

Proceeding Paper

# Effects of germanium or copper addition to formamidinium cesium lead triiodide perovskite crystals

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**Abstract:** Copper (Cu) or germanium (Ge) was added to the perovskite compounds to stabilize the photoactive  $\alpha$ -phase of formamidinium-cesium lead triiodide. The strain for the  $\text{PbI}_6$  octahedra was relaxed by the Cu doping, which increased the displacement of formamidinium (FA) molecules, resulting in increasing the kinetic energy. The 3d orbitals of Cu were localized near the conduction band minimum and valence band maximum, which suppressed carrier diffusion resulting in lower efficiencies of the cells. The structural distortion for  $\text{PbI}_6$  octahedra was caused by the Ge doping, which decreased the displacement of FA molecules, resulting in a decrease in the kinetic energy. Suppression of formation of photo-inactive  $\delta$ -phase resulted in formation of the  $\alpha$ -phase. Electron density distribution showed the charge transfer from Ge to iodine (I) ions, which promoted carrier diffusion from I 5p to Ge 4p orbitals. The cells doped with 12.5% Ge also provided photovoltaic properties and a single phase structure.

**Keywords:** germanium; copper; formamidinium; cesium; first-principles calculations; perovskite; solar cell

## 1. Introduction

Organic-inorganic hybrid perovskite solar cells are being studied worldwide as next-generation solar cells due to their high conversion efficiencies and easy fabrication method [1-4]. To develop commercial perovskite solar cells in the future, photovoltaic properties and long-term stability are required [5-9]. Among various types of perovskite crystals, formamidinium cesium-lead triiodide ( $\text{FA}_{1-x}\text{Cs}_x\text{PbI}_3$ ) perovskite crystals have provided high efficiency and stability [10,11]. However, due to photo-inactive  $\delta$ -phase of  $\text{FA}_{1-x}\text{Cs}_x\text{PbI}_3$  perovskite crystals, optimization of compositions and formation-conditions of thin films is required [12-14]. Substitution of Pb by other elements such as Sn [15-18], Cu [19-24],<sup>1</sup> Co [25], Ge [26-28], or Eu [29,30], would be one of the methods to optimize the electronic and crystal structures and to improve the photovoltaic properties. For example, adding a small amount of Sn to  $\text{FA}_{1-x}\text{Cs}_x\text{PbI}_3$  perovskite crystals suppressed the phase transition from the  $\alpha$ - to  $\delta$ -phase, resulting in longer carrier lifetime and smaller temperature dependence [31]. As the same group 14 element as Pb, Ge was expected to provide a potential substitute for Pb and effective to suppress the photo-inactive  $\delta$ -phase [32].

The purpose of this work is to investigate the crystal structure and properties of Cu or Ge-doped  $\text{FA}_{1-x}\text{Cs}_x\text{PbI}_3$  perovskite crystals from the first-principles calculations and experiments. The effects of Ge or Cu on the  $\text{FA}_{1-x}\text{Cs}_x\text{PbI}_3$  crystals were investigated by X-ray diffraction (XRD), current density-voltage ( $J$ - $V$ ) characteristics, band structures, partial density of states (pDOS), Born–Oppenheimer molecular dynamics calculations (BOMD), and Car-Parrinello molecular dynamics calculations (CPMD).

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## 2. Materials and Methods

The present perovskite solar cells were prepared by the same method as reported in the previous works [33–35]. For preparing the perovskite compound, a mixture of  $\text{CH}_3\text{N}_2\text{I}$  (FAI), CsI,  $\text{PbI}_2$ ,  $\text{PbCl}_2$ ,  $\text{GeI}_2$ , *N*-methyl-2-pyrrolidinone (NMP, 100  $\mu\text{L}$ ) with the desired molar ratio in *N,N*-dimethylformamide (DMF, 0.5 mL) was stirred at 70 °C for 24 h. For the 2%  $\text{GeI}_2$  added device, the mole of FAI, CsI,  $\text{PbI}_2$  and  $\text{GeI}_2$  was adjusted to be 0.996 M (85.6 mg), 0.204 M (26.5 mg), 1.176 M (271.1 mg) and 0.024 M (3.9 mg). The perovskite solutions were spin-coated on  $\text{TiO}_2$  with air-blow at three times [36–38]. A solution of decaphenylcyclopentasilane (DPPS, Osaka Gas Chemical, OGSOL SI-30–15) was prepared in chlorobenzene (1.0 mL) and dropped onto the perovskite layer during the last stage of the spin-coating process [39,40]. DPPS was used as a hole-transporting material to protect the cell from moisture and oxygen [41,42]. Then, the substrate was annealed at 150 °C for 10 min. All procedures were performed in air atmosphere. A gold (Au) electrode was deposited as the top electrode. The structure of the solar cells is denoted as FTO/ $\text{TiO}_2$ /perovskite/DPPS/spiro-OMeTAD/Au. The prepared cells were stored at a temperature of 22 °C and humidity below 30%.

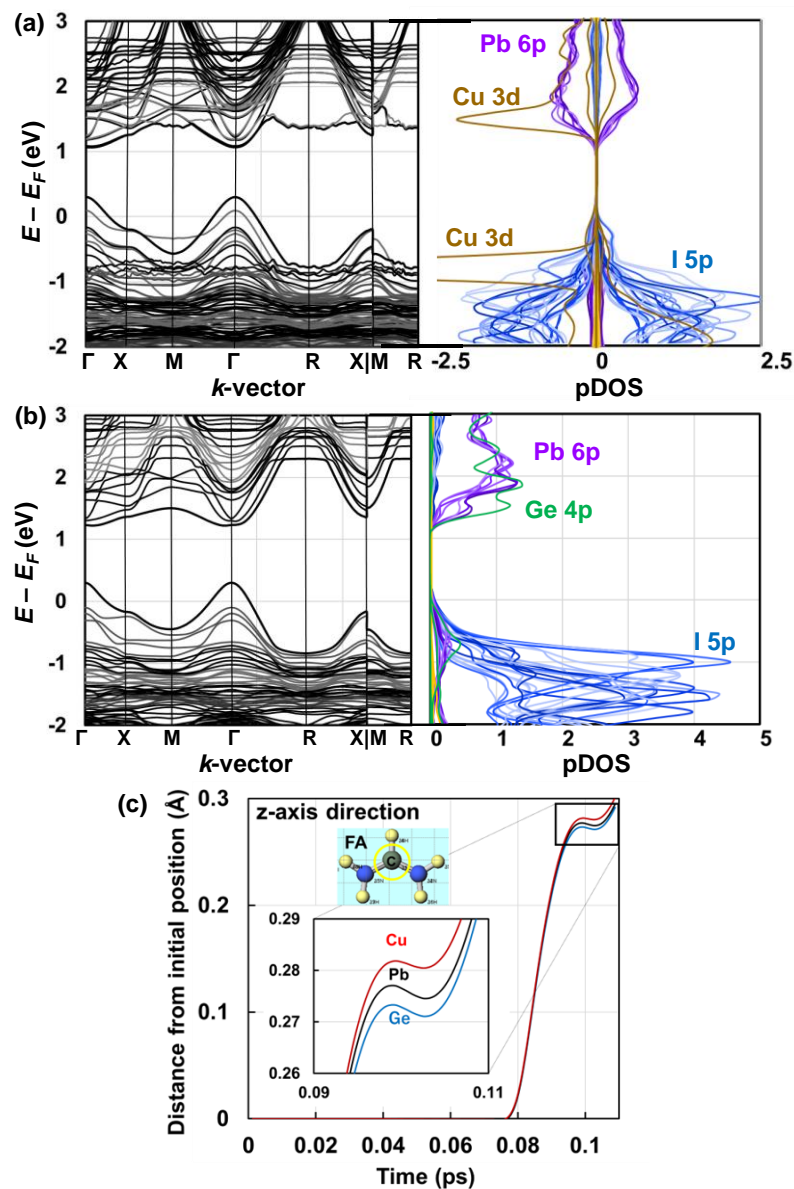
The ab initio quantum calculations were performed using the Vanderbilt ultrasoft pseudo-potentials, scalar relativistic generalized gradient approximations and the Perdew-Burke-Ernzerhof exchange-correlation functional and density functional theory without consideration of spin-orbital coupling effect (Quantum Espresso software). The details of the calculation methods were reported in the previous works [43–45].

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1. First-principles calculation

First-principles calculations for Cu- or Ge-doped crystals were performed to calculate the band structures and pDOS for each system after structural optimization at 300 K. For the Cu-doped perovskite in Figure 1(a), the 5p orbitals of I atom and 3d orbitals of the Cu atom dominate near the VBM. The 6p orbitals of the Pb atom and the 3d orbitals of the Cu atom dominate near the CBM. The localization of the 3d orbital of Cu near the VBM and CBM suppressed the carrier generation and diffusion. For the Ge-doped crystals in Figure 1(b), the 6p orbital of the Pb atom and the 4p orbital of the Ge atom overlap and dominate in the conduction band. Charge transfer from 5p orbital of the I atom to 4p orbital of the Ge atom would promote carrier generation. These results indicate that Ge-doped FACsPbI<sub>3</sub> perovskite solar cells would have better photo-voltaic properties.

Perovskite cubic crystals with partial substitution of Cu or Ge at the Pb site were analyzed by the first principles CPMD calculations. After equilibrating electronic and nucleus state at 0 K, enthalpies and relaxation process of kinetic energy were calculated at 300 K. Distances from the initial positions of carbon (C) in FA, Pb, Cu, and Ge are shown in Figure 1(c). The Cu-doped crystals showed smaller deviations of the Cu atoms from their initial positions and smaller distortions for the  $\text{CuI}_6$  octahedron. As a result, significant change is observed at the position of C in FA. On the other hand, large shift from the initial Ge position is observed for the Ge-doped crystal, resulting in the significant strain in the crystal. Then, the deviation of C positions in FA was suppressed. Differences in the strength of the bonds between the central metal and I and the orientation of the orbitals caused differences in the distortion, which would change the interaction between the FA molecule and I, changing the kinetic behavior of the FA.

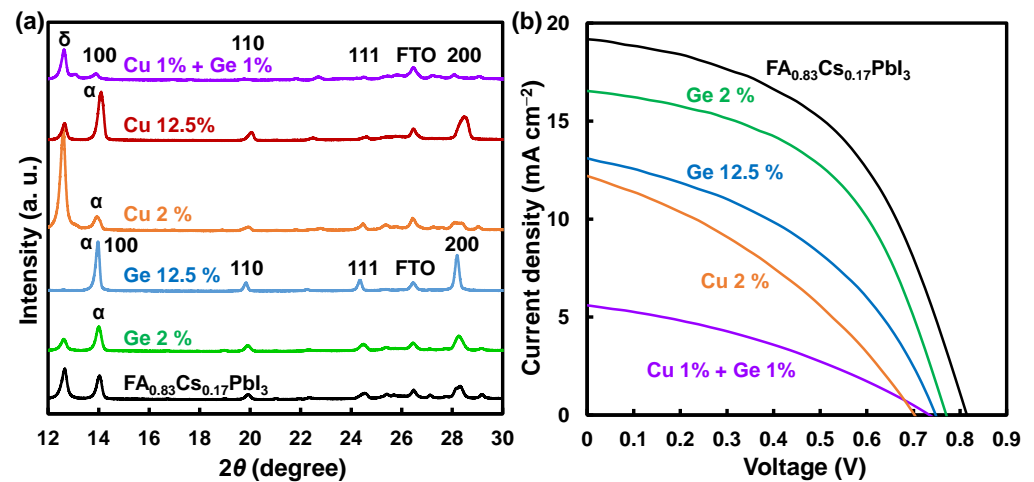


**Figure 1.** Calculated band structures and partial density of state of (a)  $\text{FA}_{0.875}\text{CS}_{0.125}\text{Pb}_{0.875}\text{Cu}_{0.125}\text{I}_3$  and (b)  $\text{FA}_{0.875}\text{CS}_{0.125}\text{Pb}_{0.875}\text{Ge}_{0.125}\text{I}_3$ . (c) Displacements of C position in FA along z-axis.

### 3.2. Device characterization

FACsPbI<sub>3</sub> based perovskite solar cells added with 2% Cu, 2% Ge, 12.5% Cu, or 12.5% Ge were fabricated and characterized. XRD patterns of these cells are shown in Figure 2(a). For the device doped with 2% Cu, weak diffraction peaks of the photoactive  $\alpha$ -phase were observed, and the photo-inactive  $\delta$ -phase was formed as observed at  $2\theta$  of  $12.6^\circ$ . On the other hand, sharp 100 diffraction peaks of the  $\alpha$ -phase are observed for the cells doped with 2% Ge, 12.5% Ge, and 12.5% Cu, which indicates formation of the  $\delta$ -phase was suppressed, and the structure of  $\alpha$ -phase was maintained.

$J$ - $V$  characteristics of the devices are shown in Figure 2(b), and the photovoltaic parameters are listed in Table 1. For the device doped with 2% Ge,  $J_{sc}$ ,  $V_{oc}$  and FF were higher than those of the Cu-doped devices. When Ge was added up to 12.5%, the  $\alpha$ -phase was formed without  $\delta$ -phase, indicating Ge can be a candidate as an alternative element to Pb.



**Figure 2.** (a) XRD patterns of present perovskite crystals. (b) *J*-*V* characteristics of present solar cells.

**Table 1.** Photovoltaic parameters of present perovskite photovoltaic devices. *J*<sub>sc</sub>: short-circuit current density. *V*<sub>oc</sub>: open-circuit voltage. FF: fill factor. *η*: conversion efficiency.

Devices	<i>J</i> <sub>sc</sub> (mA cm <sup>-2</sup> )	<i>V</i> <sub>oc</sub> (V)	FF	<i>η</i> (%)
FA <sub>0.83</sub> CS <sub>0.17</sub> PbI <sub>3</sub>	19.3	0.815	0.496	7.74
FA <sub>0.83</sub> CS <sub>0.17</sub> Pb <sub>0.98</sub> Ge <sub>0.02</sub> I <sub>3</sub>	16.7	0.770	0.504	6.42
FA <sub>0.83</sub> CS <sub>0.17</sub> Pb <sub>0.875</sub> Ge <sub>0.125</sub> I <sub>3</sub>	13.1	0.747	0.422	4.13
FA <sub>0.83</sub> CS <sub>0.17</sub> Pb <sub>0.98</sub> Cu <sub>0.02</sub> I <sub>3</sub>	12.2	0.702	0.350	3.00
FA <sub>0.83</sub> CS <sub>0.17</sub> Pb <sub>0.875</sub> Cu <sub>0.125</sub> I <sub>3</sub>	0.583	0.0385	0.237	0.00532

#### 4. Conclusion

In summary, the crystal structure and properties of Ge-doped FACs-based perovskite was characterized from first-principles calculations and experiments. The structural distortion for PbI<sub>6</sub> octahedra was caused by the Ge doping, which decreased the displacement of FA molecules, resulting in decrease of the kinetic energy. Suppression of formation of δ-phase resulted in formation of α-phase. Band structure showed the charge transfer from Ge to I ions, which promoted carrier diffusion from I 5p to Ge 4p orbitals. The perovskite solar cells doped with 12.5% Ge also provided photovoltaic properties.

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