



Transparency enhancement for SrVO₃ by SrTiO₃ mixing: A first-principles study

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ABSTRACT

SrVO₃ was recently found to be a strong candidate for transparent conducting oxide (TCO) applications. However, there is still a noticeable range of the blue spectrum that is not part of the transparency window. In response to that, we have studied the mixing of SrVO₃ and SrTiO₃ with density functional theory, cluster expansion, Monte Carlo simulations and special quasi-random structures (SQS). We confirmed with thermodynamics modeling the feasibility of obtaining solid solutions SrTi_{1-x}V_xO₃ across the full composition range (0 ≤ x ≤ 1). A simple miscibility gap closes at consolute temperature T_c = 500 K. Phase boundaries show slight asymmetry skewing toward the larger cation SrTiO₃-side. Electronic density of states and optical properties, including complex dielectric function spectra and band structures of the random solid solutions were studied with SQS. Substitution of V with Ti reduces the electrical conductivity of SrTi_{1-x}V_xO₃, which goes through a composition-driven metal to insulator transition close to x = 0.67, but suppresses the optical absorption beyond 3.25 eV. It is likely that doping or vacancy creation would enhance the electrical conductivity and extend the conducting compositions, leaving room for property tuning to obtain optimal TCO materials.

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1. Introduction

The development of transparent conductors for solar cell, light emitting, and display technologies requires combining two seemingly contradicting material properties: high optical transparency and high electrical conductivity. Among them, transparent conducting oxides (TCO) have been widely researched [1–5]. Usually, a material that excels at one aspect does not do well at the other. Traditional approaches to fabricating 10 s–100 s nm thick transparent conducting layers include heavily doping wide-gap semiconductors, adding free carriers to a transparent base material, such as degenerately doped indium tin oxide (ITO) [3]. The added carriers turn the semiconductor base material into a conductor, but there are limits as to the concentration of dopants, self-compensation [2] as well as reduced total scattering time by impurities [1]. Recently a new approach was proposed [1], taking advantage of strong electron–electron interactions in highly correlated transition metal oxides [6–13], such as SrVO₃ and CaVO₃ [1]. These TCO materials have their Fermi energy levels in the conduction band edge and are therefore already conducting. The energies of interband optical transitions are primarily above 2.8 eV, extending

into and above the blue region of the visible spectrum near 3.25 eV. The strong electronic correlation in these materials flattens the conduction band and increases the carrier effective mass, therefore reducing the energy scale of intraband transitions, limiting absorption on the red end of the visible spectrum near 1.75 eV. The outcome is a window containing the visible spectrum with low absorption present. Conductivity is in turn negatively influenced relative to metals, but is better than that of degenerately doped wide band gap semiconductors like ITO with a magnitude of 10⁴ S cm⁻¹. The “correlated metal” approach potentially provides a better trade-off between optical transparency and electrical conductivity as well as alleviating the dependency on highly priced indium.

However, the optical absorption of SrVO₃ on the higher-energy part of the visible spectrum, starting from 2.8 eV, is not optimal. There is still a noticeable range of the blue spectrum that is not part of the transparency window. Improved transparent conductor performance would be obtained if absorption due to interband transitions can be blue-shifted to higher photon energies or suppressed in magnitude. One possible approach is mixing this material with a wide-gap semiconductor of similar structure and volume, such as SrTiO₃. Both compounds adopt the ideal perovskite structure. Ti is one group earlier than V, with an ionic radius [14] of Ti⁴⁺, 0.61 Å, very close to that of V⁴⁺, 0.58 Å. As a

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Table 1

Lattice parameters a , volumes per formula unit (V/f.u.), and bulk moduli (B) from EOS's of SrTiO₃ and SrVO₃.

	a (Å)	V/f.u. (Å ³)	B (GPa)
SrTiO ₃	3.94	61.3	168
expt. ^a	3.905	59.55	184
calc. ^c	3.946	61.42	172.8
SrVO ₃	3.89	58.8	175
expt. ^b	3.841	56.67	
calc. ^c	3.866	57.79	181.5

^a Ref. [94].

^b Ref. [95].

^c FP-LAPW-GGA [112].

result, their unit-cell volumes are close too, calculated to be 61.3 Å³ and 58.8 Å³ (Table 1). SrTiO₃ has a rather large band gap of 3.25 eV [15] with interband transitions above. Previously experimental results showed that synthesis of solid solutions of the two in the full composition range is feasible [16–18]. Tsuiki et al. first demonstrated it with heat treatment of powders of SrCO₃, TiO₂ and V₂O₅ at 900–1100 °C under a flowing H₂ atmosphere and hydrostatic pressing at 100 MPa [16]. They measured the temperature-dependent conductivity, metal-nonmetal transition composition and the depth of the donor level of V⁴⁺ in SrTiO₃ [17]. Hong et al. used a higher temperature, 1550 °C and obtained similar results. Gu et al. grew epitaxial thin films using a pulsed electron-beam deposition (PED) technique at 800 °C [18]. Although conductivity was studied, optical properties were not. We intend to computationally study if the solid solutions could tune the absorption behaviors.

In this work, we study the thermodynamics of mixing SrVO₃ and SrTiO₃ with cluster expansion (CE) and Monte Carlo (MC) simulations to examine and validate the viability of obtaining SrTi_{1-x}V_xO₃ solid solutions across the full composition range (0 ≤ x ≤ 1). The cluster expansion formalism [19–24] is a first-principles approach to construct complete thermodynamic models to predict phase relations without resorting to experimental input. It fits the formation energies of a small number of structures (~50–100) calculated with density functional theory (DFT) to produce a set of effective cluster interactions (ECIs) for pairs, triplets, quadruplets, etc. This approach has been used to study a diverse set of material systems including alloys [25–32], semiconductors [33–36], ionic compounds [37–41], and minerals [42–46] yielding results that agree well with experiments. We then study electronic and optical properties, including complex dielectric function spectra, band structures, and electronic density of states (DOS) of the end members and random solid solutions with special quasi-random structures (SQS) [47,48]. SQS has also been used for a wide range of material systems and structures, both metal alloys [27,48–54] and ceramics [33,55–71], including peroxides [72,73]. We aim to explore the effects of mixing SrVO₃ with SrTiO₃ and whether it can suppress absorption near and beyond 2.8 eV, leaving the entire visible spectrum within the transparency window, and how much it adversely affects electrical conductivity.

2. Computational methods

We performed *ab initio* DFT computations with the Vienna Ab-initio Simulation Package (VASP) [74–77]. The projector-augmented wave method (PAW) [78,79] and Perdew–Burke–Ernzerhoff (PBE) generalized gradient approximation (GGA) [80,81] were used. Potentials of Sr_{sv}, Ti_{sv}, V_{sv} and O were selected, where “_{sv}” denotes that the semi-core s and p electrons are also included. Because transition metal oxides are correlated materials, the GGA + U correction scheme was used for the d orbitals of V

with U = 4 eV, a choice made by comparing the complex dielectric function spectra under different parameter sets (potentials, spin-polarization and U values) in Sec. A of the Supplemental Materials. We adjusted our choice of the U value to match the high-energy part of the visible spectra starting from 2.8 eV, which was well-modeled with FM/U = 0 in Ref. [1]. Spin-polarization was not considered due to the abrupt change of the V⁴⁺ magnetic moments, spin channel separation and non-matching visible spectra with the GGA + U scheme. The Heyd-Scuseria-Ernzerhof hybrid functional (HSE06) did not improve the modeling of the visible spectra either, with or without spin-polarization. The GGA + U scheme for Ti however, was not used for the energy landscape calculations as per previous calibration work [82,83], but was used for electronic and optical calculations in Sections 3.4 and 3.5. A more detailed justification on our choice of a large U value is given in Section 3.3. The plane wave energy cutoff was chosen to be 400 eV for fixed cell volume & shape calculations and 520 eV for variable cell volume & shape relaxations. The k-point meshes were created with k-points per reciprocal atom (KPPRA) [84] of 1000 (Γ-centered 2 × 2 × 2) for relaxations and 4000 (Γ-centered 4 × 4 × 4) for electronic DOS and complex dielectric functions. Gaussian smearing was used with a σ value as small as 0.1 eV. For structural optimization, the atomic positions were allowed to relax until forces on any atom were below 0.02 eV/Å.

We first obtained equations of state (EOS's) for SrTiO₃ and SrVO₃. In each case, we picked 5 vol points, fitted the total energies to the Birch-Murnaghan EOS [85], and derived the equilibrium volumes (V₀) and bulk moduli (B) [86–89].

Next we used the Alloy Theoretic Automated Toolkit (ATAT) [90–93] to calculate the phase diagram of SrTi_{1-x}V_xO₃. Included in ATAT, the MIT Ab-initio Phase Stability (maps) [90,91] code was used to generate the energy landscape and CE. The Easy Monte Carlo Code (emc2 and phb) [92,93] was used to perform MC simulations to obtain the phase diagrams. Ground-state analysis was performed by using a well-converged CE to calculate formation energies (ΔE_f) for all 188,728 symmetrically inequivalent structures with 16 or fewer variable cation sites. In addition, we evaluated ΔE_f of the structures corresponding to random solid solution configurations at different compositions and fitted them to a smooth curve.

To obtain the phase diagram from CE, a box of 16 × 16 × 16 5-atom unit cells (4096 exchangeable sites) was chosen in the semi-grand canonical ensemble simulation. In such an ensemble chemical potential (μ) and temperature (T) can be given as external conditions. Chemical potential is defined as μ_i = (∂G/∂n_i)_{T,n_j≠i}, where G is the Gibbs free energy, n_i is the number of atoms of species i in the simulation cell. In a binary system A_{1-x}B_x, μ = μ_A - μ_B is used as the input. For each μ and T point, sufficient MC passes were used to make sure the composition (x) reached a precision of 0.01.

Electronic and optical properties were studied through energy/frequency-dependent complex dielectric function spectra from 0.4 to 6 eV. For random solid solution configurations of the mixed system SrTi_{1-x}V_xO₃, we employed SQS's, also used in other peroxides [72,73], at different compositions x = 1/9, 2/9, ..., 8/9. Each SQS is a supercell of 3 × 3 × 3 5-atom unit cells (27 exchangeable sites). Extensive testing suggested they are adequate, and necessarily large to model randomness. These structures were obtained from the Monte Carlo generator of Special Quasirandom Structures (mcsqs) [48] code in ATAT. The maximum pair cluster diameter was set to 7 Å and triplet to 6 Å. For each composition, four instances of stochastic searches were performed and sufficient time was allowed to obtain the same structure closest to a random configuration. These prototype structures are provided in the Supplemental Materials. For each composition, we obtained the EOS using the method described above for the end members, relaxing only the ionic positions at each volume point, and did another ionic

relaxation at the equilibrium volume point determined from the EOS. The resultant equilibrium structures were used to calculate electronic DOS and complex dielectric function spectra.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Cell parameters of the end members

Table 1 shows the lattice parameters of SrTiO₃ and SrVO₃. Volumes are given for the 5-atom formula unit. Lattice parameters (a) and volumes per formula unit (V) compare well with experimental results [94,95] with a small and consistent overestimation (<1%), while values of B obtained from the EOS fitting show an underestimation (<10%) [94]. These deviations are due to the use of GGA in our DFT calculations and is a well-known consequence of this approximation [69–71,86,87,96–111]. They are closer to other reported values calculated with GGA [112]. Note the slightly larger deviation of a and B of SrVO₃ than those of SrTiO₃, which arises from employing the GGA + U scheme to account for the correlation effect in SrVO₃.

3.2. Cluster expansions and phase diagrams

Fig. 1 shows the formation energy landscape of SrTi_{1-x}V_xO₃. All 36 non-end-member structures have positive DFT-calculated ΔE_f , below 60 meV/f.u. CE was performed and 4 pairs + 6 triplets were chosen to be the optimized cluster set with a cross validation score of 5 meV. Detailed information of the cluster set is provided in the Supplemental Materials. The top of the curve corresponding to random structures is ~ 25 meV, on the level of RT (0.02 eV at 298 K). Therefore, mixing should be feasible. A more accurate estimate can be derived with phase diagram calculations below. As a comparison, mixing BaTiO₃ with CaTiO₃ results in the top of the curve >140 meV, while mixing BaTiO₃ with SrTiO₃ results in 6 meV [113]. The $\Delta E_f(x)$ curve of random solid solution configurations shows asymmetry, skewing toward the larger cation SrTiO₃-side. Usually, the curve would lean to the smaller cation side, because it is more difficult to put a large ion into the smaller ion's lattice than vice

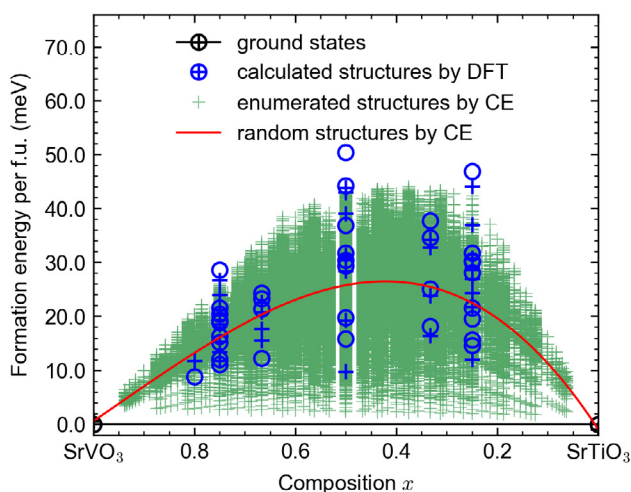


Fig. 1. The formation energy landscape of SrTi_{1-x}V_xO₃. Energy values are per formula unit, i.e. per exchangeable site. Black markers and the convex hull line indicate ground states, blue markers indicate the structures calculated with DFT and used to obtain the CE, and green crosses indicate a 16-exchangeable-site ground-state analysis. Among the markers, hollow circles indicate DFT values, and crosses indicate CE-fitted values. The red curve indicates CE-fitted values of the random solid solution configurations. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

versa, but we see the opposite here, likely due to the correlation effect of V⁴⁺ in oxides.

The calculated phase diagram with a simple miscibility gap is shown in Fig. 2. Depending on the composition x of interest, full solid solutions form at different temperatures. The top of the phase boundary, close to x = 0.4, is around 500 K. The nature of the miscibility gap in this perovskite solid solution is primarily lattice mismatch, as is also the case for other simple solid solutions with large lattice mismatches, e.g. carbonites [46] and transition metal nitrides [41]. In addition, a previous Born-Haber-like breakdown of the mixing process in CaO-MgO and CaCO₃-MgCO₃ indicates that chemical identity exchange contributes to small and slightly negative energy (in favor of mixing). Asymmetry in the $\Delta E_f(x)$ curve of the random solid solution configurations is also seen in the phase diagram, which is skewed toward the SrTiO₃-side. Although T_C is above the room temperature, there are ways to obtain the random solid solutions beyond 500 K and prevent the bulk solid solutions from phase separation as temperature decreases, because at these relatively low temperatures phase separation kinetics are low. As stated in Section 1, previous experimental endeavors were successful in synthesizing solid solutions of the entire composition range [16–18] by initially applying a much higher temperature (>1000 °C), one that lies in the fully miscible region in the phase diagram. This feature is useful for tuning various properties of the solid solutions.

3.3. GGA+U treatment for SrTiO3

To correctly reproduce optical properties of SrTiO₃, there is also the consideration of GGA + U for Ti. Although Ti⁴⁺ has no d electrons, regular GGA does not result in the correct band gap. In Fig. 3 we show the energy-dependent complex dielectric function ($\epsilon = \epsilon_1 + i\epsilon_2$) spectra for SrTiO₃ and in Fig. 4 band structures calculated with different parameter sets. Three variations are given: U = 0 or 10 eV with PBE potentials or using HSE06. PBE/U = 0 greatly underestimates the band gap, calculated to be 1.80 eV, while HSE06 produces a more accurate value, 3.26 eV (expt. 3.25 eV [15]). Comparing Fig. 4(a) and (c), the entire conduction bands, including the lower-lying Ti-t_{2g} and higher-lying Ti-e_g bands are up-shifted, leading to a blue-shifted ϵ_2 rise in Fig. 3. With PBE, we adjust U to match the HSE06 value, taking U = 10 eV, which leads to a band gap of 3.25 eV. Comparing Fig. 4(a) and (b), only Ti-t_{2g} bands are up-shifted while keeping the lower-lying O-p and higher-lying Ti-e_g bands intact. This results in the valley filling

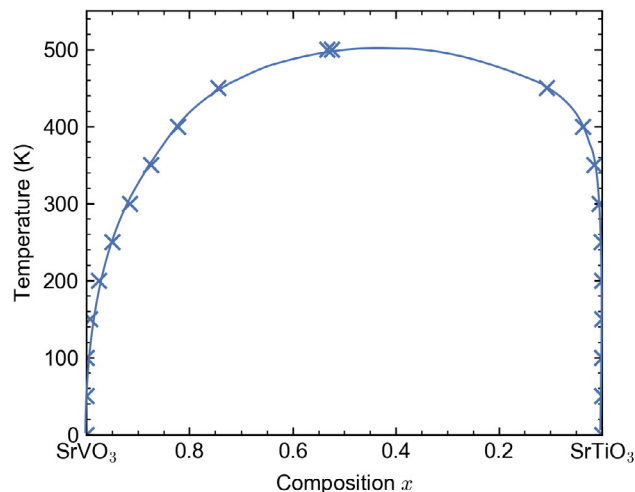


Fig. 2. Calculated phase diagrams of SrTi_{1-x}V_xO₃. Crosses are raw data points, and curves are interpolations.

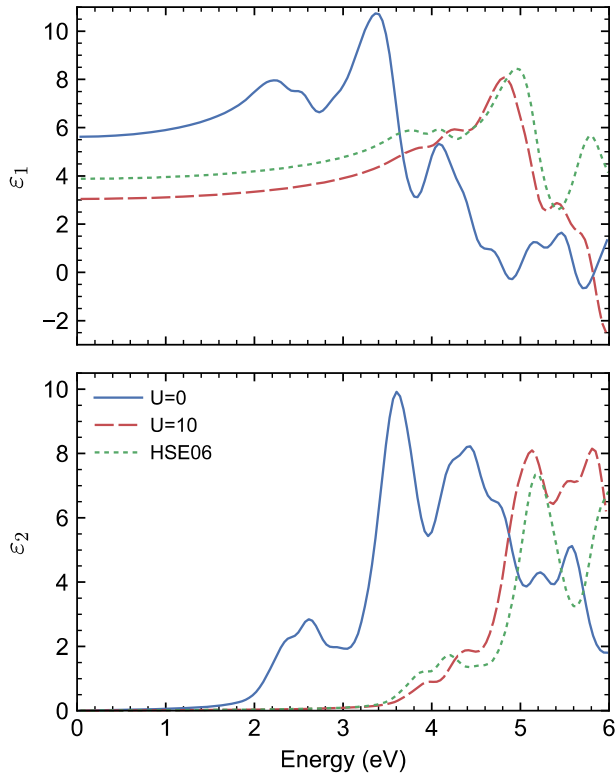


Fig. 3. Calculated complex dielectric function spectra ϵ_1 and ϵ_2 of SrTiO₃ with different parameter settings. The first two cases were calculated with PBE, and the last with HSE06.

of ϵ_2 at ~ 5.3 eV in Fig. 3, an O-p to Ti- e_g interband transition. However, such an energy value is beyond the blue end of the visible spectrum and does not affect our evaluation this material as a TCO. In addition, the shapes of respective Ti-d bands stay the same before and after the application of U value. On the other hand, HSE06 does not produce the correct results for SrVO₃, a metallic compound (see Supplemental Materials) to be mixed with SrTiO₃ in our study. Therefore we chose PBE/U = 10 eV for the study of electronic DOS and complex dielectric functions of random solid solutions. In short, the calculated complex dielectric function spectra and band structures demonstrate the effectiveness of this treatment, despite the unusually large chosen U value.

3.4. Electronic properties of random solid solutions

Fig. 5 shows the progression of local/projected DOS of SrTi_{1-x}V_xO₃ covering the full range of x modeled with SQS's. A few orbitals are plotted, including V- t_{2g} , V- e_g , Ti- t_{2g} , Ti- e_g and O-p. All other orbitals contribute little to bands between -8 eV and 5 eV. The first subplot corresponds to pure unit cells of SrVO₃. Due to the crystal field by the octahedrally coordinated O²⁻, the five V-d orbitals of each V⁴⁺ split into three lower-lying V- t_{2g} states between -1 eV and 1.5 eV, and two higher-lying V- e_g states beyond 1 eV. V- t_{2g} states below E_F accommodate electrons and the states around E_F contribute to SrVO₃'s conductivity. The last subplot corresponds to SrTiO₃, the band structure of which is shown in Fig. 4(b) but with E_F adjusted to match with the other compositions. All Ti-d states lie above E_F , and the O²⁻ octahedral crystal field splitting also occurs to Ti⁴⁺. In this case, Ti- t_{2g} states lie just a bit lower than Ti- e_g , almost within the same energy range between 1.3 and 4 eV, a result due to the GGA + U = 10 eV shift. Throughout the progression with decreasing x, V-d states keep diminishing in magnitude while Ti-d states keep increasing in magnitude, a natural outcome

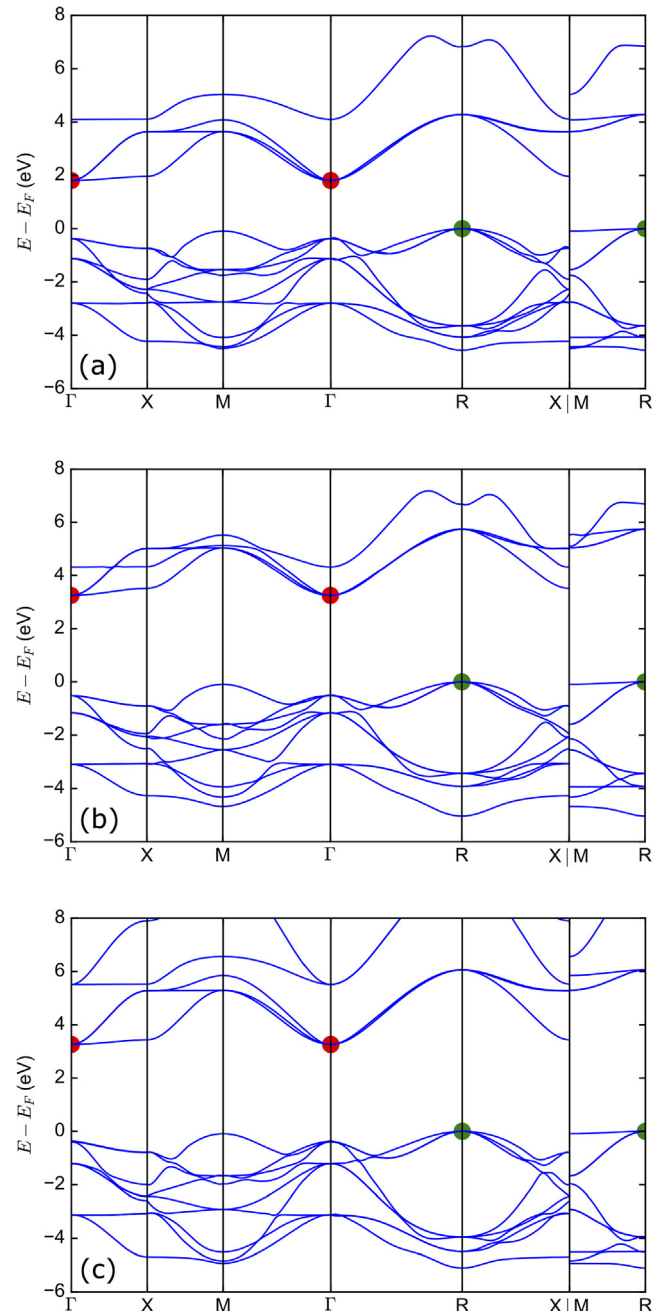


Fig. 4. Calculated band structures of SrTiO₃ with (a) PBE/U = 0 and (b) PBE/U = 10 eV, and (c) HSE06.

of cation substitution. O-p dominates the valence bands, and form bands together with the cation d states at energies depending on the composition of Ti⁴⁺ with respect to V⁴⁺.

As x gets close to 0.67 (6/9), a valley at E_F develops, corresponding to the metal to insulator transition. Previous experimental studies found this composition to be the conduction limit. The conductivities of SrVO₃ (x = 0) and solid solution (x = 0.2) measure on the magnitude of 10^4 S/cm, and drop to 10^3 S/cm for x = 0.3, 10^2 S/cm for x = 0.5 [16–18]. This agrees well with the assumption brought by Tsui et al., that the V⁴⁺ octahedra in solid solutions go through Jahn-Teller distortion, and this splits the V- t_{2g} states even more, in addition to the O²⁻ crystal field splitting [16]. The valley at E_F thus corresponds to the gap between the lower and upper Hubbard bands. It is further substantiated by the calculation of V–O bond lengths and O–V–O bond angles in Fig. 6. Larger and larger

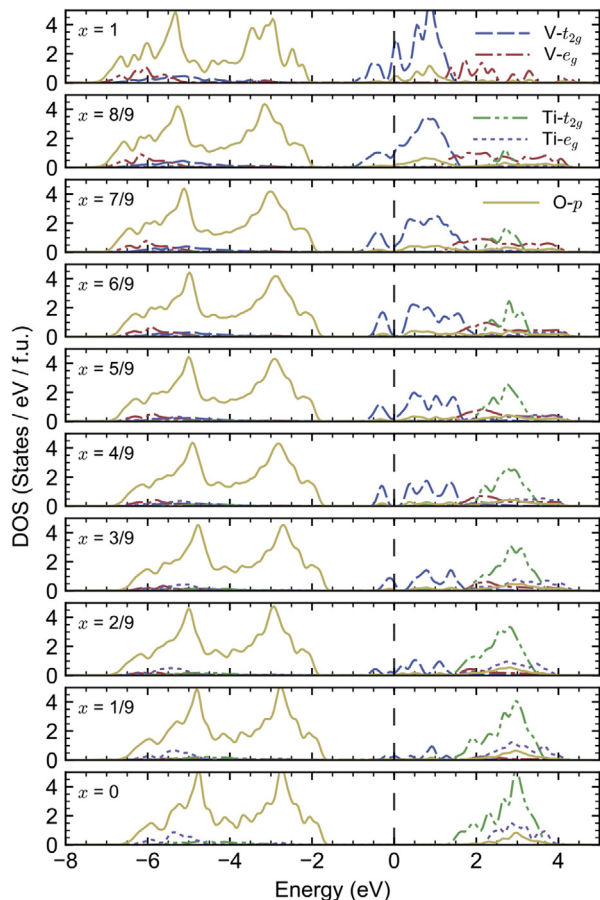


Fig. 5. Calculated projected density of states (DOS) of $\text{SrTi}_{1-x}\text{V}_x\text{O}_3$ with different compositions x . The Fermi energy has been set to 0, and the DOS of insulating SrTiO_3 has been aligned with the other compositions. Only $\text{V-}t_{2g}$, $\text{V-}e_g$, $\text{Ti-}t_{2g}$, $\text{Ti-}e_g$ and $\text{O-}p$ states are shown, because other states have minimal contributions.

deviation from those in the end member SrVO_3 takes place as x decreases. The bonds get elongated and demonstrate more variation, resulting in larger volumes of the VO_6 octahedra, to accommodate for the total crystal volume increase caused by neighboring TiO_6 . The same trend for volume is seen in Fig. S4 of the Supplemental Materials for the TiO_6 octahedra. This accommodation was also observed by Dawson et al. in their classical simulation of mixing BaTiO_3 with CaTiO_3 and SrTiO_3 [113], where the volumes of TiO_6 octahedra shrink as smaller cations, Ca^{2+} , Sr^{2+} , replace Ba^{2+} . The decrease in conductivity could also be related to increased ionicity with the decrease of x , as demonstrated by the Bader charge transfer analysis in Table 2. It indicates a slight and steady increase of transfer between Ti-O and V-O pairs with the replacement of V for Ti , turning the local environment of V and Ti more polarized, depleting available electrons from being conducting carriers. Note that in the traditional design approach for TCOs, dopant cations provide isolated states for wide-gap semiconductors, facilitating free carrier excitation. Similarly, this observation of electronic DOS progression opens doors to the possibility of doping other cations or creating vacancies to provide some states to fill in such a gap. Such an approach may enhance conductivity and extend the conducting compositions of $\text{SrTi}_{1-x}\text{V}_x\text{O}_3$ below $x = 0.67$.

3.5. Optical properties of random solid solutions

Fig. 7 shows the energy-dependent complex dielectric function spectra ϵ_1 and ϵ_2 of $\text{SrTi}_{1-x}\text{V}_x\text{O}_3$ with SQS's. Fig. 8 shows the absorption coefficients (α) obtained from spectra in ϵ ($\epsilon = (n + ik)^2$;

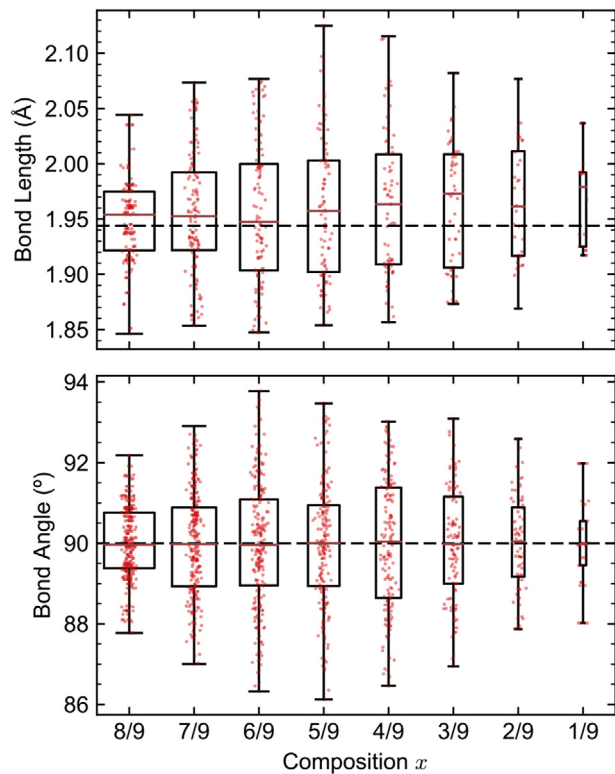


Fig. 6. Bond lengths of V-O , and bond angles of O-V-O in SQS's of $\text{SrTi}_{1-x}\text{V}_x\text{O}_3$ with different compositions x . Each box extends from the lower to upper quartile values, with a line at the median. The whiskers extend from the box to show the range of the data. Widths of the box are scaled with respect to numbers of data points. The slightly horizontally jittered red dots are actual values. The dashed lines correspond to values in the end member SrVO_3 . (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

Table 2

Bader charge transfer (e/atom) of SQS's of $\text{SrTi}_{1-x}\text{V}_x\text{O}_3$ with different compositions x .

x	Sr (e)	Ti (e)	V (e)	O (e)
1	-1.59		-2.11	1.24
8/9	-1.59	-2.52	-2.12	1.25
7/9	-1.60	-2.53	-2.12	1.27
6/9	-1.59	-2.53	-2.13	1.28
5/9	-1.59	-2.54	-2.13	1.30
4/9	-1.59	-2.54	-2.14	1.32
3/9	-1.59	-2.55	-2.14	1.33
2/9	-1.59	-2.55	-2.14	1.35
1/9	-1.59	-2.55	-2.15	1.37
0	-1.59	-2.55		1.38

$\alpha = 4\pi k/\lambda$) up to 6.0 eV. The low-energy range below 2.00 eV can be largely attributed to intraband transitions and the high-energy range to interband transitions. As x becomes smaller, the shapes of ϵ_1 and ϵ_2 change continuously from resembling SrVO_3 to SrTiO_3 . The critical point in ϵ_2 at 3.4 eV decreases in magnitude while other high energy features increase. When no low-energy phonon related transitions are present, the point at which $\epsilon_1 = 0$ indicates the free carrier absorption edge. These values are predominantly between 0.5 eV and 1.5 eV. As soon as Ti^{4+} cations are introduced, this quantity blue-shifts from the pure SrVO_3 's 1.0 eV to ~ 1.5 eV, but still below 1.75 eV, the red end of the visible spectral range. This indicates intraband transitions are pushed to higher energies, but could also be an artifact of the calculation method, because even with a small replacement of V^{4+} for Ti^{4+} at $x = 0.89$ (8/9), the blue-shift is apparent and stays roughly the same with more replacements. On the other hand, the introduction of Ti^{4+} helps

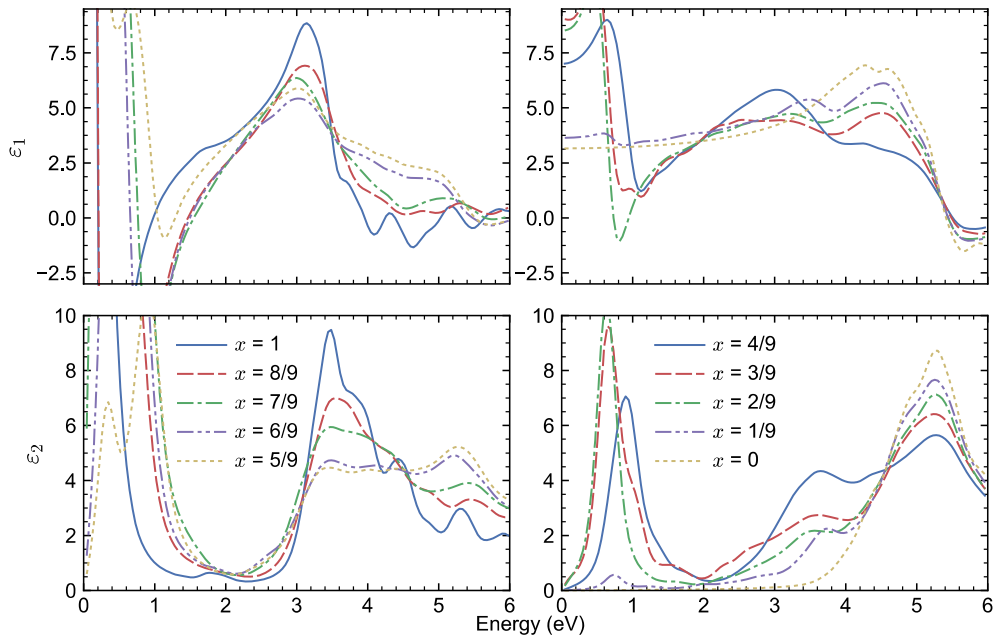


Fig. 7. Calculated complex dielectric function spectra ϵ_1 and ϵ_2 of SQS's of $\text{SrTi}_{1-x}\text{V}_x\text{O}_3$ with different compositions x .

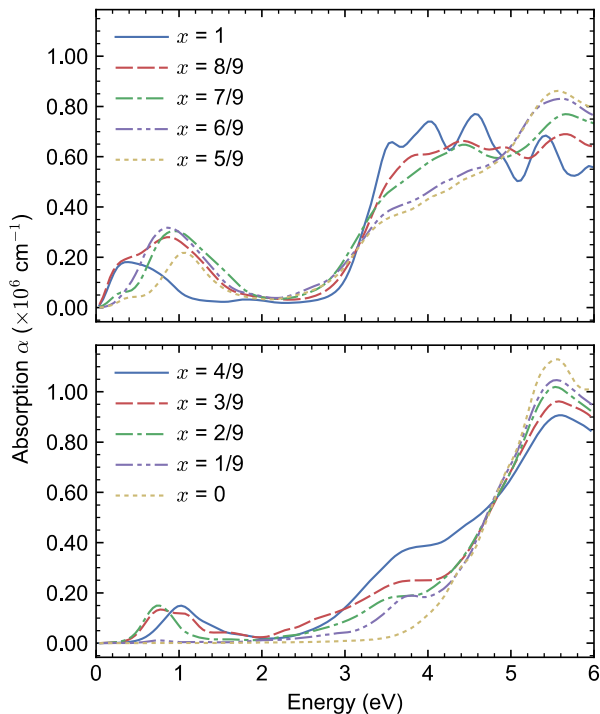


Fig. 8. Calculated absorption coefficient (α) spectra of SQS's of $\text{SrTi}_{1-x}\text{V}_x\text{O}_3$ with different compositions x .

suppress the absorption beyond the blue end of the visible range, 3.25 eV. Although the critical point in ϵ_2 at 3.4 eV does not blue-shift to open a wider transparency window, the transition strength decreases. Spectra in ϵ_2 at 3.4 eV when $x = 0.67$ (6/9) are approximately halved, effectively allowing more light beyond the blue end of the visible spectrum to pass through these compositions without being absorbed. There is also a slight absorption increase between 2.00 and 3.25 eV, likely due to the smoothing method involved. Therefore, solid solutions of $0.67 < x < 1$ could be strong candidates for TCOs due to less high-energy photon absorption

and only slightly reduced conductivity. As the system becomes Ti-rich ($x < 0.67$), the transparency window widens, but such solid solutions no longer retain the high conductivity required for their usual applications. As we discussed in Section 3.4, doping or vacancy creation could enhance conductivity and extend the conducting range of composition, allowing further absorption suppression beyond, or even below the blue end of the visible spectrum.

4. Conclusions

We studied the mixing of SrVO_3 and SrTiO_3 with CE, MC simulations and SQS. We confirmed with thermodynamics modeling the feasibility of obtaining solid solutions $\text{SrTi}_{1-x}\text{V}_x\text{O}_3$ across the full composition range ($0 \leq x \leq 1$). A simple miscibility gap closes at consolute temperature $T_c = 500$ K. Phase boundaries show slight asymmetry skewing toward the larger cation SrTiO_3 -side. Electronic DOS and optical properties, including complex dielectric function spectra and band structures of random solid solutions were studied with SQS. Substitution of V with Ti reduces the electrical conductivity of $\text{SrTi}_{1-x}\text{V}_x\text{O}_3$, which goes through a composition-driven metal to insulator transition close to $x = 0.67$, but suppresses the optical absorption beyond 3.25 eV. It is likely that doping or vacancy creation would enhance the electrical conductivity and extend the conducting compositions, leaving room for property tuning to obtain optimal TCO materials.

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Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.commatsci.2017.12.020>.

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