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Abstract

In this study, a series of free-standing as well as controlled size Pt nanoparticles-loaded mesoporous metal oxides (CeO₂, MnO₂, In₂O₃, NiO, and Co₃O₄) with high surface area and designed pore structure were prepared by hard template method and used as catalysts for CO₂ hydrogenation as well as dry reforming of CO₂ with methane. The physicochemical properties of catalysts were characterized by N₂ adsorption-desorption isotherm, XRD, TEM, and H₂-TPR. Pt-free and Pt-loaded mesoporous NiO and Co₃O₄ performed with high catalytic activity and selectivity for both CO₂ activation reactions. Pt-free NiO exhibited the highest catalytic activity as well as showing 100 % CH₄ selectivity at 473 - 673 K and ~1:1 H₂/CO₂ ratio at 673 – 973 K in CO₂ hydrogenation and dry reforming with methane, respectively. The enhanced catalytic properties can be ascribed to the presence of metallic Ni as well as the optimal dynamics of Ni/NiO_x structure under reaction conditions.

Keywords	Mesoporous oxides, Pt nanoparticles, CO ₂ hydrogenation, dry reforming of CO ₂
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Dear Sang-Eon Park (Editor-in-Chief, Journal of CO₂ Utilization),

Please find our manuscript "*Pt nanoparticles-loaded and noble-metal-free, mesoporous oxides as efficient catalysts for CO₂ hydrogenation and dry reforming with methane*" submitted to Journal of CO₂ utilization.

In this paper, we tested several Pt-free as well as controlled sized Pt nanoparticle-loaded mesoporous transient metal oxides with high surface area in CO₂ hydrogenation as well as CO₂ dry reforming with methane. Pt-free and Pt-loaded mesoporous NiO and Co₃O₄ performed with high catalytic activity and selectivity for both CO₂ activation reactions. Pt-free NiO exhibited the highest catalytic activity as well as showing 100 % CH₄ selectivity at 473 - 673 K and ~1:1 H₂/CO₂ ratio at 673 - 973 K in CO₂ hydrogenation and dry reforming with methane, respectively. The enhanced catalytic properties can be ascribed to the presence of metallic Ni as well as the optimal dynamics of Ni/NiO_x structure under reaction conditions.

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18th of January, 2019.

Dr. András Sápi

Pt nanoparticles-loaded and noble-metal-free, mesoporous oxides as efficient catalysts for CO₂ hydrogenation and dry reforming with methane

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Abstract

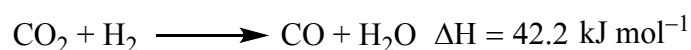
In this study, a series of free-standing as well as controlled size Pt nanoparticles-loaded mesoporous metal oxides (CeO₂, MnO₂, In₂O₃, NiO, and Co₃O₄) with high surface area and designed pore structure were prepared by hard template method and used as catalysts for CO₂ hydrogenation as well as dry reforming of CO₂ with methane. The physicochemical properties of catalysts were characterized by N₂ adsorption-desorption isotherm, XRD, TEM, and H₂-TPR. Pt-free and Pt-loaded mesoporous NiO and Co₃O₄ performed with high catalytic activity and selectivity for both CO₂ activation reactions. Pt-free NiO exhibited the highest catalytic activity as well as showing 100 % CH₄ selectivity at 473 - 673 K and ~1:1 H₂/CO₂ ratio at 673 – 973 K in CO₂ hydrogenation and dry reforming with methane, respectively. The enhanced catalytic properties can be ascribed to the presence of metallic Ni as well as the optimal dynamics of Ni/NiO_x structure under reaction conditions.

Key words: Mesoporous oxides, Pt nanoparticles, CO₂ hydrogenation, dry reforming of CO₂

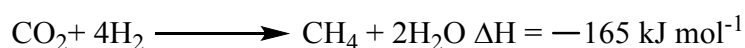
1. Introduction

Recently, the population increase and connecting industrial demands has caused a tremendous amount of fossil fuel utilization. The combustion of fossil fuels leads to the release of CO₂ into the atmosphere which in turn leads to global warming and climate change [1].

The hydrogenation of CO₂ leads to the formation of a variety of products e.g., methanol (CH₃OH), carbon monoxide (CO), methane (CH₄), formic acid (HCOOH) and hydrocarbons [2-7]. CO₂ hydrogenation through the reverse water-gas shift reaction produces the primary industrial C₁ building block CO which, together with H₂, can be used to produce long-chain hydrocarbons through Fischer-Tropsch reaction [8, 9].



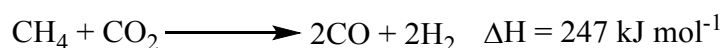
However, CO₂ hydrogenation is an endothermic reaction and requires high operation temperature [10]. Various metals such as Pt [11-14], Pd [15-18], Rh [19-24] and Au [25, 26], Ru [27], Cu [28-30], Fe [31, 32], and Ni [33, 34] have been utilized. Various supports such as CeO₂ [28, 35, 36], SiO₂ [37, 38], Al₂O₃ [39, 40], ZrO₂ [29], TiO₂ [25, 41], zeolite [13] have been used. In addition, methanation of CO₂, also known as Sabatier reaction is a promising strategy for the production of methane. It is an exothermic reaction and favors formation of methane at high pressure and low temperature.



This reaction is the key to the Power-to-gas (PtG) technology. PtG is the production of chemical energy carriers using electric power during peak power production period. PtG involves two steps. The first step is to produce hydrogen by water electrolysis. The second step is the methanation (Sabatier reaction) between H₂ and CO₂ to produce synthetic natural gas (SNG) [42, 43]. The produced SNG is easy to store and can be transported in existing natural gas pipelines. A variety of transition metals such as Ni [44-46], Co [47-49], Pd [50, 51], Ru [52-54], Rh [55, 56] have been widely investigated as active components for CO₂ methanation. Among these metals, Ni and Co are promising candidates due to its lower cost than Pd, Ru, and Rh. A variety of oxide supports have been used for the CO₂ methanation that includes Al₂O₃ [57-59], SiO₂ [47, 60, 61], TiO₂ [52, 53, 62, 63], CeO₂ [50, 61, 64], NiO [65], Co₃O₄ [66]. Supported noble metal catalysts such as Pt, Ru, and Rh was found to have high ability toward H₂ dissociation and thus have been used as effective catalysts for CO₂ hydrogenation [2]. The

activity and selectivity of supported catalysts are associated with interactions between the active metals and oxide supports [3]. The ordered mesoporous metal oxides and SBA-15 with tunable pore size and a high specific surface area have provided an opportunity not only for the high conversion but also for the synthesis of well-dispersed metal catalysts.

In the dry reforming of methane (DRM) reaction, two major greenhouse gases (CH_4 and CO_2) are converted into syngas (H_2 and CO). The formed syngas can be used in Fischer-Tropsch reaction [67].



DRM is a highly endothermic reaction and therefore high temperatures are needed to obtain high syngas yields [68]. DRM reaction has been carried out by using various heterogeneous catalysts. The noble metals such as Rh, Ir, Pt, Ru, and Pd exhibit higher catalytic activity and stability compared to other transition metal-based catalysts (Ni and Co) [69-74]. Ni-based catalysts are extensively used due to their high catalytic activity and low cost. However, due to coke formation and sintering during the long-term run, their activity was found to be poor [75]. Extensive research has been done on designing coke-resistant catalysts for DRM. Various transition metal oxide [76, 77], post-transition metal oxides [78], and rare earth metal oxide [79-81], SBA-15 [82] have been used as a catalyst.

In this study, we synthesized mesoporous metal oxides such as CeO_2 , MnO_2 , In_2O_3 , NiO , Co_3O_4 , and SBA-15 with high specific surface and anchored size controlled Pt nanoparticles on these oxides. The synthesized catalysts were characterized by N_2 adsorption-desorption isotherm, XRD and TEM. CO_2 hydrogenation and DRM reactions were carried out on these catalysts to evaluate their catalytic efficiencies. NiO and Co_3O_4 based catalysts showed significant activity in both CO_2 activation reactions. Due to the reduction of the oxides, a special Ni/NiO_x as well as a Co/CoO_x interphase is produced during the reactions which may be attributed to the high activity even in the absence of Pt nanoparticles. In the case of pure NiO support, the activity was observed as ~ 2 times and ~ 3 times higher compared to the Pt/NiO catalysts at the hydrogenation reaction at ~ 600 K and the DRM reaction at ~ 900 K, respectively.

2. Experimental

2.1 Synthesis of catalysts

2.1.1 Synthesis of 4.8 nm Pt nanoparticles

Synthesis of 4.8 nm particles is based on a modified version of the polyol-method. Briefly, 0.04 g $\text{Pt}(\text{C}_5\text{H}_7\text{O}_2)_2$ and 0.035 g polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP, MW = 40,000) are dissolved in 5 ml ethylene-glycol and ultrasonicated for 30 minutes to get a homogenous solution. The reactor is a three-necked round bottom flask, which is evacuated and purged with atmospheric pressure argon gas for several cycles to get rid of additional oxygen and water. After three purging cycles, the flask was immersed in an oil bath heated to 473 K under vigorous stirring of the reaction mixture as well as the oil bath. After 10 minutes of reaction, the flask was cooled down to room temperature. The suspension is precipitated with adding acetone and centrifuging. The nanoparticles are washed by centrifuging with hexane and redispersing in ethanol for at least 2-3 cycles and finally redispersed in ethanol.

2.1.2 Synthesis of the mesoporous metal oxide support

For the preparation of mesoporous metal-oxide support, mesoporous KIT-6 silica was used as hard template [83]. For the synthesis of KIT-6, 27 g of the Pluronic-123 block copolymer and 43.5 ml HCl was dissolved in 980 ml water. After 30 min, 33.3 ml n-butanol was added to the solution at 35 °C under vigorous stirring. After 1 h of stirring, 58 g of Tetraethyl orthosilicate (TEOS) was added to the solution dropwise followed by stirring for 24 h at 308 K. The capped bottle was stored at 313 K for another 24 h in an oven. Then the solid product was filtered, dried at 363 K overnight and calcined at 823 K for 6 h.

Mesoporous oxides were prepared through the hard template method using the as-prepared KIT-6. $\text{Ce}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{Mn}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot x\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{In}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot x\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{Ni}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and $\text{Co}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ were used to synthesis mesoporous CeO_2 , MnO_2 , In_2O_3 , NiO and Co_3O_4 respectively. In a typical synthesis, 16 mmol of metal nitrate was dissolved in 8 ml water and mixed with a suspension of 4 g KIT-6 in 50 ml toluene. The mixture was stirred at 338 K to completely evaporate toluene. After the evaporation, the precipitated product was collected and dried at 333 K overnight, followed by calcination at 573 K for 6 h. The silica template was completely removed by several washing steps using 2 M aqueous NaOH solution. The filtered product was dried at 323 K.

2.1.3 Synthesis of the SBA-15 mesoporous silica support

SBA-15 mesoporous silica support was synthesized from tetraethyl orthosilicate (TEOS) by a soft template method. 8 g of pre-melted Pluronic-123, 60 ml of distilled water and 240 ml of 2 M HCl solution were mixed together at 313 K for 2 hours. After the dissolution of P-123, 17 g of TEOS was added dropwise to the mixture at 313 K and continuous stirring was applied for 20 hours. Stirring was continued for 1.5 days at 333 K. After the synthesis, the product was filtered and washed with distilled water. Then, the product was heated to 373 K with a heating rate of 2 K min⁻¹ and aged for 5 hours, then the temperature was increased to 823 K with a heating rate of 1 K min⁻¹. After 4 hours of calcination, the product is ready for further use.

2.1.4 Synthesis of Mesoporous metal oxide and SBA-15 supported Pt catalysts

To fabricate supported catalysts, the ethanol suspension of Pt nanoparticles to reach a loading of 0.5 wt % and the different supports were mixed together in ethanol and sonicated in an ultrasonic bath (40 kHz, 80 W) for 3 hours. The supported nanoparticles were collected by centrifugation. The products were washed with ethanol three times before they were dried at 353 K overnight. The required amount of Pt nanoparticle suspension was calculated based on ICP measurements.

2. 2 Characterization of catalysts

2.2.1 Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM)

Imaging of the all the samples were carried out using an FEI TECNAI G2 20 X-Twin high-resolution transmission electron microscope (equipped with electron diffraction) operating at an accelerating voltage of 200 kV. The samples were drop-cast onto carbon film coated copper grids from ethanol suspension.

2.2.2 Powder X-ray Diffraction (XRD)

XRD studies of all samples were performed on a Rigaku MiniFlex II instrument with a Ni-filtered CuK α source in the range of $2\theta = 10-80^\circ$.

2.2.3 N₂ adsorption-desorption isotherm measurements

The specific surface area (BET method), the pore size distribution and the total pore volume were determined by the BJH method using a Quantachrome NOVA 2200 gas sorption

analyzer by N₂ gas adsorption/desorption at 77 K. Before the measurements, the samples were pre-treated in a vacuum (~ 0.1 mbar) at 473 K for 2 hours.

2.2.4 Temperature Programmed Reduction (TPR)

The temperature-programmed reduction (TPR) was carried out in a BELCAT-A apparatus using a reactor (quartz tube with 9 mm outer diameter) that was externally heated. Before the measurements, the catalyst samples were treated in oxygen at 673 K for 30 min. Thereafter, the sample was cooled in flowing Ar to room temperature. The oxidized sample was flushed with N₂ containing 10% H₂, the reactor was heated linearly at a rate of 5 K/min from 323 K to 773 K and the H₂ consumption was detected by a thermal conductivity detector (TCD).

2.2.5 Hydrogenation of carbon-dioxide in a continuous flow reactor

Before the catalytic experiments, the as-received catalysts were oxidized in O₂ atmosphere at 573 K for 30 min to remove the surface contaminants as well as the PVP capping agent and thereafter were reduced in H₂ at 573 K for 60 min.

Catalytic reactions were carried out at atmospheric pressure in a fixed-bed continuous-flow reactor (200 mm long with 8 mm i.d.), which was heated externally. The dead volume of the reactor was filled with quartz beads. The operating temperature was controlled by a thermocouple placed inside the oven close to the reactor wall, to assure precise temperature measurement. For catalytic studies, small fragments (about 1 mm) of slightly compressed pellets were used. Typically, the reactor filling contained 150 mg of catalyst. In the reacting gas mixture, the CO₂: H₂ molar ratio was 1:4, if not denoted otherwise. The CO₂: H₂ mixture was fed with the help of mass flow controllers (Aalborg), the total flow rate was 50 ml/min. The reacting gas mixture flow entered and left the reactor through an externally heated tube in order to avoid condensation. The analysis of the products and reactants was performed with an Agilent 6890 N gas chromatograph using HP-PLOTQ column. The gases were detected simultaneously by thermal conductivity (TC) and flame ionization (FI) detectors. The CO₂ was transformed by a methanizer to methane and it was also analysed by FID.

2.2.6 Dry reforming of methane in a continuous flow reactor

We used the same reaction conditions as that used for CO₂ hydrogenation reaction except that the CH₄: CO₂ ratio was maintained at 1:1 with the total flow rate of 60ml/min.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 N₂ adsorption-desorption analysis

The N₂ adsorption-desorption isotherms of the catalysts are shown in Fig. 1. All catalysts exhibit a high surface area (80 – 133 m²g⁻¹ for transition metal oxides and 786 m²g⁻¹ for SBA-15 oxide), as well as type IV adsorption isotherms with hysteresis loop at the high relative pressure region, which is a distinctive feature of capillary condensation in mesopores [84]. The specific surface area, pore diameter and pore volume of all catalysts are presented in Table 1. CeO₂ presented a specific surface area of 133 m²g⁻¹ and pore volume of 0.2134 cm³g⁻¹ which is very high compared to those obtained by conventional precipitation method [85]. MnO₂ exhibits hysteresis loop in the relative pressure range 0.3 to 1 with type IV isotherm and H3 type hysteresis indicates the presence of mesopores in the sample [86].

In₂O₃ exhibits type IV adsorption isotherm according to IUPAC classification [87]. Co₃O₄ with a specific surface area of 94.691 m²g⁻¹ and pore volume of 0.1218 cm³g⁻¹ exhibits H3 type hysteresis loops indicating the presence of slit-shaped pores [88]. NiO displayed a specific surface area of 107.059 m²g⁻¹ and pore volume of 0.1922 cm³g⁻¹. NiO exposes a type IV adsorption isotherm with an H3 type hysteresis loop in the relative pressure range of 0.3-1.0 [89]. SBA-15 exhibited high BET surface area of 786.3 m²g⁻¹ and pore volume of 0.7002 cm³g⁻¹ which is comparable with other studies [90]. SBA-15 displayed type IV adsorption isotherm with an H1 type hysteresis loop in the relative pressure range of 0.5-0.7 which is indicative of narrow pore size distribution according to IUPAC classification [91].

Table 1. *Adsorption properties (specific surface area, pore diameter and pore volume) of the catalysts*

Sample	BET surface area (m ² g ⁻¹)	Pore diameter (nm)	Pore volume (cm ³ g ⁻¹)
CeO ₂	133.231	3.58	0.2134
Co ₃ O ₄	94.691	3.58	0.1218
In ₂ O ₃	88.000	3.80	0.1240
MnO ₂	136.973	3.60	0.2141
NiO	107.059	3.86	0.1922
SBA-15	786.370	4.00	0.7002

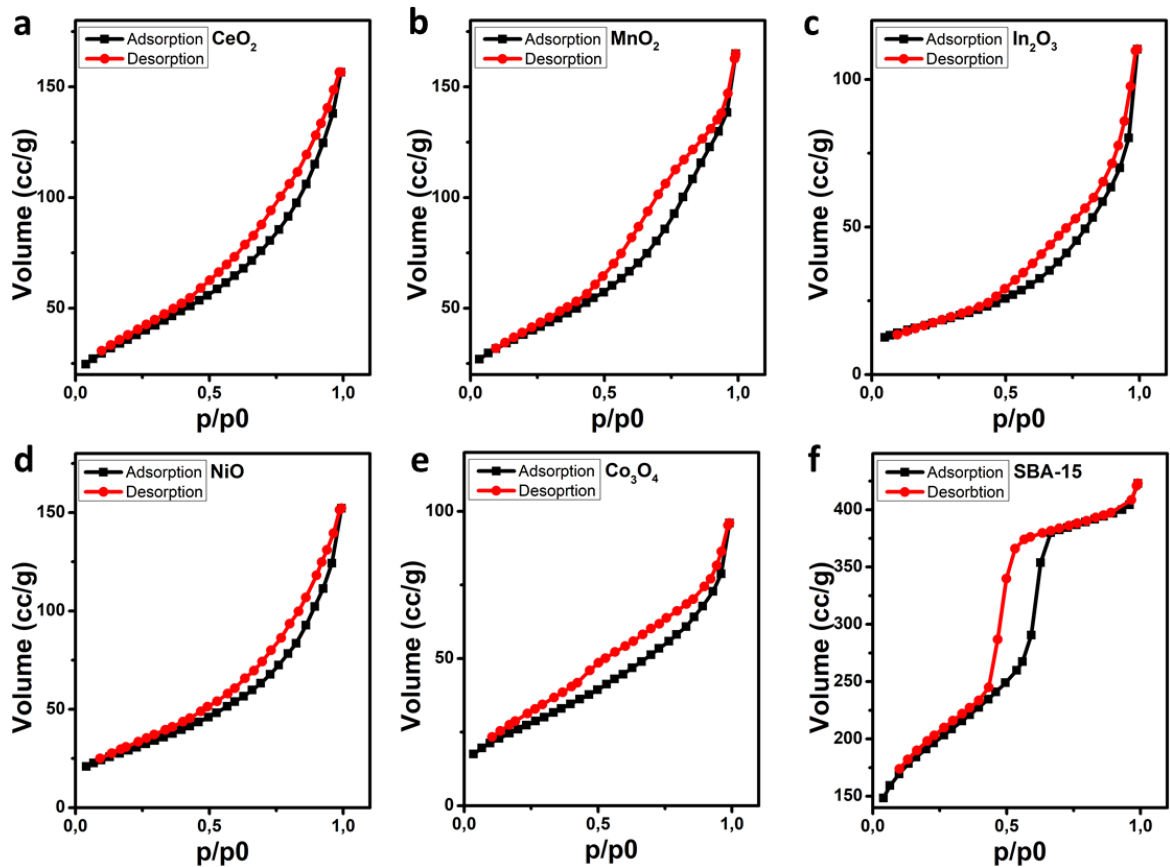


Fig. 1. N_2 adsorption desorption isotherm of (a) CeO_2 (b) MnO_2 (c) In_2O_3 (d) NiO (e) Co_3O_4 (f) $SBA-15$

3.2 X-ray Diffraction

The XRD patterns of mesoporous CeO_2 , MnO_2 , In_2O_3 , NiO , and Co_3O_4 shows the presence of low intensity and elongated peaks characteristic for nanostructured materials with low crystallinity (Fig. 2). Fig. 2(a) shows the XRD pattern of CeO_2 . The peaks at 28.6° , 33.1° , 47.6° , 56.3° , 59.3° , 69.3° and 76.8° were corresponded to the (111), (200), (220), (311), (222), (400) and (331) planes (JCPDS No. 34-0394), respectively of the face-centered cubic structure of CeO_2 ($a = 5.411 \text{ \AA}$, space group: $fm3m$) [92]. XRD pattern of MnO_2 is shown in Fig. 2(b). Diffraction peaks at 28.8° , 37.2° , 42.7° and 56.5° corresponds to crystal planes of (110), (101), (111) and (211), respectively (JCPDS No. 44-0141) [93]. It can be indexed to the tetragonal crystal structure of α - MnO_2 . The diffraction pattern clearly corroborates the phase purity of the prepared α - MnO_2 . XRD pattern of In_2O_3 is shown in Fig. 2(c). The diffraction peaks at 21.4° , 30.6° , 35.4° , 51° , 60.6° corresponds to crystal planes of (211), (222), (400), (440), and (622) respectively for In_2O_3 cubic structure [94].

XRD pattern of NiO is shown in Fig. 2 (d). The diffraction peaks at 37.2°, 43.2°, 62.8°, 75.2° and 79.3° were indexed to (111), (200), (220), (311) and (222) planes respectively. It can be indexed to the face-centered cubic NiO phase (Fm-3m, JCPDS No. 47-1049) [95]. Fig. 2(e) shows the XRD pattern of Co₃O₄. The peaks at 19°, 31.3°, 36.7°, 38.6°, 44.8°, 55.3°, 59.2° and 65.35° corresponds to crystal planes of (111), (220), (311), (222), (400), (422), (511) and (440) respectively for Co₃O₄ cubic spinel structure (JCPDS card No.43-1003) [96].

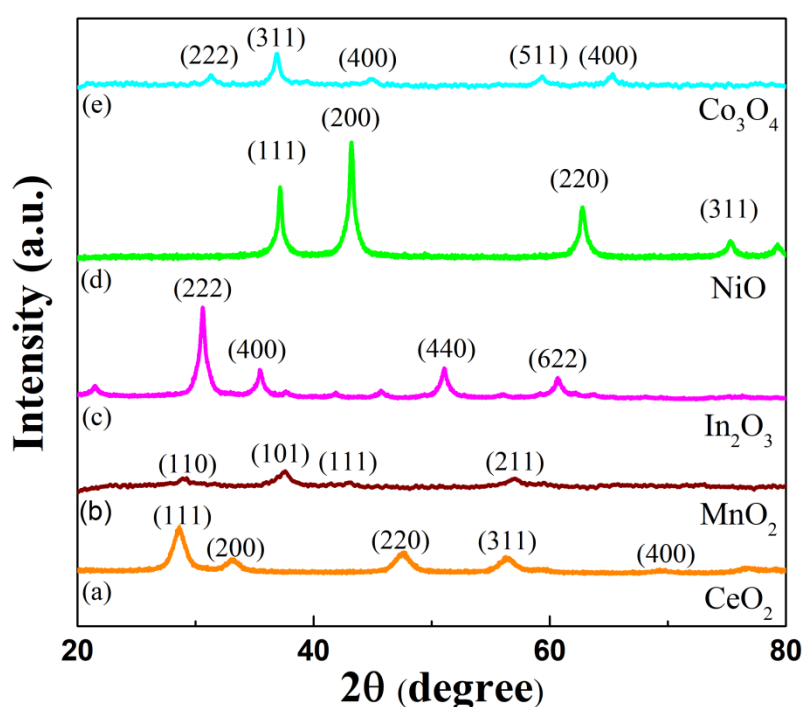


Fig. 2. XRD patterns of (a) CeO₂ (b) MnO₂ (c) In₂O₃ (d) NiO (e) Co₃O₄

3.3 Transmission Electron Microscopy

The morphology of as-synthesised samples was examined by Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM). Fig. 3 shows the TEM images of the mesoporous oxides. The ordered pore structure is presented for all oxides, where the average pore size is 2-5 nm and the wall thickness is ~ 5-7 nm. The length of the pore structure can be varied from 100 nm to a several hundreds of nanometer. Fig. 3(f) shows the TEM image of the SBA-15. The image clearly shows well-ordered mesoporous hexagonal arrays.

TEM images of the 0.5 % Pt nanoparticles anchored onto the surface of the mesoporous CeO₂, MnO₂, NiO, Co₃O₄ and SBA-15 are shown in Fig. 4. The surface dispersion of the Pt nanoparticles is homogeneous without presence of aggregated Pt nanoparticles. The size of the

Pt nanoparticles was 4.8 ± 1.2 nm with narrow size distribution while the shape of the particles was mostly polyhedral with multiple facets close to a spherical structure.

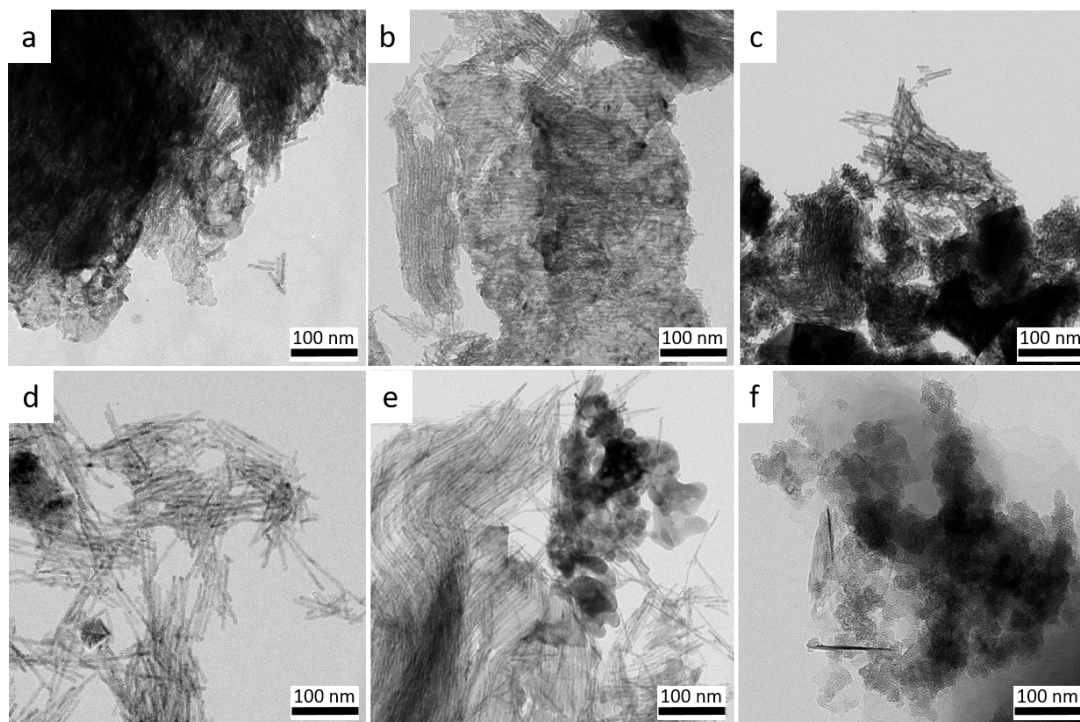


Fig. 3. TEM images of free-standing mesoporous (a) CeO₂ (b) MnO₂ (c) In₂O₃ (d) NiO (e) Co₃O₄ and (f) SBA-15

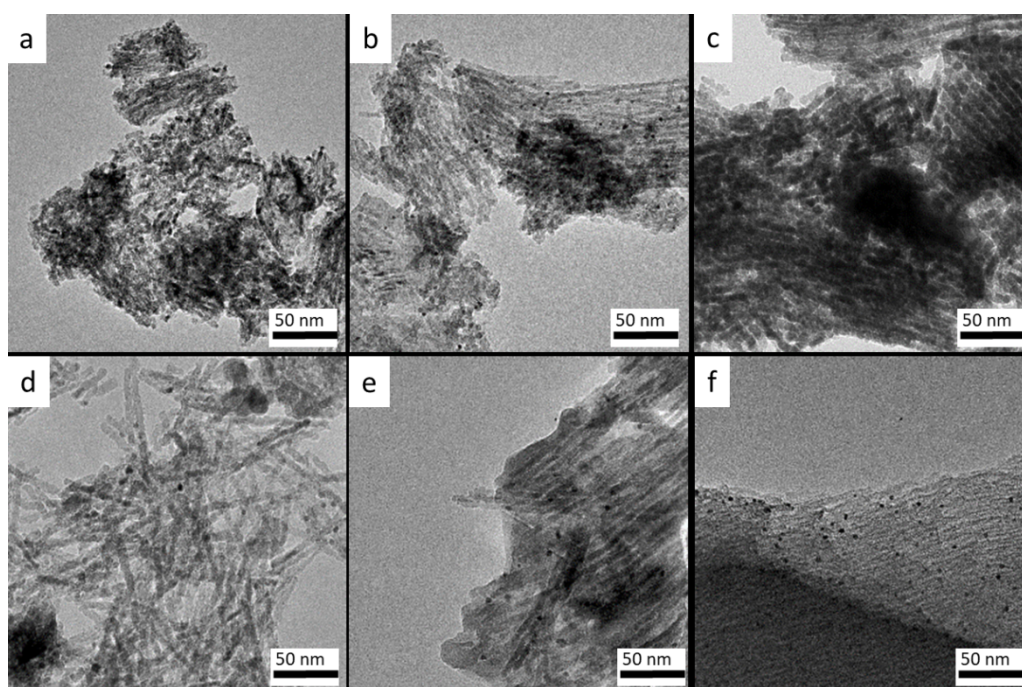


Fig. 4. TEM images of (a) 0.5 % Pt/CeO₂ (b) 0.5 % Pt/MnO₂ (c) 0.5 % Pt/In₂O₃ (d) 0.5 % Pt/NiO (e) 0.5 % Pt/Co₃O₄ (f) 0.5 % Pt/SBA-15

3.4 Temperature-Programmed Reduction

The reducibility properties of catalysts were tested by Temperature Programmed Reduction by Hydrogen gas (H_2 -TPR) and the results are presented in Fig. 5. The total H_2 consumed and the reduction temperatures during the H_2 -TPR is presented in Table 2. The reducibility of the mesoporous metal oxides differ from most oxide type used in the literature. The differences can be interpreted due to the structural differences. For CeO_2 and Pt/CeO_2 , no characteristic reduction peak was observed in our studied temperature region of 323-773 K, only a small reduction peak can be detected at around 391 K which may be identified as a partial reduction of surface layer. However, pure CeO_2 reduction are observed with two peaks in the TPR as reported in the literature [97, 98]. The first peak at ~532 K can be attributed to the reduction of surface oxygen species and the second peak at ~670 K can be attributed to the reduction of bulk lattice oxygen of CeO_2 . When Pt nanoparticles are also presented on the surface of the supports, an additional small peak appeared at 391 K showing the presence of the metal oxide reducing effect of the Pt nanoparticles.

MnO_2 shows two reduction peaks at 540 and 630 K with a total H_2 consumption of 7.2 mmol/g (Table 2). The lower temperature reduction peak can be attributed to the reduction of MnO_2 to Mn_3O_4 and the peak at the higher temperature is due to the reduction of Mn_3O_4 to MnO [99]. In the case of the Pt/MnO_2 catalysts, however, one intense reduction peak at 440 K with 5.7 mmol/g H_2 consumption was observed showing that a large part of MnO_2 reduced at a lower temperature due to SMSI between Pt and MnO_2 . This is also in consistent to the reduced intensity of the peak at 530 K. The shift towards lower temperature for MnO_2 after Pt loading can be attributed to activation of H_2 on the pre-reduced Pt and the spillover of this activated hydrogen on MnO_2 which largely promoted the reduction of MnO_2 [100, 101].

For In_2O_3 and Pt/In_2O_3 (not shown), no characteristic reduction peak was observed in our studied temperature region of 323-773 K. However, pure In_2O_3 reduces to metallic indium around 973 K as reported in the literature [102].

NiO shows a reduction peak at 650-767 K which can be attributed to the reduction of NiO to metallic nickel [69, 103, 104]. Pt/NiO show the red shift of the reduction temperature of the nickel oxide reduction showing the presence of the promoting effect of Pt on the reduction of NiO and the reduction of NiO_x species [69].

The TPR profile of Co_3O_4 shows two peaks. The low-temperature peak at 563 K can be attributed to the reduction of surface Co^{3+} to Co^{2+} and the high-temperature peak at 667 K is due to the reduction of Co^{2+} to metallic cobalt [69, 98, 105]. For $\text{Pt}/\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$ catalysts, all the reduction peaks are shifted to lower temperatures and the catalyst showed a low temperature peak at 387 K and a high-temperature peak at 533 and 606 K. The decrease of reduction temperature for $\text{Pt}/\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$ compared to Co_3O_4 can be attributed to the spillover of H_2 from Pt to Co_3O_4 [106] as well as the oxygen removing behavior of Pt from the oxide structure [65].

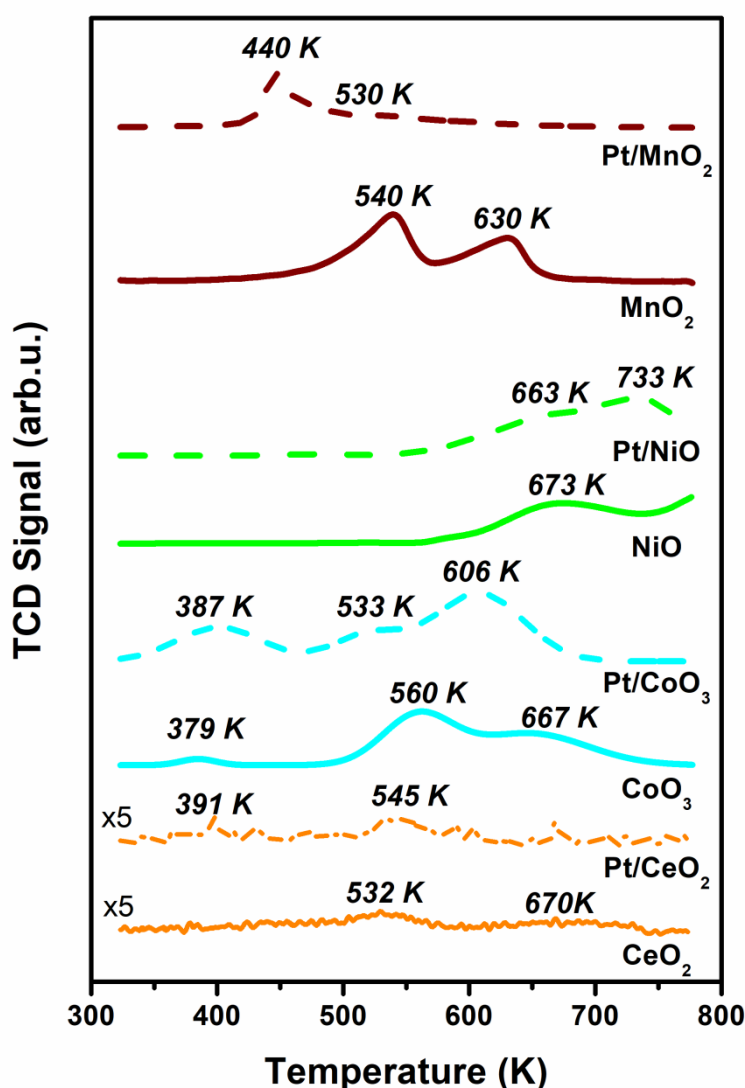


Fig.5 H_2 -TPR profiles CeO_2 and 0.5 % Pt/CeO_2 , Co_3O_4 and 0.5 % $\text{Pt}/\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$, NiO and 0.5 % Pt/NiO , MnO_2 and 0.5 % Pt/MnO_2

Table 2. *H₂ temperature-programmed reduction data for the catalysts*

Catalysts	H₂-TPR	
	Peak positions (K)	H₂ consumption (mmol g⁻¹)
MnO₂	540. 630	7.2
Pt/MnO₂	633 (shoulder)	5.7
NiO	535. 667	7.2
Pt/NiO	633	8.7
Co₃O₄	560. 667	8.3
Pt/Co₃O₄	119. 338	11.6
CeO₂	527	0.5
Pt/CeO₂	391. 545	0.5

3.5 Catalytic activity tests

3.5.1 CO₂ hydrogenation reaction

The catalytic efficiencies of CeO₂, MnO₂, In₂O₃, NiO, and Co₃O₄ for CO₂ hydrogenation is shown in Fig. 6 (a), Fig. 7 (a) and Table 3. The major products obtained were CO and CH₄ besides water. The catalytic activity for CO₂ hydrogenation was tested in the temperature range of 475 -675 K. The conversion of CO₂ was increased with the increasing reaction temperature with significant conversion started only at a temperature above 523 K. The conversion reached 80.6% over NiO and 58.4% over Co₃O₄ at 638 K. The high conversion over NiO and Co₃O₄ can be attributed to the presence of Ni/NiO_x and Co/CoO_x structure under reaction conditions [65]. However, further increasing temperature leads to a decrease in conversion presumably due to coke formation on the surface of the catalyst as well as the over-reduction of the oxide resulted in a non-optimal metal/metal-oxide interphase. The other catalysts such as CeO₂, MnO₂, and In₂O₃ do not show any significant conversion. The inactivity can be attributed to the difficulty of the reduction of such metals from their oxides as well as the sintering of these metal oxides under reaction conditions as indicated by X-ray diffraction (Fig. 12.).

The effect of the loading of the 4.8 nm Pt nanoparticles on the catalytic performances of CeO₂, MnO₂, In₂O₃, NiO, Co₃O₄, and SBA-15 was also investigated in the range of 473-673

K (Fig. 6 (b) and Fig. 7 (b)). In the case of the Pt/NiO catalysts, loading of Pt nanoparticles show no significant promotion of the activity of the catalysts. This interesting phenomena is not unusual. In an earlier study we found that Pt has a small effect of Pt/NiO activity compared to the pure NiO support where the 70 % of the surface of the nickel-oxide support was in a metallic state under reaction condition which was promoted by the reduction by the Pt nanoparticles [65]. In this study, the 0.5 % Pt nanoparticle concentration of the catalysts resulted in a surface mixture of Pt/PtO_x/Ni/NiO_x which is not as effective in catalysis as the pure Ni/NiO_x evolved at the surface of the Pt-free mesoporous nickel-oxide under the conditions of CO₂ hydrogenation.

The catalytic activity of Pt/Co₃O₄ catalysts was ~1.5 times higher compared to the pure Co₃O₄ catalysts at 623 K. Ouyang et al prepared Pt/Co₃O₄ and found that the presence of metallic Co after reduction at 473 K had strong hydrogenation ability which in turn leads to higher CO₂ conversion [106]. Here, the formation of the mixed cobalt-oxide structure with the metallic cobalt and Pt on the surface are resulted in a higher activity.

Conversion profile for Pt/CeO₂ and Pt/In₂O₃ are almost identical to the Pt-free catalysts. However, in the case of Pt/MnO₂, the conversion values can be observed as ~20 % at 623 K, which is ~20 times more compared to the catalytic activity of pure MnO₂.

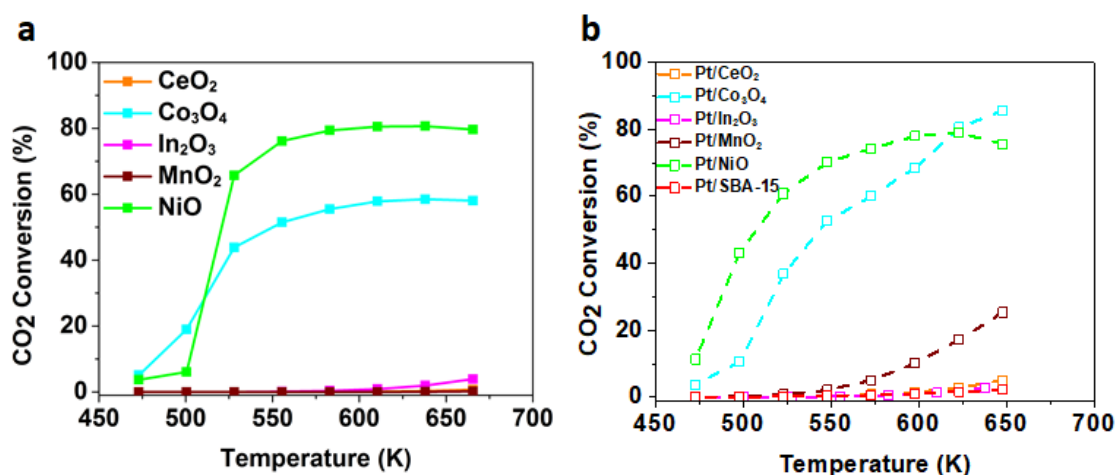


Fig. 6. Conversion of CO₂ as a function of temperature in the CO₂ hydrogenation reaction over (a) Pt-free mesoporous oxides and (b) Pt-loaded mesoporous oxides

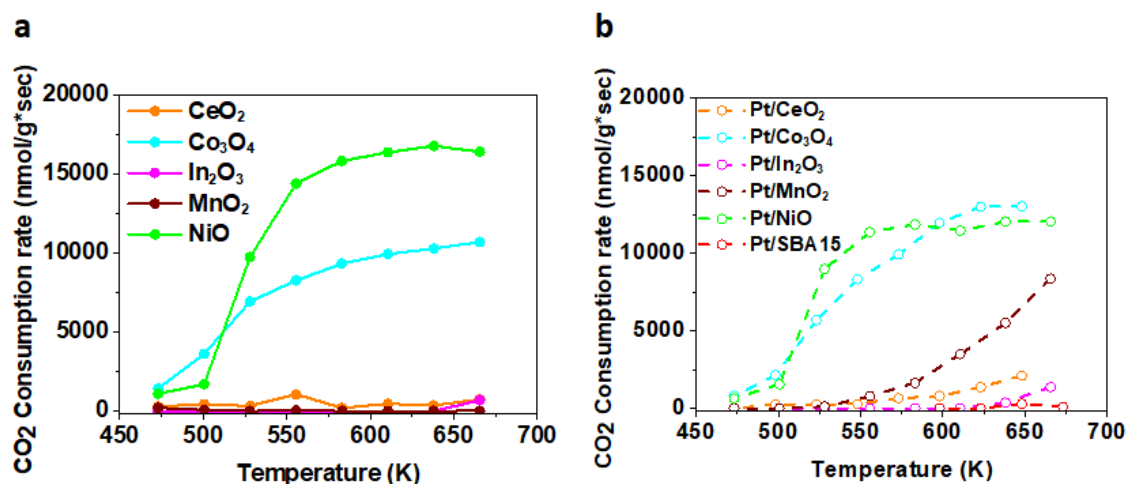


Fig. 7. CO₂ consumption rate as a function of temperature over (a) pure mesoporous oxides and (b) Pt-loaded mesoporous oxide catalysts in CO₂ hydrogenation reaction

Table 3. The highest CO₂ consumption rate (nmol/g.s) with adherent temperature in CO₂ hydrogenation reaction

Catalysts	Temperature (K)	Maximum CO ₂ consumption rate (nmol/g.s)
CeO ₂	555.5	1058.96
Pt/CeO ₂	648	2106.14
MnO ₂	473	206.06
Pt/MnO ₂	665.5	8353.49
In ₂ O ₃	665.5	683.49
Pt/In ₂ O ₃	665.5	1371.72
NiO	638	16767.55
Pt/NiO	638	12038.21
Co ₃ O ₄	665.5	10689.22
Pt/Co ₃ O ₄	648	13007.98
Pt/SBA-15	648	294.11

Fig. 8 (a) and Table 4. show the selectivity values of the CO₂ hydrogenation toward CH₄ as a function of reaction temperature. CH₄ selectivity of NiO, Pt/NiO, Co₃O₄ and Pt/Co₃O₄ was 100%, 100%, 93.06%, and 100%, respectively at 473 K. Both Pt-free and Pt promoted NiO and Co₃O₄ showed almost similar selectivity towards CH₄. Ouyang et al found that CH₄ selectivity was higher over cobalt catalyst due to the presence of metallic Co under reaction condition which had strong hydrogenation ability [106]. However, pure CeO₂, MnO₂, In₂O₃

and Pt promoted CeO_2 , MnO_2 , In_2O_3 and SBA-15 showed zero selectivity at lower temperatures (i.e. 473 K and 573 K) and CeO_2 , Pt/CeO_2 showed slightly increased selectivity at higher temperature (i.e. at 673 K).

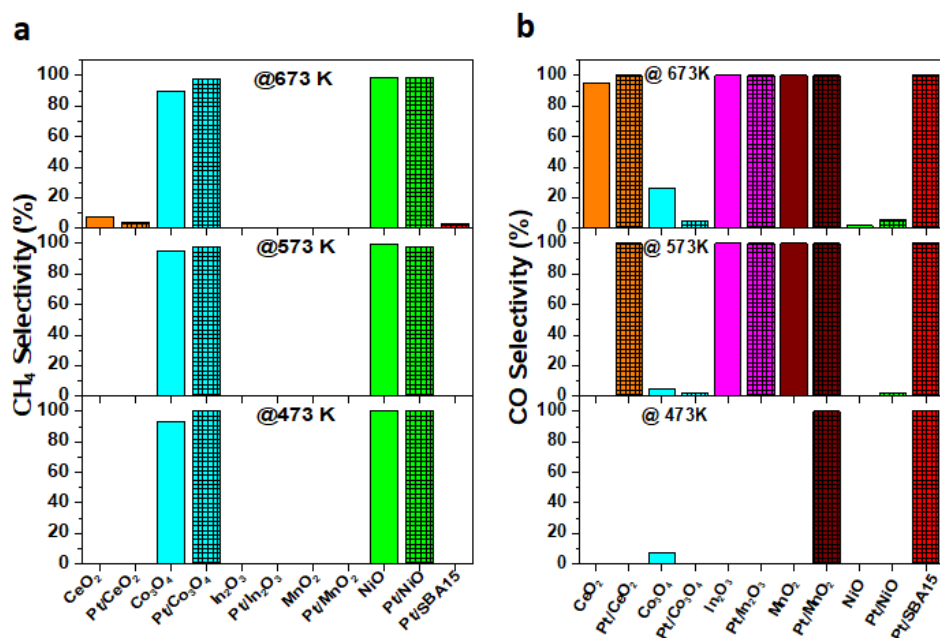


Fig. 8. Selectivity towards (a) CH_4 and (b) CO at 473 K, 573 K and 673 K

Fig. 8 (b) and Table 4. show CO selectivity of the catalysts. Pure CeO_2 does not show any activity thus selectivity at low temperatures (i.e. 473 and 573 K). However, it displayed 95 % selectivity at 673 K. The high CO selectivity at 673K may be due to the operation of RWGS reaction [107]. Pt/CeO_2 shows no selectivity at 473 K however, 100% selectivity was observed at 573 K and 673 K. This is due to the presence of highly reduced platinum and Ce^{3+} ions in the Pt/CeO_2 catalysts. A similar trend was observed in CuO/CeO_2 catalyst [108]. Similar behaviour was observed for Pt-free and Pt promoted MnO_2 and In_2O_3 catalysts. However, pure and Pt promoted NiO and Co_3O_4 show less CO selectivity. Pt promoted SBA-15 showed 100% selectivity towards CO. In general, both Ni- and Co-based catalysts are the most active catalysts as well as they promotes CH_4 selectivity rather than CO in the CO_2 hydrogenation reaction at 473-673 K as observed in earlier studies [109].

Table 4. *Catalytic performances over different catalysts for CO₂ hydrogenation*

Catalyst	Temperature (K)	Conversion %	Selectivity %					
			CO			CH ₄		
			473 K	573 K	673 K	473 K	573 K	673 K
CeO ₂	665.5	0.69	0.0000	0.0000	95.154	0.0000	0.0000	7.4848
Pt/CeO ₂	648	5.08	0.0000	100.00	100.00	0.0000	0.0000	3.3994
MnO ₂	665.5	0.15	0.0000	100.00	100.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pt/MnO ₂	648	25.3	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
In ₂ O ₃	665.5	3.89	0.0000	100.00	100.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pt/In ₂ O ₃	648	5.82	0.0000	100.00	100.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
NiO	665.5	80.66	0.0000	0.4862	1.6314	100.00	99.513	98.440
Pt/NiO	648	78.96	0.0000	2.4043	5.1445	100.00	97.595	98.378
Co ₃ O ₄	665.5	58.48	6.9356	4.6151	26.520	93.064	95.384	89.818
Pt/Co ₃ O ₄	648	85.64	0.0000	2.4043	4.8735	100.00	97.595	97.622
Pt/SBA-15	673	3.15	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.0000	0.0000	2.4907

3.5.2. Dry reforming of CO₂ with methane

The performance of the catalysts was also evaluated for dry reforming reaction with a CH₄:CO₂ ratio of 1:1 in the temperature range of 473-673 K. The conversion as well as the consumption rate of CO₂ and CH₄ over different catalysts are shown in Fig. 9. and Fig. 10. respectively. CH₄ and CO₂ were converted to syngas with no noticeable by-products (e.g., alkane and alkene). The CO₂ and CH₄ conversions increased with increasing reaction temperature, as the DRM reaction is endothermic in nature. The comparison was made between the pristine supports and supports loaded with 0.5 % platinum nanoparticles. We observed in almost all reactions that platinum metal loaded support showed higher conversion compared to pristine mesoporous metal-oxides. This can be attributed to the synergetic metal support interaction as well as the high C-O and C-H breaking affinity of the Pt. Conversion of CH₄ is almost similar to CO₂ conversion for most of the catalysts, however in the case of pure NiO the conversion of CO₂ is greater than CH₄, which is showing the presence of a C-H activation favouring catalysts.

The CO₂ and CH₄ conversions increased with increasing reaction temperature, as the DRM reaction is endothermic in nature. The bare CeO₂ does not show any activity in DRM reaction. The activities of the catalysts can be ranked as NiO > Pt/Co₃O₄ > Pt/NiO > Co₃O₄ > Pt/CeO₂ > Pt/In₂O₃ > Pt/MnO₂ > In₂O₃ > MnO₂ > CeO₂. Pt-free NiO showed the highest performance among the tested catalysts with the high CH₄ conversion (65.03%) and CO₂

conversion (39.3%). The high conversion efficiency of NiO compared to other catalysts is ascribed to the formation of metallic Ni under reaction conditions resulted in a Ni/NiO_x structure, which promotes the thermal decomposition of CH₄ as it was observed in the case of CO₂ hydrogenation reaction. The expected promotion effect of Pt was also unobservable in dry reforming of CO₂.

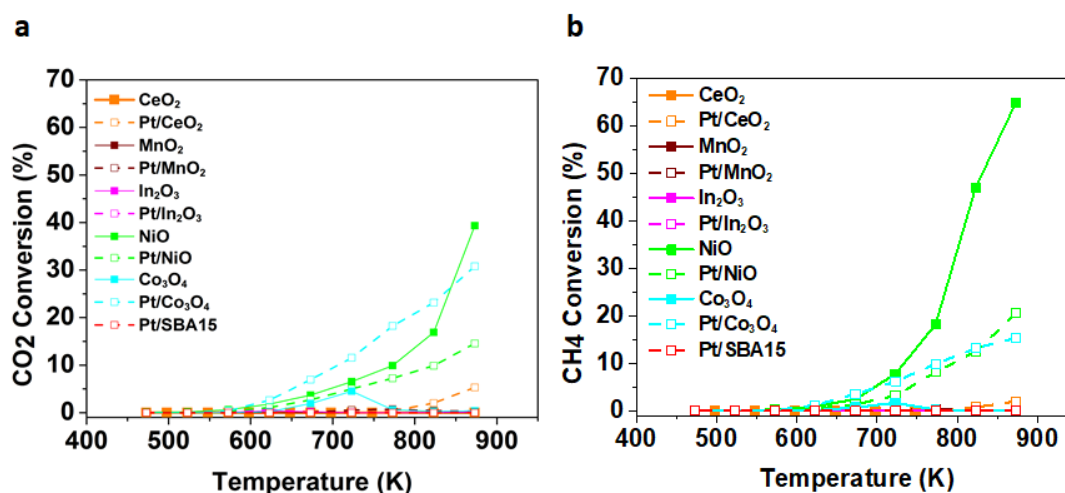


Fig. 9. (a) CO₂ and (b) CH₄ conversion of dry reforming of CO₂ with methane over Pt-free and Pt-loaded mesoporous oxide catalysts as a function of temperature

0.5 % Pt/Co₃O₄ catalysts showed amazingly higher CO₂ (30.8%) and CH₄ (15.3%) conversion compared to pure Co₃O₄ (0.38% CO₂ conversion and 0.14% CH₄ conversion). This is due to the presence of Pt⁰ and Co⁰ species as well as a special synergetic of Pt/Co/CoO_x structure in Pt/Co₃O₄. Besides, the presence of Pt⁰ which was found to have higher hydrogen dissociation ability is responsible for the higher CO₂ and CH₄ conversion in contrast to Co₃O₄ in which only Co⁰ species are present [110].

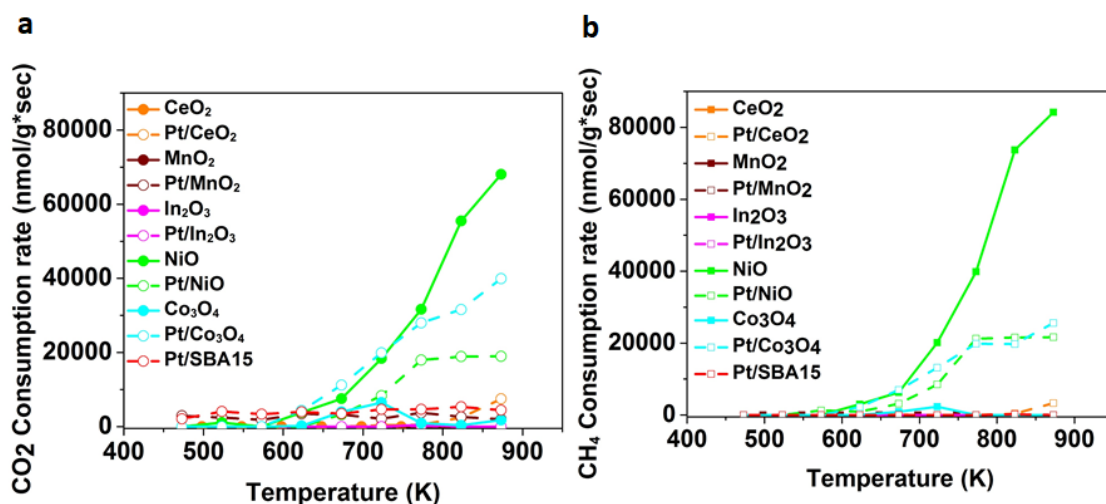


Fig. 10. Consumption rate of (a) CO_2 and (b) CH_4 of dry reforming of CO_2 with methane over Pt-free and Pt-loaded mesoporous oxide catalysts as a function of temperature

The maximum CO_2 consumption rate of all catalysts can be seen in Table 5. We can see that the CO_2 consumption rate was much greater on NiO compared to other pure or Pt promoted catalysts. This activity is competing well with other catalysts used in dry reforming of CO_2 with methane [69, 111] .

Table 6. The maximum CO_2 consumption rate (nmol/g.s)

Catalysts	Temperature (K)	Maximum CO_2 consumption rate (nmol/g.s)
CeO ₂	473-873	0
Pt/CeO ₂	873	7475.62
MnO ₂	773	1596.58
Pt/MnO ₂	623	3459.09
In ₂ O ₃	773	436.21
Pt/In ₂ O ₃	773	171.25
NiO	873	68036.13
Pt/NiO	873	18963.52
Co ₃ O ₄	723	6457.78
Pt/Co ₃ O ₄	823	39935.44
Pt/SBA-15	823	5324.80

Fig. 11. compares the H_2/CO ratio in the temperature range of 673-973 K for dry reforming of CO_2 with methane over the mesoporous oxide-based catalysts. The H_2/CO ratio

is generally higher at high temperature, which is due to the occurrence of carbon gasification, methane decomposition, and water-gas shift reaction, which produces H_2 . The H_2/CO ratio was between 0 and 2.2 over the entire range of temperature studied (673 – 973 K). The values of H_2/CO ratio were found to be less than unity notably at low temperature. This can be attributed to the occurrence of RWGS and methanation reactions at low temperatures, which consumes H_2 . The ratio decreases at higher temperatures (at 873 and 973 K) which may be due to the sintering of metal particles as well as the carbon deposition [112]. As the temperature increases further, the DRM reaction become significant as per the thermodynamic point of view. However, Pt/SBA-15 displayed almost zero H_2/CO ratio at low temperatures (673 K, 773K and 873 K) but it displays higher H_2/CO ratio (2.2) at 973 K. This may be due to the oxidation of carbon deposition by the platinum metal that is well dispersed on the high surface area SBA-15 support [113]. However, the activity of Pt/SBA-15 catalysts was really low. On the other hand, pure NiO catalyst show H_2/CO ratio of close to the optimal unity value showing the presence of a highly active and selective catalyst.

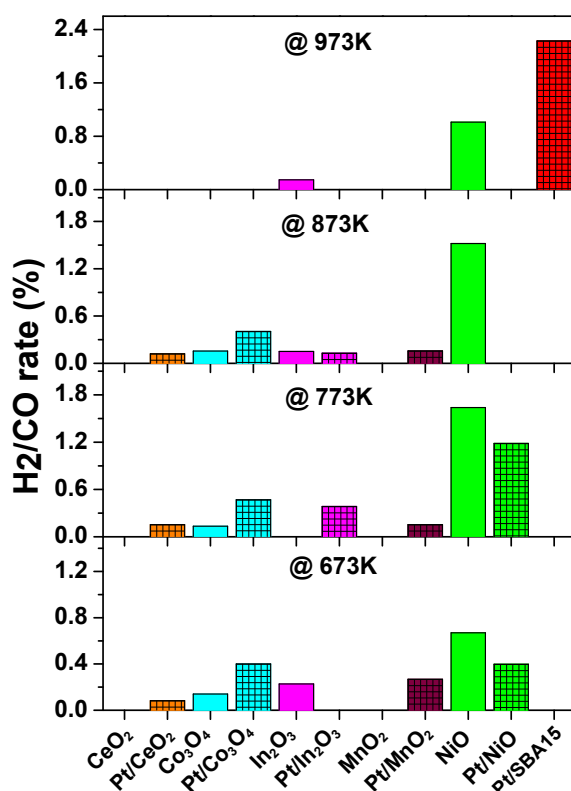


Fig. 11. Effect of temperature on H_2/CO ratio for various catalysts in dry reforming of CO_2

3.7 Post-reaction catalyst properties

The crystal structures of the used catalysts after CO₂ hydrogenation reaction were investigated by XRD. The diffraction patterns obtained for the used catalysts along with as-prepared catalysts are presented in Fig. 12. and Fig. 13 for CO₂ hydrogenation and CO₂ methanation respectively. The peak intensity in the XRD pattern of spent CeO₂ increased compared to the fresh catalyst which may be due to partial sintering of the catalysts under the experimental conditions [114]. However, MnO₂, In₂O₃, NiO, and Co₃O₄ present new peaks after reactions showing the phase transition of the supports under reaction conditions. The spent MnO₂ catalyst shows peaks at $2\theta = 35^\circ, 40.7^\circ, 58.7^\circ, 70.2^\circ$ and 73.8° can be indexed to (111), (200), (220), (311) and (222) planes respectively of MnO phase (JCPDS No.78-0424) [115] with less intense peaks at $32.5^\circ, 36.09^\circ, 44.3^\circ, 51.2^\circ$ and can be indexed to the (103), (211), (220) and (105) planes of Mn₃O₄ (JCPDS No. 24-0734) tetragonal phase. The spent In₂O₃ shows peaks at $32.9^\circ, 39.1^\circ$ and 54.4° can be indexed to (011), (110) and (112) planes respectively of tetragonal phase of metallic indium (JCPDS No. 05-0642) [116]. The spent NiO show peaks at $2\theta = 44.5^\circ, 51.8^\circ$ and 76.3° can be indexed to (111), (200) and (220) planes respectively for metallic nickel (JCPDS No. 65-2865) [117]. The spent Co₃O₄ catalyst shows peaks at $2\theta = 44.2^\circ, 51.5^\circ$ and 75.9° can be indexed to (111), (200) and (220) planes of metallic cobalt (JCPDS No. 05-0727) [118].

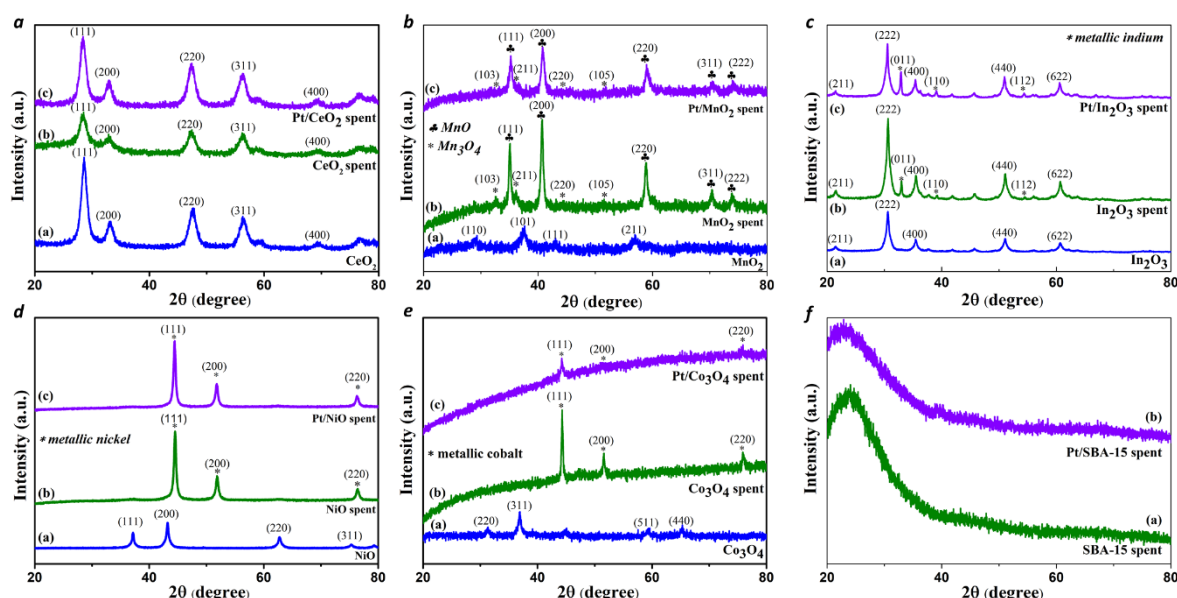


Fig. 12. XRD patterns of fresh as well as spent Pt-free and Pt-loaded supports (a) CeO₂ (b) MnO₂ (c) In₂O₃ (d) NiO (e) Co₃O₄ (f) SBA-15 after CO₂ hydrogenation.

The diffraction patterns obtained for the used catalysts after dry reforming of CO₂ with methane along with fresh catalysts are presented in Fig. 13. The spent catalysts after DRM reaction showed similar XRD pattern as that of the spent catalyst obtained from CO₂ hydrogenation reaction except that the intensities of peaks are weak. The presence of Mn₃O₄ in MnO₂, metallic Ni in NiO and metallic Co in Co₃O₄ under reaction conditions are responsible for their higher catalytic activities in both CO₂ hydrogenation and DRM reactions.

Fig. 13. XRD patterns of fresh as well as spent Pt-free and Pt-loaded supports (a) CeO_2 (b) MnO_2 (c) In_2O_3 (d) NiO (e) Co_3O_4 (f) SBA-15 after DRM reaction

4. Conclusions

Pt-free NiO exhibited the highest catalytic activity for both CO₂ hydrogenation and methanation reactions. The enhanced catalytic properties can be ascribed to the presence of metallic Ni and the optimal concentration of Ni/NiO_x under reaction conditions. In the case of cobalt based catalysts, Pt/Co₃O₄ showed higher catalytic activity than the corresponding Co₃O₄ mesoporous structures for both CO₂ activation reactions. The high catalytic activities of

Pt/Co₃O₄ resulted from the presence of metallic cobalt, Pt nanoparticles as well as synergistic effect between the Pt and Co₃O₄ mesoporous structures.

The results presented in this study show the importance of the nature of oxide supports as well as the significance of formed interphases under reaction conditions. The presence of Pt nanoparticles is not sufficient in certain cases. The efficiency of Pt supported oxide catalyst determined not only reducibility of oxide support but also the character of formed interfaces. Dynamically different Ni/NiO, Pt/Ni/NiO, Pt/Co/Co₃O₄ interfaces could be built up during the reduction step which determine the activity and selectivity in both reactions. In the future, noble-metal free catalysts will be tested where the optimal metal/metal-oxide structure will be prepared for the high activity and selectivity reactions.

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