

Preparation and Tribological Properties of TiO₂/WO₃ Nanocomposite Lubricant

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ABSTRACT

Nanocomposite Lubricants have been the focus of research in recent years. In this paper, tetrabutyl titanate (TBOT) was used to obtain TiO₂-encapsulated WO₃ nanoparticles, their microstructures and morphology were characterized by XRD and SEM. Adsorption site and interaction energy of citric acid, triethanolamine oleate, stearic acid and trioctyl phosphate as dispersants and TiO₂ were calculated. The results demonstrate that the reactivity from strong to weak follow the order of citric acid > triethanolamine oleate > stearic acid > trioctyl phosphate. Among the four dispersants, triethanolamine oleate has the strongest electron gain and loss ability and adsorption capacity and used as dispersant to obtain TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposite lubricant. Addition of 0.015 vol.% TBOT, the oil film strength is up to 530 N and COF is 0.087. The lubrication mechanism of the TiO₂/WO₃ nano composite in the sliding process is attribute to tribofilm lubrication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Friction and wear are an important cause of equipment failure and low production efficiency in modern industrial production [1,2]. Reducing friction and wear is the primary task to improve the service life of equipment, improve production efficiency and reduce capacity loss [3,4]. Lubricant is one of the important means to reduce friction and wear [5,6].

Lubricants consist of base oil and additives. Additives can be divided into conventional organic molecules, two-dimensional layered, nano metal oxides [6-9] etc. Two-dimensional MoS₂, H-BN

graphite and WS₂ are considered to be effective lubricating additives [10-12]. It is mainly due to its unique structure, large specific surface area, strong stiffness and weak interlayer interaction [13,14]. Graphene-based nano-materials are widely used as lubrication additives due to they are easy to shear and relatively smooth [13-15]. Fluorinated graphene has excellent thermal and chemical stability, good mechanical strength, and larger layer spacing than graphene [16,17]. Metal and carbon-based nanoparticles are used to reduce friction and resist wear [12,18-21]. Metal oxide nanoparticles, such as TiO₂, SiO₂, Al₂O₃ and ZnO, can be used as microball bearings rolling in the contact interface region, as abrasives with

polishing effects on worn surfaces, or as third bodies providing surface repair effects [22-25]. Softer metal nanoparticles [26-28], such as Ag and Cu, have been shown to form a tribofilm at the interface, which exhibit low shear stress and reduce the wear rate of steel-steel contacts. Hard carbon-based nanoparticles [29-30], such as diamond, can be considered for ball rolling or for increasing surface hardness through contact with the surface. Soft carbon-based nanoparticles, such as graphite and fullerenes [31-33], can be combined to form a protective film on the contact surface, thus effectively protecting the friction pair [34,35].

The main methods for preparing nanocomposites include sol-gel method, interlayer insertion method, blending method, in-situ dispersion polymerization, radiation synthesis method, template method [36], self-assembly method [37], molecular deposition film method, etc. [38]. The friction and wear characteristics of nanocomposites are not only related to the composition structure of the composites, but also closely related to the external experimental conditions [39]. Zhao *et al.* [40] prepared TiO₂/F-RGO nanocomposites by in-situ composite method and studied the influence of load on tribological properties of TiO₂/F-RGO nanocomposites. Meng *et al.* [41] and Hu *et al.* [42] showed that nano-composites improved the friction and wear properties. Liu *et al.* [43] prepared Au/TiO₂ nanocomposite films by sol-gel method, and studied the tribological properties of Au/TiO₂ nanocomposite films when grinding with AISI52100 steel balls. Kasiarova *et al.* [44] and Bhimaraj P *et al.* [45] found that relative humidity and crystallinity are also important factors affecting the friction and wear properties of nanocomposites in some cases. In previous studies, TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposite particles were not synthesized, and the influence of nanomaterial characteristics on collaborative lubrication behavior was not studied.

In this paper, WO₃ nanoparticles prepared by the sol-gel method and TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposite particles prepared by hydrolysis process of tetrabutyl titanate (TBOT), their microstructures and morphology were characterized by XRD and SEM. The adsorption sites and interaction energies between citric acid, triethanolamine oleate, stearic acid and trioctyl phosphate and TiO₂ were theoretically calculated. The tribological behavior

of the prepared nanoparticles and dispersants in the base fluid was studied by four-ball friction testing machine, and the wear surface of the nanoparticles was observed, the wear and friction mechanism of nanoparticles as anti-wear additives between metal friction pairs is proposed.

2. EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

2.1 Raw materials

The raw materials used in the preparation of TiO₂/WO₃ nanoparticles are europium(III) hexahydrate (Eu(NO₃)₂·6H₂O), ammonium paratungstate ((NH₄)₁₀H₂(W₂O₇)₆xH₂O), citric acid monohydrate (C₆H₈O₇·H₂O), acetonitrile (C₂H₃N), tetrabutyl titanate (TBOT) (C₁₆H₃₆O₄Ti), absolute ethanol (C₂H₆O), ammonia (NH₄OH), etc. The raw materials used in the preparation of the lubricant are glycerin (C₃H₈O₃, thickener to improve the viscosity of the fluid, moisturizer to prevent volatilization, purchased from Shanghai McLean Biochemical Technology Co., Ltd.), polyethylene glycol (HO(CH₂CH₂O) nH, to increase fluid viscosity, as a humectant), triethanolamine (C₆H₁₅NO₃, preparation of oleic acid triethanolamine), oleic acid (C₁₈H₃₄O₂, preparation of oleic acid triethanolamine). Except for glycerol, all are purchased from Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd.

2.2 Selection and calculation of dispersants

Materials studio software with Dmol3 module was used to calculate the chemical parameters of the alternative dispersant, the molecular frontier orbital energy of the dispersants was calculated first, and the molecular activity of the chemical reaction of the dispersant was analyzed. Then the adsorption energy of the dispersant on the preferred crystal surface of the nanoparticles was calculated, and the appropriate dispersant by the size of the adsorption energy was selected. Four dispersants in common, including stearic acid (C₁₈H₃₆O₂), citric acid (C₆H₈O₇), triethanolamine oleate (C₂₄H₄₇NO₄) and trioctyl phosphate (C₂₄H₅₁O₄P), were used and the chemical parameters of the above four dispersants were calculated to select the most suitable dispersant. Melting point and density of four dispersants were tested according to GB T 617-2006 and GB4472-84, the details of the four dispersants selected are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Details of four dispersants for the test.

| Dispersants | Chemical formula | Functional group | Melting point (°C) | Density(gcm ⁻³) |
|------------------------|--|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Stearic acid | C ₁₈ H ₃₆ O ₂ | carboxyl | 70 | 0.84 |
| Citric acid | C ₆ H ₈ O ₇ | carboxyl | 156 | 1.542 |
| Triethanolamine oleate | C ₂₄ H ₄₇ NO ₄ | carbonyl | -18 | 0.96 |
| Trioctyl phosphate | C ₂₄ H ₅₁ O ₄ P | Phosphate group | -70 | 0.92 |

2.3 Preparation and characterization of TiO₂/WO₃ nanoparticles

WO₃ nanoparticles are prepared by the sol-gel method, and then nano-TiO₂ is coated on its surface to obtain TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposites in our previous work [46]. Three TiO₂/WO₃ samples were prepared by the various concentrations of TBOT (0.01 vol.%, 0.015 vol.% and 0.02 vol.%). The structure of the prepared TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposite particles was characterized by X-ray diffraction pattern, and the microscopic morphology and size of the TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposite particles were characterized by scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and transmission electron microscope (TEM).

2.4 Preparation of nano-lubricants

Triethanolamine oleate was selected as a dispersant, glycerol and polyethylene glycol were used to increase the viscosity of the fluid. Lubricant consists of TiO₂/WO₃ nanoparticles (0.1wt%), glycerol (5wt%), oleic acid (1.5wt%) and triethanolamine (1.5wt%). After selecting the test reagent, the nanoparticles are pre-dispersed as follows. 100ml of deionized water was added to the beaker, 5 ml of glycerol and 0.1 g of the prepared WO₃ nanoparticles was add them to the beaker, stirred with a magnetic stirrer for stirring for 30 min. 50ml of deionized water, triethanolamine and oleic acid were added to the beaker in turn, with a constant temperature magnetic stirrer and heated to 80 °C for 30 min. After stirring, it was cooled to room temperature, then added to a beaker containing pre-dispersed solution and stirred for 15 min.

2.5 Friction and wear properties of lubricants

Tribological properties of the TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposite fluid were studied using the MR-S10A four ball tribometer. The maximum non-jamming load (P_B) of the nanofluid is measured to reflect the carrying capacity of the nanoparticle lubrication film. The P_B value was determined by

the 10 s test according to GB/T3142-2019, and the rotation speed of the upper steel ball was 1450 r/min. Long-term wear test was conducted according to NB/SH/T0189-2017. The coefficient of friction (μ) and the diameter of the wear scars (D) are measured, and their worn morphology are analyzed.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 TiO₂/WO₃ nanoparticle characterization

The XRD pattern of TiO₂/WO₃ and WO₃ nanoparticles prepared at pH=10 is shown in Fig.1. The pattern of WO₃ is consistent with the ICDD/JCPDS PDF #71-2142 card. Then, the phases of TiO₂/WO₃ are found to be basically consistent with the PDF standard cards of PDF #71-2142 and PDF #72-0784. The prepared TiO₂/WO₃ sample has a strong diffraction peak at (002), (020), (200), (202), (-202), (400), (402), (402), and its unit cell constant is $a=7.313\text{\AA}$, $b=7.525\text{\AA}$, $c=7.689\text{\AA}$, $\alpha=\beta=\gamma=90^\circ$. The diffraction peak of TiO₂ phases are detected at (101), (004), (200) and (105).

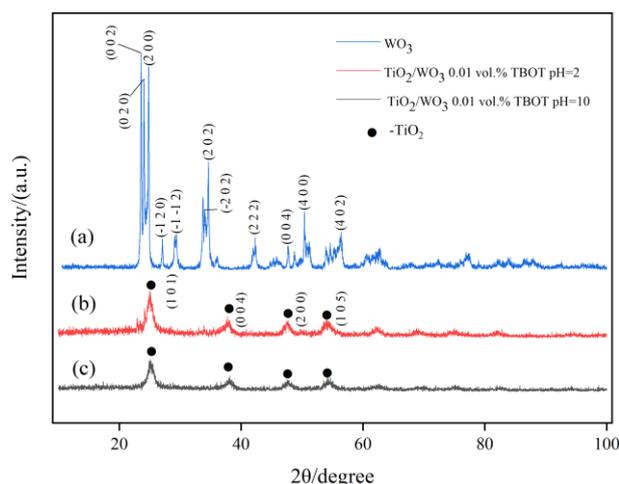


Fig. 1. XRD diagram of WO₃ nanoparticles, TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposite particles prepared under alkaline condition (pH=10) and acidic condition (pH=2).

Grain size and full width at half maximum (FWHM) of TiO₂/WO₃ composite material are

obtained by adding different concentrations of TBOT (0.01 vol.%, 0.015 vol.%) were calculated using Scherrer formula as follow,

$$D = \frac{K\lambda}{\beta \cos \theta} \quad (1)$$

where K is Scherrer constant ($k=1$), D is the grain size (nm), β is FWHM.

According to Scherrer formula, the and shown in Fig.2. The black line is FWHM, and the blue line is the grain size. It can be concluded that the prepared TiO_2/WO_3 composite by adding 0.01 vol.% TBOT has the largest grain size under acidic condition, while the prepared TiO_2/WO_3 composite by adding 0.01vol.% TBOT has the smallest grain size under alkaline condition, and their half-width is inversely proportional to the grain size.

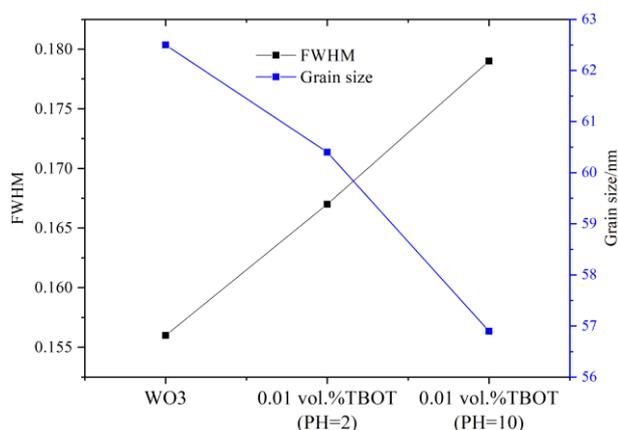
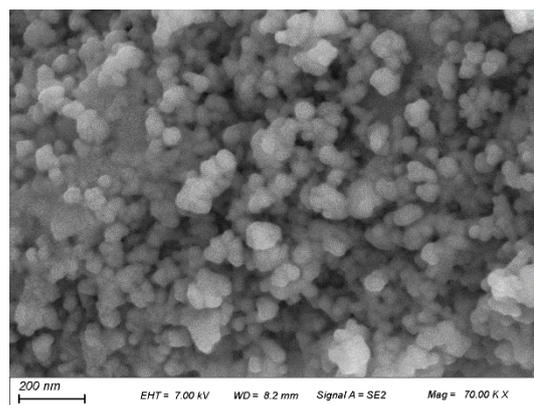
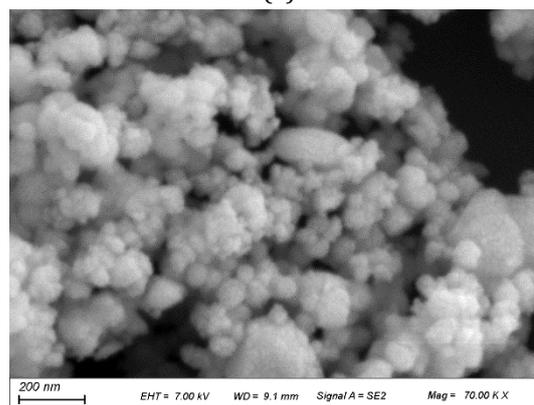


Fig. 2. FWHM and grain size of WO_3 nanoparticles, TiO_2/WO_3 nanocomposite particles.

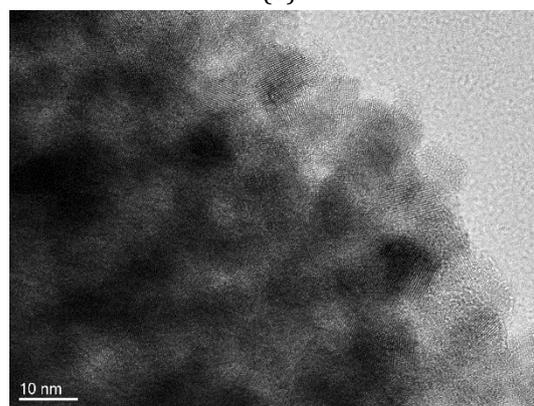
he microscopic morphology of TiO_2/WO_3 nanocomposite particles is shown in Fig. 3. As can be seen from Fig. 3, TiO_2/WO_3 nanocomposite particles are spherical, and the nanoparticles prepared under acidic conditions (Fig. 3b, d) are all show high-density agglomeration structures, while the surface of the nanoparticles prepared under alkaline conditions (Fig. 3a, c) is relatively loose. It can be seen that the nanoparticles prepared under acidic conditions have a larger particle size (~50nm) than that of alkaline condition (~20 nm). According to the research results of Bhimaraj P et al. [45], when the particle size of nanoparticle is smaller, the anti-wear and anti-friction properties of the prepared lubricant is better. Therefore, it can be speculated that lubricant containing nanoparticles prepared under alkaline conditions has better tribological properties.



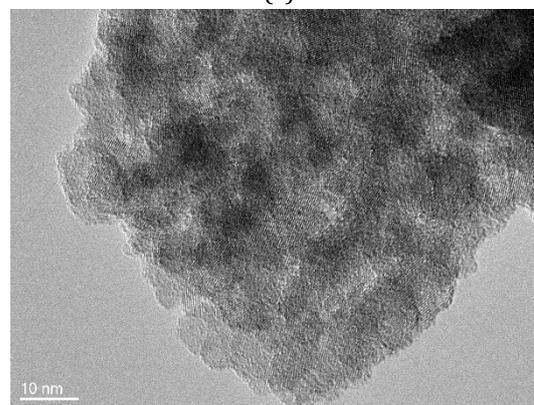
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Fig. 3. SEM and HTEM images of TiO_2/WO_3 nanoparticles prepared under alkaline condition (a, c) and acidic condition (b, d).

3.2 Calculation of dispersants

Based on molecular orbital theory, the quantum chemical parameters of four dispersants of stearic acid ($C_{18}H_{36}O_2$), citric acid ($C_6H_8O_7$), triethanolamine oleate ($C_{24}H_{47}NO_4$) and trioctyl phosphate ($C_{24}H_{51}O_4P$) were calculated by using the Dmol3 module of Materials studio, and the calculation results of the highest occupied orbital energy (E_{HOMO}) and the lowest unoccupied orbital energy (E_{LUMO}) are shown in Table 2. The higher the value of E_{HOMO} indicates that the stronger the ability of the molecule to give electrons, the lower the value of E_{LUMO} indicates that the stronger the ability of the molecule to obtain electrons, and the smaller the energy gap ($\Delta E = E_{LUMO} - E_{HOMO}$) value, the higher the reactivity of the molecule. The calculated the hardness (η), electrophilic index (ω), softness (S) and chemical potential (μ) and other chemical parameters of the molecule are shown in Table 3. The larger values of ω and S indicate that the molecules are more easily adsorbed. The smaller η is, the stronger adsorption capacity is. The quantum chemical parameters of the molecule are calculated using the following formula:

$$\eta = \frac{1}{2}(E_{LUMO} - E_{HOMO}) \quad (2)$$

$$S = \frac{1}{\eta} = \left(\frac{\partial \mu}{\partial N}\right)_v \quad (3)$$

$$\mu = \frac{1}{2}(E_{HOMO} + E_{LUMO}) \quad (4)$$

$$\omega = \frac{\mu^2}{\eta} \quad (5)$$

The reactivity of the four dispersants follows the order of citric acid > triethanolamine oleate > stearic acid > trioctyl phosphate. In

addition, it can be seen that trioctyl phosphate has a low ability to give electrons, but its ability to accept electrons is strong. The ability of citric acid to gain and lose electrons is weak. The electron gain-loss capacity of triethanolamine oleate is the strongest of the four dispersants chosen. Among the four dispersants, the E_{HOMO} value of triethanolamine oleate is significantly lower than that of the other three dispersants, and the electron donor capacity of the other three dispersants was similar. The E_{LUMO} value of trioctyl phosphate was the lowest, indicating that it had the strongest ability to accept electrons. Citric acid has the highest E_{LUMO} value, indicating that it is the least electron receptive.

Fig. 4 demonstrates the optimized molecular configurations, HOMO, and LUMO of the four dispersants under an aqueous solvent. The HOMO and LUMO of citric acid and triethanolamine oleate are mainly distributed on carbonyl and carboxyl groups. In order to further determine the ability of these dispersants to gain and lose electrons during the reaction, the Fukui index of four dispersants in aqueous solvents was calculated theoretically, and the results are shown in Table 3.

$$f_k^+ = q_k(N+1) - q_k(N) \quad (6)$$

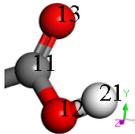
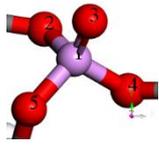
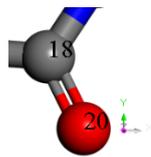
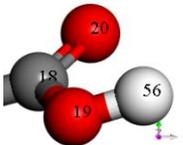
$$f_k^- = q_k(N) - q_k(N-1) \quad (7)$$

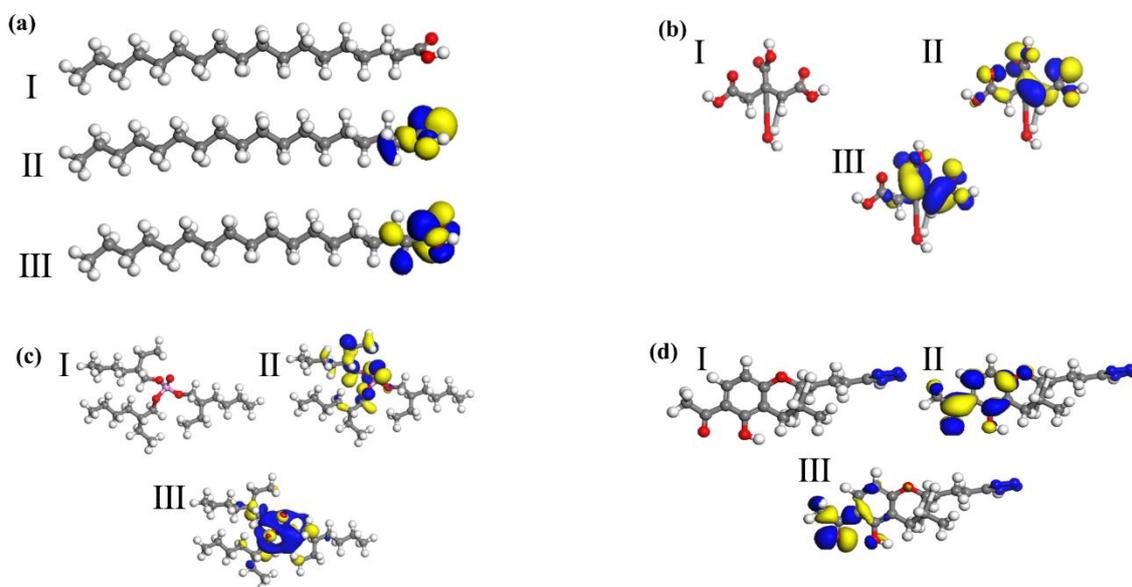
Where f_k^- represents the electrophilic index, f_k^+ nucleophilic index, and f_k^0 represents the free radical index. In electrophilic reactions, atoms are easy to lose electrons, so they have high value of f_k^- , while in nucleophilic reactions, on the contrary, atoms are easy to gain electrons, so they have high value of f_k^+ . In free radical reactions, atoms form bonds by forming a common electron pair, so it has a high value of f_k^0 .

Table 2. Chemical parameters of four dispersants.

| Molecules | E_{HOMO} (eV) | E_{LUMO} (eV) | ΔE (eV) | η (eV) | μ (eV) | S (eV ⁻¹) | ω (eV) |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| $C_{18}H_{36}O_2$ | -6.594 | -1.044 | 5.550 | -3.819 | 0.360 | 2.775 | 5.256 |
| $C_6H_8O_7$ | -6.699 | -2.941 | 3.758 | -4.820 | 0.532 | 1.879 | 12.364 |
| $C_{24}H_{47}NO_4$ | -5.783 | -0.674 | 5.109 | -3.229 | 0.391 | 2.555 | 4.080 |
| $C_{24}H_{51}O_4P$ | -6.821 | 0.486 | 7.307 | -3.168 | 0.274 | 3.654 | 2.746 |

Table 3. Fukui indices of four dispersants under water solvent conditions.

| Chemical formula | Functional group | Partial atomic number | Atom | f_k (a.u.) | f_k^+ (a.u.) | f_k^0 (a.u.) |
|--|------------------|---|-------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| C ₆ H ₈ O ₇ | carboxyl |  | C(11) | 0.047 | 0.091 | 0.069 |
| | | | O(12) | 0.051 | 0.060 | 0.055 |
| | | | O(13) | 0.145 | 0.125 | 0.135 |
| | | | H(21) | 0.033 | 0.039 | 0.036 |
| C ₂₄ H ₅₁ O ₄ P | Phosphate group |  | P(1) | 0.027 | 0.113 | 0.070 |
| | | | O(2) | 0.052 | -0.003 | 0.025 |
| | | | O(3) | 0.092 | 0.009 | 0.050 |
| | | | O(4) | 0.033 | -0.013 | 0.010 |
| | | | O(5) | 0.041 | -0.018 | 0.012 |
| C ₂₄ H ₄₇ NO ₄ | carbonyl |  | C(18) | 0.035 | 0.145 | 0.090 |
| | | | O(20) | 0.114 | 0.112 | 0.113 |
| C ₁₈ H ₃₆ O ₂ | carboxyl |  | C(18) | 0.049 | 0.304 | 0.176 |
| | | | O(19) | 0.040 | 0.129 | 0.084 |
| | | | O(20) | 0.163 | 0.231 | 0.197 |
| | | | H(56) | 0.025 | 0.066 | 0.045 |

**Fig. 4.** Optimized molecular configuration, (II) HOMO, (III) LUMO of the four dispersants (a) stearic acid, (b) citric acid, (c) trioctyl phosphate, (d) triethanolamine oleate.

As can be seen from Table 3, for carboxyl compounds such as citric acid and stearic acid, oxygen atoms in carboxyl groups have strong ability to donate and accept electrons in both electrophilic reactions and nuclear reactions. For the phosphate compound trioctyl phosphate, the oxygen atom of the phosphate group in the electrophilic reaction has a stronger ability to

give electrons, and the carbon atom of the phosphate group in the nucleophilic reaction has a stronger ability to receive electrons, while the oxygen atom is weak in receiving electrons. the carbonyl oxygen atom in the electrophilic reaction has a strong ability to donate electrons, and the carbonyl carbon atom in the nucleophilic reaction has a strong ability to receive electrons.

Molecular dynamics calculations were carried out using the FORCITES module in materials studio software, and the adsorption energy of the four dispersants on the TiO₂ (0 0 2) crystal plane was calculated and selected as the optimal dispersant. According to the law of conservation of energy, the adsorption energy (E_{Ads}) between TiO₂ and the dispersant is calculated using Equation (8).

$$E_{ads} = E_{total} - E_{mol} - E_{suf} \quad (8)$$

where, E_{Mol} is the energy of isolated surface modifier molecules, eV. E_{Surf} is the energy on the surface of nanoparticles when the modifier molecules are not adsorbed, eV. E_{Tot} is the total energy of surface modifier molecules and nanoparticles, eV.

The model changes before and after adsorption are shown in Fig. 5. As can be seen from Table 4, the adsorption energy of triethanolamine oleate and stearic acid is negative, mainly provided by non-bonding energy, which belongs to physical adsorption. The adsorption energy of trioctyl phosphate and citric acid is positive, mainly provided by bond energy, which belongs to chemical adsorption. The calculated adsorption energy of citric acid, stearic acid, triethanolamine oleate and trioctyl phosphate in the aqueous solvent are 6.180 eV, -14.022 eV, -13.612 eV and 10.954 eV respectively. Although, the adsorption energy of stearic acid was slightly higher than others, stearic acid was insoluble in water, triethanolamine oleate is selected as the dispersant for this test.

Table 4. Adsorption energy of dispersant molecules on the surface of nanoparticles.

| Molecules | energy | $E_{Ads}(eV)$ | $E_{Tot}(eV)$ | $E_{Mol}(eV)$ | $E_{Surr}(eV)$ |
|--|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| C ₁₈ H ₃₆ O ₂ | sum | -14.022 | -76848.241 | -39.911 | -76794.309 |
| | Bond Energy | 1.630 | -20.828 | -22.457 | 0.000 |
| | Non-bonded Energy | -15.651 | -76827.413 | -17.453 | -76794.309 |
| C ₆ H ₈ O ₇ | sum | 6.180 | -76817.098 | -28.970 | -76794.309 |
| | Bond Energy | 13.030 | 16.699 | 3.669 | 0.000 |
| | Non - bond energy | -6.850 | -76833.797 | -32.639 | -76794.309 |
| C ₂₄ H ₄₇ NO ₄ | sum | -13.612 | -76815.412 | -7.492 | -76794.309 |
| | Bond Energy | 3.086 | -16.429 | -19.516 | 0.000 |
| | Non - bond energy | -16.698 | -76798.983 | 12.024 | -76794.309 |
| C ₂₄ H ₅₁ O ₄ P | sum | 10.954 | -76783.328 | 9.319 | -76794.309 |
| | Bond Energy | 23.782 | 23.808 | 8.507 | 0.000 |
| | Non - bond energy | -12.828 | -76807.136 | 0.812 | -76794.309 |

3.3 Tribological properties of TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposite lubricants

The load carrying capacity of the TiO₂/WO₃ nanocomposite lubricant are shown in Table 5. As can be seen from Table 5, with the same amount of TBOT added, the oil film strength (P_B) is less than 147 N regardless of whether the nanoparticles are prepared under acidic or alkaline condition. Thus, it can be concluded that the tribological properties of TiO₂/WO₃

nanoparticles prepared when the concentration of TBOT is 0.01%vol are very poor, and even cannot meet the minimum value required to determine the antiwear properties of lubricating oil. However, when the TBOT concentration was increased to 0.015 vol.%, the P_B was increased by 390.74 % compared with that of 0.01 vol.% under alkaline condition. The addition of 0.015 vol.% TBOT improved the tribological properties of the prepared TiO₂/WO₃ nanoparticles.

Table 5. Results of the determination of the load carrying capacity of the lubricant.

| Sample number | TBOT additions | P_B/N | $D(1+5\%)(mm)$ | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------|----------------|-------|----------|
| | | | d_1 | d_2 | $d_{平均}$ |
| 1 | 0.01vol.% pH=2 | <147 | | | |
| 2 | 0.01vol.% pH=10 | 108 | 0.23 | 0.22 | 0.225 |
| 3 | 0.015vol.% pH=10 | 530 | 0.41 | 0.39 | 0.40 |

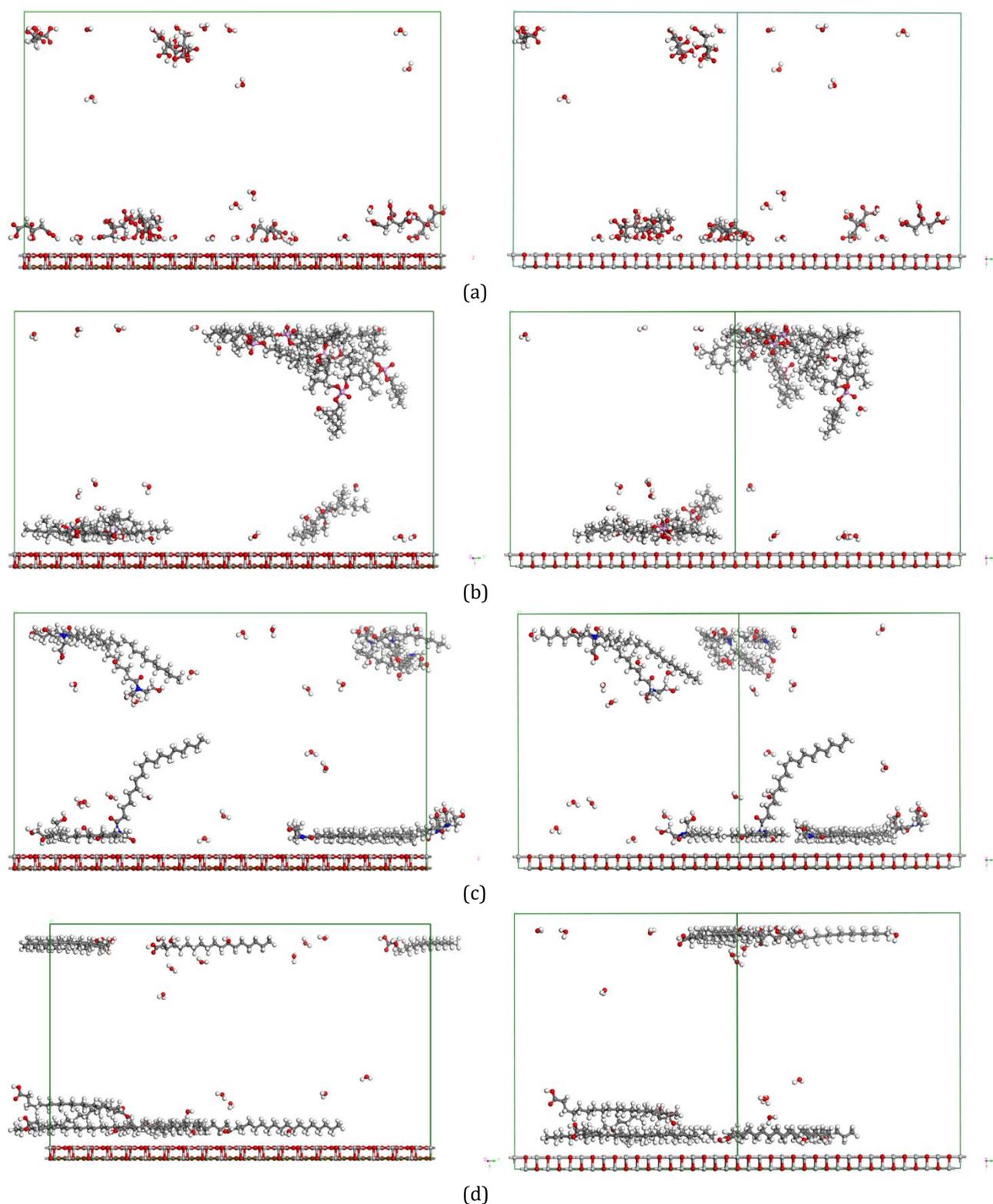


Fig. 5. Pre-adsorption (left) and pos- adsorption (right) models of the molecules on the surface of TiO₂, citric acid(a), trioctyl phosphate (b), triethanolamine oleate (c), and stearic acid(d)

Fig. 6 show coefficient of friction curve of lubricants containing TiO₂/WO₃ nanoparticle prepared with 0.01 vol.% and 0.015 vol.% TBOT under alkaline condition. It can be seen that the friction coefficient generally shows an

upward trend, with more frequent and unstable fluctuations. Addition of 0.015vol.% TBOT, the friction coefficient is relatively stable and basically unchanged. Overall, when the amount of TBOT added is 0.015vol.%, the nanoparticles

have good stability, and the friction coefficient ($\mu = 0.087$) is smaller and the wear resistance is better than that of the nanoparticles prepared with 0.01vol.% TBOT. The coefficient of friction increases from 0.06 to 0.10 in the first seconds is due to the consume of nanoparticles, and the additive may be used as a three-body material, resulting in an increase in the coefficient of friction.

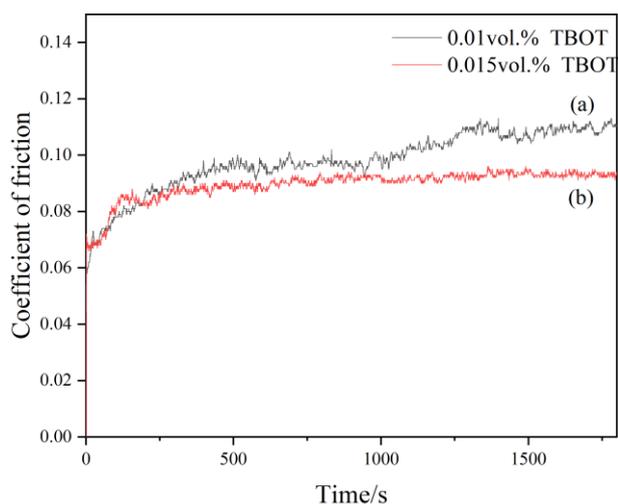
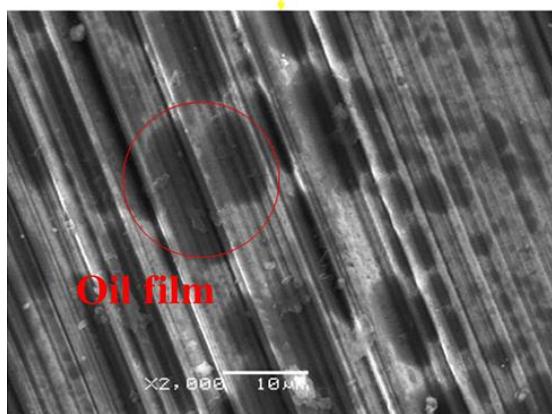
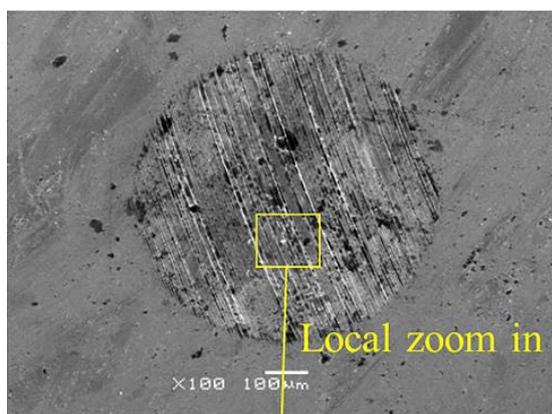


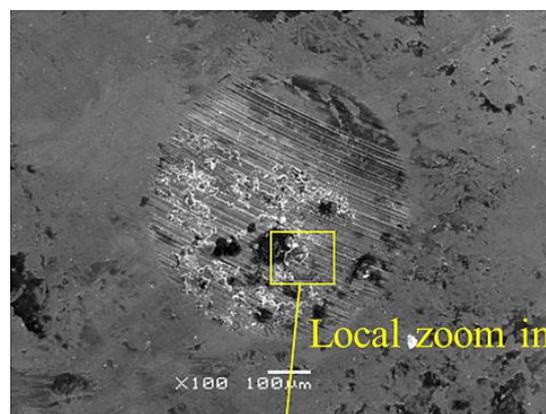
Fig. 6. Coefficient of friction curve of lubricants under alkaline condition.

3.4 Worn surface analysis

Fig. 7 shows the morphology of worn surface with lubricants after sliding. It is found that the worn surface lubricated with TiO_2/WO_3 nanoparticle prepared with 0.01 vol.% TBOT has severe wear and there are serious abrasions, pits, cracks and continuous wear marks. Compared with 0.01vol.% TBOT, the worn surface lubricated with TiO_2/WO_3 nanoparticle prepared with 0.015 vol.% TBOT is smoother and flatter, and the wear marks are lighter. When using TiO_2/WO_3 nano-composite lubricant as a lubricant, a composite lubrication film can be formed on the surface of the steel ball, which effectively alleviates the friction and wear of the contact surface. On the other hand, TiO_2 -coated WO_3 nanoparticles exhibit spherical shape in microscopic morphology, spherical TiO_2/WO_3 nanoparticles as microspheres between friction pairs, which play a role of friction and wear reduction [47]. The lubrication mechanism of the TiO_2/WO_3 nano composite in the sliding process is attribute to tribofilm lubrication.



(a)



(b)

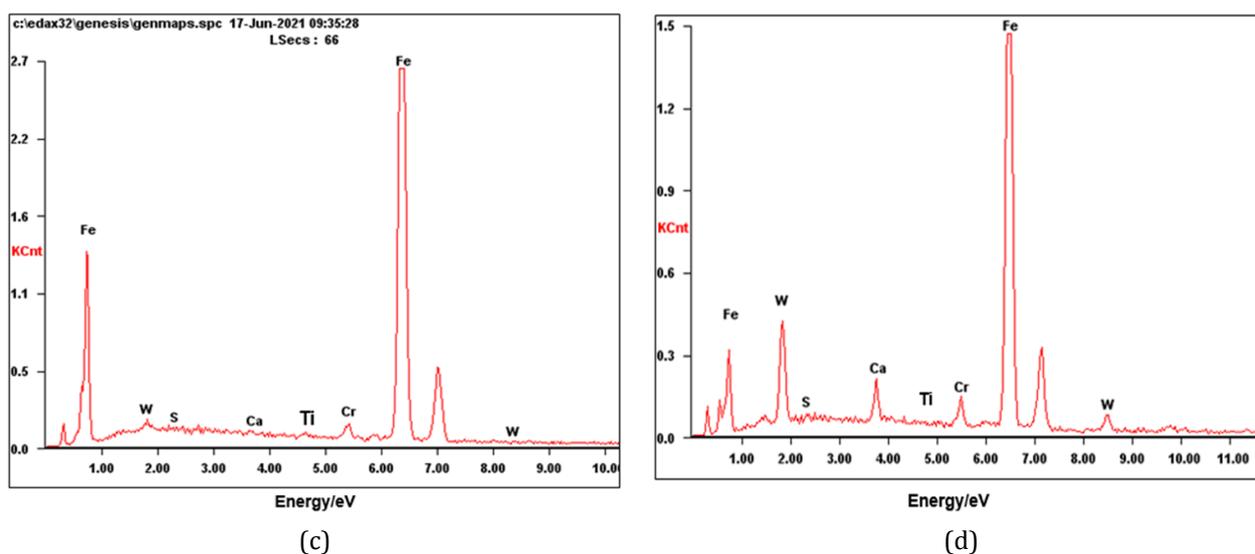


Fig. 7. Morphology of the worn surface lubricated by the TiO_2/WO_3 nanoparticles prepared with (a, c) 0.015 vol.% TBOT, (b, d) 0.01 vol.% TBOT.

4. CONCLUSION

WO_3 nanoparticles prepared by the sol-gel method and TiO_2/WO_3 nanocomposite particles prepared by hydrolysis process of TBOT. Microstructure and morphology of TiO_2/WO_3 nanocomposite particles was characterized by XRD and SEM. Adsorption energy between triethanolamine and TiO_2 was calculated up to -14 eV and used as a dispersant in TiO_2/WO_3 nanocomposite lubricant. Addition of 0.015 vol.% TBOT, the oil film strength is as high as 530 N, the oil film strength is increased by about 390%, the friction coefficient is 0.087. The lubrication mechanism of the TiO_2/WO_3 nano composite in the sliding process is attribute to tribofilm lubrication.

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