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## COMMUNICATION

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Received 00th January 2015,  
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www.rsc.org/**Photocatalytic CO<sub>2</sub> reduction by a mixed metal (Zr/Ti), mixed ligand metal-organic framework under visible light irradiation**Yeob Lee,<sup>a</sup> Sangjun Kim,<sup>b</sup> Jeung Ku Kang,<sup>bc\*</sup> and Seth M. Cohen<sup>a\*</sup>

**Postsynthetic exchange (PSE) of Ti(IV) into a Zr(IV)-based MOF enabled photocatalytic CO<sub>2</sub> reduction to HCOOH under visible light irradiation with the aid of BNAH and TEOA. Use of a mixed-ligand strategy enhanced the photocatalytic activity of the MOF by introducing new energy levels in the band structure of the MOF.**

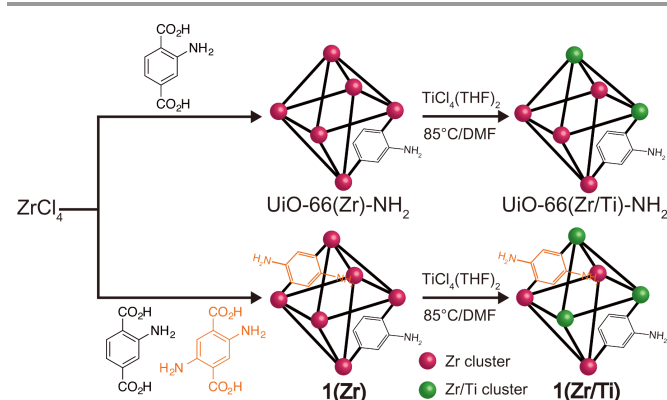
Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) produced by energy generation based on fossil fuels contributes to global warming and consequently negative effects on the environment.<sup>1–3</sup> Direct conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> into useful chemicals is regarded as a promising technology for addressing the CO<sub>2</sub> problem.<sup>4</sup> Inspired by nature, systems that can photocatalytically generate hydrocarbon fuels from CO<sub>2</sub> have gathered substantial interests. Homogeneous systems based on transition metal centers and photosensitizers can show high efficiencies, but they are generally not reusable.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, heterogeneous photocatalysts based on semiconductors are robust, but suffer from low efficiencies because most of these systems only absorb UV light, which represents only ~4% of the solar energy spectrum.<sup>6</sup> Developing new photocatalysts that can harvest more of the solar spectrum, while retaining high stability and efficiency, would be an important advancement for CO<sub>2</sub> utilization.

Metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) are crystalline hybrid materials for CO<sub>2</sub> conversion with high specific surface area, because they can be tuned by design.<sup>7–10</sup> The use of MOFs in photocatalysis of CO<sub>2</sub> has been investigated.<sup>11,12</sup> Fu *et al.* found that Ti-based NH<sub>2</sub>-MIL-125(Ti) could mediate the conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> to HCOO<sup>–</sup> in the presence of triethanolamine (TEOA). In addition, they found that visible light sensitivity could be introduced by incorporating 2-aminobenzene-1,4-dicarboxylic acid (NH<sub>2</sub>-bdc).<sup>11</sup> Another report also used NH<sub>2</sub>-MIL-125(Ti) to produce H<sub>2</sub> from a TEOA-H<sub>2</sub>O solution with visible light irradiation.<sup>13</sup>

Now a well studied, robust, and highly porous MOF, UiO-66 (UiO = University of Oslo) constructed from Zr secondary-building units (SBUs) and benzene-1,4-dicarboxylic acid (H<sub>2</sub>bdc),<sup>14–18</sup> cannot catalyze the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> to HCOO<sup>–</sup> or the reduction of H<sub>2</sub>O to H<sub>2</sub>. The Zr<sub>6</sub> SBUs (Zr<sub>6</sub>O<sub>4</sub>(OH)<sub>4</sub>) cannot accept electrons from the bdc linker under light irradiation (unlike the aforementioned Ti<sub>8</sub> SBUs (Ti<sub>8</sub>O<sub>8</sub>(OH)<sub>4</sub>))

because the redox potential energy level of the Zr<sub>6</sub> SBUs in UiO-66 lie above the LUMO of the bdc ligands.<sup>12,13,19</sup> Consequently, it was hypothesized that embedding Ti ions into the Zr<sub>6</sub> SBUs of UiO-66 might introduce catalytic activity to UiO-66 by lowering the redox potential energy of Zr<sub>6</sub> cluster.

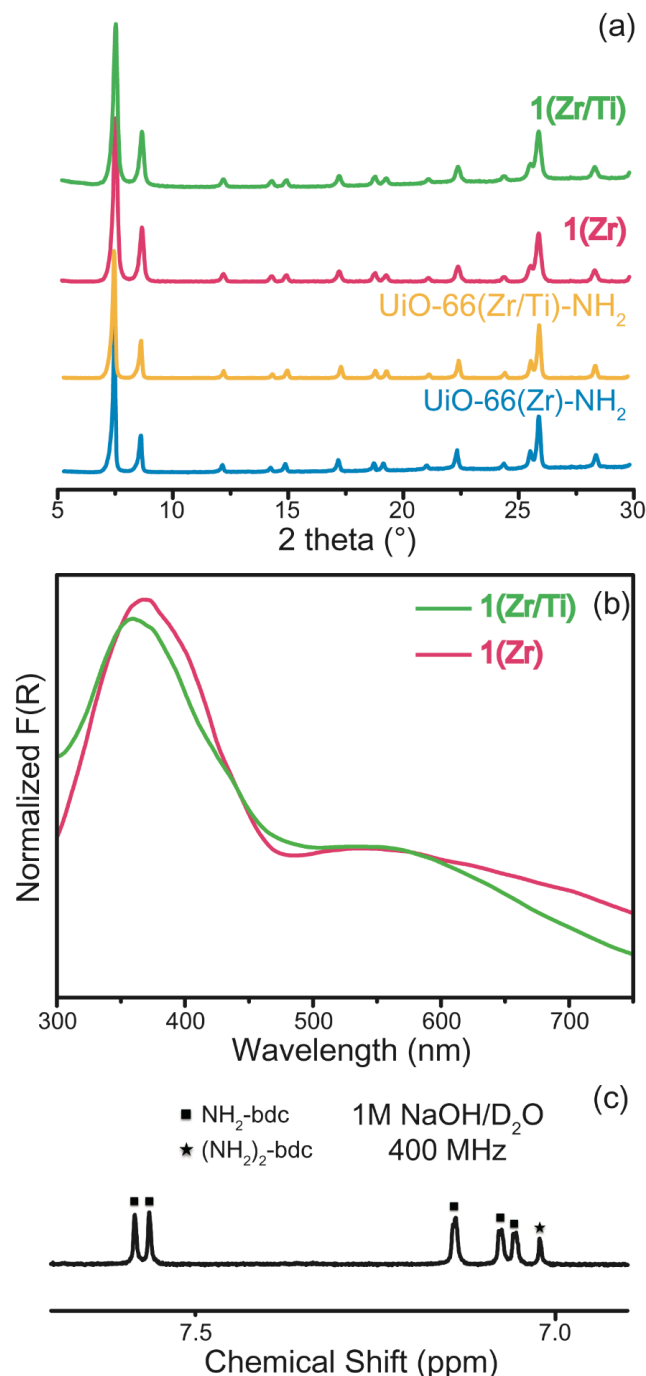
Herein, we report a mixed-ligand, mixed-metal UiO-66-derivative (Zr<sub>4.3</sub>Ti<sub>1.7</sub>O<sub>4</sub>(OH)<sub>4</sub>(C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>7</sub>O<sub>4</sub>N)<sub>5.17</sub>(C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>8</sub>O<sub>4</sub>N<sub>2</sub>)<sub>0.83</sub>, **1(Zr/Ti)**) obtained by postsynthetic exchange (PSE)<sup>20–26</sup> as an effective photocatalyst for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction under visible light irradiation. The Ti(IV) ions make the SBUs capable of accepting electrons generated via light absorption by the organic linkers. Introducing a small amount of 2,5-diaminobenzene-1,4-dicarboxylic acid ((NH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>-bdc) as a co-ligand provided new energy levels in the band structure of the MOF and introduced broader light absorption coverage for the MOF.



**Scheme 1.** Synthesis of mixed-ligand MOF **1(Zr)** via PSE to obtain mixed-metal MOFs **1(Zr/Ti)**, UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH<sub>2</sub>.

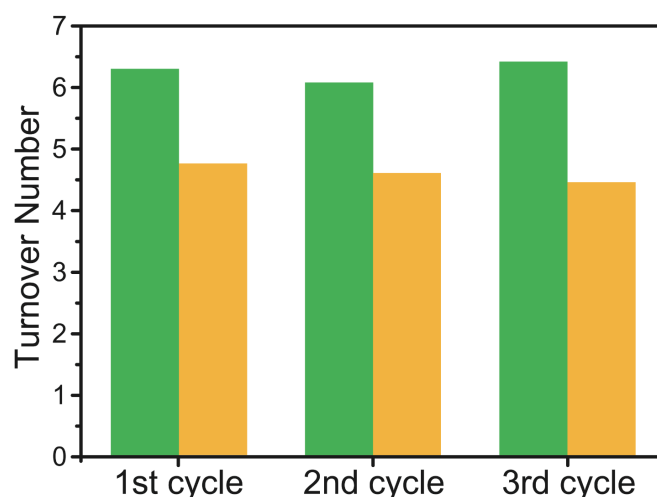
Solvothermal synthesis of **1(Zr)** produced nanocrystals with excellent crystallinity (Fig. 1) and a narrow size distribution (Fig. S1). The crystal growth of **1(Zr)** gave particles with an edge length of ~70 nm, which is smaller than that obtained for UiO-66(Zr)-NH<sub>2</sub> at around ~200 nm. **1(Zr)** absorbed visible light as shown by two broad absorption bands in the UV-vis spectrum, while UiO-66(Zr)-NH<sub>2</sub> absorbs only a small portion of blue light beyond the UV spectrum

(Fig. S2). The ratio between  $\text{NH}_2$ -bdc and  $(\text{NH}_2)_2$ -bdc was calculated by dissolving the MOF under alkaline conditions and measuring the  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum in solution (see ESI). **1(Zr)** contained ~14%  $(\text{NH}_2)_2$ -bdc and 86%  $\text{NH}_2$ -bdc, which is slightly different from ligand ratio used in synthesis of the MOF (this may be due to the lower solubility of  $(\text{NH}_2)_2$ -bdc in *N,N*-Dimethylformamide (DMF)). Afterwards, these Zr-based MOFs were exposed to DMF solutions of  $\text{TiCl}_4(\text{THF})_2$  for 5 days at 85 °C in order to achieve PSE with Ti(IV).



**Fig. 1.** (a) PXRD patterns of **UiO-66(Zr)-NH<sub>2</sub>**, **UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH<sub>2</sub>**, **1(Zr)**, and **1(Zr/Ti)**. (b) Diffuse reflectance UV-visible spectra of **1(Zr)** and **1(Zr/Ti)** (normalized using the Kubelka-Munk function,  $F(R)$ ). (c)  $^1\text{H}$  NMR of dissolved **1(Zr)**.

After PSE, the crystallinity, morphology, and light absorption of the **UiO-66** materials were maintained, indicating that PSE did not alter the gross physical properties of the MOFs. Introduction of Ti(IV) into the MOF was confirmed by both energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDX) and inductively-coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) measurements. The ratios for Zr/Ti were 2.52 for **1(Zr/Ti)** and 3.03 for **UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH<sub>2</sub>** as determined by ICP-MS (Table S1). The ICP-MS data support our argument that Ti(IV) was substituted for Zr(IV) in MOF SBUs. The weight percentage of both elements in **1(Zr/Ti)** were determined to be 23.2 wt% for Zr and 4.8 wt% for Ti. If Ti was simply loaded into **1(Zr)** with no change in the SBUs, then these values should be 29.2 wt% for Zr and 6.1 wt% for Ti (Table S2). Furthermore, the surface area of **1(Zr)** was essentially unchanged after PSE (from ~930 m<sup>2</sup>/g to ~990 m<sup>2</sup>/g), indicating the added Ti is not blocking the pores of the MOF. These suggest that, on average, the Zr<sub>6</sub> SBUs was converted by PSE to ~Zr<sub>4.3</sub>Ti<sub>1.7</sub> for **1(Zr/Ti)** and ~Zr<sub>4.5</sub>Ti<sub>1.5</sub> for **UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH<sub>2</sub>**.



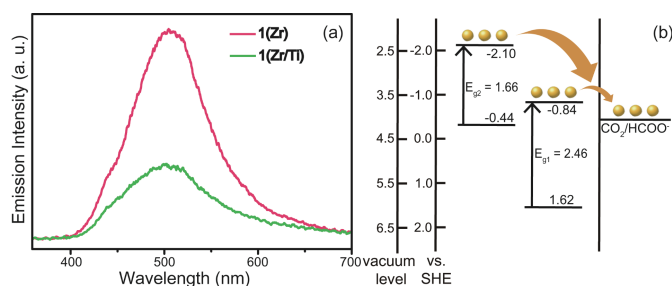
**Fig. 2.** Turnover numbers of **1(Zr/Ti)** (green) and **UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH<sub>2</sub>** (gold) for photocatalysis of  $\text{CO}_2$  to  $\text{HCOOH}$  over three cycles. Samples were recovered after each cycle and reused under identical reaction conditions.

Both MOFs were tested for photocatalytic  $\text{CO}_2$  reduction under visible light irradiation. The reaction was conducted in 5 mL of a mixed solution of 4:1 (v/v) acetonitrile (MeCN)-triethanolamine (TEOA, as a sacrificial base), and 0.1 M 1-benzyl-1,4-dihydronicotinamide (BNAH, as a sacrificial reductant).<sup>27-29</sup> The suspension, which contained 5 mg of MOF, was purged with 1 bar of  $\text{CO}_2$  gas for 30 min followed by light irradiation by a 300 W Xe lamp. The initial pH value of the 4:1 MeCN-TEOA solution was ~11, but dropped to ~9.5 after purging with  $\text{CO}_2$  gas. Because of the high pH, the photocatalysis products can be deprotonated; therefore, the reaction mixtures were extracted with ethyl acetate and washed with  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  (to remove TEOA and protonated products).<sup>30</sup> The final ethyl acetate solution (1  $\mu\text{L}$ ) was analyzed by gas chromatograph-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) to identify the products.

The photocatalysis products were analyzed via GC-MS, the results of which are shown in Fig. 2. **1(Zr/Ti)** showed similar turnover number values over three photocatalytic cycles (6 hours each), indicating the catalytic ability of the MOF was not degraded during photocatalysis. Turnover numbers were calculated based on the Ti content determined from ICP-MS results. The average turnover number of  $6.27 \pm 0.23$

(31.57±1.64  $\mu\text{mol}$  of  $\text{HCOOH}$ , from 3 independent samples) indicates each Ti site transferred about 13 electrons to  $\text{CO}_2$  over the course of each catalytic run (Fig. S3).  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  gave a lower turnover number (4.66±0.17) when compared to **1(Zr/Ti)** (Fig. 2, Fig. S4). No  $\text{HCOOH}$  was detected when using the parent **1(Zr)** and  $\text{UiO-66(Zr)-NH}_2$  materials, indicating that Ti was essential for photocatalysis.

The MOFs were studied by photoluminescence (PL) spectroscopy to provide evidences for charge transfer in **1(Zr/Ti)**. As shown in Fig. 3a, the emission intensity of **1(Zr)** was remarkably reduced after PSE. This indicates that the recombination rate of photogenerated electron-hole pairs in the organic linkers was decreased suggesting charges were transferred to the inorganic SBUs. In addition, **1(Zr/Ti)** achieved better charge separation than  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  because **1(Zr/Ti)** quenched a greater portion of the photogenerated charges than  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  (Fig. S5). This indicates that **1(Zr/Ti)** accepts more electrons from the organic linkers to catalyze  $\text{CO}_2$  than  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$ , which is supported by the GC-MS results.



**Fig. 3.** (a) Photoluminescence spectra of both **1(Zr)** and **1(Zr/Ti)**, (b) Energy band structure of **1(Zr/Ti)** derived from UPS and F(R) results. Heterogeneous ligands formed two energy levels in MOF, which potentially catalyze  $\text{CO}_2$ .

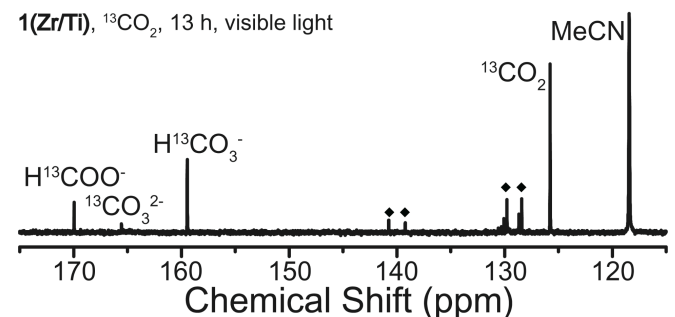
The energy band structures of both **1(Zr/Ti)** and  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  were investigated using UV light photo-electron spectroscopy (UPS, Fig. S6). The UPS results indicate that **1(Zr/Ti)** has two different valence bands, in contrast to  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  that has a single valence band. This is consistent with the UV-visible spectra in Fig. 1(b) where **1(Zr/Ti)** showed two absorption bands. The maxima of the two valence bands of **1(Zr/Ti)** were calculated to be 1.62 eV and -0.44 eV (vs. SHE) from the UPS spectrum of **1(Zr/Ti)** and bandgap energies for those two levels were acquired from UV-Vis spectra as 2.46 eV and 1.66 eV, respectively. These data can be used to produce an energy band diagram of **1(Zr/Ti)** as shown in Fig. 3(b). Two conduction band minima values of -0.84 eV and -2.10 eV (vs. SHE) are suitable for electron transfer to  $\text{CO}_2$ .<sup>31</sup>  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  has a single valence band maximum of 1.88 eV and its conduction band minimum was calculated to be -0.79 eV based on the bandgap energy for  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  of 2.67 eV (calculated from the UV-Vis spectrum, Fig. S7). Consequently, **1(Zr/Ti)** is expected to show better photocatalysis efficiency than  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  because **1(Zr/Ti)** has two light absorption routes (both suitable for  $\text{CO}_2$  reduction) originating from the  $(\text{NH}_2)_2\text{-bdc}$  ligand.

In order to prove that  $\text{HCOOH}$  is produced from photocatalytic reduction of  $\text{CO}_2$ , the reaction was performed using  $^{13}\text{CO}_2$  and the products analyzed by  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR. A solution containing  $\text{CD}_3\text{CN}$ , TEOA, BNAH, and  $^{13}\text{CO}_2$  was subjected to similar photocatalysis conditions (see ESI). Calibration of the expected product peaks was performed

because the basic reaction conditions can perturb the chemical shifts of the products (Fig. S8).<sup>30</sup>  $\text{H}^{13}\text{COOH}$  was found at 162.73 ppm in  $\text{CD}_3\text{CN}$  solution and this value was increased to 169.86 ppm due to deprotonation of  $\text{H}^{13}\text{COOH}$  to  $\text{H}^{13}\text{COO}^-$  with added TEOA.

Several products, including  $\text{H}^{13}\text{COO}^-$ ,  $^{13}\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{H}^{13}\text{CO}_3^{2-}$ ,  $^{13}\text{CO}_3^{2-}$ , residual solvent, and other small peaks were found in  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectrum after photocatalysis by both **1(Zr/Ti)** after 13 hours of light irradiation (Fig. 4).  $^{13}\text{CO}_3^{2-}$  and  $\text{H}^{13}\text{CO}_3^{2-}$  were produced by oxidation of  $^{13}\text{CO}_2$  under these basic conditions.<sup>31,32</sup> Other small peaks come from isotopes of BNAH as these shifts were found in a reference solution of  $\text{CD}_3\text{CN-TEOA-BNAH}$  (Fig. S8). These results indicate that the carbon source of photocatalytically produced  $\text{HCOOH}$  is  $\text{CO}_2$  gas, and not other sources (such as MOF ligand decomposition). The  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectrum of the product solution from  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  showed additional peaks in addition to BNAH and these peaks might represent organic linkers dissociated from the MOF during photocatalysis (Fig. S9). No  $\text{H}^{13}\text{COO}^-$  was detected in NMR spectra when using **1(Zr)** and  $\text{UiO-66(Zr)-NH}_2$ , consistent with the GC-MS results.

Durability is another important issue when considering long-term photocatalysis. The crystallinity, Zr/Ti ratio, and morphology of the  $\text{UiO-66}$  materials were examined after three cycles of photocatalysis. Both **1(Zr/Ti)** and  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  maintained crystallinity and morphology after three cycles of photocatalysis (Fig. S10, S11). However,  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  showed broaden PXRD reflections, a roughened surface in SEM image, and greater leaching of Ti (as measured by ICP-MS, Table S1), compared to **1(Zr/Ti)**. Overall, **1(Zr/Ti)** was more stable than  $\text{UiO-66(Zr/Ti)-NH}_2$  during photocatalysis.



**Fig. 4.**  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectrum of product solution from photocatalysis of  $^{13}\text{CO}_2$  by **1(Zr/Ti)** for 13 hours under visible light irradiation.  $\blacklozenge$  = BNAH.

To evaluate our mixed-metal approach, the photocatalytic activity of  $\text{NH}_2\text{-MIL-125(Ti)}$  was also investigated.  $\text{NH}_2\text{-MIL-125(Ti)}$  was synthesized following a reported procedure and its structure confirmed by PXRD (Fig. S12).<sup>13</sup> Photocatalysis with  $\text{NH}_2\text{-MIL-125(Ti)}$  under the same reaction conditions described above gave a turnover number of 1.52 after 6 hours. This value is much lower when compared to the MOFs described here. Therefore, it is inferred that the mixed metal SBUs described here are more efficient photocatalysts. This might be, in part, because the  $\text{Ti}_8$  SBUs have a redox potential that is too low to provide a sufficient driving force to catalyze  $\text{CO}_2$  reduction when compared to the mixed Zr/Ti SBUs described here.

The photocatalytic ability of **1(Zr/Ti)** was also compared to heterogeneous photocatalytic systems based on semiconductors or MOFs in units of turnover frequency ( $\text{h}^{-1}$ ) (Table S3, S4).<sup>33-38</sup> **1(Zr/Ti)**



prepared in this work showed a much higher photocatalytic ability, and also improved visible light sensitivity than non-MOF heterogeneous photocatalysts. In the comparison to MOF-based photocatalysts, only one MOF system we aware of shows better catalytic ability than **1**(Zr/Ti), but this system requires Ru for both the catalytic site and an exogenous light sensitizer.<sup>38</sup> In the latter example, the reaction conditions are not identical to those reported here, which makes an absolute comparison of photoreactivity difficult.

In summary, highly efficient and robust MOF photocatalysts for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction to HCOOH under visible light irradiation, without the need for an exogenous light sensitizer was developed via PSE of Ti(IV) into a series of UiO-66 MOFs. UiO-66 materials were tuned to have catalytic activity by lowering the electron accepting levels of the Zr<sub>6-x</sub>Ti<sub>x</sub> (Zr<sub>6-x</sub>Ti<sub>x</sub>O<sub>4</sub>(OH)<sub>4</sub>) SBUs. Introduction of diamine-substituted ligands greatly enhanced the photocatalytic ability by introducing new energy levels for additional light absorption and charge transfer. This study suggests a new approach to develop MOF photocatalysts using a mixed-metal and mixed-linker approach.

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## Notes and references

<sup>a</sup> Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California 92093, United States of America, E-mail: scohen@ucsd.edu

<sup>b</sup> Department of Materials Science and Engineering, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), Daejeon, 305-701, Republic of Korea, E-mail: jeung@kaist.ac.kr

<sup>c</sup> Graduate School of EEWS, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), Daejeon, 305-701, Republic of Korea

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