

STRUCTURAL, DIELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC PROPERTIES OF ZINC–
ALUMINUM CO-SUBSTITUTED IN COBALT FERRITE NANOPARTICLES
SYNTHESIZED VIA CO-PRECIPIATION METHOD

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SYNTHESIZED VIA CO-PRECIPITATION METHOD

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Physics)

Faculty of Science
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

AUGUST 2016

Dedicated to my beloved family especially my parents, wife and daughter and my brother soul. Thank you very much for being supportive, helpful and understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah the most beneficent the most merciful, first and foremost, I thank God for everything that has made this dissertation possible. This research project would not have been possible without the support of many people. I would like to express my deep gratefulness to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Zulkaflī Othaman who was abundantly helpful and offered invaluable assistance, support and guidance.

And finally, my parents, my wife and Dr. Ali A Ati that provided me with patience and understanding also my group mate, Shadab Dabagh and Rizuan Mohd Rosnan for their constant encouragement and emotional support kept my vigor and life line alive in research.

My appreciation also goes to all the lecturers and laboratory officers at both the Department of Physics and Ibnu Sina Institute of Fundamental Science Study UTM.

ABSTRACT

Spinel ferrite nanoparticles (NPs) have raised interest due to their technological applications. Fabrication of doped cobalt (Co) ferrite NPs with high crystallinity, good dielectric and modified magnetic properties are demanded for many applications. This thesis determined the influence of zinc-aluminum substitution on the structural, dielectric and magnetic properties of Co ferrite NPs. A series of $\text{Co}_{(1-x)}\text{Zn}_{(x)}\text{Fe}_{(2-x)}\text{Al}_x\text{O}_4$ NPs with $0.0 \leq x \leq 1.0$ (x in wt.%) were prepared by chemical co-precipitation method and calcined at 700 °C, 800 °C and 900 °C. The synthesized samples were characterized using X-ray diffraction (XRD), Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), Field-emission scanning electron microscopy (FESEM), Vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM) and the Impedance Analyser. The achieved high crystallinity and formation of spinel structure with mean particle size 17–30 nm is confirmed by XRD analyses. The FESEM micrographs displayed the formation of well-defined and homogenous crystalline grains having Gaussian size distribution with narrow open pores. FTIR spectra revealed two absorption bands which confirmed the presence of A and B sublattices for the spinel structure. The values of saturation magnetization and magnetic coercivity were increased from 13.80–88.61 emu/g and 23.99–109.63 Oe, respectively as the temperature was increased from 700 °C to 900 °C. The room temperature dielectric properties were measured in the frequency range of 100 Hz to 10 MHz. The dielectric constant and dielectric loss were found to decrease with increasing frequency before reached a stable value. Increased saturation magnetization of NPs with high crystallinity and good homogeneity make these doped ferrites suitable for many applications.

ABSTRAK

Zarah nano (NP) ferit spinel mendapat perhatian yang luas disebabkan oleh aplikasi teknologinya. Fabrikasi NP ferit kobalt (Co) terdop dengan kehabluran tinggi, sifat dielektrik dan pengubahsuaian magnetik yang baik diperlukan untuk pelbagai aplikasi. Tesis ini menentu-ukur pengaruh penggantian zink-aluminum terhadap sifat struktur, dielektrik dan magnetik NP ferit Co. Satu siri NP $\text{Co}_{(1-x)}\text{Zn}_x\text{Fe}_{(2-x)}\text{Al}_x\text{O}_4$ dengan $0.0 \leq x \leq 1.0$ (x dalam % berat) telah disediakan menggunakan kaedah pemendakan kimia dan pembakaran pada suhu 700 °C, 800 °C dan 900 °C. Sampel yang telah disintesis, kemudian dicirikan menggunakan pembelauan sinar-X (XRD), spektroskopi inframerah transformasi fourier (FTIR), mikroskop pengimbas elektron pengeluaran medan (FESEM), magnetometer sampel bergetar (VSM), dan penganalisa impedans. Kehabluran tinggi dan formasi struktur spinel yang diperolehi dengan saiz purata zarah 17-30 nm telah disahkan oleh analisa XRD. Mikrograf FESEM menunjukkan formasi zarah kristal yang jelas dan homogen yang mempunyai taburan saiz Gaussian dengan liang terbuka yang sempit. Spektrum FTIR menunjukkan dua jalur serapan yang mengesahkan kehadiran sub-kekisi A dan B bagi struktur spinel. Nilai pemagnetan tepu dan koersiviti telah meningkat masing-masing dari 13.80–88.61 emu/g dan 23.99–109.63 Oe, apabila suhu meningkat daripada 700 °C kepada 900 °C. Sifat dielektrik pada suhu bilik telah diukur pada julat frekuensi 100 Hz sehingga 10 MHz. Pemalar dan kehilangan dielektrik menunjukkan penurunan dengan peningkatan frekuensi sebelum mencapai nilai stabil. Peningkatan pemagnetan tepu NP, dengan kehabluran tinggi dan kehomogenan yang baik menjadikan ferit terdop ini sesuai untuk pelbagai aplikasi.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SEM	-	Scanning Electron Microscope
EDX	-	Energy Dispersive X-Ray
FESEM	-	Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscopy
FTIR	-	Fourier Transform Infrared
FWHM	-	Full Width at Half Maximum
LCR	-	Inductance Capacitance Resistance
VSM	-	Vibrating Sample Magnetometer
XRD	-	X-ray Diffraction
JCPDS	-	Joint Committee on Powder Diffraction Standards
FCC	-	Face-Centered Cubic
TEM	-	Transmission Electron Microscopy
H_c	-	Coercive Field
M_s	-	Saturation Magnetization
M_r	-	Retentivity
NaOH	-	Sodium Hydroxide
BSE	-	Back-Scattered Electrons
EXAFS	-	Extended X-Ray Absorption Fine

Structure

PEG	-	Polyethylene Glycol
$\text{Zn}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$	-	Zinc Nitrate Hexahydrate
$\text{Fe}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$	-	Iron (III) Nitrate
$\text{Al}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$	-	Aluminium Nitrate Hexahydrate
$\text{Co}(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_2 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$	-	Cobalt (II) Acetate Tetrahydrate

LIST OF SYMBOLS

ΔE	-	Activation energy
μ_0	-	Permeability
A	-	Area
μ	-	Moment
\AA	-	Angstrom
a, c	-	Lattice parameter
$\Delta\mu_v$	-	Volume free energy
$\Delta\mu_s$	-	Surface free energy
ΔG	-	Total free energy
C	-	Capacity
σ	-	Surface tension
r	-	Radius
hkl	-	Miller indices
Co	-	Cobalt
G_v	-	Free energy per unit volume
ρ	-	Density
q	-	electron charge
Cu K_α	-	Copper K-alpha line
P_i	-	Ionic polarization
P_o	-	Orientation polarization
P_e	-	Electronic polarization
P_s	-	Space Charge polarization
d	-	Interplaner distance
χ_e	-	electrical susceptibility
d	-	Thicknesses of grain boundary

Z - Atomic number

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Nanomaterials have advantages and unique electrical, magnetic, optical and mechanical properties and have therefore drawn significant research attention. Magnetism and magnetic materials are one of the most highly demanded disciplines in the field of condensed matter physics. Due to great chemical and thermal stability and robust nature, metal oxide nanostructures are of specific interest. By controlling the composition, morphology, crystallinity and size of nanostructures, their diversified extraordinary properties can be fine-tuned in meeting specific objectives.

Ferrites are the mixed metal oxides containing iron oxide as their main component. Although literature has been in existence for hundreds of years, the research in ferrites was initiated at the end of Second World War. The paper by Neel in 1948, in which theory of a new class of magnetic materials, ferrimagnets, was put forward, initiated a great stream of experimental and theoretical investigations of ferrites and other ferrimagnets [1]. Ferrites are the best in high density recording media and high frequency circuits among several magnetic materials. Also, they are comparatively economical and cannot be substituted by other magnetic materials.

Ferrites are an example of an important magnetic material with wide application in various technological fields, such as electronics, automobile, IT and other new emerging fields. It is well known that changing its composition or the method or condition of preparation could modify the properties of ferrites. With

appropriate selection of the preparation methodology and composition, the ferrite properties can be enhanced along with the making of new ones with the steady application of material science and technology. Extraordinary electrical, optical and magnetic properties displayed by ferrites depend on factors like substitution of cations stoichiometry, calcining temperature and preparation methodology. Commercially, the chemically homogenous, fine grain size, high density ferrites have proven to be very important in technological applications [2, 3].

Depending on the nature of magnetic behaviour of the ferrite materials, they are classified into two broad categories, soft ferrites and hard ferrites. Soft ferrites have small coercive field so they can be easily magnetized and demagnetized. Hard ferrites can be used as permanent magnets as they retain their magnetism once magnetized due to their large coercive field. The characterization of soft and hard ferrites in general is based upon some important factors like saturation magnetization (M_s), remanence (M_r) and coercivity (H_c). Taking into account the crystal structure and the magnetic ordering, ferrites can be grouped into three different categories namely spinel, garnet and Hexagonal ferrites [4].

The spinel ferrites are named after the naturally occurring mineral spinel, having the general chemical formula written as MFe_2O_4 , where M is a divalent transition metal or a suitable combination of these ions. The composition of spinel lattice includes a closely packed oxygen crystal arrangement in which unit cell (the smallest unit repeated in the crystal network) is formed by 32 oxygen ions. The packing of these anions leaves two types of spacing between anions in face centred cubic (FCC) arrangement. Tetrahedral coordinated sites (A), bounded by four adjacent oxygen atoms, and octahedral coordinated sites (B), bounded by six nearby neighbour oxygen atoms are the two types of spacing as shown in Figure 1.1. In the unit cell there are 64 tetrahedral sites and 32 octahedral sites in total, out of which only 8 tetrahedral and 16 octahedral sites are occupied, resulting in an electrically neutral structure [9, 10].

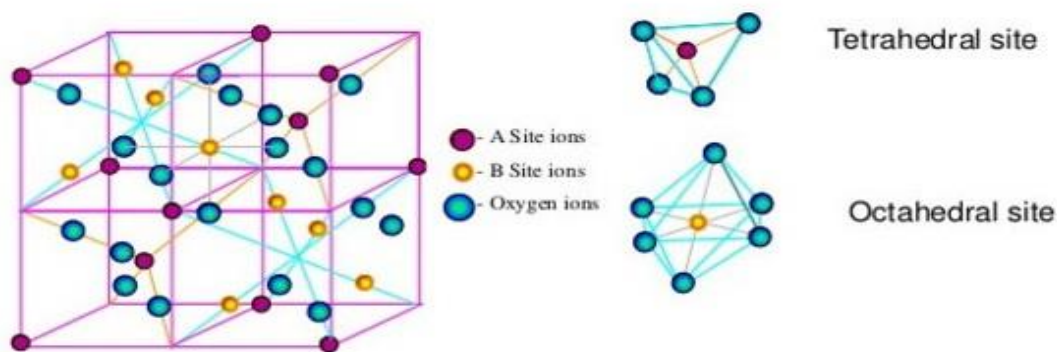


Figure 1.1 Schematic of two sub cells of a unit cell of the spinel structure, showing octahedral and tetrahedral sites [5].

The factors which can influence the distribution of the metal ions over tetrahedral and octahedral sites include the electronic configuration of the metal ions, the ionic radii and the electrostatic energy of the spinel lattice and more recently the preparation condition. The degree of use for spinel ferrite properties depends on the competition between the various types of super-exchange interaction amongst A and B site cations i.e. J_{AB} (A–O–B), J_{BB} (B–O–B), and J_{AA} (A–O–A). Specific amounts of cation site exchange will be sufficient to change J_{AB} and J_{BB} interactions, which has significantly changed the magnetic behaviour of spinel nanoparticles compared to the bulk variety. The composition and microstructure of ferrites affects their structural and magnetic properties, which are dependent on processing conditions and synthesis routes [6].

Various techniques are being employed in many fields including physics, chemistry, biology and engineering for production of nanomaterial. The striking point for careful study and potential exploitation and possibilities associated with nanomaterials is creating definite monodisperse structures of predictable size, shape, crystallinity, and morphology using simple synthesis technique. As is well known, the preparation of nanocrystalline oxide samples mainly follows two approaches: (i) Top to bottom approach: physical methods (ii) Bottom to top approach: chemical methods are followed.

Physical methods are commercially attractive because it is generally easier to

produce larger volumes of product, but they tend to impact physical stresses in the materials which can require further processing and result in wider size distributions. The most popular physical methods are ball milling, laser pyrolysis and plasma torch.

Chemical techniques are generally better for the synthesis of mixed cation nanoparticles because they can provide control over the particle stoichiometry, shape, size distribution, crystallinity and phase purity. Numerous chemical methods have been developed that have proven viable for the synthesis of nanoparticles. The most popular chemical methods of synthesis of nanomaterials are sol-gel processing mechanism and co-precipitation methods. These methods have their own set of advantages and disadvantages in terms of ease of preparation, duration of synthesis, extent of instrumentation required and the availability of the precursors and their economic viability. Among many types of preparation and processing techniques, chemical co-precipitation is one of the popular methods for obtaining homogenous ferrite powder of crystalline size. It is the inherent ability of this reaction system to control the size and size distribution that makes it attractive for the synthesis of nanoparticles. In addition, the co-precipitation method is also free from contamination, simple, low cost, offers more homogeneous mixing of the components and demonstrates good control over the particle size of the powder [7].

A good candidate for hard magnetic material having high coercivity (H_c) and mode rate magnetization (M_s) is cobalt ferrite. CoFe_2O_4 nanoparticles are very suitable for magnetic recording applications like high-density digital recording disks, audio and video tape etc. due to the properties mentioned above along with great chemical and physical stability [8]. The structure of cobalt ferrite is inverse spinel. The lattice parameter of the unit cell of CoFe_2O_4 is 8.36 \AA consists of eight formula units. The Fe^{3+} ions are aligned in tetrahedral sites anti-ferromagnetically with respect to the Fe^{3+} ions in the octahedral sites giving oxygen ions mediated super-exchange interactions. Hence, the saturation magnetism is $3\mu\text{B}$ per formula unit as determined by Co^{+2} ions. According to literature, due to its high value, they have become perfect for using in high density magnetic storage materials, medical diagnosis, magneto-mechanical, and torque sensors. However, there are many limitations by using cobalt ferrite in many applications that need improvement in saturation magnetization and decrease in

coercivity [9].

1.2 Problem Statement

Magnetic ferrite is a group of technologically important magnetic materials. Due to their useful electromagnetic characters ferrites have a large number of applications. One of the subjects of primary scientific importance is the synthesis of ferrite nanoparticles with tailorable magnetic properties and controllable size along with structure-property relationship understanding [10, 11].

The difference in properties and performance of ferrites as compared with most other magnetic materials is due to the fact that the ferrites are oxide materials rather than metals. Ferromagnetism is derived from the unpaired electron spins in only a few metal atoms, these being iron, cobalt, zinc, aluminum, and some rare earth elements. It is not surprising that the highest magnetic moments and therefore the highest saturation magnetizations are to be found in the metals themselves or in alloys of these metals.

Cobalt ferrite is categorized as a hard magnet due to its high corecivity and moderate magnetization. Due to its high magnetic corecivity value and good physical and chemical stability it has been used for various applications. Cobalt ferrite (CoFe_2O_4) neither has a spinel or inverse spinel structure. Some applications require saturation magnetization as large as possible and coercivity value as low as possible [9, 12]. With respect to this, substitution of Zn/Al ions in the structure of CoFe_2O_4 is expected to enhance the structural, dielectrical and magnetic properties.

Various methods used for synthesis of nanosized spinel ferrite powders include mechanical milling [13], sol-gel [14], reverse micelle [15], citrate-gel [16] and microemulsion [17]. However, these methods are not suitable and non-economical for large scale production. They also often involve toxic reagents, complicated synthetic steps, high reaction temperature, and long reaction time. The selection of an appropriate synthetic procedure often depends on the desired properties and the final

applications. The co-precipitation method, however, has advantages such as free from contamination, simple, low cost, more homogeneous mixing of the components and good control over the particle size of the powder.

No systematic studies have been reported in literature about the magnetic, structural and electrical properties of $\text{Co}_{(1-x)}\text{Zn}_x\text{Fe}_{(2-x)}\text{Al}_x\text{O}_4$ ($x = 0.0, 0.2, 0.4, 0.6, 0.8, 1.0$) prepared by wet chemical co-precipitation method. Although separate studies are carried out about magnetic and structural properties of $\text{Co}_{1-x}\text{Zn}_x\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_4$ [18] and $\text{CoFe}_{2-x}\text{Al}_x\text{O}_4$ [19] ferrite system prepared by co-precipitation method, the doped Zn/Al on cobalt ferrites have not been studied yet.

Synthesizing aluminium and zinc substituted cobalt ferrite $\text{Co}_{1-x}\text{Zn}_x\text{Fe}_{2-x}\text{Al}_x\text{O}_4$ ($0.0 \leq x \leq 1.0$) is extremely important due to immense significance of cobalt ferrites and the fact that their properties change significantly on substitution with trivalent metal cations. The nano-size ferrites are synthesized by using co-precipitation method to investigate their dielectric and magnetic behavior in systematic way, with a view to improve their structural, magnetic, dielectric properties.

1.3 Objectives of Research

In view of above discussions, the main objectives of this research can be listed as the followings:

- I. To determine the structure of Zinc-Aluminum substituted Cobalt ferrite by chemical co-precipitation method in different temperature and ratio.
- II. To determine the magnetic behavior of Zinc-Aluminum substituted Cobalt ferrite at different calcination temperatures and different ratio.
- III. To determine the dielectric properties of Zinc-Aluminum substituted Co ferrite at different dopant ratio.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Present work consists of the synthesis, characterization and investigation of structural, magnetic and dielectric properties of $\text{Co}_{(1-x)}\text{Zn}_x\text{Fe}_{(2-x)}\text{Al}_x\text{O}_4$ nanoparticle. The concentrations of Zinc/Aluminum expressed as wt% were ($0.0 \leq x \leq 1.0$).

This material is selected for this study in view of their technological importance. Zinc aluminum substituted on cobalt ferrite $\text{Co}_{(1-x)}\text{Zn}_x\text{Fe}_{(2-x)}\text{Al}_x\text{O}_4$ are prepared by co-precipitation method by using cobalt acetate, Zinc, aluminum and iron nitrates. The crystallinity of the powder is developed by calcinate at 700 °C, 800 °C and 900 °C.

Crystalline phase is investigated by using X-ray Diffractometer (XRD). The average crystallite size for nanoparticles is determined by Scherrer's formula. Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) is one of the preferred methods for infrared spectroscopy to identify the chemical and structural changes occurring in particular sample. The morphology of the calcined sample is investigated by field emission scanning electron microscopy (FESEM). Energy dispersive X-ray spectrometer (EDX) is used for elemental analysis of the sample. To understand the magnetic properties of $\text{Co}_{(1-x)}\text{Zn}_x\text{Fe}_{(2-x)}\text{Al}_x\text{O}_4$ ferrite samples, the field dependence magnetization of all the samples is measured using vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM). The investigations of dielectric properties of consolidated nanoparticles of the test samples are performed by using two point probe. Chemically synthesized samples are used to prepare nanoparticles and subjected to a different calcinate temperature in order to study the effect of calcination temperature on various properties of nanoparticles.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Nanomaterial has unique electronic, magnetic, optical and mechanical properties, which led to increasing interest in research of further applications. Metal oxide nanostructures are of particular interest due to their robust nature and high chemical and thermal stability, as well a vast array of other remarkable properties.

These diverse properties can be fine-tuned for specific purposes by controlling the size, morphology composition and crystallinity of the nanostructure.

Ferrites are one of the vital categories of technological materials which have substantial applications having range from millimeter wave integrated circuitry to transformer cores and magnetic recording. Due to the requirement of magnetic materials in many new discoveries, the importance of ferrites in technology is increasing constantly. It has become one of the subjects of primary scientific importance, to synthesize the ferrite nanoparticles with tailorable magnetic properties and controllable dimensions along with structure-property relationship understanding.

Present research gives a better understanding into synthesis of nanomaterials in particulate by making use of hydroxide. Co-precipitation method is almost preferred to be able to obtain high quality product. The properties of ferrites can be fine-tuned purposely by reliable controlling of dimensions, composition, morphology and crystallinity of these nanostructures. There is a wide range of recording media applications of Zn/Al doped co-ferrites, where controllable size and least magnetic and electrical loss are desired. There is a requirement of soft magnetic material having a square hysteresis loop, low-coercivity and high-remanence, for applications in sensors and recording media.

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