

Advances in Materials Physics and Chemistry, 2015, 5, 205-213
Published Online June 2015 in SciRes. <http://www.scirp.org/journal/ampc>
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ampc.2015.56021>



The Effect of Electrolyte on Dye Sensitized Solar Cells Using Natural Dye from Mango (*M. indica* L.) Leaf as Sensitizer

T. J. Abodunrin¹, O. Obafemi¹, A. O. Boyo², T. Adebayo³, R. Jimoh⁴

¹Department of Physics, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria

²Department of Physics, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria

³Chemical Science Department, Redeemers University, Ede, Nigeria

⁴Instrumentation Department, Kwara State University, Molete, Nigeria

Email: Temitope.Abodunrin@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

Received 31 March 2015; accepted 12 June 2015; published 16 June 2015

Copyright © 2015 by authors and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

Dye-sensitized solar cells (DSSC) were fabricated with mango leaf dye extracts as natural dye sensitizers at pH value of 5.20 and temperature of 18.1°C. Methanol was used as dye-extracting solvent. DSSCs from dye extract of *M. indica* L. with KMnO_4 electrolyte had the highest photocurrent density of 1.3 mA/cm² and fill factor FF of 0.46 for the sun at its peak. Potassium permanganate (KMnO_4) had a photocurrent density of 1.3 mA/cm² and FF of 0.8 at sundown. Potassium Iodide (KI), Potassium Bromide (KBr) and Mercury Chloride (HgCl_2) electrolytes had 0.2 mA/cm², 0.08 mA/cm² and 0.02 mA/cm² photocurrent densities respectively. The fill factors of 0.09, 0.03 and 0.003 respectively for sun overhead while 0.08 mA/cm², 0.01 mA/cm² and 0.01 mA/cm² were the values of photocurrent densities respectively at sundown. The fill factors were 0.02, 0.0006 and 0.003 respectively at sundown. The maximum power P_{max} of the DSSCs were 0.5 mW/cm², 0.10 mW/cm², 0.01 mW/cm² and 0.012 mW/cm² respectively at 1300 h at 1630 h 0.9 mW/cm², 0.14 mW/cm², 0.005 mW/cm² and 0.0015 mW/cm² respectively.

Keywords

Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells, Dye Sensitizer, Electrolytes, *M. indica* L., Photocurrent Density, Fill Factor

1. Introduction

Solar energy remains a foremost energy resource with unlimited capacity to solve man's numerous energy chal-

How to cite this paper: Abodunrin, T.J., Obafemi, O., Boyo, A.O., Adebayo, T. and Jimoh, R. (2015) The Effect of Electrolyte on Dye Sensitized Solar Cells Using Natural Dye from Mango (*M. indica* L.) Leaf as Sensitizer. *Advances in Materials Physics and Chemistry*, 5, 205-213. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ampc.2015.56021>

lenges. Dye-sensitized solar cell (DSSC) discovered by Grätzel *et al.* [1] [2] has gained prominence because of its considerable low cost of production [2], no greenhouse gas emission, eco-friendliness and sustainability. Dye sensitizers perform a primary role of trapping solar energy and converting it to electricity through potential difference that exists between solar cell layers. Quality is a measure of efficiency and fill factor [3].

Anthocyanin, flavonoids from natural sources has been used as sensitizers in DSSCs and recorded low solar energy efficiency conversion [2] [4]-[6]. DSSCs change cheap energy from the sun to electricity established upon different sensitivities in band gap of dye sensitizers and electrolytes [7]. This process involves several subsystems whose work in cycle is in conjunction with the surface of adsorption of the dye deposited on a semiconductor surface that receives near IR photons and visible region of light. It pumps these incident electrons into the conduction band of the semiconductor. Performance of the DSSC is based on the band gap of materials like TiO₂, electrolytes and the dye sensitizer. TiO₂ is ideal because it has ability to withstand constant electron transfer under solar illumination in the ultraviolet range. Dye absorption performance on TiO₂ surface determines efficiency of DSSC [7]. DSSC efficiency of 10.4% has been observed for use of nanocrystalline TiO₂ films [8]. Ruthenium dye photosensitizers are one of the most efficient produced from heavy transition metallic compound, ruthenium polypyridyl complex widely used for its high charge-transfer absorption in the visible spectrum of light; long span of excitation time, good absorption, and high efficiency of metal-ligand charge transfer [9]. Ruthenium complexes are very difficult to make and costly, this limits their applications on large scale in solar cells, encouraging a search for suitable alternatives like organic dyes. However, organic dyes of higher absorption coefficients with similar characteristics and efficiencies up to 9% have been observed [9]-[11]. Higher absorption in organic dyes could mean thinner nanostructured metal oxide films that is most suitable for use of higher viscous materials and charge transport. Such materials include ionic liquids, solid electrolytes or hole conductors [12].

Leaves of most plants are rich in chlorophyll and its application as natural dye sensitizer has been experimented in many associated studies [3] [4] [13]. Anthraquinones are natural compounds that have medicinal properties as well as give colour pigments to plants [14].

Mango (*M. indica* L.) is a fairly large genus of Anacardiaceae family of evergreen trees [15]. It grows from 10 to 45 metres height, with a heavy dome-shaped crown and, a stout straight bole, thick bark, dark grey, rough, flaking off when old, with leaves linear, elliptic lanceolate or oblong, 10 - 30 cm long and 2 - 9 cm wide giving off an aromatic, resinous odour when crushed.

Anthraquinones and flavonoids from *M. indica* L. are composed of lupeol and certain tannins and saponnins pigments characteristic of Anacardiaceae family. They absorb visible radiation over a range 412 nm - 664 nm. Solar energy conversion efficiency a function of J_{sc} , open circuit voltage V_{oc} , and fill factor FF [17], suggest that their improvement is essential to increasing the conversion efficiency. *Mangifera* has several active triterpenoids [15] which have several medicinal benefits.

Lupeol's chemical structure is shown in **Figure 1** [16]; it contains functional carboxylic group which articulates with the TiO₂ surface bonding. In this paper, anthraquinone (**Table 1**) and flavonoid extracts of Mango (*M. indica* L.) mixed with iodine and four different electrolytes were used as natural dyes sensitizers in the preparation of DSSCs.

2. Experimental

The *M. indica* L. leaf pigments were extracted by crushing 317 g of *M. indica* L. in a milling machine and soaking it in 8000 ml of methanol. This mixture was filtered and a rotary evaporator used to recover the pigment from the mother liquor-methanol. The raw extracts of *M. indica* L. was divided into four and used as dye sensitizer at four different pHs. Two drops of Iodine (0.1 M) solution was added to all the samples then, two drops of HgCl₂ was added to a first sample of dye extract, a pH of 2.16 was recorded at 22.7°C, two drops of KBr was added to a second sample, a pH of 1.78 was observed at 22.7°C, a few drops of KI added to a third sample had a pH of 2.25°C at 22.6°C and lastly two drops of KMnO₄ was added to a fourth sample, a pH of 2.58 was recorded at 22.5°C.

The transparent fluorine-doped tin oxide (FTO) conducting glass had the following dimensions 50 mm × 50 mm × 22 mm (ALDRICH) having surface resistivity of 7 Ω/m². The active area of DSSC was 0.54 cm². The TiO₂ paste was prepared by pounding 12 g of commercial TiO₂ (Assay) with 20 ml of concentrated nitric acid. The mixture was well blended and squeegee was used to screen-print the resulting TiO₂ paste onto the conduct-

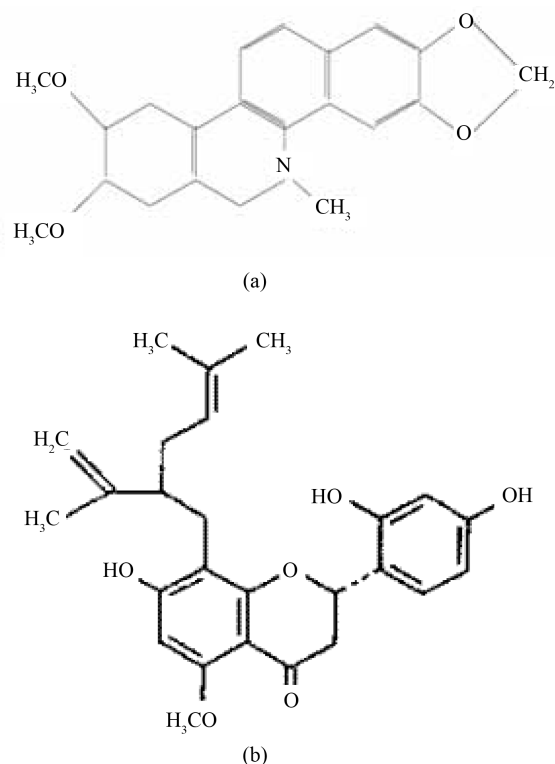


Figure 1. Chemical structure of two allotropes of *P. macrophylla*. (a) <http://journal.9med.net/upload/Image/4QT23.jpg> at 21/03/15; 3:48 p.m. (b) <http://www.plant-expert.com/upload/structures/34981-26-5.gif> 21/03/15 by 3:50 p.m.

Table 1. Phytochemichemical analysis of *P. macrophylla*.

| Anthraquinones | Flavonoids |
|----------------|------------|
| ++ | ++ |

++ = highly present.

ing FTO. It was left for 30 min to allow the paste settle and even out the irregularities at the surface, then allowed to dry. Appropriate thickness of the TiO₂ working electrode is 9 μm. It was sintered at 450°C for 45 min to enhance its absorption performance. Then the sintered thin film of TiO₂ was immersed 24 h in the *M. indica* L. prepared, thus allowing the dye pigment to be adsorbed on the TiO₂ nanoparticles surface. Glass insulation spacers were stuck on the edges of the base plate of conductive glass at the bottom. This space allows injection of the electrolyte. After cleaning the DSSCs photoelectrode, it is ready for testing.

3. Characterization

The absorption spectra of the *M. indica* L. dye was determined with Genesys 10 UV Scanning spectrophotometer an RC, 229,847 series model. Manufactured by Thermo Electron Corporation in USA. Aspex 3020 scanning electron microscope (SEM) was used at different magnification for specific wavelengths under the irradiation of 100 mW·cm⁻². The current-voltage curves were recorded using a multimeter.

4. Results and Discussion

The FTIR image of hexane fraction (**Figure 2**) of *M. indica* L. leaf extracts shows all the organic compounds present in the dye (**Table 2**). **Figure 3** shows the optical absorption spectra of *M. indica* L. leaf extracts for pH 2.16, pH 1.78, pH 2.25 and pH 2.58. Absorption spectra of a dye represents the probability of its transition between the ground state, excited state and the incident wavelength range of solar energy absorbed by the dye. All four dyes extract show absorption peaks centered at 303 and 350 nm in UV-range, with maximum peak at 350

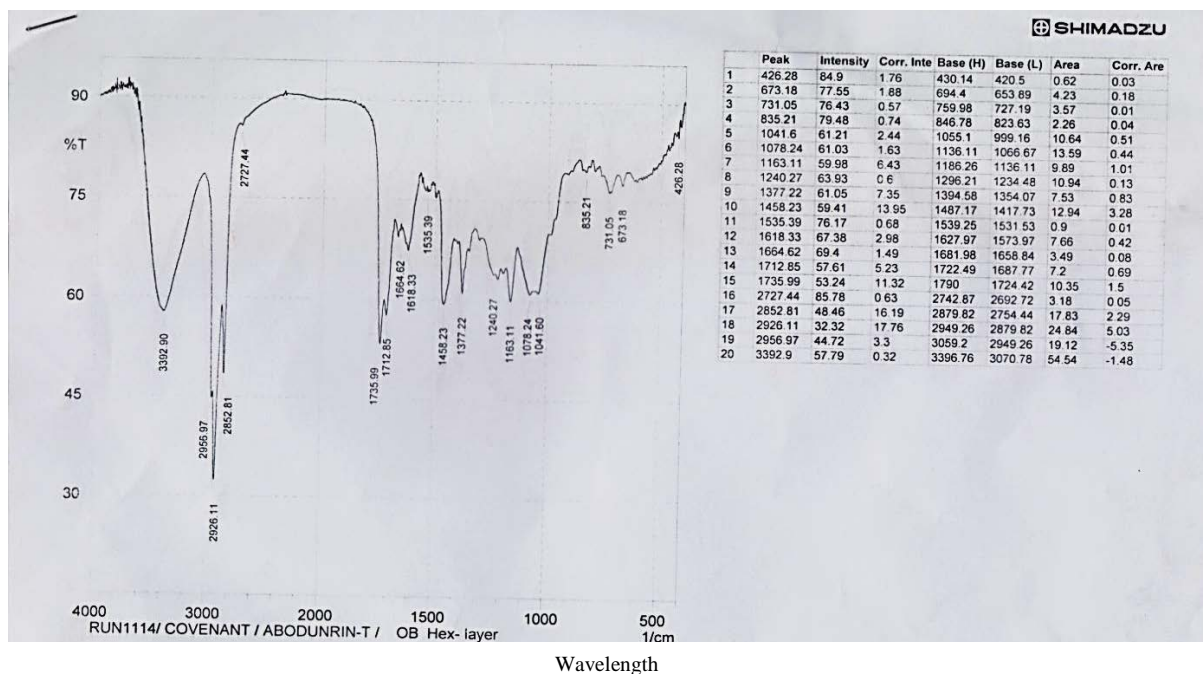


Figure 2. FTIR image of hexane fraction of *P. macrophylla* leaf dye.

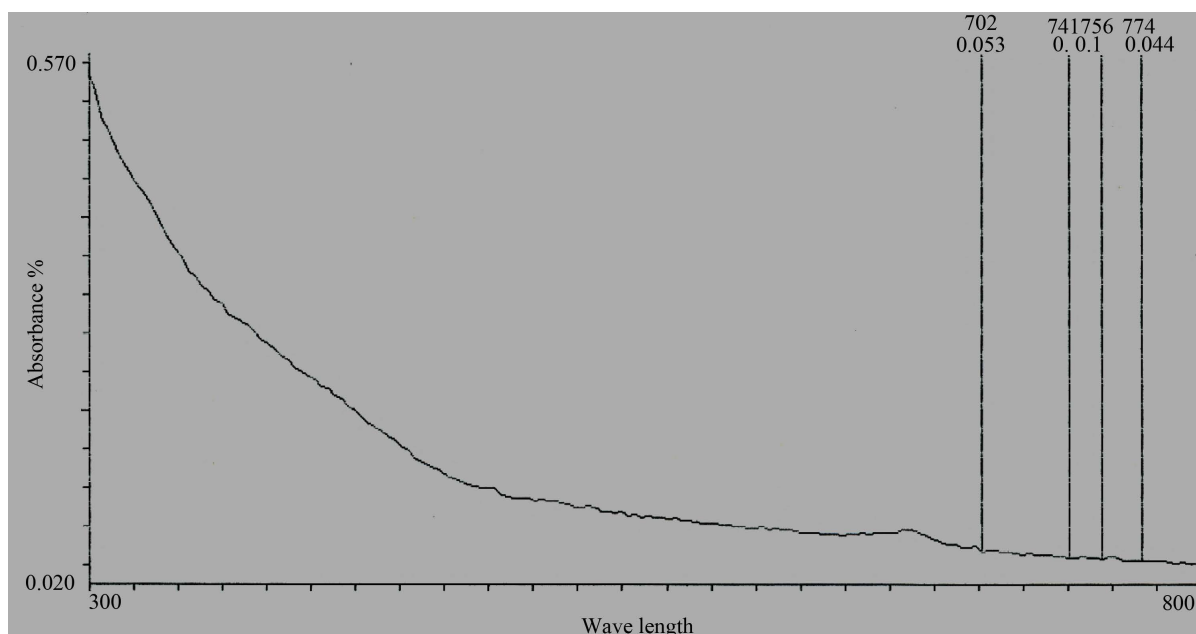


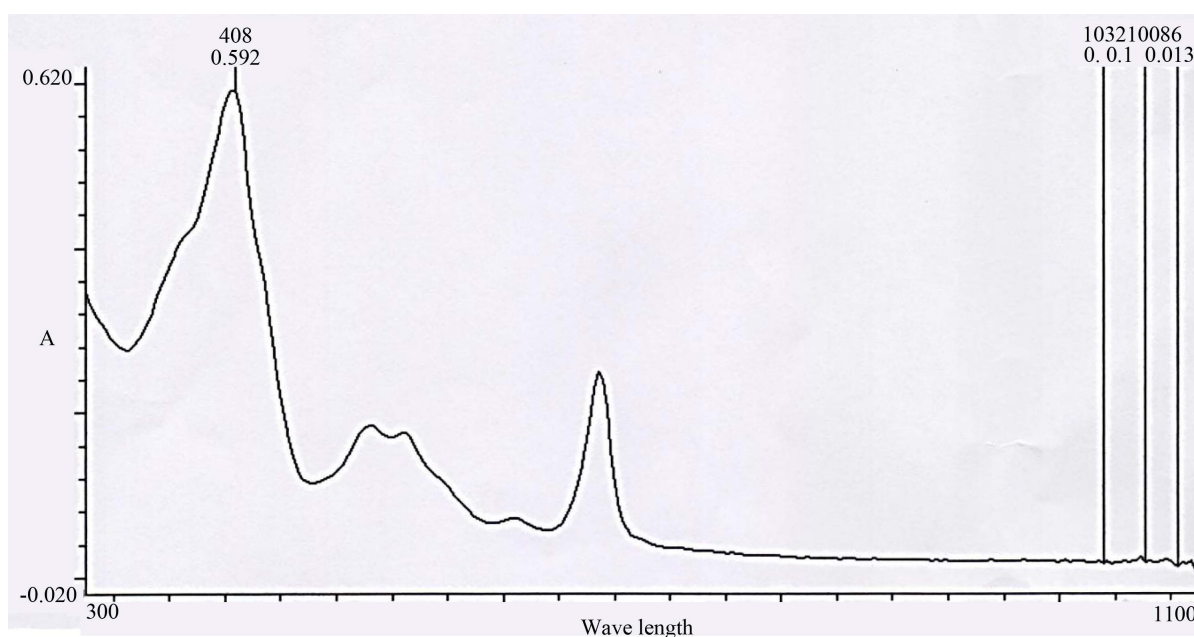
Figure 3. UV/Vis of *P. macrophylla* leaf dye without a sensitizer.

nm for pH 2.25, and pH 2.58, 312 nm for pH 1.78 and, 303 nm at pH 2.16 in range of short wavelength. The dye extracts at pH 2.25 and 2.58 have similar absorption intensity in long wavelength range. The highest intensity occurs at pH 2.16 with a value of 2.936, which is higher than 2.880 at 220 nm for pH 5.20 at short wavelength range (Figure 3). The lowest absorption intensity in long wavelength is observed for dye at pH 2.16, indicating a degradation of the *M. indica* L. dye in strong acidic medium [18], at higher temperatures.

Dye extract at pH of 2.58 shows a broad absorption peak in the 303 - 400 nm range due to $\pi - \pi^*$ transitions due to the O-H phenolic bond [20], which has a high concentration with a specific absorbance peak of 3392.90 nm (Figure 4) and broad appearance. 426 - 731 nm indicates the presence of chloroalkanes whose appearance is

Table 2. FTIR analysis of compounds in *P. macrophylla*'s leaf extract.

| Absorption peak (cm) | Bond (Type of bond) | Appearance |
|----------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 426.28 | Unidentified | |
| 673.18 - 731.05 | C-H (Cis-disubstituted alkenes and monosubstituted benzene) | Strong |
| 835.21 - 1041.6 | C-H (trisubstituted alkenes; aliphatic amines) | Medium to strong; often overlapped |
| 1078.24 - 1163.11 | C-X (fluoroalkanes) | Two strong broad bands |
| 1240.27 - 1377.22 | C-O (aromatic ethers and carboxylic acids) N-O (aliphatic nitro compounds) | Weak |
| 1458.23 - 1535.39 | Aromatic C-C | About 3 to 4 |
| 1618.33 - 1664.62 | Conjugated C-C with benzene ring (dienes) | Strong |
| 1712.85 - 1735.99 | C=O (saturated carboxylic acids); esters and lactones | |
| 2727.44 - 3392.9 | N-H (ammonium ions) | Multiple broad peaks |

**Figure 4.** UV/Vis spectrograph of *P. macrophylla* leaf dye with KI electrolyte.

medium. 835.21 nm indicates the presence of the C-H bond, trisubstituted alkenes whose appearance is strong. 1041.6 - 1240.27 nm indicates presence of C-N bond, aliphatic amines which are often overlapped. 1377.22 nm indicates the presence of C-H, 1458.23 nm indicates 3 or 4 weak to strong aromatic C=C bond, 1535.39 nm indicates the presence of N-O bond, aliphatic nitro compounds which are stronger in appearance. 1618.33 - 1664.62 nm indicates the presence of C=N with similar conjugation effects to C=O. 1712.85 - 1735.99 nm indicates the presence of C=O saturated carboxylic acids influenced by conjugation and ring size. 2727.44 - 2852.81 nm indicates the presence of C-H bond, aldehydes of medium appearance. 2926.11 - 2956.97 nm indicates the presence of the methyl group (Figure 5 & Figure 6), medium in appearance.

The combined J-V and P-V curves of the DSSCs at different pHs are shown in Figure 7. The open-circuit voltage V_{oc} of 0.38 is obtained for pH2.58 while at a pH of 2.25, and 2.16 the V_{oc} is 0.50; the least value is 0.13 when the pH is 1.78. The dye with pH2.58 has the highest J_{sc} of 1.30 mA/cm² and fill factor of 0.8.

The temperature increase reduced the J_{sc} of the dye at 2.16, the band gap is smaller as more electrons are excited and have high kinetic energy, and it also has the lowest fill factor, the resulting lupeol degradation in very strong acidic environment [18] causes poor harvesting of solar energy by the dye when injected on the TiO₂ [21]. The photoelectric parameters are shown on Table 3. Although J_{sc} of 20.5 mA/cm² and V_{oc} of 0.72 V are ob-

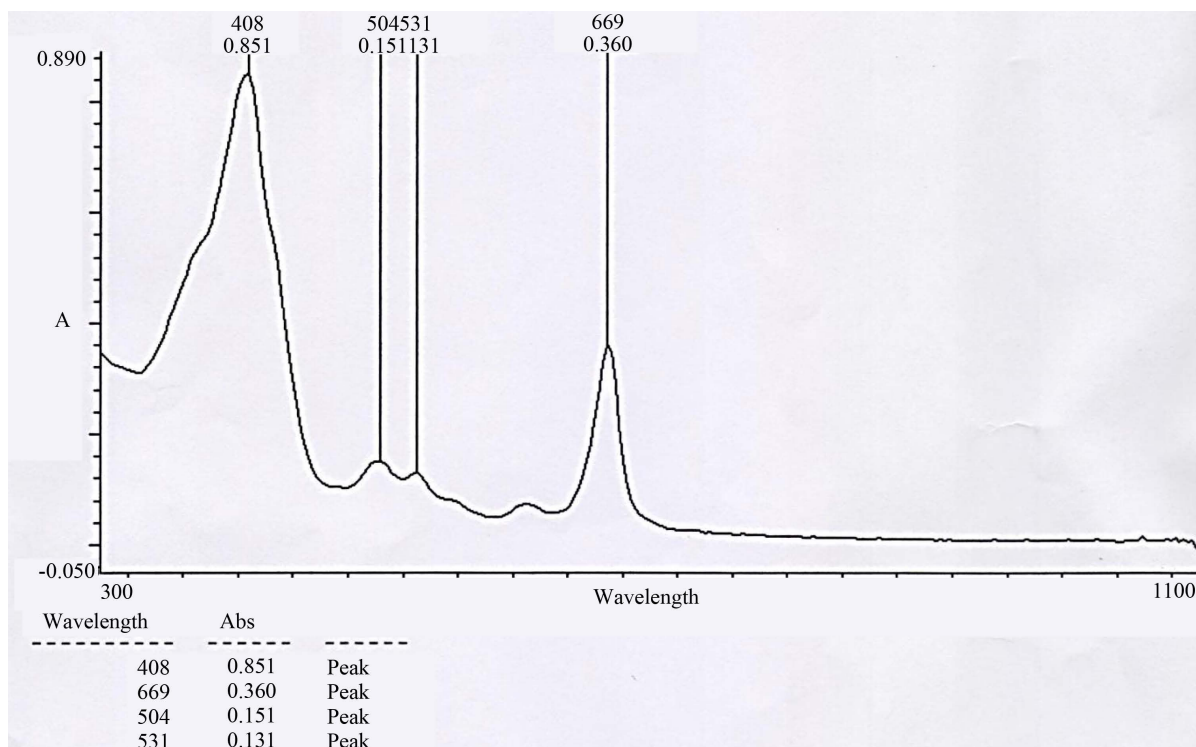


Figure 5. UV/V is Spectrograph of *P. macrophylla* leaf dye with KBr electrolyte.

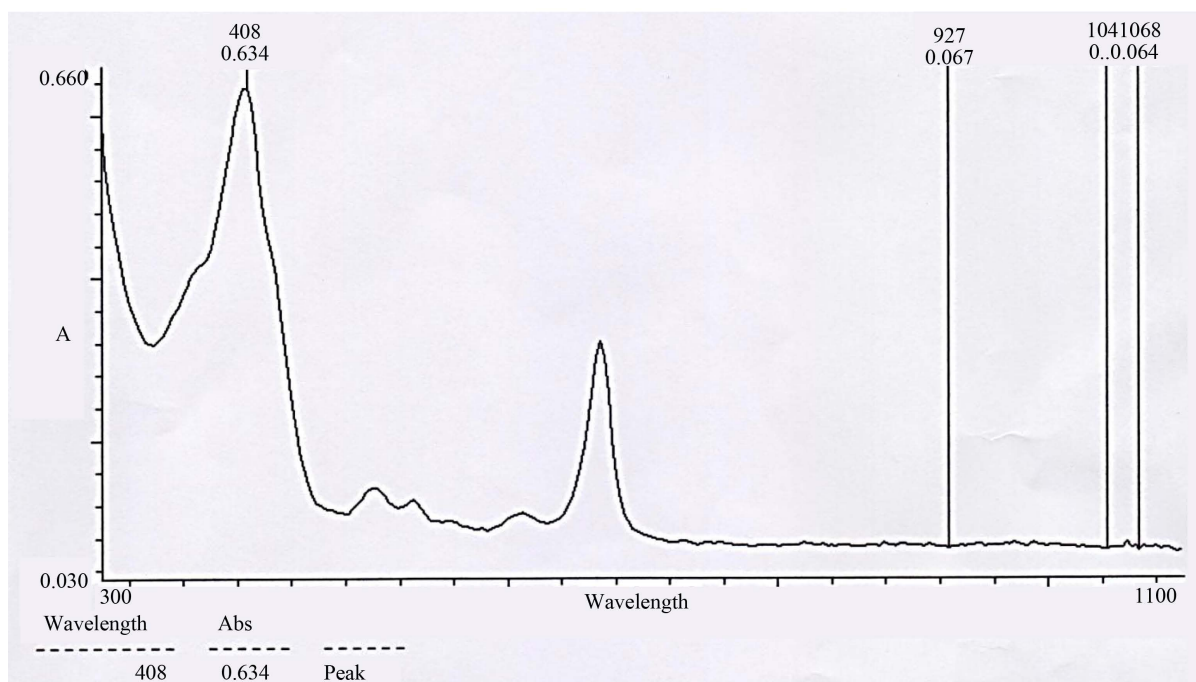


Figure 6. UV/V is Spectrograph of *P. macrophylla* leaf dye with $HgCl_2$ electrolyte.

served under AM 1.5 [19] from the black dye, it is regarded as superior to all charge-transfer sensitizers. The J_{sc} 1.30 mA/cm² at dye sensitizer pH 2.58 is promising.

The Scanning Electron Microscope micrograph (**Figure 8**) of the *M. indica* L. shows the thickness of *M. indica* L. film. The *M. indica* L. film has a thickness of 9 μm and a mean particle size of 20 nm. The parallel veins

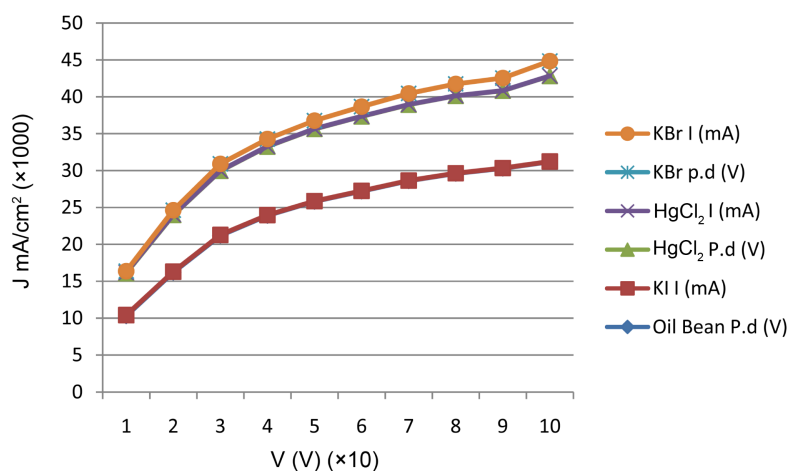


Figure 7. J-V characteristics of DSSCs with KI, KBr and HgCl₂ dye sensitizers with *P. macrophylla* extracts dye.

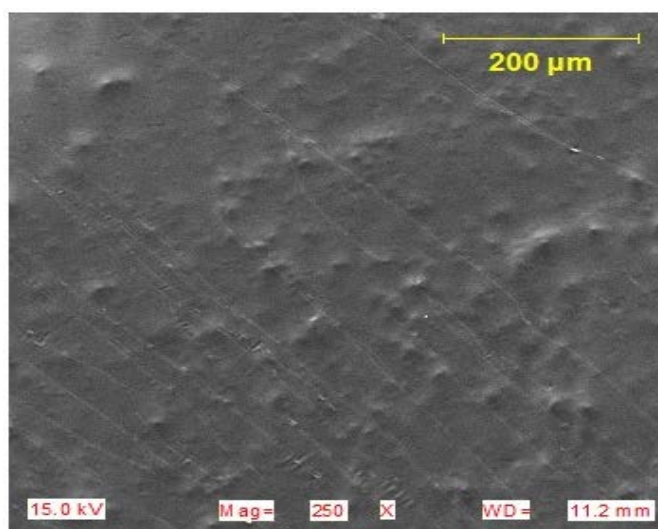


Figure 8. SEM micrograph of *M. indica* L.

Table 3. Characteristics of *P. macrophylla* dye-sensitized solar cells.

| Dye-sensitizer | J_{sc} (mA/cm ²) | V_{oc} (mV) | FF | $\eta\%$ |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|------|----------|
| KI | 0.20 | 0.032 | 0.48 | 0.21 |
| KBr | 0.16 | 0.045 | 0.28 | 0.36 |
| HgCl ₂ | 0.12 | 0.043 | 0.23 | 0.43 |

of the leaf is distinctly outlined in the chromophores of *M. indica* L.

5. Conclusion

Lupeol's crude extracts of *M. indica* L. were used as natural dye sensitizers for DSSCs for different pH values. The DSSC at pH 2.16 had the least parameter values due to degradation of lupeol at increased temperatures and strong acidic environment resulting in the leaching of the adsorbed dye from the TiO₂ surface. The dye sensitizer for DSSC at pH 2.58 recorded the highest J_{sc} of 1.3 mA/cm², a fill factor of 0.46, and highest p_{max} of 0.5 mW/cm². The low absorption of lupeol onto the titania surface at high pH led to decreased photochemical parameter of the cell at pH 2.16. These values are significantly less than that of black dye which is greater than all

other charge-transfer sensitizers based on its performance under 1.5 AM at the moment, with a confirmed J_{sc} value of 20.5 mA/cm² and a V_{oc} of 0.72 V [19]. However, lupeol natural extract of *M. indica* L. represents an environmentally friendly, non-toxic, relatively cheap and available energy source, in dye sensitized solar cells.

Acknowledgements

This study was carried out with the Shimadzu FTIR equipment of the Chemical Science Department, Redeemers University, Ede. The SEM Aspx 3020 series of the Instrumentation Laboratory, Kwara State University, was used for this research. The UV/Vis spectrophotometer Genesys 10 UV/visible scanning of Wine light RC, 229,847 Analytical Systems limited, USA of the Covenant University Central Instrumentation laboratory was used in the analysis of the UV/Vis spectral analysis.

References

- [1] O'Reagan, B. and Grätzel, M. (1991) A Low Cost High-Efficiency Solar Cell Based on Dye-Sensitized Colloidal TiO₂ Films. *Nature*, **353**, 737-740. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/353737a0>
- [2] Grätzel, M. (2004) Conversion of Sunlight to Electric Power by Nanocrystalline Dye Sensitized Solar Cells. *Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology A: Chemistry*, **164**, 3-14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jphotochem.2004.02.023>
- [3] Zhang, D., Lanier, S.M., Downing, J.A., Avent, J.L., Lum, J. and McHale, J.L. (2011) Betalain, Pigments for Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells. *Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology A: Chemistry*, **219**, 188-194.
- [4] Chang, H., Wu, H.M., Chen, T.L., Huang, K.D., Jwo, C.S. and Lo, Y.J. (2010) Dye-Sensitized Solar Cell Using Natural Dyes Extracted from Spinach and Ipomea. *Journal of Alloys and Compounds*, **495**, 606-610. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jallcom.2009.10.057>
- [5] Dai, Q. and Rabani, J. (2002) Photosensitization of Nanocrystalline TiO₂ Films by Anthocyanin Dyes. *Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology A: Chemistry*, **148**, 17-24. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1010-6030\(02\)00073-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1010-6030(02)00073-4)
- [6] Calogero, G., Di Marco, G., Cazzanti, S., Caramori, S., Argazzi, R., Di Carlo, A. and Alberto Bignozzi, C. (2010) Efficient Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells Using Red Turnip and Purple Wild Sicilian Prickly Pear Fruits. *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*, **11**, 254-267. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijms11010254>
- [7] Bisquert, J., García-Cañadas, J., Mors-Seró, I. and Palo-Mares, E. (2003) Comparative Analysis of Photovoltaic Principles Governing Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells and p-n Junctions. *Proceedings of the SPIE*, San Diego, 49-59.
- [8] Nazeeruddin, M.K., Pechy, P., Renouard, T., Zakeeruddin, S.M., Humphry-Baker, R., Comte, P., Liska, P., Cevey, L., Costa, E., Shklover, V., Spiccia, L., Deacon, G.B., Bignozzi, C.A. and Grätzel, M. (2001) Engineering of Efficient Panchromatic Sensitizers for Nanocrystalline TiO₂-Based Solar Cells. *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, **8**, 1613-1624.
- [9] Hara, K., Dan-Oh, Y., Kasada, C. and Arakawa, H. (2004) Effects of Additives on the Photovoltaic Performance of Coumarin-Dye-Sensitized Nanocrystalline TiO₂ Solar Cells. *Langmuir*, **10**, 4205-4210. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/la0357615>
- [10] Ito, S., Zakeeruddin, S.M., Humphry-Baker, R., Liska, P., Charvet, R., Comte, P., Nazeeruddin, M.K., Pechy, P., Takata, M., Miura, H., Uchida, S. and Grätzel, M. (2006) High Efficiency Organic-Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells Controlled by Nanocrystalline TiO₂ Electrode Thickness. *Advanced Materials*, **18**, 1202-1205. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/adma.200502540>
- [11] Kim, S., Lee, J.K., Kang, S.O., Ko, J.J., Yum, J.H., Fantacci, S., De Angelis, F., Di Censo, D., Nazeeruddin, M.K. and Grätzel, M. (2006) Molecular Engineering of Organic Sensitizers for Solar Cell Applications. *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, **128**, 16701-16707. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/ja066376f>
- [12] Wongcharee, K., Meeyoo, V. and Chavadej, S. (2007) Dye-Sensitized Solar Cell Using Natural Dyes Extracted from Rosella and Blue Pea Flowers. *Solar Energy Material Solar Cells*, **91**, 566-571. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.solmat.2006.11.005>
- [13] Tennakone, K., Kumara, G.R.R.A., Kumarasinghe, A.R., Sirimanne, P.M. and Wijayantha, K.G.U. (1996) Efficient Photosensitization of Nanocrystalline TiO₂ Films by Tannins and Related Phenolic Substances. *Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology A: Chemistry*, **94**, 217-220. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1010-6030\(95\)04222-9](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1010-6030(95)04222-9)
- [14] Kushwaha, R., Srivastava, P. and Bahadur, L. (2013) Natural Pigments from Plants Used as Sensitizers for TiO₂ Based Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells. *Journal of Energy*, **2013**, Article ID: 654953.
- [15] Anyaneyulu, V. and Radhika, P. (2000) The Triterpenoids and Steroids from *Mangifera indica* Linn. *Indian Journal of Chemistry*, **39B**, 883-893.
- [16] Shivanghi, G. (2015) *Journal of Pharmacy and Bioallied Sciences*, **7**, 1-85.

-
- [17] Sze, S.M. and Lee, M. (1969) *Physics of Semiconductor Devices*. Wiley, New York.
- [18] Pedreno, M.A. and Escribano, J. (2001) Correlation between Antiradical Activity and Stability of Betanine from *Beta vulgaris* L. Roots under Different pH, Temperature and Light Conditions. *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*, **81**, 627-631. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jsfa.851>
- [19] Qin, Y. and Penq, Q. (2012) Ruthenium Sensitizers and Their Applications in Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells. *International Journal of Photoenergy*, **2012**, 1-21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2012/291579>
- [20] Peter, L. (2011) *Infrared and Raman Characteristic Group Frequencies: Tables and Charts*. 18.
- [21] Hernández-Martínez, A.R., Vargas, S., Estevez, M. and Rodríguez, R. (2010) Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells from Extracted Bracts *Bougainvillea betalain* Pigments. *Proceedings of the 1st International Congress on Instrumentation and Applied Sciences*, Cancun, Q. R., 26-29 October 2010.