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Eakkasit Thasirisap, Naratip Vittayakorn, Panpailin Seeharaj

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Surface modification of TiO₂ particles with the sono-assisted exfoliation method

Eakkasit Thasirisap, Naratip Vittayakorn, Panpailin Seeharaj*

Advanced Materials Research Unit, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, 1 Chalong krung Rd., Ladkrabang, Bangkok, 10520, Thailand

Corresponding author: e-mail address: panpailin.se@kmitl.ac.th

Tel.: +66 8496-9664

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Abstract

This study reported a novel approach to optimize the photocatalytic property of anatase TiO₂ particles by delaminating their outer surface into highly reactive nanosheets via the sono-assisted exfoliation method. To modify the surface, TiO₂ particles were dispersed in aqueous solution of 10 M sodium hydroxide (NaOH) and tetrabutylammonium hydroxide (TBAOH), followed by irradiation with high intensity ultrasonic wave (20 kHz, 150 W/cm²) for 60 min. The intercalation and exfoliation processes were accelerated with the driving force of the extreme acoustic cavitation leading to the delamination of TiO₂ nanosheets with highly reactive exposed {001} facets from the mother TiO₂ crystals. The presence of TBAOH increased yield of nanosheets formation and stabilized the nanosheet structure. The unique morphology of the surface modified TiO₂ particles provided benefits in increasing the specific surface area and lowering the optical band gap energy (E_g) and electron-hole recombination rate resulting in an enhancement of methylene blue dye degradation efficiency. The surface modification of TiO₂ particles by the sono-assisted exfoliation method can optimize the photocatalytic activity by yielding synergetic effects of the high surface reactive sites of the nanosheets and the high degree of crystallinity of the bulk structure.

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