

VIETNAM ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

THE 11th INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
ON ADVANCED MATERIALS SCIENCE AND NANOTECHNOLOGY

PROCEEDINGS



PUBLISHING HOUSE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



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TABLE OF CONTENT

CODE PAGE

MATERIALS FOR ELECTRONICS AND PHOTONICS (MEP)

1	Highly efficient, no s-droop micro light-emitting diodes with an epitaxial oxide p-layer grown on nitride semiconductors	MEP-I14*	2
	<i>J.H. Baek, S.-M. Kim, T.-H. Chung, Y. W. Kim, E. F. Schubert, D.-M. Jeon, D.-S. Shin, J.-I. Shim, S. K. Hong, and Y. R. Ryu</i>		
2	Facile and rapid synthesis of $WO_3 \cdot 0.33H_2O$ nanostructures via microwave-assisted hydrothermal method for bifunctional smart windows	MEP-O04	7
	<i>Van Kien Vu, Do Y Nhi Nguyen, Thi Lan Anh Luu, Huu Lam Nguyen, Cong Tu Nguyen</i>		
3	Mixed-phase 1T/2H MoS_2/graphene nanocomposite synthesized via hydrothermal method for enhanced optoelectronic applications	MEP-O08	11
	<i>Le Ngoc Long, Tran Thi Ngoc Bich, and Nguyen Thi Ngoc Tram</i>		
4	Robust dual-load wireless power transfer system based on parity time symmetry	MEP-O09	17
	<i>Ngoc Hung Phi, and Jong-Wook Lee</i>		
5	Magneto-inductive wave propagating in magnetic metamaterial structure for wireless power transfer and near-field communications	MEP-P03	20
	<i>Nguyen Khanh Viet, Nguyen Ngoc Linh, Le Thi Hong Hiep, Bui Huu Nguyen, Nguyen Hai Anh, Do Khanh Tung, Bui Son Tung, Bui Xuan Khuyen, Vu Dinh Lam, Pham Thanh Son</i>		
6	Wide-band absorption structure in the THz region using multi-layer resonance disc	MEP-P05	24
	<i>Nguyen The An, Nguyen Thu Minh, Nguyen Thi Ly, Vu Duy Chien, Pham Van Dien, Pham Van Hai, Vu Dinh Lam, Nguyen Thi Thuy, Tran Manh Cuong</i>		
7	Enhanced and expanded the absorption in the GHz frequency range by integrating magnetic materials into the metamaterial structure	MEP-P08	28
	<i>T.X. Duong, D.K. Tung, P.T. Son, N.H. Anh, N. V. Ngoc, N.T. Tung, B.S. Tung, V.T.H. Hanh, V.D. Lam, Y.P. Lee, and B.X. Khuyen</i>		

*Editor's suggestion

53	Synthesis, characterization, and application of hybrid nanomaterials based on biopolymer extracted from rice husk biomass	MLS-P10	226
	<i>Nhat Thong Tran, Tuan Vu Vo, MyTrinh Nguyen, Minh Tri Le-Phuoc, Ngoc Thuy Nguyen, Dong Quy Hoang</i>		
54	Chemical method for direct synthesis of Ni(OH)₂ nanomaterials on niken foam electrode towards glucose detection	MLS-P12	230
	<i>Dinh Hieu Trung, Dao Van Nam, Chu Thi Xuan, Dao Xuan Viet, Chu Manh Hung, Nguyen Viet Hoang, Phung Duc Trung, Pham Duc Thinh, Luu Hoang Minh, and Nguyen Duc Hoa</i>		
55	Flat magneto-impedance magnetic sensors based on Co-based amorphous micro-wire oriented particle detection applications in biomedicine	MLS-P13	236
	<i>H.A Tam, N.V. Tuan, V.N. Thuc, P.T. Hien, N.T.P. Thao, B.T.Sang, D.T. Hien, Manh-Huong Phan, D.T. H. Giang, N.T. Ngoc</i>		
56	Detection of acetamiprid pesticide using silver nanostars as surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy substrate	MLS-P15	240
	<i>Dao Tran Cao, Cao Tuan Anh, Nguyen Anh Vu, and Luong Truc Quynh Ngan</i>		
57	Synthesis of gold nanoparticles using parsley leaves extract and their characterization	MLS-P19	244
	<i>Le Thi Mai Hoa</i>		

MATERIALS AND ECOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR ENVIRONMENT (MEE)

58	Chemical conversion of rice straw: environmental and economic analysis	MEE-I04	249
	<i>Chi M. Phan, Son A. Hoang, Nhung H. Nguyen, Khanh D. Pham and Siti Alaa</i>		
59	Effects of dopants on the morphology and photocatalytic activity of zinc oxide	MEE-O01	252
	<i>N.V. Vinh, N. T. Kien, N. Q. Bac, P. N. Chuc, N. T. H. Chi, L. T. V. Ha, D. N. Nhiem</i>		
60	Plasma-assisted phytochemical synthesis of gold nanoparticles	MEE-O03	257
	<i>Nguyen Minh Thu, Nguyen Thanh Tung, Nguyen Nhat Linh</i>		
61	Graphene-based Fe₃O₄ magnetic aerogel as a porous adsorbent of 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid	MEE-P02	261
	<i>Nguyen Thi Thu Hang, Le Bao Hung, Nguyen Kim Thuy, Cao Phuong Anh, Nguyen Thi Nang, Vu Minh Chau, Dang Minh Quang, Nguyen Ba Cuong, Truong Ngoc Tuan, and Nguyen Thi Hoai Phuong</i>		

62	Synthesis, characterisation, photocatalytic and antibacterial activity of Ag-doped ZnO nanoparticles	MEE-P05	265
	<i>Nguyen Xuan Dung, Phan Thi Minh Huyen, Dinh Thi Truong Giang, Phan Thi Hong Tuyet, Nguyen Thi Hoa and Luu Tien Hung</i>		
63	Lignin nanoparticles from agricultural waste as an efficient emulsion stabilizer	MEE-P11*	270
	<i>Thi Lieu Nguyen, Anh Quan Hoang, Chi Cong Pham, Duy Khanh Pham, and Phuong Tung Nguyen</i>		
64	Research on the fabrication and properties of multiferroic materials NFO/BCT-BZT for application in decomposing the synthetic dye methylene orange	MEE-P17	275
	<i>Nguyen Thi Viet Chinh, Pham Xuan Thao, Ngo My Hoa, Phan Tien Danh, Tran Dang Thanh, Do Hung Manh, Ngo Thu Huong, Vu Thi Thuy, Dao Van Hao, Dao Son Lam</i>		
65	Fabrication of magnetocaloric materials for enviromentally friendly refrigeration applications	MEE-P20	279
	<i>Pham Xuan Thao, Dao Son Lam, Ngo Thu Huong</i>		
66	Utilization of biomass-derived polymer material for water pollution remediation	MEE-P21	283
	<i>Khoa D T Nguyen, Toan M Nguyen, Doan Q Tran, Vy T Nguyen, Dong Quy Hoang, and Tuan An Nguyen</i>		

ADVANCED ENGINEERING MATERIALS (AEM)

67	Single crystal structure formation of metals in laser powder bed fusion using a flat-top beam profile	AEM-I01	288
	<i>Tomonori Kitashima and Makoto Watanabe</i>		
68	Enhanced discharge robustness of large-scale Resistive WEM detectors with diamond-like carbon anode	AEM-I12	292
	<i>V. Bayev, K. Afanaciev, S. Movchan, A. Kashchuk, O. Levitskaya, V. Akulich and V. Konovalov</i>		
69	Prediction of effective elastic property of cellular foams via micromechanical model: local morphology effects	AEM-P06	296
	<i>Van-Hai Trinh, and Dinh-Vu Dang</i>		
70	Microstructure and Mechanical properties NiNbNCr_{0.5} and TiNbVCr_{0.5}Zr_{0.5} high entropy alloys	AEM-P14	300
	<i>Nguyen Van Toan, Tran Bao Trung, Doan Dinh Phuong, Dinh Chi Linh, Phung Thi Hong Van and Dang Quoc Khanh</i>		

*Editor's suggestion

Synthesis, characterisation, photocatalytic and antibacterial activities of Ag-doped ZnO nanoparticles

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Abstract. Synthesis, characterization, photocatalytic, and antibacterial properties of Ag-doped ZnO nanoparticles were presented in this work. The nanoparticles were synthesized by the combustion method using polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) as an agent. The structure of nanoparticles were characterized using powder X-ray diffraction (XRD) and transmission electron microscopy (TEM). XRD revealed a single-phase hexagonal structure in all samples, except for the 5% Ag-doped ZnO. TEM indicated that most particles had a spherical shape, with grain sizes ranging from 10 to 30 nm in diameter. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) showed the porous surface of the sample. Both the shape and grain size of the nanoparticles were influenced by the Ag ratio and annealing temperatures. Rhodamine B was used as a representative dye pollutant to assess photocatalytic activity. The results demonstrated that Ag-doped ZnO nanoparticles exhibited superior photocatalytic properties compared to pure ZnO nanoparticles, with the 3% Ag-ZnO sample showing the best photocatalytic and antibacterial activity.

Keywords: Ag-doped ZnO; nanoparticles, photocatalytic properties, antibacterial, PVA; combustion method.

1. Introduction

Metal oxide nanomaterials play a crucial role in many areas of chemistry, physics and materials science. They belong to a family of nanomaterials that have been manufactured on a large scale for both industrial and household applications, and they hold promise for future applications [1].

Among metal oxides, zinc oxide has a wide range of applications in different areas because of its unique photocatalytic, electrical, electronic, optical, dermatological, and antibacterial properties [2].

The photocatalytic degradation of organic pollutants in water and air, using semiconductors such as TiO₂, ZnO, and

some other oxides has been the focus of research recently due to their prospects in the environmental detoxification [3].

The quantum efficiency of ZnO is also significantly larger than that of TiO₂ and sometimes it has revealed better activity than TiO₂. Besides, ZnO is available at a low cost and it absorbs over larger fraction of the solar spectrum than TiO₂, it is considered to be a more suitable material for the photocatalytic degradation of organic pollutants [4]. Moreover, it is a bactericide and is effective in inhibiting inhibit bacteria [5].

Transition metal such as Ag doped nanostructure is an effective method to enhance photocatalytic and antibacterial activity of ZnO, which can further improve

by the changes in doping concentrations of doped materials [6].

Many methods have been described in the papers for the synthesis of ZnO nanomaterials such as hydrothermal methods [7], sol-gel method [8], chemical vapor deposition [9], laser synthesis [10], magnetically assisted synthesis [11],...

In the recent years, combustion synthesis (CS) has become an effective, low-cost method for the production of various industrially useful materials. Today CS has become a very popular approach for the preparation of nanomaterials. The extensive research carried out in the last five years emphasized the CS capabilities for materials improvement, energy saving, and environmental protection [12, 13].

In this paper, we present the results of a study on synthesis, characterization, photocatalytic activity and bactericidal properties of Ag-doped ZnO nanoparticles, which were synthesized by combustion method using a polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) agent.

2. Experimental

The metal nitrate solutions in the predetermined molar ratio $Zn^{2+}:Ag^+$ were mixed with a precalculated amount of PVA. The obtained solution was magnetically stirred at 80°C. As water evaporated, the solution turned into a very viscous gel. After drying, the gel was further heated to form a crystal phase.

The thermal analysis was performed on TGA/DTA Analyzer DTG 60H (Shimadzu, Japan) in the air with the heating rate of 100C/min.

The structure and grain size, morphology of nanoparticles were characterized on an X-ray diffractometer (XRD) Bragg-Brentano with Cu-K α in the range $2\theta = 20 - 80^\circ$ with a step size = 0.02 a transmission electron microscope (TEM) (JEM-1010, JEOL, Japan) operated at 60 kV.

The photocatalytic performances of the Ag-doped zinc oxide particles were evaluated by cleaning rhodamin B (RDM B) in water under UV irradiation. In a typical process,

0.1g of the catalysts was added into 50 mL RDM B solution with a concentration of 10 mg/L.

The antibacterial property of Ag-doped ZnO samples was tested bioactive with Escherichia coli ATCC (American Type Culture Collection) 25922 strain. The antibacterial activity of the synthesized ZnO nanoparticles was evaluated using bacterium as per the colony count method.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Pyrolysis of gel

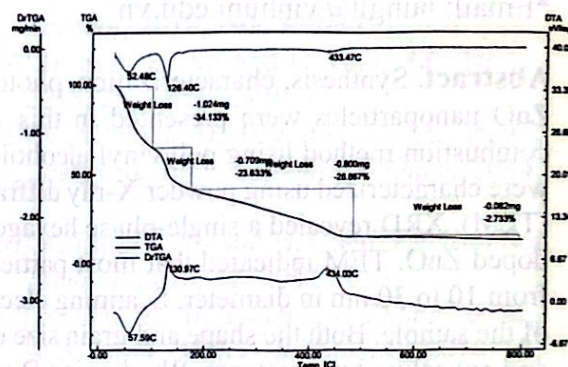


Figure 1. TGA-DTA curves of gel.

The pyrolysis of the gel-precursor was monitored by thermal analyses in Fig. 1. According to the TGA curve, the weight decrease terminated around 500°C. Before 100°C, the weight loss of about 34.1% was associated with to the vaporization of physically absorbed water on gel. In the range of temperature 100-200°C, the first exothermic peak at about 131°C with a weight loss of 23.6% could be due to incomplete decomposition of PVA. Corresponding to a wide temperature region from 200 - 500°C, the weight loss (accompanying exotherms in the DTA thermogram) showed the fire of PVA being left in the gel with nitrates acted as an oxidizer. During the combustion, large amounts of gases such as H₂O, CO, CO₂ and NO are liberated [14]. At a temperature higher than 500°C, the final weight loss corresponded to the formation of crystal phase.

3.2. Synthesis of Ag-doped ZnO nanomaterials

To find the heating temperature for the formation of Ag doped ZnO phase, 3%Ag doped ZnO was chosen to be synthesized under conditions: pH=3, PVA/metal mole ratio of 2:1, gel formation temperature 80°C, and various heating temperatures (300, 400, 500, 600 and 800°C).

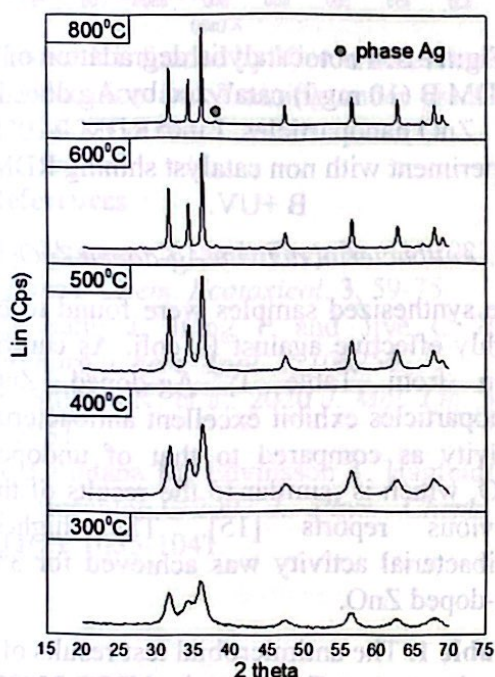


Figure 2. XRD patterns of the 3%Ag doped ZnO powder samples prepared by heating the precursor at designated temperature for 1 h.

Figure 2 presents XRD patterns of the obtained powders. All the diffraction peaks can be indexed to be in agreement with the ICDD Reference Pattern: zinc oxide, PDF2 card: 01-070-8072, which corresponds to hexagonal wurtzite structure. No peaks of impurity are observed except for the sample heated at 800°C. These results confirmed the formation of single phase hexagonal ZnO. The most prominent peaks observed in the patterns corresponded to (1 0 0), (0 0 2), (1 0 1), (1 0 2), (1 0 3), (1 1 2), (1 0 4) planes. From the results above, x% Ag-ZnO with x = 0; 1; 3; 5 were synthesised under the same conditions.

The XRD patterns of x%Ag-doped ZnO were shown in Fig. 3. The samples with doping concentrations lower than 5% show a pure ZnO phase (PDF2 card: 01-070-8072). This result indicated that Ag ions are incorporated into ZnO at either the interstitial or the substitute sites. Samples with higher Ag concentrations show impurity peak (phase Ag), suggesting that the solubility of Ag in ZnO is lower than 5%. Due to the low Ag solubility in ZnO, we focus on the 0- 3% doped samples. These samples had the hexagonal system structure of ZnO from PDF card 01-070-8072.

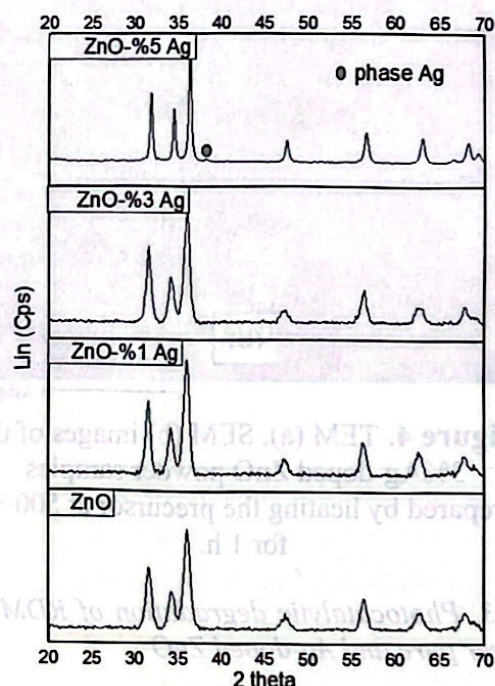


Figure 3. XRD patterns of x%Ag-ZnO with different Ag contents: x = 0, 1, 3, 5.

TEM and SEM images of 3%Ag-doped ZnO were shown in Fig. 4. The TEM micrograph clearly showed nanostructure homogeneities with the sample's spherical morphologies. The TEM observation also showed the nanospheres with an average diameter of 15 -20 nm. The crystallite size was calculated from XRD data using the Scherrer formula. It is found to be 14.1 nm in agreement with the particle size obtained from TEM.

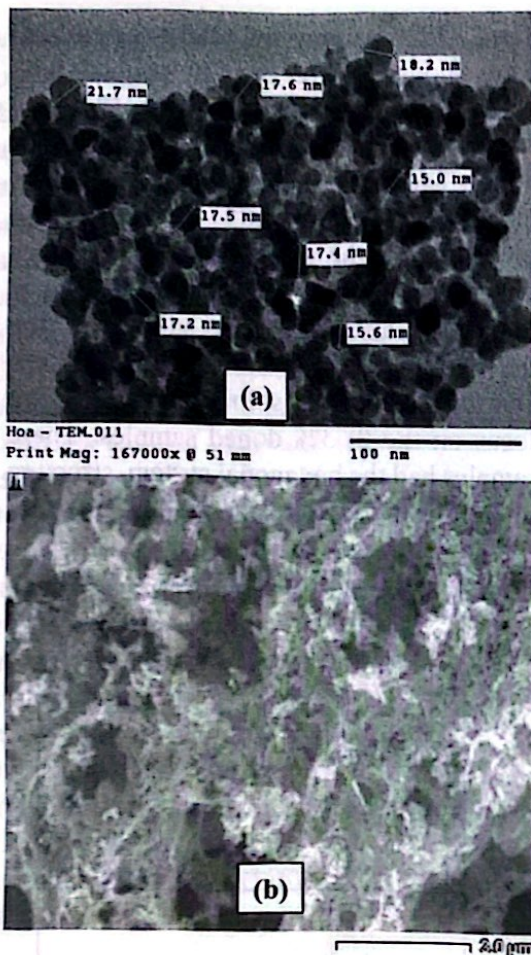


Figure 4. TEM (a), SEM (b) images of the 3%Ag-doped ZnO powder samples prepared by heating the precursor at 500 °C for 1 h.

3.3. Photocatalytic degradation of RDM B over pure and Ag-doped ZnO

The decolorization of RDM B in solution was observed in terms of change in intensity at λ_{max} of the dye. In photocatalytic degradation experiments, prior to irradiation, the aqueous solution was stirred continuously in the dark for 60 min to ensure adsorption/desorption equilibrium. Rate of decolorization was observed in terms of change in intensity at λ_{max} of the dye (Figure 5). The order of photocatalytic activity of Ag-doped ZnO was as follows: 3 > 1 > 0 mol %, which suggested that the Ag⁺ doping enhanced the photocatalytic activity. The 3%Ag-ZnO photocatalyst exhibited the highest photocatalytic decolorization efficiency.

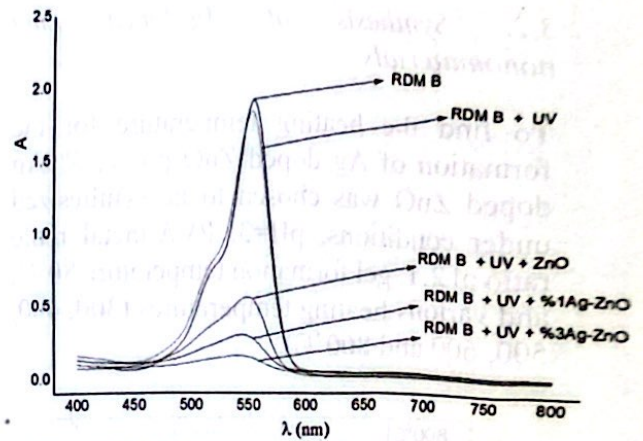


Figure 5: Photocatalytic degradation of RDM B (10 mg/l) catalyzed by Ag doped ZnO nanoparticles. Line: RDM B-experiment with non catalyst shining RDM B +UV.

3.4. Antibacterial activity Ag-doped ZnO

The synthesized samples were found to be highly effective against *E. coli*. As can be seen from Table 1, Ag-doped ZnO nanoparticles exhibit excellent antibacterial activity as compared to that of undoped ZnO, which is similar to the results of the previous reports [15]. The highest antibacterial activity was achieved for 3% Ag-doped ZnO.

Table 1. The antimicrobial test results of samples against *E. coli* strain ATCC 25922.

Samples	Results					
	10 ⁻³		10 ⁻⁵		10 ⁻⁷	
	\bar{D}	s	\bar{D}	s	\bar{D}	s
Ref. sample	283.67	21.73	170.33	3.58	155.33	8.33
ZnO	9.00	7.94	3.33	3.51	1.67	1.53
1%Ag-ZnO	3.67	3.51	1.67	0.58	0	-
3%Ag-ZnO	0.67	0.58	0.33	0.58	0	-

D: average number of viable cells.

4. Conclusions

Pure ZnO and x% Ag-doped ZnO nanoparticles (0 % ≤ x ≤ 5 %) were synthesized by combustion method using polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) agent. XRD analyses showed the single phase of hexagonal structure (PDF2 card: 01-070-8072) in all the samples (exception sample

with doping Ag content 5%). TEM images indicated that the particles were spherical in shape with grain size of nanoparticles ranging from 10 to 30nm. The study found that Ag-doped ZnO nanoparticles exhibited better photocatalytic and antibacterial activity than the pure ZnO. The 3% Ag-doped ZnO showed the highest antibacterial and photocatalytic activity.

Acknowledgments

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