

Investigation of transition metal-doped graphitic carbon nitride for MO dye degradation

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ABSTRACT

Graphitic carbon nitride (g-C₃N₄) has received significant attention recently as a metal-free and visible-light responsive photo-catalyst because of its exceptional photocatalytic activity. The separation and transit efficiency of the photo-generated charge carriers determines the photocatalytic effectiveness of g-C₃N₄ and g-C₃N₄-based materials for contaminant degradation. Therefore, pure g-C₃N₄ typically shows low impact. Herein, metal-doped (Copper (Cu), Manganese (Mn), and Zinc (Zn)) g-C₃N₄ is synthesized by an easy high-temperature process to enhance the performance of g-C₃N₄. The XRD, SEM, UV-vis DRS, measurements, photocatalytic testing, etc. are used to describe and evaluate the synthesized materials. As a result, metal-doped photo-catalysts exemplified improved visible-light photocatalytic activities for pollutants degradation with the benefits of reduced band gaps for prolonged visible-light absorption, and improved electronic structures for effective charge transfer. The Zn-doped g-C₃N₄ in particular exhibited efficient use of photo-generated electron-hole charge carriers during the pollutant degradation process due to the excellent tailoring, including both electronic structure and microstructures. As a result, the Zn-doped g-C₃N₄ photo-catalyst exhibits the highest photocatalytic performance for Methyl Blue (MO) dye degradation. During the degradation process of the samples, i.e. (g-C₃N₄, Cu-g-C₃N₄, Mn-g-C₃N₄, and Zn-g-C₃N₄) the MO degradation rate is achieved, such as 40 %, 60 %, 80 %, and 90 %, respectively. Additionally, the main areas of investigation are the photo-degradation of MO dye and the photo-catalytic mechanism.

1. Introduction

The use of semiconductor photo-catalysts to convert solar energy into sustainable fuels and chemicals has been a widely used technique in the development of sustainable and environmental cleanup [1–3]. Over the years, various semiconductors such as sulphides, oxides, and nitrides, have been studied as active photo-catalysts [4–6]. Therefore, the low efficiency of pollutant degradation for photo-catalysis is the main obstacle to its widespread practical usage. Synthesizing extremely

effective photocatalytic materials that can initiate higher degradation in the environment is one potential remedy [7].

In recent decades, the n-type polymer semiconductor g-C₃N₄ (graphitic carbon nitride) has attracted significant consideration owing to its band gap of around 2.7 eV [8,9], which permits visible absorption, and the specific redox ability for photo-induced charge carriers in the material's structures makes it potentially desirable for photocatalytic activity [10,11], which can be extensively exercised in water splitting, organic photosynthesis, and pollutant degradation [12,13]. It can be

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used as a photo-catalyst for carbon-based synthesis [14], a photo-electric converter [15], an electrode material for batteries and fuel cells [16], a hydrogen storage material [17], and even as a fluorescent sensor [18]. However, fast recombination of photo-generated electron-hole pairs and the less surface area of g-C₃N₄ suppressed their efficiency [19]. Thus, several efforts have been made to resolve these drawbacks, e. g. doping with heteroatoms [20], tuning compositions [21], coupling with other semiconductors [22], and preparation of nano or porous g-C₃N₄ [22]. Another effective remedy is through the fabrication of a material at the nanoscale to minimize the defects in crystals in order to avoid an increase in carrier recombination [23,24]. The size, morphology, shape, surface area, and dimension of nanostructures are essential characteristics for photocatalytic activities [25].

Furthermore, metal-doping is an effective mechanism for improving photo-catalytic properties of semiconductors and has assisted in a significant interest in regulating optical bandgap and reducing in photo-generated electron hole recombination [24,26]. In order to generate a charge polarity variation with encouraged electron transfer while a non-radical process was reported by Guan et al. with Fe-doped to g-C₃N₄ microstructures [27]. Asymmetrically incorporating metallic Ni into the NiO matrix, Zhao et al. improved a non-radical efficiency by producing additional sites with oxygen vacancies [28]. According to Wei et al., the presence of iodine vacancies may both lower the Bi valence and raise the carrier density, which will boost the catalyst's ability to transfer electrons to peroxydisulfate and accept electrons from the organic matrix [29]. According to Zuo et al., the CuO-CN polarization electric field had an imbalanced charge distribution, which increased the absence of charge on the CuO's outer surface and promoted non-radical activation [30]. It has been demonstrated that with just these two techniques, the catalyst's electronic structure can be changed to improve catalytic performance.

In this study, metal-doped (Cu, Mn, and Zn) g-C₃N₄ nano-structures were prepared with a facile synthesis method. A simple solid-state reaction technique is used to synthesized, which is easily available and accessible or may be commercialized. The water-soluble organic synthetic dye methyl orange (MO) was employed as an organic pollutant. Here, we used Carbamide (CH₄N₂O) as a base material for g-C₃N₄ synthesis and metal salts like Cu, Mn, and Zn as dopant, which regulated optical bandgap lower and upper states, enhanced optical absorption, and altered structural morphologies, resulting in higher photocatalytic efficiency is attained.

2. Experimental section

2.1. Materials

Urea (CH₄N₂O), Copper Chloride (CuCl₂), Magnesium Chloride (MnCl₂), and Zinc Chloride (ZnCl₂) were purchased from Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd. (Shanghai, China). The organic compound Methyl Orange (MO), isopropyl alcohol (IPA), distilled water, P-benzoquinone (BQ), Edta disodium (EDTA-2Na) were purchased from Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co, Ltd. (Shanghai, China). All materials were consumed without further modification.

2.2. Synthesis of g-C₃N₄

The g-C₃N₄ (graphitic carbon nitride) is synthesized urea using the thermal decomposition process. The 10 g urea is placed in a crucible, put in a muffle furnace for 2 h, heated to 550 °C at a rate of 5.0 °C per min for 2 h in an open environment, the furnace's 550 °C temperature was sustained for 2 h before it cooled to room temperature. Using a mortar and pestle to crush the acquired yellowish material (g-C₃N₄), additional processing was performed to produce a fine powder.

2.3. Synthesis of metal-doped g-C₃N₄

The Copper Chloride (CuCl₂) modified g-C₃N₄ was prepared using Urea (5 g of urea (99.9 % pure)) along with 0.15 g of Copper Chloride (CuCl₂) (3 % doping factor). Both materials were crushed into powder form until they reached a homogenous mixture. The powder was then placed in a muffle furnace using an alumina crucible at 550 °C for at least 2 h. After cooling down to room temperature, copper modified g-C₃N₄ structures were collected and denoted as Cu-g-C₃N₄. The same procedure was adopted for the synthesis of Mn-g-C₃N₄ and Zn-g-C₃N₄.

The Manganese Chloride (MnCl₂) and Zinc Chloride (ZnCl₂) modified g-C₃N₄ were synthesized using the same procedure mentioned above, and the collected samples were named as Mn-g-C₃N₄ and Zn-g-C₃N₄.

2.4. Characterization

X-ray Diffraction (XRD) (Philips X' Pert Pro MPD) is used to analyze the crystal structures of all the synthesized materials. Scanning electron microscopy (Hitachi S-4800) is used to examine the microstructure of the fabricated samples. Methyl-Orange (MO) dye degradation was used to evaluate the products' stability and effectiveness. In order to examine, band gaps and K values, UV-Vis. spectra were recorded. All samples' bandgaps and K values were calculated from these measurements, as shown in Figs. 3 and 5.

3. Result and discussion

3.1. Structural and compositional analysis

In order to investigate the crystal structure of the pristine and transition metal-doped (Cu, Mn, and Zn) g-C₃N₄. All the samples were tested using X-ray diffraction. Fig. 2 displays the recorded diffraction patterns (θ-2θ scans) for each sample. Two diffraction peaks recorded for the pristine g-C₃N₄ can be observed at diffraction angles of 13.1° and 27.3°, respectively. These reflections correspond to the (100) and (002) planes of the g-C₃N₄. The observed diffraction peaks measured for the synthesized g-C₃N₄ are well matched with the graphitic structure of g-C₃N₄ (JCPDS: 87-1526). The diffraction peak appeared at a diffraction angle of 13.1°, which represented the unit of tri-s-triazine connecting to trigonal nitrogen. The aromatic conjugated structures for long range interplanar stacking are demonstrated by the strongest peak that appeared at diffraction angle 27.3° [31]. It can also be observed that the diffraction peaks recorded for the (002) plane of the metal-doped g-C₃N₄ have a lower intensity as compared to the un-doped sample. Additionally, the diffraction peak representing metal-doped g-C₃N₄ samples is shifted toward a lower diffraction angle compared to pure g-C₃N₄. Moreover, the diffraction peaks representing the doped samples are significantly broader compared to un-doped samples. The reduction in peak intensity can be attributed to the thinning nature of doped g-C₃N₄ successive layers as compared to pure g-C₃N₄. The broadening of the diffraction peaks may be attributed to the presence of the strain in the layered structure caused by the doping as commonly reported in the literature. While the peak shift toward the lower diffraction angle can be attributed to an increase in the interatomic spacing, therefore increasing the distance between successive layers of the doped g-C₃N₄ accordingly.

In order to investigate the microstructure and surface morphology of the synthesized un-doped and transition metal-doped (Cu, Mn, and Zn) g-C₃N₄ samples, Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) images were recorded. The SEM images of all the samples are shown in Fig. 3. The SEM micrograph displayed in the Fig. 3(a) shows that the synthesized g-C₃N₄ is consists of round shaped grains. The non-uniform size distribution of the grains in the images may be attributed to the sticking of the grains with each other. The SEM images recorded for this sample also give the impression of the presence of pores in the grains, which may be clearly seen using high resolution SEM images. The SEM images

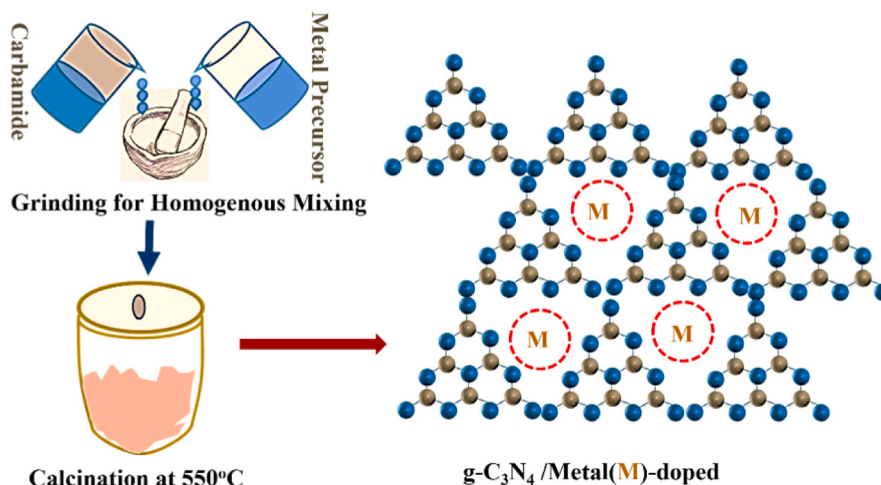


Fig. 1. Schematic diagrams of pure g-C₃N₄ and transition metal doped (Cu, Mn, and Zn) g-C₃N₄ structures.

obtained from the manganese doped g-C₃N₄ sample are shown in Fig. 3 (c). The microstructure of this sample looks different compared to the microstructure observed for the undoped g-C₃N₄ sample in terms of size and distribution of the grains. Additionally, SEM image representing Mn-g-C₃N₄ showed that the fabricated material has a fiber like surface, which is reported quite to be beneficial in photo-catalysis. The fibrous morphology of the material will show greater reactivity and longer stability. Fig. 3(b) represents the SEM images of the copper-doped g-C₃N₄ sample.

The microstructure of this sample is different compared to the observed microstructure of the un-doped and Mn-g-C₃N₄ sample. One difference that can be noticed is the size of the grains. It can be noticed that the size of the grains is bigger as compared to the undoped g-C₃N₄. Moreover, the grains have a non-uniform size distribution and are irregular in shape, with a larger surface area. The grains of a few micrometers in size can be observed at the bottom of the image, representing the Cu-g-C₃N₄. Fig. 3(d) displays the SEM images of the Zinc-doped g-C₃N₄ sample. A unique microstructure was observed for this sample. This sample exhibits an elongated flake-like microstructure. The images recorded at high resolution showed in the inset of the image indicate the existence of the pores inside the elongated flake like structures.

Based on a visual comparison, it was observed that for doped g-C₃N₄, not only a diverse and exhaustive modification of the morphology was achieved. In accordance with the different metal dopants added, but also the fiber or irregular shaped structures provided better surface area to volume ratios, thereby enhancing reactivity and photocatalytic effect accordingly.

4. UV-Vis analysis

According to Fig. 4, UV-Vis diffuse reflectance spectra was exercised to determine the optical bandgap energy for transitional metal-doped and pristine metal-free g-C₃N₄ semiconductors. Manganese and Zinc-doped g-C₃N₄ structures showed enhanced absorption corresponding to the pristine. As a result, it would encourage higher solar energy and higher catalytic activity [32]. The mathematical formula listed below is exercised to ascertain the semiconductor bandgap potential energy (eV).

$$(ah\nu)^n = A(h\nu - E_g) \quad (1)$$

The following symbols stand for the absorption coefficient, energy bandgap, Planck's constant, frequency, and band tailing constant, respectively: α , E_g , h , ν , and A . where n (2, and $\frac{1}{2}$) is a power factor of the transition mode indicating the nature of the material. For direct bandgap

material, its value is 2, whereas in the case of indirect transition represented by representing $\frac{1}{2}$. The g-C₃N₄ bandgap potential energy is approximately 2.79 eV, while Cu-g-C₃N₄, Mn-g-C₃N₄, and Zn-g-C₃N₄ have bandgap energies are 2.70 eV, 2.56 eV, and 2.49 eV, respectively. Therefore, enhanced solar energy absorption is accredited to narrow bandgap energy. Resulting, in higher photocatalytic efficiency, as shown in Figs. 4 and 5. The expressions shown below are exercised to evaluate the conduction band minimum energy (E_{CB}) positions and the valence band maximum energy (E_{VB}) positions [33].

$$E_{CB} = \chi - E_e - 0.5E_g \quad (2)$$

$$E_{VB} = E_{CB} + E_g \quad (3)$$

here, E_{CB} and E_{VB} signified conduction band (higher energy state) and valence band (lower energy state) energy, χ , E_g and E_e indicated absolute electronegativity (Mulliken), bandgap energy, and free electron energy (4.50 eV) on the hydrogen scale.

It is recognized that g-C₃N₄ has an absolute electronegativity of precisely 4.67 eV. The valence band edges have are at 1.63 eV, 1.58 eV, 1.51 eV, and 1.50 eV potential energies, respectively, as shown in Fig. 4b, which is shifted toward lower potential. The conduction band edges are at 1.17 eV, 1.05 eV, and 0.97 eV, potential energies, respectively, corresponding to the g-C₃N₄, P-g-C₃N₄, and S-g-C₃N₄ structures, which is explained by the valence band and conduction band locations, as well as possibly the induction of substates within the band structure of g-C₃N₄, which were modified by the transition-metals doping. Additionally, compared to the pristine g-C₃N₄ allowing a bandgap of 2.80 eV, the bandgap significantly fell to 0.4 eV. This is explained by the fact that nonmetal doping caused the narrow bandgap.

5. Photocatalytic activity

The Methyl Orange (MO) dye was exercised to evaluate the g-C₃N₄ photocatalytic activity and metal-doped g-C₃N₄ composite performance, as shown in Fig. 3a. It can be shown from absorption spectra that the breakdown of MO dye undergoes significant modifications. A photo-degradation reaction results in a positive doping finding. Fig. 6a describes the MO dye degradation using pure g-C₃N₄, whose degrading photocatalytic activity was noticeably low, leading to it taking 150 min for the 60 % degradation to be completed. The absorption intensity of MO dye is decreases slowly. Even after 150 mins, 60 % of the dye degrades, resulting in higher photo-generated electrons-holes recombination and low absorption of solar energy, which is attributed to lower photocatalytic activity [34]. As compared to bulk g-C₃N₄, the Cu-doped

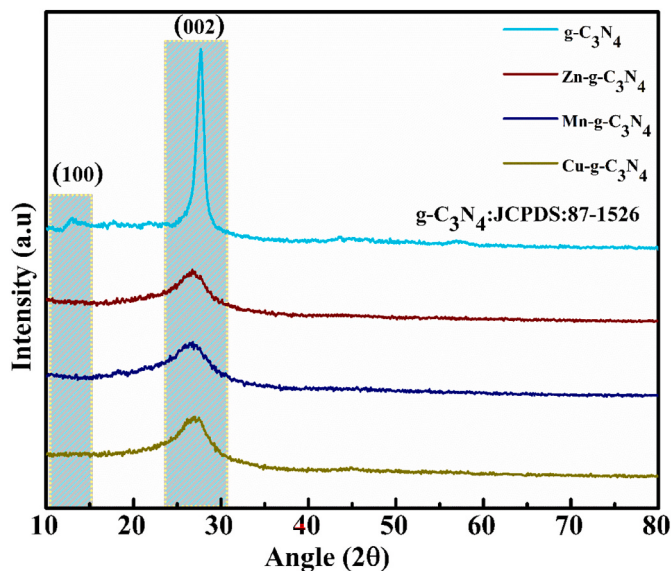


Fig. 2. XRD diffraction pattern for the bulk $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$ and metal-doped $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$.

$g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$ composite confirmed improved photocatalytic activity as shown in Fig. 3b, which could be justified by the fact that the extra mass of Cu could offer more catalytic sites, allowing for more $\bullet\text{OH}$ to be produced as a result of the interactions between Cu and H_2O_2 [35]. However, the pollutants' degradation performance may be increased or decreased based on the Cu mass concentration [35]. As visible energy is irradiated, the photocatalytic efficiency of the Mn-doped $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$ composites exhibits a considerable variation for MO dye degradation, as viewed in Fig. 3c. The higher concentration of Mn was considered to have higher catalytic sites but did not have a significant photocatalytic performance because the tri-s-triazine structure was damaged and there was a speedy reduction in specific surface area as shown in Fig. 1 [36]. The structures

of and catalytic activity of $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$ can be damaged by heavy cobalt doping, according to previous study. During the potential-catalytic preparation, as shown in Fig. 3d, zinc was significantly influenced, with a longer absorption edge and higher light absorption intensity. As a result, higher degradation was attained by the Zn- $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$ sample as compared to the $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$, Cu- $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$, and Mn- $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$. The catalytic activity of MO dye was monitored with pristine $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$ and transitional metal-doped (Cu, Mn, and Zn elements) using solar energy irradiation as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. Typically, the Langmuir-Hinshelwood model is used to investigate how organic pollutants degrade when exposed to solar energy irradiation. Additionally, it is considered that the photocatalytic interaction occurs between the molecules of absorbed contaminants and the photogenerated active species. For the breakdown of pollutants, first-order kinetics is hence efficient and straightforward [9]. Therefore, Fig. 4b, c shows the photodegradation reaction constant (k) for $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$ and doped elements, namely Cu, Mn, and Zn. The first-order kinetic reaction is represented by the mathematical expression as mentioned in Eq. (1).

$$\ln\left(\frac{C_0}{C}\right) = Kt \quad (4)$$

here, initial concentration, verified concentration, kinetic constant, and reaction time are denoted by C_0 , C , K , and t , respectively. The synthesized samples such as $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$, Cu- $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$, and Mn- $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$, and Zn- $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$ and their respective significant values of K were tested, 5.71×10^{-2} , 7.27×10^{-2} , 8.51×10^{-2} , and 9.50×10^{-2} , respectively. Based on results and experiments, it is possible to conclude that among the transitional metals Zn doped $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$ sample has a higher pollutant degradation efficiency of approximately 81 %. Moreover, it is also being investigated whether a metal-doped strategy can enhance catalytic activity. However, higher metal contents are more active and react quickly with surrounding reactants to produce undesirable species, which causes photocatalyst stability to be less than satisfactory [37].

A graph was made between C/C_0 and time (mins) to further clarify the photocatalytic performance of the materials created based on solar

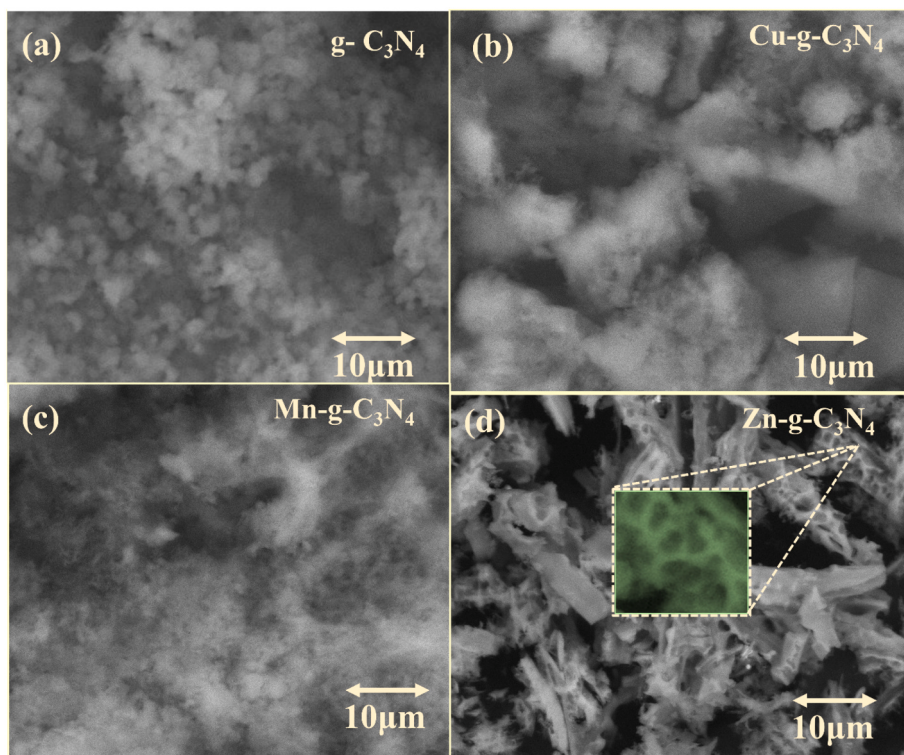


Fig. 3. SEM Images of (a) bulk $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$, (b) Cu- $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$, (c) Mn- $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$, (d) Zn- $g\text{-C}_3\text{N}_4$.

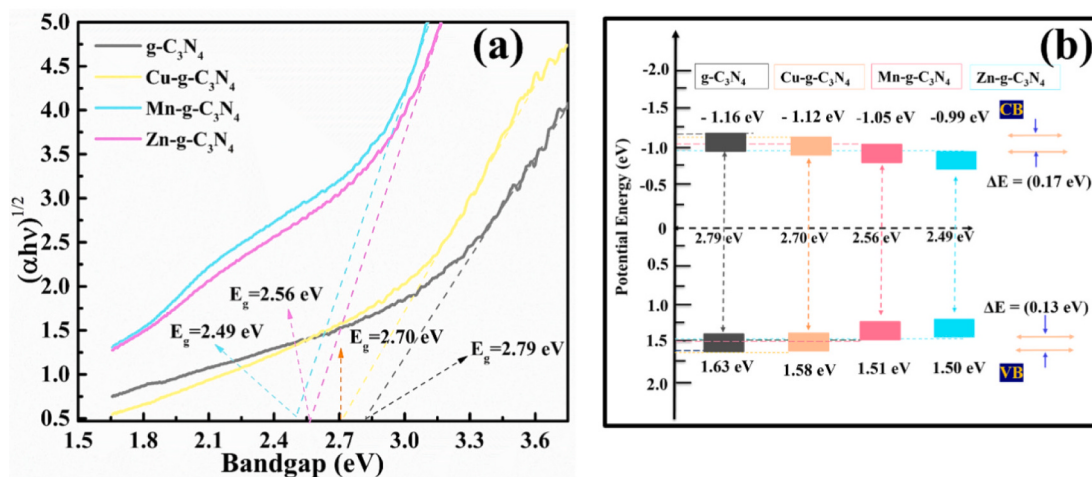


Fig. 4. Transitional metal doped and pristine g-C₃N₄ elements bandgap energy (a), valance and conduction band potential energy potions (b).

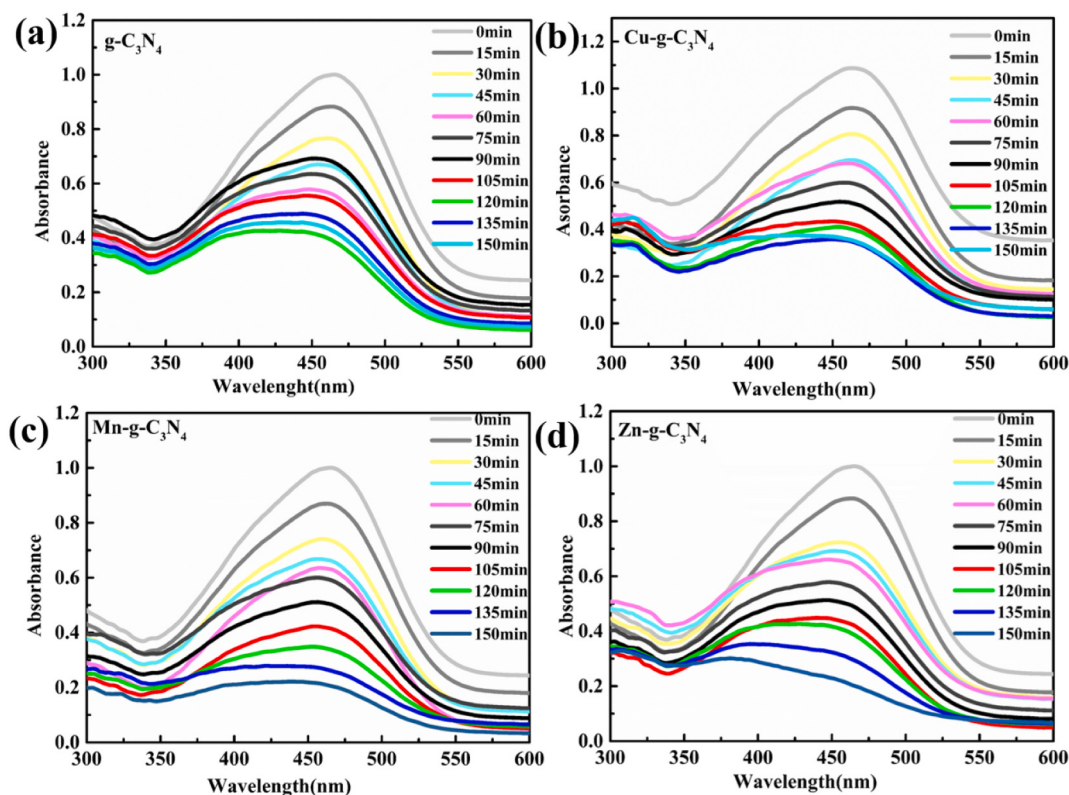


Fig. 5. Absorption Spectra for MO dye (a) g-C₃N₄, (b) Cu-g-C₃N₄, (c) Mn-g-C₃N₄, and (d) Zn-g-C₃N₄ samples.

energy irradiation spectrum. C/C_0 describes the intensity of the MO dye at a specified time. The authors observed that Zn and Mn showed better results of photocatalysis as compared to pure CGN according to the graph shown in Fig. 6. Initially, Zn showed a sudden decrease in the MO dye concentration as compared to Mn and pure g-C₃N₄ at time 30 min. But as time went on, the reactivity of the pure g-C₃N₄ decreased, but the Zn and Mn kept decomposing all the MO dye. At $t = 125$ mins, both Zn and Mn showed the same amount of concentration of MO dye, leading to the fact that Zinc, due to its better conductivity, is competing with Mn, but after this point, Zn still goes on to further decompose the dye, showing the best fabricated material from the other samples. This can be attributed to the fact that due to doping, the concentration of active species for first-order kinetic reaction becomes enhanced, which results

in prolonged and rapid degradation of the dye in the presence of a catalyst.

The formula used to calculate the reactivity values is given below:

$$k t = C/C_0$$

Another form of this formula is:

$$k t = \ln\left(\frac{C_0}{C}\right)$$

By rearranging the above formula, we calculated the value of 'k' which shows the reactivity of a photocatalyst, or commonly known as the photodegradation constant. From Fig. 7, we observed that pure g-C₃N₄ had a very low k value, which indicated that the reactivity of the

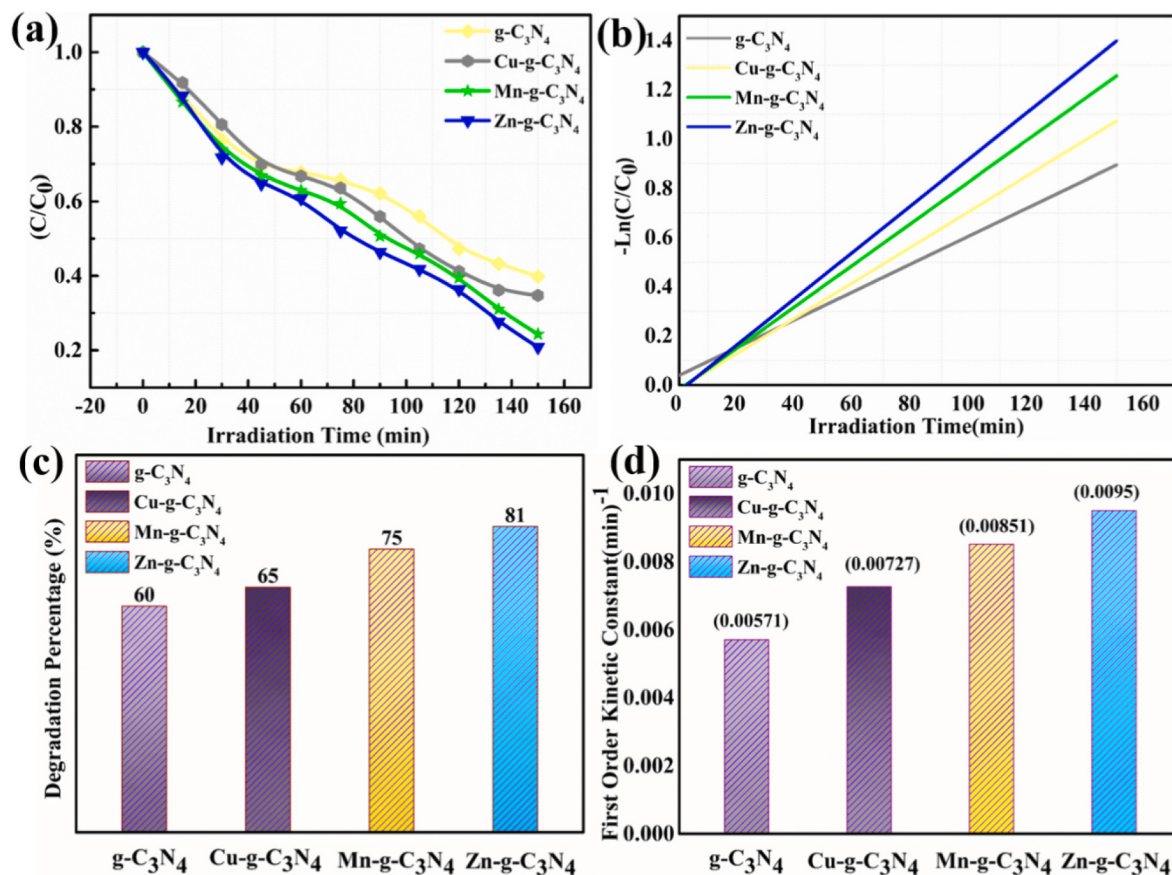


Fig. 6. Methyl orange photodegradation (a), $\ln\left(\frac{C}{C_0}\right)$ Vs 't' graph (b), percentage of photo-degradation (c), and kinetic constant 'K' for g-C₃N₄, Cu-g-C₃N₄, Mn-g-C₃N₄, and Zn-g-C₃N₄.

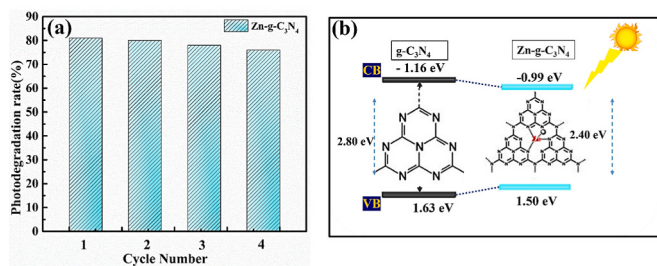


Fig. 7. Transition metal-doped g-C₃N₄ photocatalysts stability test (a), schematic diagram for photocatalytic mechanism.

sample was weak, leading to low degradation and taking more time. Whereas other samples showed a significant higher k value, exhibiting greater reactivity along with less degradation time.

6. Photocatalytic mechanism

Considering the aforementioned scientific examination and observations, the potential photocatalytic mechanism is explained. Corresponding to the results, pristine g-C₃N₄ exhibited decreased photocatalytic activity, which is accredited to higher electron-hole recombination, lower solar energy absorption, or possibly because the conduction band minima have a larger negative potential, which is approximately (−1.16 eV) as shown in Fig. 4b. The g-C₃N₄ nitrogen (N) atoms provide active sites which may take part in photocatalytic processes. The localized structure of g-C₃N₄ between the carbon atoms C

and N confined electrons available around the N atoms and the transfer of excited electrons [38]. Additionally, the possibility of photo-generated electron-hole recombination may be increased by the back transition of excited electrons for redox reactions [33,39]. According to the DFT theory, doping produced an excited electron pathway from a N atom to a doped atom, which improved localized active sites, reduced charge recombination, and altered reaction properties [40]. Cu doping is attributed to a reduction in optical bandgap, enhanced reaction constant rate (5.7×10^{-3} – 7.2×10^{-3}), which enhances visible energy absorption, resulting in increased catalytic activity. In addition, according to our conclusions, Cu species doped in g-C₃N₄ are capable of MO degrading pollutants, but satisfactory results are not yet realized. However, further research may be required to ascertain what role the Cu species of the Cu-doped carbon nitride play in the catalytic process cycle and how the complex interaction between the elements copper and carbon nitride affects the photocatalytic activity of the substance. Furthermore, we think that the Cu-doped catalyst's catalytic activity in building carbon nitride in ultrathin nanosheets could further improve the material by connecting it with conductive substrates (like graphene and carbon). The Mn doped g-C₃N₄ was verified for MO degradation, which exhibited improved catalytic activity corresponding to the pristine and Cu doped g-C₃N₄. Once solar energy irradiated across the Mn-g-C₃N₄ photocatalyst, electron-hole pairs generated and excited electrons from VB shifted toward CB of Mn-g-C₃N₄ generated a substate at CB lower state, causing a lower CB edge potential energy (−1.05 eV), which is a shift toward the positive potential of g-C₃N₄ (−1.16 eV) [41,42]. The Zn doped catalyst displayed enhanced catalytic activity corresponding to the pristine, Cu, and Mn doped g-C₃N₄, a consequence of the narrow optical bandgap (about 2.49 eV), CB potential (−0.99 eV) and VB

potential (1.5 eV) confirmed the shifting of bandgap to higher potential as shown in Fig. 4b, which verified higher solar energy absorption. Moreover, spongy porous structures may have more surface area, which additionally promotes higher catalytic activity. The reusability and stability of a transitional metal-doped catalyst are two other practical considerations for catalyst research. A number of tests were conducted over Zn-g-C₃N₄ for the degradation of MO through the irradiation of solar light, as shown in Fig. 7a, which indicated that there were no leaching issues with the Zn-g-C₃N₄ catalyst during the catalytic reaction and the subsequent washing procedures. More significantly, no obvious reduction in conversion or selectivity has been noticed after four consecutive cycles, showing that the Zn-g-C₃N₄ doped catalyst was highly stable for MO degradation.

7. Conclusion

Here, we studied how urea was thermally decomposed to produce Cu, Mn, and Zn-doped g-C₃N₄ composites. Transition metal-doped g-C₃N₄ composites materials exhibited a narrowing bandgap, photo-generated electron-hole pair transfer channel, which is credited to a variety of morphological characteristics and, as a result, increased photocatalytic performance. Through examination of all of the trials' photodegradation activity, it was found that during degradation investigation of synthetic organic MO dye for entire trails, Zn-g-C₃N₄ exhibited higher catalytic efficiency owing to its porous tubular form with higher surface area. The Zn-g-C₃N₄ first-order kinetic constant and optical energy bandgap of 2.49 eV were evaluated, respectively, resulting in enhanced solar energy absorption and higher photocatalytic efficiency for MO. Furthermore, this study determines valuable photocatalysts for decontaminating organic pollutants when irradiated by visible light energy.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Asif Hussain: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software. **Hamza Naeem, Zaigham Saeed Toor:** Data curation, Writing- Original draft preparation. **M. Umer Farooq, M. Umer:** Visualization, Investigation. **Jianhua Hou, Yuxiong Xue and Xiaozhi Wang:** Supervision, Writing-Reviewing and Editing. **Ji Renlong, Qikai Zhang, M. Hashim:** Software, Validation and Editing. **Samayya Maqsood, M. Boota, Asgar Ali:** Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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