EVALUATION OF THE NUTRITIONAL QUALITIES OF THE LEAVES OF *PARQUETINA NIGRESCENS*, *LAUNAEA TARAXACIFOLIA* AND *SOLANUM NIGRUM*

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ABSTRACT

Although previous studies have considered the composition of *Parquetina nigrescens*, *Launaea taraxacifolia* and *Solanum nigrum* individually, there is still a need to compare the nutrients distribution in these plants in order to enhance scientific knowledge on their human health benefits. The analyses' results showed that whereas the *L. taraxacifolia leaves* contain the highest level of ash and crude fibre, they have the least shelf life. The most beneficial Ca/P, Na/K and Zn/Cu ratios were respectively found in the *P. nigrescens*, *S. nigrum* and *L. taraxacifolia* leaves. Remarkably, the Cd and Pb contents of the three leaves were below the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius commission 2015 recommended maximum levels. Following the FAO/WHO/UNU requirement, only the composition of isoleucine, leucine and valine in the three leaves as well as the combination of phenylalanine and tyrosine in *L. taraxacifolia* and *S. nigrum* leaves were found to be above the required amount for all the age-brackets considered. *L. taraxacifolia* and *S. nigrum* leaves also had the highest concentration of vitamin A and C, respectively. Generally, this research revealed that the selected leaves are nutritionally rich with health-promoting advantages. Further investigation on *P. nigrescens* leaves to ascertain its safety for direct human consumption is, however, required.

Keywords: *Parquetina nigrescens*; *Launaea taraxacifolia*; *Solanum nigrum*; Essential Amino acids; Vitamins.