Supporting Information

Modulating and optimizing 2D/2D Fe-Ni$_3$P/ZnIn$_2$S$_4$ with S vacancy through surface engineering for efficient photocatalytic H$_2$ evolution

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Experimental

1.1 Synthesis of ZIS

In a representative experiment, ZnCl₂·2H₂O (1.0 mmol), InCl₃ (2.0 mmol) and TAA (8.0 mmol) were orderly dissolved into 60 mL ethanol solution (V₅H₂O·V₆H₂O = 1:1), and then stirred at room temperature for 30 min. Thereafter, the clear solution was poured into 100 mL stainless steel autoclave, and maintained at 180°C oven for 18 h. After cooling naturally to indoor temperature, the sediment was separated by centrifugation, followed by washing with deionized water and ethanol, and drying at 60°C for 12 h. The obtained yellow powder was labelled as ZIS.

1.2 Synthesis of ZIS with rich S vacancies

The preparation process of ZIS with abundant S vacancies was similar to that of ZIS. It was prepared by shortening the solvothermal time. Typically, 1.0 mmol ZnCl₂·2H₂O, 2.0 mmol InCl₃ and 8.0 mmol TAA were orderly added into 60 mL ethanol solution (V₅H₂O·V₆H₂O = 1:1), and then stirred at room temperature for 30 min. After that, the mixture was transfer to 100 mL stainless steel autoclave, and kept oven at 180°C for 4 h. In order to compare the performance, three different solvothermal durations (3, 4 and 5 h) were explored. Finally, the precipitate of each sample was separated by centrifugation, and washing with deionized water for several times, then drying at 60°C for 12 h. The obtained yellow powder with the best performance was labelled as ZIS-Vs.

1.3 Synthesis of Ni₂P/ZIS-Vs

The Ni₂P/ZIS-Vs composite photocatalyst was fabricated by a typical hydrothermal method. Firstly, 0.0789 g Ni(NO₃)₂·6H₂O and 0.0330 g red phosphorus (molar ratio
of 1:4) were dissolved in 30 mL ethylenediamine and stirred for 30 min until homogeneous. And then 0.18 g ZIS-Vs was added above mixed solution and continuously stirred for 30 min. Finally, the mixed solution was held at 140°C for 12 h in 50 mL Teflon lined stainless steel reactor. After reaction, the powders were collected and washed with distilled water and anhydrous ethanol for several times, and dried at 60°C for 12 h under vacuum condition. The collected powder was named as 10Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs, where 10 represented the mass ratio of Ni$_2$P to ZIS-Vs. The Ni$_2$P loading was x% (x = 5, 10 and 15) and denoted as xNi$_2$P/ZIS-Vs. Bare Ni$_2$P powder was also obtained without adding ZIS-Vs. And the sample with best performance was denoted as Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs.

1.4 Synthesis of Fe doping Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs

The preparation process of Fe doping Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs composite was similar to that of Ni$_2$P/ZIS. It was fabricated by a typical hydrothermal method. In brief, 0.0789 g Ni(NO$_3$)$_2$·6H$_2$O, 0.0330 g red phosphorus and 10 mg FeCl$_3$ were dissolved in 30 mL ethylenediamine and stirred for 30 min until homogeneous. Then added 0.18 g ZIS-Vs into the mixed solution and stirred another 30 min. Finally, the above solution was put in 50 mL Teflon lined stainless steel reactor and kept at 140°C for 12 h. After the reaction, the powders were gathered and washed by distilled water and anhydrous ethanol for several times, and dried at 60°C for 12 h. The gathered sample was named as 10Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs, where 10 represented the added mass of FeCl$_3$. A series of the Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs composites with different contents of FeCl$_3$ (8, 10 and 12 mg) were prepared using the same process. Among them, bare Fe-Ni$_2$P powder was also obtained without adding ZIS-Vs. And the sample with best performance was denoted as Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs. Meanwhile, we also prepared different metal ions (Mn(SO$_4$)$_2$·H$_2$O, CoCl$_2$, CuCl$_2$) doped with Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs and marked as M-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs.
1.5 Characterizations

The morphology and microstructure were investigated by SU8010 scanning electron microscope (SEM) outfitted with an energy dispersive X-ray spectrometer (EDS), and JEM-2100 plus transmission electron microscope (TEM). The crystalline and phase information were characterized by Bruker D8 Advance X-ray diffraction (XRD). The chemical states were investigated by Thermo ESCALAB 250 XI X X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS), monochromatic Al Kα radiation, and the XPS data was calibrated by C 1 s spectrum (binding energy is 284.8 eV). The light absorption property was researched by the PerkinElmer Lambda 750 S UV-vis spectrophotometer using barium sulfate as standard reference. The recombination of photogenerated carriers was tested by F-4600 spectrofluorometer (375 nm excitation wavelength). The secondary cutoff binding energy was measured by AXIS SUPRA X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy with He I as the excitation source. The surface photovoltage (SPV) measurement were carried out on the system consisting of a 500 W Xe lamp source equipped with a monochromator, a lock-in amplifier with a light chopper, a photovoltaic cell, and a computer. The Raman spectra were conducted on LabRAM HR Evolution Raman spectrometer with 325 nm excitation wavelength to analysis the composition. The electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) measurement was conducted on JEOL JES-FA200 EPR spectrometer with a 9.054 GHz magnetic field. Photoluminescence (PL) spectra were directly measured by a steady state spectrometer (Edinburgh instruments, UK) and a FLs980 lifetime.

1.6 Photocatalytic water splitting for hydrogen evolution

The hydrogen production experiments were performed on a 150 mL quartz reactor (CEL-PAEM-D6, CEAULIGHT, Beijing). Typically, photocatalyst (5 mg) was added into 50 mL solution involving 15% TEOA as sacrificial agent. Prior to exerting light,
the reaction system was degassed for 40 min to thoroughly exclude the air and the dissolved oxygen in reaction system. And the system temperature was kept at 6°C using circulating water. Then the reaction was proceeded under 300 W Xenon lamp (PLS-SXE 300, Beijing) with a 420 nm cut-off filter. The generated hydrogen was analyzed by GC7920-7F2A gas chromatograph (CEAULIGHT, Beijing, N₂ as carrier gas and TCD detector).

1.7 Apparent quantum yield (AQY) test

The apparent quantum yield (AQY) was measured following the same reaction conditions as photocatalytic test except that the incident light was supplied by a 300W Xe lamp equipped with specific band-pass filters to get the desired monochromatic incident wavelength (λ=420 nm). AQY was calculated based on the following equation:

\[
AQY = \frac{N_e}{N_p} \times 100\% = \frac{2MN_Ahc}{SPt\lambda} \times 100\%
\]

where \(N_e\) is the number of reaction electrons, \(N_p\) is the number of incident photons, \(M\) is the number of hydrogen molecules, \(N_A\) is the Avogadro constant, \(h\) is the Planck constant, \(c\) is the speed of light in a vacuum, \(S\) is the irradiation area, \(P\) is the light intensity, \(t\) is the reaction time, and \(\lambda\) is the light wavelength.

1.8 Photoelectrochemical and electrochemical measurements

The electrochemical tests such as transient photocurrent responses and electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) were performed on the electrochemical workstation (Chenhua, Shanghai) with a standard three-electrode system. The Pt net and Ag/AgCl were the counter electrode and the reference electrode, respectively. The working electrode was prepared as follows: 5 mg catalyst was dispersed into 90 μL ethanol and sonicated for 20 min, and then put 10 μL Nafion and sonicated another 20 min. Then, 20 μL of the above mixed solution was spread it
on the surface of FTO (1.0 cm*1.0 cm) and dry at room temperature. The electrolytes
used in the tests were all Na$_2$SO$_4$ solutions (0.5 mol/L). 300 W xenon lamp was used
as light source and 420 nm cut-off filter. The frequency range selected for the EIS test
was 0.1 Hz to 1 MHz in the case of real-time open circuit voltage. Mott-Schottky (M-S)
plots were collected from -1 to 0.5 V under 5 and 10 kHz frequency and 0.01 V
amplitude.

1.9 Theoretical calculation

All calculations in this work are performed using the CASTEP code, which was
based on density functional theory (DFT) calculations with the plane wave
pseudopotential method. Perdew-Burke-Ernzerhof (PBE) functional in the generalized
gradient approximation (GGA) was chosen to describe the exchange correlation
potential. The Tkatchenko and Scheffler (TS) scheme was used to correct for the
influence of van der Waals (vdW) forces. The plane-wave energy cutoff was set to
480 eV. The tolerance of self-consistent calculation was set as 5.0×10$^{-5}$ eV/atom. The
maximum displacement below 0.005 Å and maximum force on atoms below 0.1 eV/Å
were set as the convergence thresholds in geometry optimization. To avoid
interlaminar interactions, a vacuum spacing of 18 Å was applied perpendicular to the
slab.
Figure S1. Top-view and side-view models of (a) ZIS, (b) ZIS-Vs, (c) Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs and (d) Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs used for DFT calculations, dark blue, grey, yellow, light blue, purple and red spheres represented Zn, In, S, Ni, P and Fe atoms, respectively.
Figure S2. (a) SEM image of pristine ZIS. (b) Elements mappings of Zn, In and S and (c) EDS spectrum of ZIS-Vs.
Figure S3. (a) SEM, (b) TEM and HRTEM images of Ni$_2$P nanoflakes. (c) SEM image of Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs and (d) EDS spectrum of Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs.
Figure S4. XRD pattern of Ni$_2$P nanoflake.
Figure S5. XRD patterns of composite photocatalysts supported with Ni$_2$P in different proportions.
Figure S6. XRD patterns of composite photocatalysts doped with different amounts of Fe element.
Figure S7. (a) Survey spectra of ZIS-Vs, Ni$_2$P and Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs. High-resolution (b) Zn 2p, (c) In 3d and (d) S 2p spectra of ZIS-Vs and Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs, (e) High-resolution Fe 2p spectrum of Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs.
Figure S8. High-resolution (a) Ni 2p and (b) P 2p spectra of Fe-Ni$_2$P and Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs. High-resolution (c) Ni 2p and (d) P 2p spectra of Fe-Ni$_2$P and Ni$_2$P.
Figure S9. UPS spectra of (a) Ni$_2$P-ZIS-Vs and (b) Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs.
**Figure S10.** (a and b) The corresponding photocatalytic $\text{H}_2$ evolution rates of various samples.
Figure S11. (a and b) The corresponding electrocatalytic hydrogen evolution polarization curves and Tafel plots of samples.
Figure S12. Photocatalytic H$_2$ evolution rates of Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs using Na$_2$S/Na$_2$SO$_3$, LA and TEOA, respectively.
Figure S13. Contact angle measurements of (a) ZIS-Vs, (b) Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs and (c) Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs.

H$_2$O adsorption is a key step in photocatalytic reaction for hydrogen production. To better understand the main factors related to the water splitting reaction, it is greatly necessary to research the adsorption property of water molecules. The contact-angle measurements were performed. The pristine ZIS-Vs shows a contact angle of 36.681° (Figure S13a), indicating moderate hydrophilicity. Interestingly, the contact angle of Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs decreases due to the introduction of the cocatalyst Ni$_2$P (Figure S13b), indicating that Ni$_2$P induced H$_2$O adsorption preference. In Figure S13c, the Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs has the minimum contact angle of 17.30°, which manifests that the dependence of photocatalytic activity on water adsorption is enhanced.
Figure S14. (a) SEM, (b) HRTEM images and (c) elements mapping of recycled Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs sample.
Table S1. Substrate (E_{sub}), complex (E_{com}), Fe (E_{Fe}) and forming (E_{for}) energies of Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs with Zn, In or Ni replaced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Replaced element</th>
<th>$E_{\text{sub}}$ (eV)</th>
<th>$E_{\text{com}}$ (eV)</th>
<th>$E_{\text{Fe}}$ (eV)</th>
<th>$E_{\text{for}}$ (eV)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zn</td>
<td>-59031.10</td>
<td>-58331.09</td>
<td>-856.5</td>
<td>-1.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>In</td>
<td>-59031.10</td>
<td>-58181.13</td>
<td>-856.5</td>
<td>-2.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ni</td>
<td>-59031.10</td>
<td>-58541.16</td>
<td>-856.5</td>
<td>-2.36</td>
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Table S2. The element atomic fraction of ZIS-Vs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Zn</th>
<th>In</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Atomic Fraction (%)</td>
<td>14.86</td>
<td>29.72</td>
<td>55.42</td>
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</table>

Table S3. The element atomic fraction of Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Zn</th>
<th>In</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atomic Fraction (%)</td>
<td>14.60</td>
<td>29.20</td>
<td>56.20</td>
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Table S4. Energy band structures of ZIS-Vs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samples</th>
<th>$E_g$ (eV)</th>
<th>$E_{fb}$ vs. Ag/AgCl (V)</th>
<th>$E_{CB}$ vs. NHE (V)</th>
<th>$E_{VB}$ vs. NHE (V)</th>
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<tr>
<td>ZIS-Vs</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>1.17</td>
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Table S5. Dynamic analysis of emission decay for ZIS, ZIS-Vs, Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs and Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samples</th>
<th>$t_1$ (ns)</th>
<th>$A_1$ (%)</th>
<th>$t_2$ (ns)</th>
<th>$A_2$ (%)</th>
<th>$t_3$ (ns)</th>
<th>$A_3$ (%)</th>
<th>$t_{Av}$ (ns)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ZIS</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>97.86</td>
<td>3.219</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZIS-Vs</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>97.98</td>
<td>3.409</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>96.84</td>
<td>3.511</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZIS-Vs</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>85.21</td>
<td>1.531</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td>11.904</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>7.63</td>
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Table S6. Performance comparison of ZnIn$_2$S$_4$-based photocatalysts recently reported.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Samples</th>
<th>Light source</th>
<th>Incident light</th>
<th>Sacrificial agents</th>
<th>H$_2$/μmol/g/h</th>
<th>Ref.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S defect ZnIn$_2$S$_4$</td>
<td>300W Xe</td>
<td>&gt;420 nm</td>
<td>lactic acid/Na$_2$S</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cu-ZnIn$_2$S$_4$</td>
<td>300W Xe</td>
<td>&gt;420 nm</td>
<td>Na$_2$S/Na$_2$SO$_3$</td>
<td>757.5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mn-ZnIn$_2$S$_4$</td>
<td>300W Xe</td>
<td>&gt;420 nm</td>
<td>Na$_2$S/Na$_2$SO$_3$</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Co-ZnIn$_2$S$_4$</td>
<td>300W Xe</td>
<td>&gt;420 nm</td>
<td>Na$_2$S/Na$_2$SO$_3$</td>
<td>1002</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZnIn$_2$S$_4$/Ni$_2$P$_5$</td>
<td>300W Xe</td>
<td>&gt;420 nm</td>
<td>Na$_2$S/Na$_2$SO$_3$</td>
<td>2263</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ni$_2$P/ZnIn$_2$S$_4$</td>
<td>300W Xe</td>
<td>&gt;420 nm</td>
<td>TEOA</td>
<td>2066</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZnIn$_2$S$_4$&amp;NiS</td>
<td>300W Xe</td>
<td>&gt;420 nm</td>
<td>Lactic acid</td>
<td>3333</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoS$_2$/Vs-M-ZnIn$_2$S$_4$</td>
<td>300W Xe</td>
<td>&gt;300 nm</td>
<td>Lactic acid</td>
<td>6884</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fe-Ni$_2$P/ZnIn$_2$S$_4$-Vs</td>
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<td>TEOA</td>
<td>4509.87</td>
<td>This work</td>
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References


