching modes for the *Cis* forms of TCAB were predicted by calculations at higher wavenumbers than the corresponding *trans* forms [22]. In all TCAOB

isomers these modes are predicted in the same region and coupled in some isomers with other stretching modes, hence, they are assigned to the very strong IR and Raman bands at  $1462$  and  $1478\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , respectively. In both TCAB isomers the N–C stretching modes were assigned in the  $1209/1120\text{ cm}^{-1}$  region, here, these modes are assigned to the IR and Raman bands between  $1202$  and  $1070\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The rings C–C stretching modes in the TCAB isomers were assigned at  $1577$  and  $1558\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and, for these reasons, these modes for all TCAOB isomers are assigned between  $1577$  and  $1541\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The remaining C–C stretching modes and the deformations and torsions of both rings are assigned as predicted by SQM calculations and, as observed in compounds with similar rings [22,38,39].

##### 4.5. Force field

The forces constants for all TCAOB isomers were calculated employing the SQM methodology [34] and the Molvib program [35]. Their values are presented in Table 3 compared with those reported for TCAB [22]. We observed that the forces constants are slightly dependent of the size of the basis set, thus, their values decrease when increase the basis set of 6-31G\* at 6-311++G\*\*, a result also observed in TACB [22]. Analyzing the  $f(N=N)$  force constants, we observed that for the *trans* forms of TCAOB the values are higher than for the *Cis* forms by using the 6-31G\* basis set but a contrary result is observed with the other basis set. In TCAB, on the contrary, with both basis sets the force constants are higher for the *Cis* forms than the other ones. Besides, in TCAB the values of these constants are higher than the TCAOB. Evidently, the presences of the N=O bonds in TCAOB could in part justify these differences. Hence, for this same reason, in TCAOB the  $f(\nu C-N)$  force constant values for the *Trans* isomers are higher than those observed for the *Cis* isomers. On the contrary, the  $f(C-Cl)$  force constants for the *Cis* isomers are higher than those corresponding to the *Trans* isomers. In TCAOB, other possible explanation of the lower values observed in the  $f(N=N)$  and  $f(C-C)_{ring}$  force constants for the *trans* forms could be probably related to the strong  $\pi\rightarrow\pi$  delocalizations observed by NBO analysis due to the planarity of those two forms, as also was observed in the *trans* forms of TCAB [22].

##### 4.6. NMR study

The predicted  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR chemical shifts for all TCAOB isomers calculated by using the GIAO method [36] and the 6-31G\* basis set are summarized in Table S12 and S13, respectively, compared with the corresponding experimental ones by means of the RMSD values. Here, the results for the H nucleus show a better concordance than the corresponding to the C nucleus, because their rmsd values are between  $0.69$  and  $0.28\text{ ppm}$ , having the closer values the *Trans I* and *II* isomers. For the  $^{13}\text{C}$  nucleus, the rmsd differences increase up to a  $3.34\text{--}3.20\text{ ppm}$  range where the *Cis II* form present the better correlation and all *Trans* forms the higher values. Here, the differences could be explained in part by the B3LYP/6-31G\* calculations and, on the other side, to the calculations performed in gas phase instead solution. The higher rmsd values for the C nucleus corresponding to the *Trans* forms could be attributed to the formation of H bonds where the C atoms are involved, as observed in Table S11 by AIM analysis. In general this study show that the experimental and calculated chemical shifts for both  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  atoms are in reasonable concordance despite the theoretical values were calculated in gas phase by using 6-31G\* basis set.

##### 4.7. HOMO–LUMO energy gap

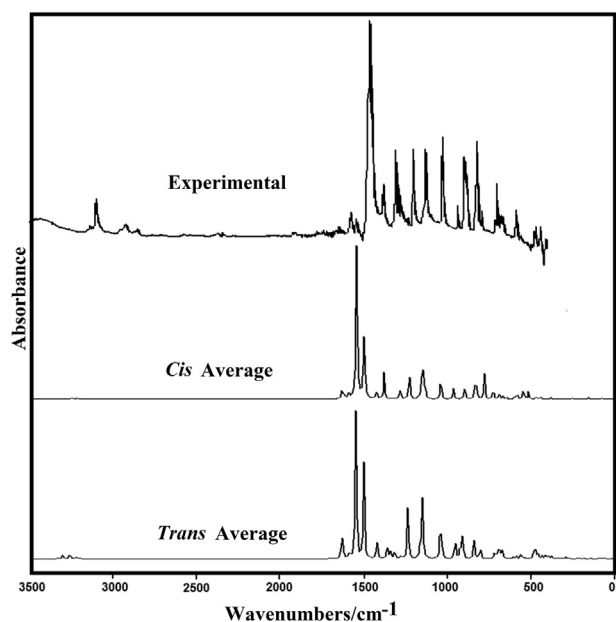
Taking into account the toxics properties that present these

**Table 2**  
Observed and calculated wavenumbers (cm<sup>-1</sup>) and assignment for all TCAOB isomers.

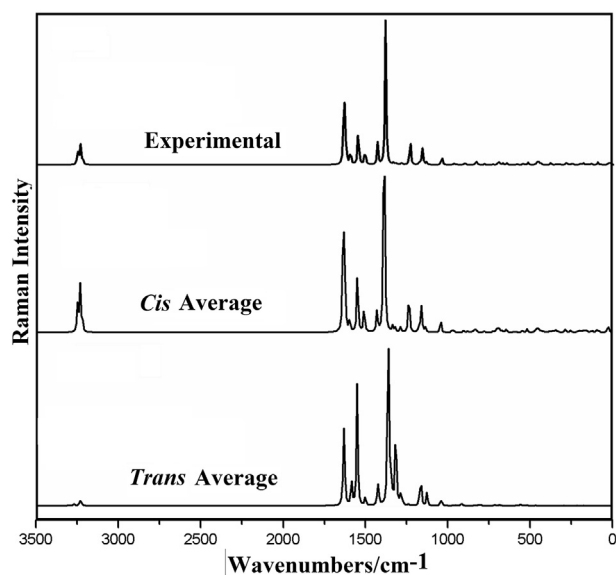
Experimental <sup>a</sup>		Cis I <sup>a</sup>		Cis II <sup>a</sup>		Cis III <sup>a</sup>		Cis IV <sup>a</sup>		Trans I <sup>a</sup>		Trans II <sup>a</sup>		Trans III <sup>a</sup>	
IR Solid	Raman	SQM <sup>b</sup>	Assig. <sup>a</sup>	SQM <sup>b</sup>	Assig. <sup>a</sup>	SQM <sup>b</sup>	Assig. <sup>a</sup>	SQM <sup>b</sup>	Assig. <sup>a</sup>	SQM <sup>b</sup>	Assig. <sup>a</sup>	SQM <sup>b</sup>	Assig. <sup>a</sup>	SQM <sup>b</sup>	Assig. <sup>a</sup>
3135vw		3117	vC6-H9	3116	vC6-H9	3115	vC6-H9	3115	vC6-H9	3174	vC16-H20	3173	vC16-H20	3172	vC15-H18
3103w	3104vw	3112	vC2-H7	3113	vC2-H7	3112	vC2-H7	3111	vC2-H7	3134	vC2-H7	3138	vC2-H7	3133	vC6-H9
3072w	3072w	3101	vC16-H20	3101	vC16-H20	3101	vC16-H20	3101	vC16-H20	3134	vC6-H9	3130	vC6-H9	3133	vC2-H7
3051vw		3097	vC17-H22	3098	vC17-H22	3097	vC17-H22	3098	vC17-H22	3100	vC17-H22	3101	vC17-H22	3106	vC16-H20
3035w		3096	vC5-H8	3097	vC5-H8	3084	vC5-H8	3096	vC5-H8	3097	vC5-H8	3096	vC5-H8	3095	vC5-H8
3015w		3084	vC15-H18	3085	vC15-H18	3096	vC15-H18	3085	vC15-H18	3087	vC15-H18	3088	vC15-H18	3091	vC17-H22
1577w		1585	vC15-C17	1583	vC1-C2	1584	vC1-C2	1584	vC15-C17	1589	vC1-C2	1588	vC1-C2	1588	vC1-C2
1577w		1579	vC1-C2	1578	vC15-C17	1579	vC15-C17	1579	vC1-C2	1578	vC15-C17	1579	vC15-C17	1578	vC15-C17
1561vw	1574s	1568	vC6-C1	1571	vC6-C1	1571	vC6-C1	1569	vC6-C1	1575	vC5-C6	1574	vC6-C1	1574	vC5-C6
											vC6-C1		vC5-C6		vC6-C1
1542vw	1549w	1543	vC14-C15	1546	vC14-C15	1544	vC14-C15	1546	vC14-C15						
1536vw	1540m									1537	vC17-C21	1537	vC17-C21	1531	vC17-C21
1462vs	1478s	1493	vN12=N13	1493	vN12=N13	1492	vN12=N13	1493	vN12=N13	1495	vN12=N13	1496	vN12=N13	1493	vN12=N13
1462vs	1470s	1461	β(C17-H22)	1462	β(C17-H22)	1462	β(C17-H22)	1462	β(C17-H22)	1457	β(C2-H7)	1456	β(C2-H7)	1457	β(C17-H22)
1448s	1448w	1455	β(C5-H8)	1456	β(C5-H8)	1456	β(C5-H8)	1456	β(C5-H8)	1452	vC21-C19	1451	vC21-C19	1455	vC19-C16
1380s	1382s	1388	vC19-C16	1382	vC19-C16	1388	vC19-C16	1382	vC2-C3	1383	vC19-C16	1383	vC19-C16	1384	vC19-C16
	1359w	1382	vC2-C3	1380	vC2-C3	1380	vC2-C3	1380	vC19-C16	1378	vC2-C3	1377	vC2-C3	1376	vC2-C3
1317sh	1318s	1335	vO25-N12	1341	vO25-N12	1334	vO25-N12	1341	vO25-N12						
1306s	1306vs									1313	vO25-N12	1312	vO25-N12	1321	vO25-N12
1288m	1290m	1283	vC3-C4	1283	vC3-C4	1282	vC3-C4	1284	vC3-C4	1290	vC3-C4	1291	vC3-C4	1290	vC3-C4
1270vw	1270s	1267	vC21-C19	1268	vC21-C19	1268	vC21-C19	1268	vC21-C19	1268	vC16-C14	1269	vC16-C14	1267	vN12=N13
			vN12=N13		vN12=N13		vN12=N13		vN12=N13						
1252vw	1253m	1253	β(C16-H20)	1254	β(C16-H20)	1254	β(C16-H20)	1253	β(C16-H20)	1255	β(C17-H22)	1257	β(C17-H22)	1252	β(C16-H20)
	1245m	1247	β(C2-H7)	1251	β(C2-H7)	1251	β(C2-H7)	1247	β(C2-H7)	1243	β(C5-H8)	1245	β(C5-H8)	1241	β(C5-H8)
1237vw	1236w														
1202s	1202w	1198	vN13-C14	1202	vN13-C14	1199	vN13-C14	1200	vN13-C14	1201	vN13-C14	1200	vN13-C14	1200	vN13-C14
	1142m	1145	β(C15-H18)	1138	β(C15-H18)	1145	β(C15-H18)	1144	β(C6-H9)	1141	β(C15-H18)	1140	β(C15-H18)	1145	β(C15-H18)
	1142m	1144	β(C6-H9)	1134	β(C6-H9)	1138	β(C6-H9)	1133	β(C15-H18)	1133	β(C6-H9)			1134	β(C6-H9)
1129s												1128	β(C6-H9)		
1097vw	1100m	1117	vC4-C5	1117	vC4-C5	1117	vC4-C5	1117	vC4-C5	1119	vC4-C5	1119	vC4-C5	1119	vC4-C5
			vC5-C6		vC5-C6		vC5-C6		vC5-C6						
1097vw	1100m	1110	vC17-C21	1112	vC17-C21	1110	vC17-C21	1112	vC17-C21	1112	β(C16-H20)	1112	β(C16-H20)	1112	vC21-C19
	1070vw	1101	vC1-N12	1103	vC1-N12	1104	vC1-N12	1099	vC1-N12	1093	vC1-N12	1095	vC1-N12	1095	vC1-N12
1027s	1026m	1032	βR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	1032	βR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	1032	βR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	1031	βR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	1027	βR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	1027	βR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	1027	βR <sub>1</sub> (A1)
1027s	1026m	1022	βR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	1023	βR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	1022	βR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	1022	βR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	1019	βR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	1019	βR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	1019	βR <sub>1</sub> (A2)
964vww	978vw			957	γC15-H18			957	γC15-H18	968	γC6-H9	969	γC6-H9	968	γC6-H9
954vww	956vw	954	γC6-H9	955	γC6-H9	954	γC6-H9	954	γC6-H9	959	γC15-H18	960	γC15-H18	963	γC15-H18
952vww		947	β(N12-O25)	950	β(N12-O25)	946	β(N12-O25)	951	β(N12-O25)						
937w	938vw	944	γC15-H18			942	γC17-H22			935	β(N12-O25)	935	β(N12-O25)	934	β(N12-O25)
	911vw									917	γC2-H7	914	γC2-H7	917	γC2-H7
895m	896vw	896	γC2-H7	893	γC2-H7	896	γC2-H7	895	γC2-H7	899	γC16-H20	902	γC16-H20	899	γC16-H20
879m	886sh vw	889	γC16-H20	872	γC16-H20	889	γC16-H20	874	γC16-H20	890	vC14-C15	884	vC14-C15	884	vC14-C15
831m		829	γC5-H8	835	γC17-H22	832	γC5-H8	836	γC17-H22	832	γC5-H8	837	γC5-H8	832	γC5-H8
831m				831	γC5-H8			827	γC5-H8	829	γC17-H22	830	γC17-H22	829	γC17-H22
823s		822	γC17-H22	823	βR <sub>2</sub> (A1)	823	βR <sub>2</sub> (A1)	822	βR <sub>2</sub> (A1)						
819w	807vw	817	βR <sub>2</sub> (A1)			818	γC15-H18								
795w	795vw													797	vC3-C110
782sh		771	vC19-Cl23			770	vC19-Cl23			786	vC3-C110	788	vC3-C110		
757vw				764	βR <sub>2</sub> (A2)			765	βR <sub>2</sub> (A2)						
718vw		724	τONNC	718	τONNC	716	τONNC	724	τONNC	712	τONNC	713	τONNC	712	τONNC
706m	706w									701	βR <sub>3</sub> (A2)	704	βR <sub>3</sub> (A2)		
694m	696w	687	τR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	696	τR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	696	τR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	690	τR <sub>1</sub> (A1)					685	βR <sub>3</sub> (A2)
683sh		681	τR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	680	βR <sub>3</sub> (A2)	681	βR <sub>3</sub> (A2)	683	τR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	686	τR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	687	τR <sub>1</sub> (A2)	683	τR <sub>1</sub> (A2)
678w	678m	680	βR <sub>3</sub> (A2)	677	τR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	677	τR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	677	βR <sub>3</sub> (A2)	679	βR <sub>3</sub> (A1)	678	βR <sub>3</sub> (A1)	676	βR <sub>3</sub> (A1)
673vw										672	τR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	672	τR <sub>1</sub> (A1)	670	τR <sub>1</sub> (A1)
663vw	661vw	662	βR <sub>3</sub> (A1)	666	βR <sub>3</sub> (A1)	665	βR <sub>3</sub> (A1)	662	βR <sub>3</sub> (A1)	658	βR <sub>3</sub> (A2)	656	βR <sub>2</sub> (A2)	666	βR <sub>2</sub> (A2)
637vw		641	γC19-Cl23	636	γC19-Cl23	638	γC19-Cl23	641	γC19-Cl23						

(continued on next page)





**Fig. 3.** Experimental infrared spectrum of TCAOB in the solid phase compared with the corresponding average predicted for all *Cis* and *Trans* isomers by using the B3LYP/6-31G\* level of theory.



**Fig. 4.** Experimental Raman spectrum of TCAOB in the solid phase compared with the corresponding average predicted for all *Cis* and *Trans* isomers by using the B3LYP/6-31G\* level of theory.

azoxybenzene derivatives, for all TCAOB isomers we have calculated the gap values and some interesting descriptors in order to know their reactivities and behaviours with both basis sets. Thus, the frontier orbitals and the chemical potential ( $\mu$ ), electronegativity ( $\chi$ ), global hardness ( $\eta$ ), global softness ( $S$ ), global electrophilicity index ( $\omega$ ) and global nucleophilicity index ( $E$ ) descriptors were computed using both basis sets [37–40]. The gap values were calculated with the differences between the HOMO-LUMO values where the most reactive isomer present a low gap value while the equations used to calculate those descriptors were presented as support material in Table S14 because they are widely known. Here, the presences of lone pairs on the O and N atoms and of four

**Table 3**  
Comparison of scaled internal force constants for all TCAOB isomers.

B3LYP method							
Force constant	<i>Cis I</i>	<i>Cis II</i>	<i>Cis III</i>	<i>Cis IV</i>	<i>Trans I</i>	<i>Trans II</i>	<i>Trans III</i>
TCAOB/6-31G* <sup>a</sup>							
$f(\text{C}-\text{N})$	4.385	4.387	4.384	4.391	4.975	4.974	4.961
$f(\text{N}=\text{N})$	8.273	8.272	8.279	8.264	8.316	8.332	8.326
$f(\text{N}=\text{O})$	8.973	8.972	8.960	8.977	8.245	8.248	8.244
$f(\text{C}-\text{Cl})$	3.477	3.475	3.481	3.474	3.460	3.454	3.466
$f(\text{C}-\text{C})_{\text{ring}}$	6.473	6.479	6.481	6.483	6.476	6.476	6.471
$f(\text{C}-\text{H})$	5.274	5.275	5.267	5.274	5.343	5.344	5.345
TCAOB/6-311++G** <sup>a</sup>							
$f(\text{C}-\text{N})$	4.246	4.250	4.247	4.253	4.828	4.825	4.807
$f(\text{N}=\text{N})$	8.266	8.263	8.279	8.262	8.228	8.250	8.244
$f(\text{N}=\text{O})$	8.514	8.504	8.496	8.510	7.797	7.802	7.785
$f(\text{C}-\text{Cl})$	3.421	3.420	3.425	3.420	3.407	3.402	3.410
$f(\text{C}-\text{C})_{\text{ring}}$	6.358	6.364	6.364	6.366	6.349	6.351	6.345
$f(\text{C}-\text{H})$	5.185	5.188	5.183	5.184	5.248	5.248	5.250
Force constant	<i>Cis I</i>	<i>Cis II</i>			<i>Trans I</i>	<i>Trans II</i>	
TCAB/6-31G* <sup>b</sup>							
$f(\text{C}-\text{N})$	4.001	4.016			4.958	4.948	
$f(\text{N}=\text{N})$	10.296	10.293			9.583	9.583	
$f(\text{C}-\text{C})_{\text{ring}}$	6.436	6.444			6.447	6.446	
$f(\text{C}-\text{Cl})$	3.456	3.455			3.430	3.443	
$f(\text{C}-\text{H})$	5.253	5.254			5.261	5.273	
TCAB/6-311++G** <sup>b</sup>							
$f(\text{C}-\text{N})$	3.903	3.908			4.847	4.838	
$f(\text{N}=\text{N})$	10.195	10.191			9.558	9.558	
$f(\text{C}-\text{C})_{\text{ring}}$	6.320	6.329			6.325	6.324	
$f(\text{C}-\text{Cl})$	3.400	3.399			3.374	3.388	
$f(\text{C}-\text{H})$	5.169	5.169			5.186	5.188	

Units are  $\text{mdyn } \text{\AA}^{-1}$  for stretching and stretching/stretching interaction.

<sup>a</sup> This work.

<sup>b</sup> From Ref [22].

electronegative Cl atoms produce attractive properties to TCAOB, as suggested by the above studies. The results clearly show that: (i) the both frontier orbitals are localized on the rings, as in TCAB [22], (ii) the *Trans* isomers are more reactive than the *Cis* ones because they present low gap values, (iii) the nucleophilicity are highest in the *Trans* forms than the *Cis* ones, (iv) the energies gap follows the trend: *Trans II* > *Cis II* > *Cis IV* > *Cis I* > *Cis III* > *Trans III* > *Trans I*, being the *Trans I* isomer the most reactive probably due to the repulsion of the more electronegative Cl and O atoms as a consequence of their proximities and, finally, (v) the TCAOB is kinetically more inert than TCAB because present a higher stability and high chemical hardness, evidently justified by the presence of N=O bond in TCAOB.

#### 4.8. Electronic spectrum

The electronic spectrum of TCAOB registered in an ethanol solution compared with the corresponding predicted for all isomers in the same medium at the B3LYP/6-31G\* level of theory can be seen in Fig. 5 while Fig. S9 shows the comparisons between the experimental electronic spectra of TCAB and TCAOB in ethanol solution. In both spectra it is possible to observe a very strong band located at 335 nm in TCAB (molar absorptivity =  $1600 \text{ M}^{-1}\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) while at 337 nm in TCAOB (molar absorptivity =  $1700 \text{ M}^{-1}\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) that can be easily assigned to  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$  and  $n \rightarrow \pi^*$  transitions because under UV–vis radiation (>200 nm) the presence of  $\pi$ -electrons and lone-pairs electrons ( $n$ -electrons) permit the electronic transitions of these types [23,45]. Besides, in the UV–visible spectrum of TCAB there is a very weak band at 445 nm not observed in TCAOB while the weak band at 271 nm is only observed in TCAOB. Hence, this latter band should evidently be assigned to  $n \rightarrow \pi^*$  transitions due to N=O chromophore. On the other hand, the UV–vis spectra



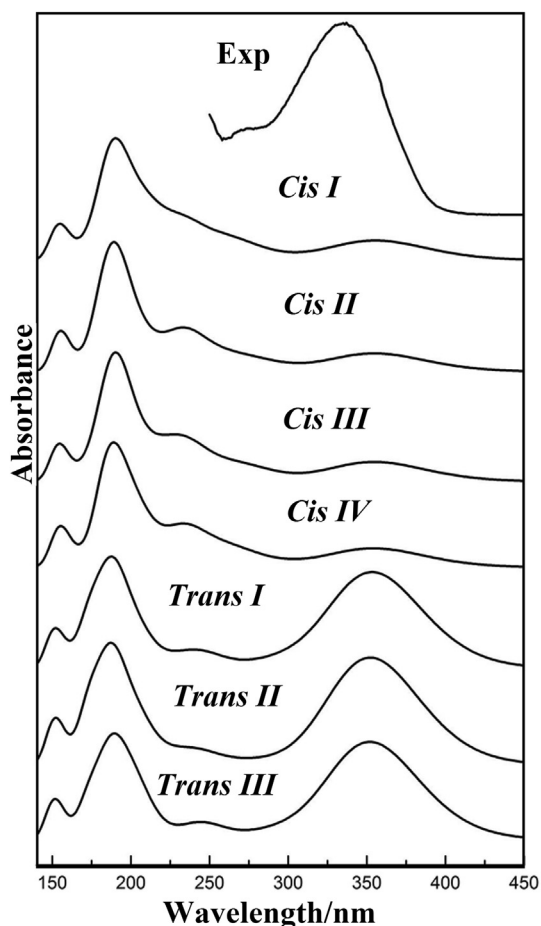


Fig. 5. Experimental electronic spectrum of TCAOB in ethanol solution compared with the corresponding predicted for all Cis and Trans isomers by using the B3LYP/6-31G\* level of theory.

predict four bands for all TCAOB isomers, showing the Cis isomers bands with low intensities, as observed in Fig. 5. In these spectra we observed a bathochromic shift toward longer wavelengths probably due to the conjugation among the lone pairs of O25 atoms and the four Cl atoms present in TCAOB. The predicted positions of the four UV–vis bands in the Trans isomers are: 353/355 nm; 249 nm, 189 nm and 151/155 nm while for the Cis forms, these bands are located at 358 nm, 234 nm, 187/196 nm and 154/159 nm. Obviously, all these bands observed are attributed to the  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$  and  $n \rightarrow \pi^*$  transitions due to the C=C, N=N and N=O chromophores groups, where the most intense can be assigned to  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$  transitions of C=C groups. Note that the predicted bands observed at low wavelengths were not observed in the experimental spectra because this was recorded from 220 to 600 nm.

## 5. Conclusions

The toxic TCAOB derivative was synthesized and, then, characterized it in the solid state by infrared and Raman spectroscopies and, in solution by multidimensional nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) and ultraviolet–visible spectroscopies. The molecular structures of four Cis isomers and three Trans isomers were determined in gas phase by using the B3LYP method and the 6-31G\* and 6-311++G\*\* basis sets. NBO studies support the high stability of both Cis and Trans isomers due to their  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$ ,  $n \rightarrow \sigma^*$ ,  $n \rightarrow \pi^*$  and  $\pi^* \rightarrow \pi^*$  electronic transitions while the AIM studies suggest the

existence of intra-molecular C–H $\cdots$ O hydrogen bonds in the Trans forms, as revealed by the broad IR band in the higher wavenumbers region. The Trans I isomer presents the higher reactivity, as suggested by their low gap energy probably due to the repulsion of the more electronegative Cl and O atoms as a consequence of their proximities. Here, the complete assignments of the 69 normal modes of vibration for all TCAOB isomers were reported by using the SQMFF methodology. The presence of the N=O group in TCAOB support the increase in the intensity of the IR band centred in 3440  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , the shifting of the bands assigned to the CH stretching modes, the notable increase in the intensities of bands observed between 1800/1500 and 1400/600  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  and the decrease in the intensities of bands between 1300 and 900  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , as compared with the corresponding spectrum of TCAB. In addition, the lower  $f(N=N)$  and  $f(C-C)_{ring}$  force constants values for the Trans forms of TCAOB could be probably related to the strong  $\pi \rightarrow \pi$  delocalizations observed by NBO analysis due to the planarity of those two forms, as also was observed in the Trans forms of TCAB.

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## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.molstruc.2017.04.043>.

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