



First principles calculations of electronic and optical properties of Mo-doped rutile TiO₂

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 30 April 2010

Received in revised form 6 July 2010

Accepted 27 July 2010

Available online 5 August 2010

Keywords:

Rutile TiO₂

Mo-doped

First principles

Electronic structures and optical properties

Computer simulation

ABSTRACT

Based on the density functional pseudopotential method, the electronic structures and the optical properties for Mo-doped rutile TiO₂ are comparatively investigated in detail. Mo substitution of the Ti sites induces effective reduction of the band gap of TiO₂, and the band gap being continuously reduced when increasing Mo doping level. For the pure TiO₂, the Fermi level locates at the valence band maximum, while it shifts to the conduction band and exhibits metal-like characteristic after Mo atoms are introduced into the TiO₂ supercell. The calculated optical properties indicate that the optical energy gap is increased after Mo doping. More importantly, absorption in the visible-light region is found, which originates from the intraband transition of the Mo 4d bands and the conduction bands. These calculations provide electronic structure evidence that, the Mo-doped rutile TiO₂ system could be a potential candidate for photoelectrochemical application due to the increase in its photocatalytic activity.

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1. Introduction

Up to now, photo-catalysis by titanium dioxide (TiO₂) has been investigated extensively for several decades, because it showed several advantages of stability, nontoxicity, and low cost [1]. However, as a serious disadvantage, it needs ultraviolet (UV) radiation to excite the electrons from valence band (VB) to conduction band (CB) because of its wide band gap [2]. Then, to make TiO₂ sensitive to a wider range of the solar spectrum, the band gap needs to be narrowed.

In recent years, impurity doping has been widely performed by chemical synthesis and other methods in order to improve photo-activity [3–12]. Theoretical investigations have also been carried out to study the band structures of TiO₂ phases including anatase [13–15] and rutile [16–20]. Mo, as a transition metal, has been used to dope TiO₂ for photocatalytic applications, showing the effects to make the materials catalytically active under visible light [21–26]. Such investigation has been mainly on the enhancement of the photocatalytic activity, with anatase being the focus of interest. As is well recognized, the rutile phase (3.0 eV, $\lambda \sim 400$ nm) [27] which

is the stable form of TiO₂, exhibits a direct band structure, while the metastable anatase phase is indirect in nature. The ionic radius of Mo⁴⁺ is equal to that of Ti⁴⁺, and values for the first 4 ionization potentials of Mo and Ti are close to each other. MoO₂ has a distorted structure of rutile with $c/a = 0.574$, compared to a value of 0.644 for TiO₂ rutile, and with pairwise Mo–Mo bonds; bond lengths between Mo in the chains of edge-sharing octahedra alternate between 251 and 311 pm, compared to a constant value of 296 pm between Ti in rutile [28,29]. Thus, rutile TiO₂ should be easily doped with Mo⁴⁺, and at high doping levels the material should exhibit a semiconductor to metal transition. Although little has been done to quantify whether effective red-shift has been caused by Mo doping of rutile TiO₂, and no effort has been made for a theoretical characterization of the Mo effects on its electronic and optical properties.

In this theoretical attempt, the aim of work is to study the electronic and optical properties of TiO₂ doping with the 4d transition metal Mo. Using the density functional method, to find a probable explanation for the electronic properties of Mo-doped rutile TiO₂, and some fundamental information which is similar to the experiments [23,26]. The results suggest that it is important to introduce Mo, which achieve significant red-shift in band gap. Finally, some important optical characteristics that have not been well studied before are analyzed and summed up for the technological applications of this dopant.

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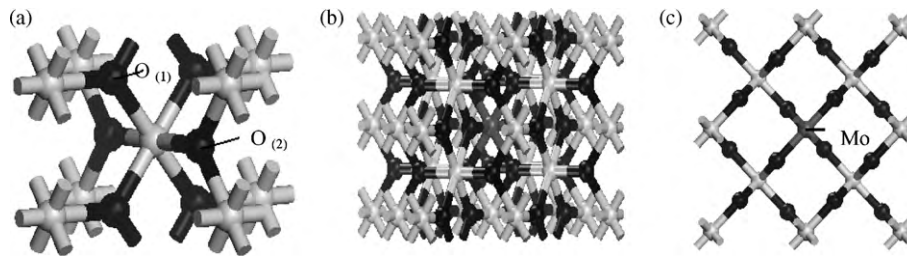


Fig. 1. Crystal models: (a) pure rutile TiO_2 with each Ti atom (white) bonded to four nearest neighbor O atoms, $\text{O}_{(1)}$, and two second nearest neighbor O atoms (black), $\text{O}_{(2)}$; (b) $2 \times 2 \times 2$ supercell with a Ti atom being substituted by Mo atom (gray); (c) $2 \times 2 \times 1$ supercell with a Ti atom substituted by Mo atom.

2. Calculation models and method

The present quantum-mechanical calculations are performed based on the density functional theory (DFT) and pseudopotential methods, which are implemented in the first principles calculation program CASTEP code [30]. Electronic exchange-correlation energy is treated under generalized gradient approximation (GGA) with the Perdew, Burke, and Ernzerhof (PBE) [31]. The Vanderbilt ultrasoft pseudopotential [32] was used with the cutoff energy of 370 eV, smearing was used with 0.5 eV and a Monkhorst-Pack grid [33] with k-point for irreducible Brillouin zone sampling.

For the geometry optimization of pure rutile and doped rutile TiO_2 , as shown in Fig. 1, were used $3 \times 3 \times 4$ k-point grids for the $2 \times 2 \times 2$ supercell, and $3 \times 3 \times 8$ k-point grids for the $2 \times 2 \times 1$ supercell doped TiO_2 (or pure TiO_2). Fine k-point sets $3 \times 4 \times 4$ and $3 \times 5 \times 4$ were employed for calculating the electronic properties of doped rutile TiO_2 . Test calculations show that using more k-points does not lead to evident changes in the energetic convergence and electronic band structures. Then the electronic structures and optical properties are calculated on the basis of the optimized supercells. In the geometry optimizations, the energetic convergence threshold for self-consistent field (SCF) is 10^{-5} eV/atom; atomic relaxation is carried out until all components of the residual forces are less than 0.01 eV/Å, and the maximum ionic displacement was within 0.001 Å. It is worth pointing out that the scheme in Fig. 1, with substitutional Mo at the body-centered (or the base-centered) Ti site in a supercell, helps reduce the distortion of the tetragonal lattice through full structural relaxation. Test calculations reveal ignorable effect due to the artificial interaction between images.

From the viewpoint of quantum mechanics, the photon absorption or emission have caused transition between occupied and unoccupied states, and excitation spectra can be considered as a joint DOS between the valence band and conduction band. Within the linear response, the macro-optical response function of solid usually can be described by the dielectric function. The imaginary part of the dielectric function, $\varepsilon_2(\omega)$, can be written as follows:

$$\varepsilon_2(q \rightarrow 0, h\omega) = \frac{2\pi e^2}{\Omega \varepsilon_0} \sum_{k,v,c} \left| \langle \psi_k^c | u \cdot r | \psi_k^v \rangle \right|^2 \delta(E_k^c - E_k^v - E) \quad (1)$$

where u is the vector defining the polarization of the incident electric field; k is the reciprocal lattice vector; the superscripts c and v represent the conduction band and valence band, respectively; E_k^c and E_k^v represent intrinsic energy level of conduction band and valence band, respectively; and ω is the frequency of incident photon. Since the dielectric function shows a causal response, the real part ($\varepsilon_1(\omega)$) of the dielectric function can be obtained from with $\varepsilon_2(\omega)$ the Kramers–Kronig relations. Then the other optical spectra, such as absorption coefficient ($I(\omega)$), reflectivity ($R(\omega)$), refractivity index ($N(\omega)$), and energy loss ($L(\omega)$) can be gained by $\varepsilon_1(\omega)$ and $\varepsilon_2(\omega)$:

$$I(\omega) = \sqrt{2}\omega \left[\sqrt{\varepsilon_1^2(\omega) + \varepsilon_2^2(\omega)} - \varepsilon_1(\omega) \right]^{1/2} \quad (2)$$

$$R(\omega) = \left| \frac{\sqrt{\varepsilon_1(\omega) + j\varepsilon_2(\omega)} - 1}{\sqrt{\varepsilon_1(\omega) + j\varepsilon_2(\omega)} + 1} \right|^2 \quad (3)$$

$$N(\omega) = \frac{\left[\sqrt{\varepsilon_1^2(\omega) + \varepsilon_2^2(\omega)} + \varepsilon_1(\omega) \right]^{1/2}}{\sqrt{2}} \quad (4)$$

$$L(\omega) = \frac{\varepsilon_2(\omega)}{\varepsilon_1^2(\omega) + \varepsilon_2^2(\omega)} \quad (5)$$

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Optimized structures

The optimized lattice constants are $a = 4.618$ Å and $c = 2.962$ Å for pure TiO_2 , as is shown in Fig. 1a, which are in good agreement with the experimental values ($a = 4.594$ Å, $c = 2.959$ Å) [34]. The structure parameter of rutile, u , is 0.305. Each Ti atom is bonded to four nearest and two second nearest oxygen neighbors. The Mo-doped structures were constructed by using the 48-atom $2 \times 2 \times 2$, and the 24-atom $2 \times 2 \times 1$ supercells with one Ti atom replaced by one Mo atom, those supercells are shown in Fig. 1b and c. Such supercell structures were fully relaxed, and the lattice parameters of the optimized supercells are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Calculated lattice constants for pure and Mo-doped rutile supercells.

Structural model	a (Å)	c (Å)	c/a	Ti–O (Å)	Mo–O (Å)	Ti–T (Å)	Ti–Mo (Å)	O–O (Å)	OTi ₃ or OTi ₂ Mo
Pure	4.678	2.962	0.641	1.959	–	3.062	–	2.801	98.344
				2.001	–	2.962	–	2.562	130.828
						4.618		2.962	
48-doped	4.683	2.967	0.634	1.963	1.979	3.616	3.664	2.763	96.461
				2.016	1.990	2.970	2.971	2.655	131.750
						4.684	4.706	2.958	131.188
24-doped	4.686	2.969	0.633	1.968	1.973	3.619	3.627	2.821	98.039
				2.023	1.996	2.970	2.969	2.610	130.982
						4.686	4.687	2.969	130.979

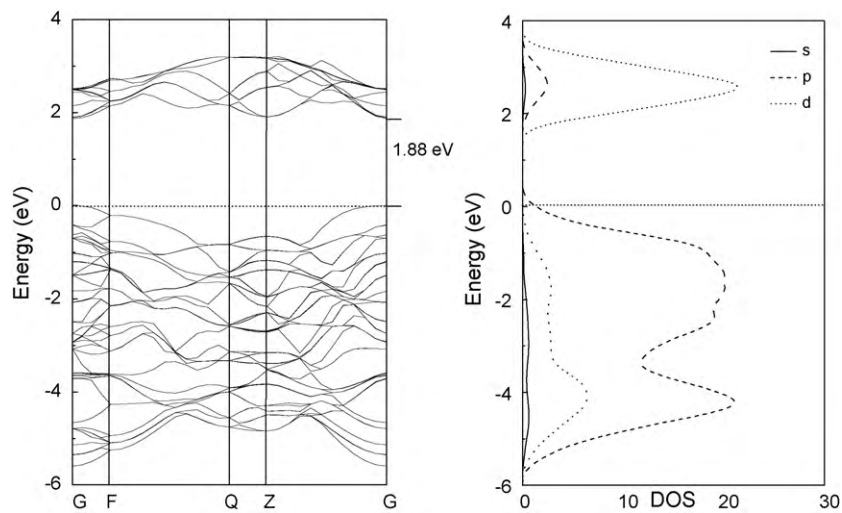


Fig. 2. Band structure and DOS for pure rutile TiO_2 . DOS shows that the top of the valence band is dominated by the oxygen 2p states and the bottom of the conduction band is dictated by the titanium 3d states. The Fermi level is set to 0.

According to the data summarized in Table 1, as the concentration of Mo increasing, the lattice parameters of Mo-doped TiO_2 excepts a slight variation and a small elongation along the c -axis, which is similar to the experiment [26]. Comparing to the TiO_2 rutile phase, the Mo–O bond lengths in the supercells are considerably longer than Ti–O₍₁₎ and slight shorter than Ti–O₍₂₎. The distortions will be useful to the substitution of Mo for Ti in the TiO_2 rutile phase.

3.2. Electronic structures

The band structure and density of states (DOS) near the Fermi energy of the pure rutile TiO_2 are presented in Fig. 2a and b. It can be seen from Fig. 2a that the valence band maximum and the conduction band minimum locate at the same G point, indicating that the lowest band gap transition in TiO_2 rutile is direct, in conformity with the literature [35]. Compared with the experimental value of 3.0 eV, the calculated band gap is underestimated to be 1.88 eV, which is attributed to the well-known intrinsic factor of DFT. It can be seen from the DOS in Fig. 2b that the valence band originates mainly from the O 2p states. In addition, the lowest conduction band is dominated by Ti 3d states. These characteristics are

consistent with the previous calculations presented by Stashans et al. [36].

To investigate the doping effect of Mo on the electronic structure, the band structure and DOS are calculated for replacing one Ti site with a Mo atom in the $2 \times 2 \times 2$ (48 atoms) and $2 \times 2 \times 1$ (24 atoms) supercells of rutile, which leads to different levels of doping with Mo accounting for 2.08 and 4.17 at.%, as shown in Figs. 3a and b and 4a and b, respectively. The electron configuration of Mo^{4+} is $[\text{Kr}] 4d^2 5s^0$, and the substructure of the Mo impurity band, as seen for 4 at.% doping in Fig. 4, corresponds to that of the 3F and 3P triplet electronic terms, the first of them splitted in an octahedral ligand field. From the varying degree of overlap of calculated Mo 4d with Ti 3d DOS in Figs. 3 and 4, it could be concluded: for 2 at.% doping the Mo impurity band overlaps fully with the Ti conduction band while for 4 at.% the lowest Mo level is a donor band with localized electrons. Compared with the undoped TiO_2 , the remarkable feature in energy band for Mo-doped TiO_2 is that the Fermi level shifts upward into the conduction band, which indicates that the material is n-type metallic, whereas the incorporation of C on oxygen lattice site will bring different results [37]. At a moderate doping level, e.g., ~6 at.% of the Ti sites in the $2 \times 2 \times 2$ supercell (48 atoms), the O 2p states are the most dominant in the

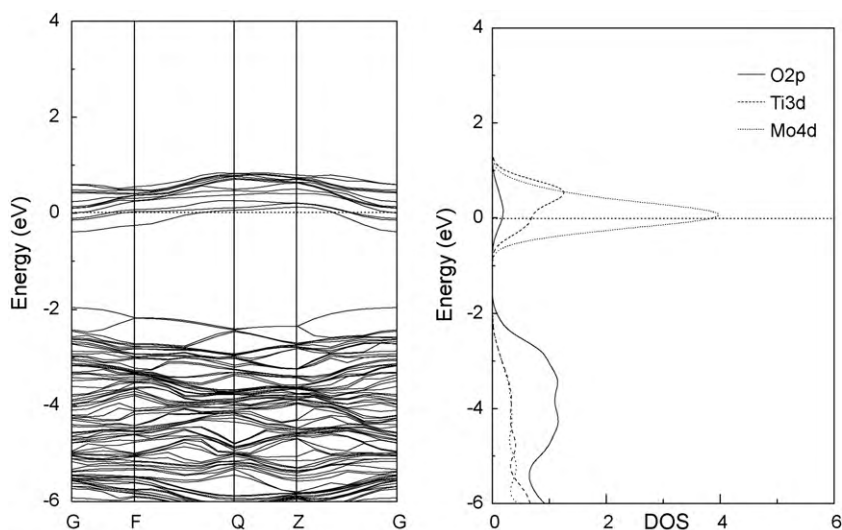


Fig. 3. (a) Band structure and (b) DOS for one Mo doping rutile TiO_2 using the 48-atom $2 \times 2 \times 2$ supercell. The Fermi level is set to 0.

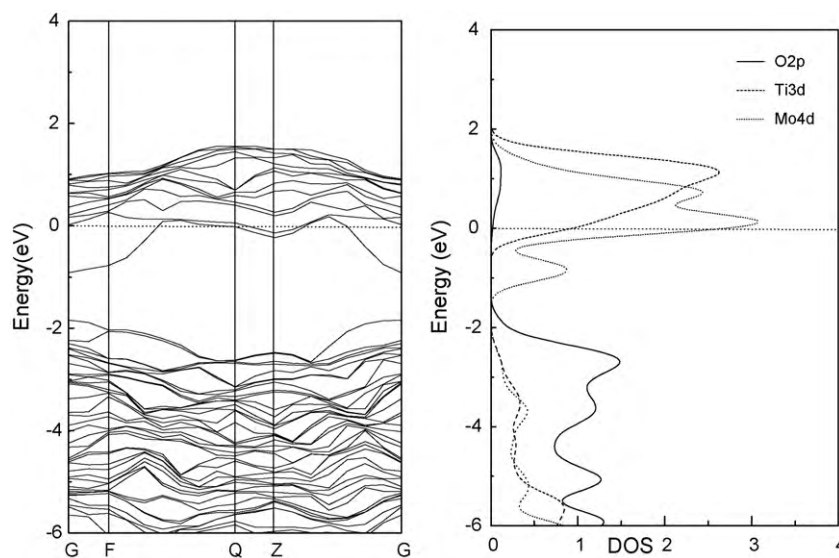


Fig. 4. (a) Band structure and (b) DOS for one Mo doping rutile TiO_2 using the 24-atom $2 \times 2 \times 1$ supercell. The Fermi level is set to 0.

energy range between -8.1 and -1.6 eV, and the Ti 3d states located mainly in the energy range between -8 and -2 eV and -0.89 and 1.37 eV in Fig. 3b. The impurity bands of Mo 4d states lie just across the Fermi energy, which is partially occupied with a bandwidth of 3.43 eV in Fig. 4b, which is similar to the calculations presented by Murugan et al. [38], the defect levels significantly concentrated in the conduction band. In this situation, the electronic intraband transition from the occupied bands to the unoccupied ones would occur under irradiation, which may induce intense absorption in the long wavelength visible region. On the other hand, the energy difference between valence band maximum and the Fermi level is about 1.96 eV (one Mo in $2 \times 2 \times 2$ supercell), which is larger than the band gap of pure TiO_2 (1.88 eV here). As a result, the transition of an electron from valence band to unoccupied states will need more energy in Mo-doped TiO_2 , and shift to the high-energy region compared with pure TiO_2 .

3.3. Optical properties

Fig. 5 shows the imaginary part of the dielectric function, which is the pandect of the optical properties for the TiO_2 systems. For pure TiO_2 , the major peaks located at 3.43 and 5.8 eV corresponding to two distinct maxima around 300 – 400 and 200 – 220 nm in optical absorption spectra respectively. The peak at 3.43 eV originates from the electronic transition between the O 2p states in the upper valence band and the Ti 3d states in the conduction band (Fig. 2). The weak peak at 5.8 eV may be due to the transition between Ti 3d and O 2p states in the valence band. For Mo-doped TiO_2 (48 atoms),

three main peaks exist at 0.32 , 3.39 and 5.78 eV. The peak at around 3.39 eV originates mainly from the transition between Ti 3d and O 2p states (Figs. 3 and 4). The peak in the low region (0.32 eV) comes from the electronic intraband transition of impurity Mo 4d states and Ti 3d states in the conduction band, where the shift of the position corresponds to the localized degree of the impurity band. It can also be seen from Fig. 5 that the line shape is almost the same for the doped and undoped TiO_2 systems in the high-energy range. These properties indicate that the different configurations of Mo dopant affect mainly the optical properties in the low energy range.

Because the calculated band gap of pure TiO_2 (1.88 eV) is smaller than the experimental value (3.0 eV), the scissor approximation with the value of 1.12 eV is used for the calculated absorption edge to fit the experimental value. Fig. 6 presents the absorption spectrum of the TiO_2 systems (doped and undoped TiO_2). It can be seen that the absorption region is quite wide, and the main absorption part still locates at the UV region. Comparing with pure TiO_2 , additional absorption is observed below the absorption edge in the visible region for Mo-doped systems, which is due to the intra-band transition of the Mo 4d impurity band and Ti 3d states in the conduction band. Since the Mo doping would become a very important factor influencing the photocatalytic activity of TiO_2 due to the intensive visible light absorption, which would also make TiO_2 a potential candidate for photoelectrochemical application.

The reflectivity, refractivity index, and loss function of the pure and Mo-doped TiO_2 systems in the energy range of ~ 0 – 20 eV, as shown in Fig. 7. For the Mo doping systems, the low energy range (<3.7 eV) is characterized by small reflectivity and appreciable refractivity. The ~ 3.7 – 6.9 eV range is characterized by strong

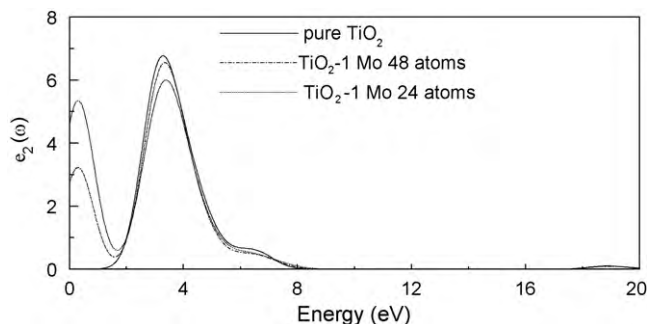


Fig. 5. Imaginary part of the dielectric function of Mo-doped and pure TiO_2 .

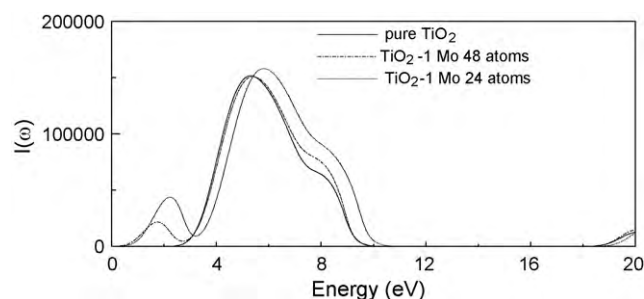


Fig. 6. The absorption coefficient spectrum of Mo-doped and pure TiO_2 .

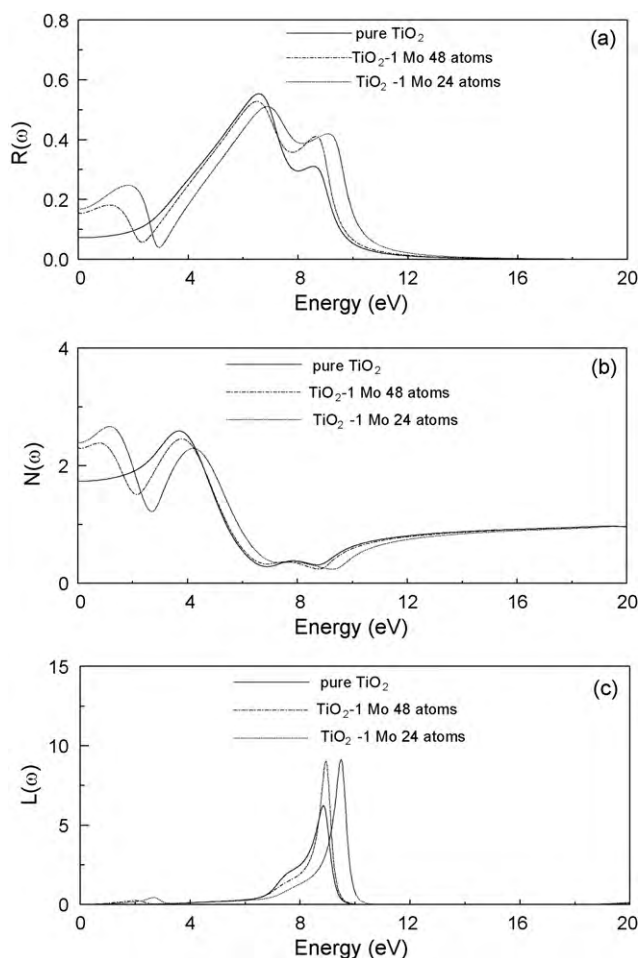


Fig. 7. The reflectivity, refractive index, and energy-loss functions of Mo-doped and pure TiO₂ systems.

reflectivity, whereas the refractive index undergoes a change from the strongest to the second weakest. At the range of 3.8–14.6 eV, the reflectivity and refractive index show an opposite trend. The loss function describes the energy loss of the electrons traversing the material. In addition, the peaks of loss function also correspond to the trailing edges in the reflection spectrum [39]. Taking one Mo-doped TiO₂ system as an example, the reflectivity reduces abruptly at about 2.1 and 8.9 eV, which corresponds to the peaks of the loss-function spectrum.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the density functional pseudopotential method, the electronic structures and the optical properties of Mo-doped rutile TiO₂ are investigated and compared with that of pure TiO₂. The electronic structures show that Mo doping TiO₂ systems exhibit n-type metallic characteristics. For pure TiO₂, the Fermi

level is located at the valence band maximum, whereas it shifts to the conduction band and exhibits metal-like characteristics after Mo doping. The calculated optical properties indicate that the optical energy gap is increased after Mo doping. More importantly, a strong absorption in the visible-light region is found, which originates from the intraband transition of the Mo 4d bands and the conduction band. These calculations provide electronic structure evidence that, the Mo doping TiO₂ system could be a potential candidate for photoelectrochemical application due to the increase in photocatalytic activity.

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