



## Structural and Optical Properties for TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films Prepared by Screen Printing method

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#### Introduction

TiO<sub>2</sub> is semiconductor metal Oxide that has unique properties such as low cost, nanotoxicity, easy reaction and resistance to chemical corrosion. It is used in environmental purification applications as well as in the manufacture of solar cells and other applications such as anti-moisture lenses, photoelectrochemistry, electro chromic devices, catalysis, gas sensing and dye-sensitized solar cells [1]. TiO<sub>2</sub> material to be much important than any thing else, because of the ability to work as a photovoltaic catalyst whose most important condition is to generate an electron pair- a gap near the surface of the catalyst by shedding a large part of the solar spectrum [2,3]. Titanium dioxed (TiO<sub>2</sub>) was first produced commercially in 1923. Titanium dioxed is obtained from a variety of Ores, TiO<sub>2</sub> exists mostly as Rutile and Anatase phases which both of them have the tetragonal structures rutile is high-temperature stable phase and has an optical energy band gap of 3.0eV (415nm), Anatase is formed at a lower temperature with an optical energy band gap of 3.2eV and refractive index of around 2[4]. There are many processing techniques that can be used to prepare TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films such as Sol-gel, Liquid deposition, electron-beam, evaporation, chemical vapour deposition (CVD), direct current (DC), radio frequency (RF), plasma oxidation, magnetron sputtering [5], we used new method which is screen printing processes for thin

### ABSTRACT

In this study, Structural and Optical Properties of titanium dioxide thin films are studied, TiO<sub>2</sub> (Anatase) thin films were prepared by screen printing (SP) method. X-ray diffraction analysis showed that the structure of TiO<sub>2</sub> films are polycrystalline and the lattice system is tetragonal. The main diffraction peak of TiO<sub>2</sub> was (101) at 2θ=25°. The data of optical absorption indicated that TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films prepared by SP have a direct optical band gap (about 3.1eV). The data of reflectivity was also used to calculate the band gap and was around 2.95 eV

films preparation where they are widely applied because of their uniformity and rapid production as well as easy thickness control [6]. this study showed the feasibility to fabricate TiO<sub>2</sub> electrodes from dioxide nano-powder, terpeneol, ethanol and ethyl cellulose to be used in dye sensitized solar cell using screen printing method which is simple and low cost technique.

#### Experimental details

For making the paste, the following materials were used: titanium dioxide TiO<sub>2</sub> (purity 99.9%) of mass 0.34g, Ethanol volume 3ml, Terpeneol 2ml and Ethyl cellulose of mass 0.032g as a binder. Glass slides were used as substrates for TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films, The substrates were cleaned with ethanol solution and distilled water, Then they immersed for 30 min in distilled water then dried with special drying paper and we used Scotch tape for framing. The past is prepared in the clean room and take some drop of past to deposited on the glass and quartz. All the samples were annealed in furnace at 500°C for 30 minutes and then left in the oven overnight to cool down. XRD measurements were implemented using Shimadzu XRD model-6000. The absorption spectra were measured Via a spectrophotometer provides (Meterteach Sp 8001) at room temperature and Tauc plot was utilized to calculate the band gap, The film thickness was calculated using the micrometer where

it measures the first reading without paste and the second reading with the paste, the difference between them is the thickness of the film thin, The Atomic Force Microscope (AFM) has been used and provides information on the nanoscale structure of the thin films and gives 2D and 3D analysis of the surfaces of the studied thin films, type AA3000-The provider from company Angstrom Advanced, device specifications: X-Yscan Scope:~10 micrometer, 2 distance:~ 2 micrometer, Scan Angle: 0-360 degree, Scan Rate: 0.1~ 100HZ, Size=2032×2044nm.

## Results and Discussion

### X-Ray Diffraction

Figure (1) shows XRD patterns of TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films prepared by screen printing method, intensity of diffraction X-ray was recorded for range  $2\theta$  from 10° to 80°. The main diffraction peaks of TiO<sub>2</sub> thin film after annealing at 500°C were (101) at  $2\theta = 25^\circ$ , and the phase of TiO<sub>2</sub> is Anatase, this result agrees with findings reference [7, 8], as well as it is seen that full width half of maximum (FWHM) values were listed in Table (1). The grain size ( $D$ ) of the films was calculated from the FWHM values using the Debye-Scherrer's formula[9] :

$$D = \frac{0.9\lambda}{\beta \cos \theta} \quad \dots (1)$$

Where  $D$  is the crystal size ;  $\lambda$  the X-ray wavelength ( $\lambda=0.15406$  nm),  $K$  is usually taken as 0.9 ,  $\beta$  is the line width at half-maximum height in (radian) , and  $\theta$  is the Bragg diffraction angle.

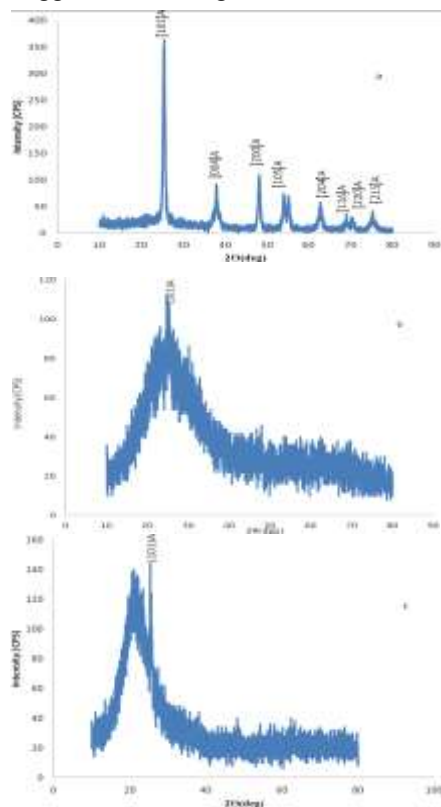


Figure (1): XRD pattern TiO<sub>2</sub> (a) powder of TiO<sub>2</sub> nanoparticles (b) TiO<sub>2</sub> thin film on quartz (c) TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films on glass

Scherrer analysis for TiO<sub>2</sub> powder is indicated in Table (1). The average crystallite size is about 16.3 nm while the average line density is 0.0038 lines/nm<sup>2</sup>.

Table (1): Scherrer's analysis of TiO<sub>2</sub> nanopowder

$2\theta(\text{deg})$	$D$ (nm)	$S(\text{lines/nm}^2)$	FWMH (rad)
25.4	17.05	0.0039	0.0083
37.84	17.1	0.0034	0.0091
48.16	16.0	0.0039	0.0096
53.9	15.7	0.0040	0.0094
55.18	15.7	0.0040	0.0096
62.8	16.5	0.0036	0.0098

Williamson and Hall proposed [6] a method for determination size and strain broadening by looking at the peak width as a function of  $2\theta$ . According to this analysis, the total broadening ( $B_{\text{tot}}$ ) in each peak is produced by two

types of broadening, strain broadening ( $\beta_{\text{strain}}$ ) and size broadening ( $\beta_{\text{size}}$ ) i.e.

$$\beta_{\text{tot}} = \beta_{\text{strain}} + \beta_{\text{size}} \dots (2)$$

Where  $\beta_{\text{strain}} = 2\varepsilon \tan \theta$  and  $\beta_{\text{size}} = \lambda / D \cos \theta$ .

After some simple algebra we can rewrite (2) as follows:

$$\beta^* = \varepsilon d^* + \frac{1}{D} \dots (3)$$

Where  $\beta^* = \beta \cos \theta / \lambda$  and  $d^* = 2 \sin \theta / \lambda$ .

(Williamson-Hall) plot is shown in fig (2) It is plotted with  $\beta \cos \theta / \lambda$  on the y-axis and  $2 \sin \theta / \lambda$  on the x-axis. A linear fit is got for the data and from it: particle size (20 nm) and strain (0.00006) are extracted from y-intercept and slope – respectively.

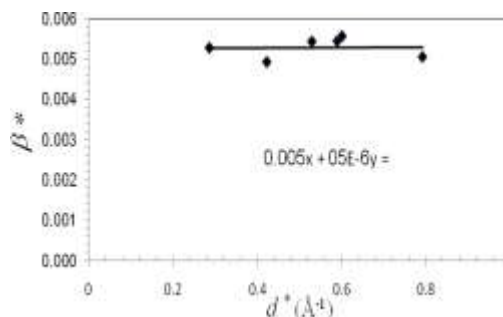


Fig (2) Williamson-Hall plot-TiO<sub>2</sub> nanoparticles

### Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM)

The surface Topology of TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films was analyzed using atomic force microscope. Figure (3) represents the result of AFM scanning in three dimensions for TiO<sub>2</sub> paste deposited on glass slides by SP and fired at (T=500) °C. The two diagrams show the typical three-dimensional surface Topology image of TiO<sub>2</sub> and the granularity distribution, respectively. The average grains size for TiO<sub>2</sub> films after annealing 500 °C for 30 min.) is about 57 nm and the roughness average is roughly 3 nm, root mean square was about 3.4 nm. The shape of the thin film is regular and homogeneous, and the adhesion strength was very good through these tests where the arrangement and uniformity of the coating layers are

clear, and it is important to observe that notice that the particles are vertically perpendicular to the crystal axis.

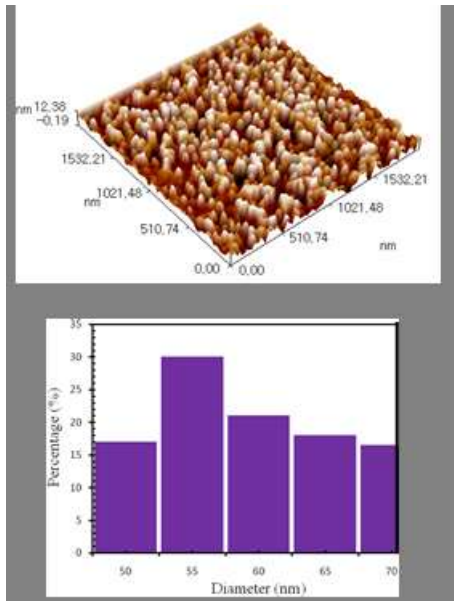


Fig (3) (a) AFM image for TiO<sub>2</sub>. (b) The granularity cumulation distribution chart of TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films

#### Optical Properties

The transmission spectrum of TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films is recorded as a function of wavelength in the range of (190-990) nm as shown in Figure (4). The thickness of TiO<sub>2</sub> was too thin (about 500 nm) for TiO<sub>2</sub> deposited on glass and quartz substrates so that the average transmission over the visible rang could exceed 20 %.

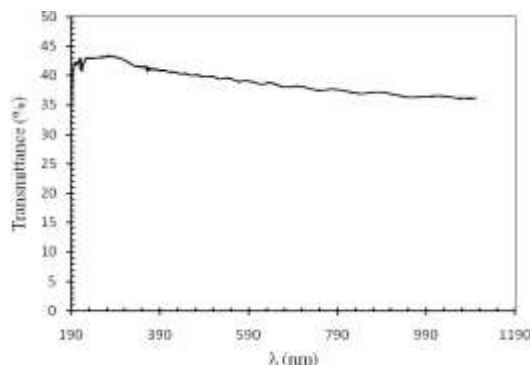


Fig (4): Transmittance spectrum of TiO<sub>2</sub> prepared by screen printing

The optical bandgap ( $E_g$ ) has been analyzed using Tauc plot [10] in which the relationship between absorption coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) and photon energy ( $h\nu$ ) is given by:

$$\alpha h\nu = B(h\nu - E_g)^n \dots (4)$$

Where B : constant depends on the type of transition.  
 $h\nu$ : photon energy.

$E_g$ : direct allowed energy photon.

n: exponential constant.  $n=1/2$  for TiO<sub>2</sub>

The absorption ( $\alpha$ ) was determined from the absorbance spectrum using the following equation [11]:

$$\alpha = 2.303 \frac{A}{t} \dots (5)$$

Where  $A$  is the measured absorbance and  $t$  is the thickness of the sample. Fig (5) shows the relation of  $(\alpha h\nu)^2$  against photon energy, from strainst line obtained at high photon energy the direct allowed energy gap could be determined, The optical band gap energy  $E_g$  was evaluated from the absorption spectrum and the optical absorption coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) near the absorption edge is given by Eq (4), The extrapolation gave a bandgap of 3.1eV for our TiO<sub>2</sub> thin film prepared by SP. This result has a good a agreement with the findings reference[12].

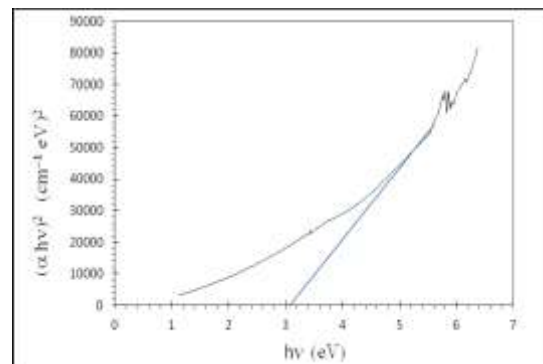


Fig. (5): plot of  $(\alpha h\nu)^2$  versus  $h\nu$  of TiO<sub>2</sub> thin film

#### Diffusive reflectance spectra

Diffusive reflectance spectra can also be used to calculate the absorption edge of TiO<sub>2</sub> [11]. Figure (6) shows the reflectance which is plotted as a function of photon energy in the range from (1.5-4.0) eV for TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films deposited on glass substrates by screen printing technique. The sharp fall of reflectance determines where the sample starts to absorb near the band edge. The intersection point between the extrapolation line and the  $h\nu$ -axis gives the value of energy band gap ( $E_g$ ) the results obtained for the band gap are in good agreement with results extracted from Tauc plot.

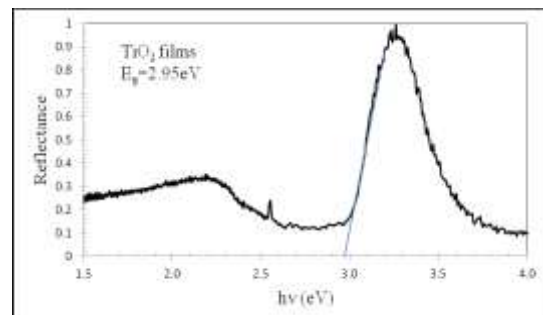


Fig (6) Determination the energy band gap of TiO<sub>2</sub> thin films using diffusive reflectance data.

## Conclusions

Synthesis of  $\text{TiO}_2$  thin films by screen printing method is found to be fast, low cost and practical to prepare electrodes dye sensitized solar cells.  $\text{TiO}_2$  thin film prepared by screen printing method and fired at  $500^\circ\text{C}$  is polycrystalline with a broad peak

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located roughly at  $2\theta = 25^\circ$ . The grain size increased after annealing ( $500^\circ\text{C}$  for 30 min.) to become 57 nm. The band gap of  $\text{TiO}_2$  thin film is direct with energy bandgap of 3.1 eV. Diffusive reflectance method gives accurate value for bandgap energy and compatible with that calculated from Tauc plot.

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## الخصائص التركيبية والبصرية للأغشية $\text{TiO}_2$ المحضرة بطريقة طباعة الشاشة

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## الملخص

في هذا العمل، تم دراسة الخصائص التركيبية والبصرية لأغشية ثنائي أكسيد التيتانيوم، وتبين أن أغشية  $\text{TiO}_2$  التي تم تحضيرها بطريقة طباعة الشاشة (SP). تظهر أن تحليل حيود الأشعة السينية بأن تركيب أغشية  $\text{TiO}_2$  متعدد التبلور ونظام الشبكة هو رباعي الأضلاع ، وأن قمة الحيود الرئيسية لأغشية  $\text{TiO}_2$  كانت (101) عند  $2\theta = 25^\circ$ ، بيانات الإمتصاص البصري أشارت بأن أغشية  $\text{TiO}_2$  المحضرة بطريقة طباعة الشاشة تمتلك فجوة طاقة بصرية مباشرة حوالي (3.1eV)، تم حساب قيم فجوة الطاقة بواسطة نتائج قيم الإنعكاسية وكانت (2.95eV).