



Comprehensive DFT study of $\text{ZnGe}_{1-x}\text{Si}_x\text{As}_2$ alloys: Insights into structural, electronic, optical, and thermoelectric properties

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Chalcopyrite alloys
Optoelectronic
Semiconductor
Thermoelectric properties

ABSTRACT

The substitution of Ge with Si in the ZnGeAs_2 chalcopyrite semiconductor and its impact on structural, electronic, optical, and thermoelectric properties have been systematically studied using density functional theory. This study demonstrates the tunability of material properties through alloying, revealing novel insights into the $\text{ZnGe}_{1-x}\text{Si}_x\text{As}_2$ ($x = 0-1$) system. The exchange-correlation energy was evaluated using the local density, generalized gradient, and modified Becke-Johnson schemes, ensuring accurate predictions. The calculated structural parameters and band gap energies for ZnGeAs_2 and ZnSiAs_2 exhibit excellent agreement with experimental data, validating the reliability of our approach.

Both ZnGeAs_2 and ZnSiAs_2 exhibit semiconductor characteristics with a direct band gap at the Γ point, making them promising for optoelectronic applications. The alloys show anisotropic optical behavior, with $\text{ZnGe}_{0.25}\text{Si}_{0.75}\text{As}_2$ demonstrating the highest refractive index and energy loss, making it a strong candidate for UV-shielding and optoelectronic devices. Thermoelectric analysis identifies $\text{ZnGe}_{0.75}\text{Si}_{0.25}\text{As}_2$ as the optimal composition, achieving a maximum Seebeck coefficient of 228.26 $\mu\text{V/K}$ at 800 K. Moreover, by tuning the carrier concentration to $n = 4.87 \times 10^{18} \text{ cm}^{-3}$, the Seebeck coefficient can be significantly enhanced to 449.44 $\mu\text{V/K}$. These findings highlight the potential of Si substitution to enhance material performance and provide a roadmap for tailoring the structural, optical, and thermoelectric properties of chalcopyrite semiconductors.

1. Introduction

The rapid advancements in renewable energy technologies have amplified the need for high-performance materials with tailored properties for specific applications. Among these, chalcopyrite compounds have emerged as some of the most promising materials, primarily due to their remarkable electrical, optical, and thermoelectric properties [1]. These properties make chalcopyrites highly versatile, enabling their use in various technological domains, including photovoltaic detectors, multijunction solar cells, light-emitting diodes (LEDs), modulators, and nonlinear optics [2–5]. Furthermore, their tunable band gaps position them as excellent candidates for infrared detectors, opening avenues for their use in optoelectronics and energy harvesting applications [6].

Within the ternary chalcopyrite family, compounds with the general

formula A-B-C_2 (where $\text{A} = \text{Mg, Zn, Cd}$; $\text{B} = \text{Si, Ge, Sn}$; $\text{C} = \text{P, As, Sb}$) have gained significant attention due to their direct band gaps and highly adjustable properties. In particular, pnictide-based chalcopyrites like ZnGeAs_2 and ZnSiAs_2 stand out for their favorable electronic and optical behaviors. Their ability to balance good electronic conductivity with low thermal conductivity further enhances their potential for thermoelectric applications, especially in energy conversion and waste heat recovery systems.

Significant progress has been made in the study of these materials through both experimental and theoretical approaches. Experimentally, ZnGeAs_2 has been investigated for its structural and optoelectronic properties by Drahokoupil et al. [7], Solomon et al. [8], and Shah et al. [9], while related compounds such as ZnSiAs_2 , ZnGeP_2 , and CdGeP_2 have been explored by Masumoto et al. [10]. On the theoretical front,

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mssp.2024.109185>

Received 7 September 2024; Received in revised form 25 November 2024; Accepted 28 November 2024

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