

Hydrothermal Stability of CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ Mixed Oxides for Selective Catalytic Reduction of NO_x by NH₃

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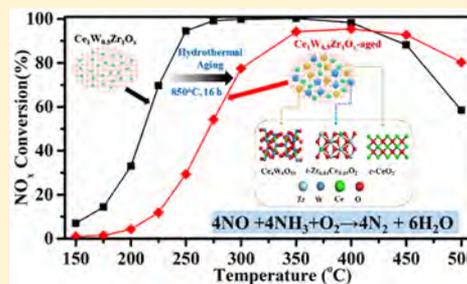
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Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ mixed oxides were prepared by the homogeneous precipitation method for the selective catalytic reduction of NO_x with NH₃ (NH₃–SCR). The effects of hydrothermal aging on the catalytic performances of CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ were investigated. The results showed that CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalyst exhibited excellent NH₃–SCR activity for removal of NO_x and hydrothermal stability. After hydrothermal aging at 850 °C for 16 h, the optimum CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalyst could still realize 80% NO_x conversion at 300–500 °C even under a high gas hourly space velocity of 250 000 h^{–1}. The structural properties, redox ability, surface species, and acidity of fresh and hydrothermally aged CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalysts were characterized by N₂-physorption, XRD, Raman, H₂-TPR, XPS, NH₃-TPD, and *in situ* DRIFTS. The characterization results showed that decreases of 89% of the surface area and 71% of the NH₃ storage capacity as well as new phase formation occurred for the CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ sample after hydrothermal aging at 850 °C for 16 h. The activity of hydrothermally aged CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ was mainly attributed to the retention of redox-acid sites and their interaction due to the formation of Ce–Zr solid solutions and Ce₄W₉O₃₃.



1. INTRODUCTION

The selective catalytic reduction of NO_x with NH₃ (NH₃–SCR) is an efficient technology for NO_x removal from diesel engines. Besides high de-NO_x efficiency, excellent hydrothermal stability up to 800 °C is also critical for SCR catalysts in diesel emission control, since water always emits from internal combustion engines and the regeneration of DPF exposes the SCR catalysts to a high temperature.^{1,2} Recently, mixed oxides, such as Ce- and Fe-based catalysts, have been widely studied for NH₃–SCR of NO_x.³ However, the hydrothermal stability of mixed oxides is questionable for practical application in diesel after-treatment systems.⁴ Ceria–zirconium mixed oxides are well-known for their outstanding thermal stability.⁵ The SCR activity of ceria–zirconium mixed oxides can be improved by the addition of acidic components, for example, Ce_{0.75}Zr_{0.25}O₂–PO₄^{3–},⁶ WO₃/ZrO₂–Ce_{0.6}Zr_{0.4}O₂,⁷ CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂,^{8–10} and NbO_x–CeO₂–ZrO₂.¹¹ These acidity-promoted ceria–zirconium mixed oxides showed outstanding activity for the NH₃–SCR reaction, and some of these catalysts have been reported to exhibit excellent hydrothermal stability.^{10,11} For instance, 80% of NO_x conversion was still obtained above 300 °C over a Ce₁Nb_{3.0}Zr₂O_x catalyst after it was hydrothermally treated at 800 °C for 48 h under a GHSV of 50 000 h^{–1}.¹¹ Therefore, the acidity-promoted ceria–zirconium oxides are

promising candidates for the abatement of NO_x from diesel vehicles.^{1,11}

WO₃-doped Ce–Zr solid solutions as well as CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ mixed oxides have been studied for NH₃–SCR of NO_x.^{7–10,12} A 10 wt % WO₃/CeO₂–ZrO₂ catalyst, which was prepared by impregnating WO₃ on CeO₂–ZrO₂, showed nearly 100% NO_x conversion within the range 200–500 °C.¹² Ning et al. reported that higher NO_x conversion can be obtained over CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalysts prepared by hydrothermal or coprecipitation methods, while samples prepared by impregnating WO₃ on CeO₂–ZrO₂ exhibited relatively poor SCR activity.⁹ Song et al. reported that hydrothermally synthesized CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalysts were stable after being hydrothermally aged at 700–900 °C for 8 h and attributed the hydrothermal stability of the catalyst at 700 °C to its remaining redox properties and highly dispersed or amorphous WO₃ species after hydrothermal-aging treatment.¹⁰ However, the results in their report cannot satisfactorily explain why CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalysts hydrothermally aged at 800 °C for 8 h still

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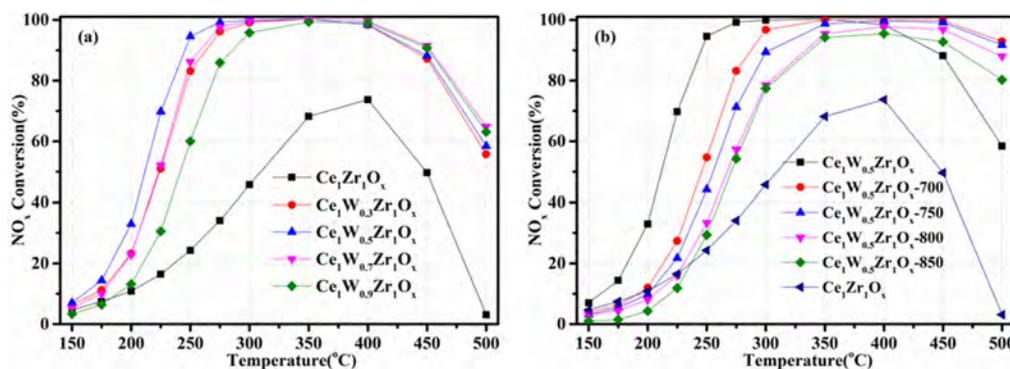


Figure 1. Effects of W/Ce molar ratio (a) and hydrothermal aging temperature (b) on the NO_x conversion over catalysts. Reaction conditions: [NO] = [NH₃] = 500 ppm, [O₂] = 5 vol %, balance N₂, and GHSV = 250 000 h⁻¹.

realized ~100% NO_x conversion at 300–500 °C, even after the formation of a new tungsten-containing crystal phase.¹⁰ Recently, Iwasaki et al. pointed out that the much higher SCR reactivity of WO₃/CeO₂ than that of a mixture of WO₃/ZrO₂ and CeO₂ could be mainly attributed to the atomic-scale site proximity and large amount of acidic-redox site interfaces.¹³ In order to understand the hydrothermal stability of CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂, a systematic study on the phase transformation that occurs during the interaction of WO₃, CeO₂, and ZrO₂, including formation of the Ce–Zr oxide solid solutions and cerium tungstates, and the number of active sites remaining for the SCR reaction (redox-acidic sites) after hydrothermal aging at high temperature, needs to be carried out.

In this work, a series of CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalysts with different W/Ce molar ratios were prepared by a homogeneous precipitation method. The CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalyst was hydrothermally aged at 700, 750, 800, and 850 °C for 16 h. The effects of hydrothermal aging on the SCR activity and the interaction between WO₃, CeO₂, and ZrO₂ in CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalysts were investigated.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Catalyst Preparation and Hydrothermal Aging Treatment. The CeO₂–WO₃–ZrO₂ catalysts with the required molar ratios (Ce/W/Zr = 1:*a*:1, where *a* = 0.3, 0.5, 0.7, and 0.9) were synthesized by a homogeneous precipitation method using urea as the precipitant. Synthesis details can be found in the [Supporting Information](#). The obtained catalysts were denoted as Ce₁W_{*a*}Zr₁O_{*x*}. For comparison, CeO₂, ZrO₂, and Ce₁Zr₁O_{*x*} samples were also prepared by the same method. The obtained catalysts were pressed, crushed, and sieved to 40–60 mesh for SCR activity testing.

The selected samples, Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_{*x*} and Ce₁Zr₁O_{*x*}, were hydrothermally aged in 10 vol % H₂O/air at 700, 750, 800, and 850 °C, respectively, for 16 h and denoted as Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_{*x*}-T and Ce₁Zr₁O_{*x*}-T, where “T” represents the hydrothermal aging temperature.

2.2. Catalytic Activity Test. The NH₃–SCR activity measurements were carried out in a fixed-bed quartz tube flow reactor with inner diameter of 4 mm. The flue gas composition was as follows: 500 ppm of NO, 500 ppm of NH₃, 5% O₂, and balance N₂. Reactant gases were regulated by mass-flow controllers before entering the reactor. The concentrations of NH₃, NO, NO₂, and N₂O were continually monitored by an FTIR spectrometer (IS10 Nicolet), which was equipped with a multiple path gas cell (2 m).

The NO_x conversion and N₂ selectivity were calculated as follows:

$$\text{NOx conversion} = \left(1 - \frac{[\text{NOx}]_{\text{out}}}{[\text{NOx}]_{\text{in}}} \right) \times 100\% \quad (1)$$

$$\text{N}_2 \text{ selectivity} = \left(1 - \frac{2[\text{N}_2\text{O}]_{\text{out}}}{([\text{NOx}]_{\text{in}} - [\text{NOx}]_{\text{out}}) + ([\text{NH}_3]_{\text{in}} - [\text{NH}_3]_{\text{out}})} \right) \times 100\% \quad (2)$$

where [NO_x] = [NO] + [NO₂], [NO_x]_{in}, and [NO_x]_{out} denote the inlet and outlet gas concentrations of NO_x, respectively.

2.3. Kinetic Studies. The kinetic experiments for standard SCR were evaluated in the same fixed-bed reactor as the activity test. The NO_x conversion was kept at less than 20% in the temperature range of 200–260 °C. The reaction rates of NO conversion ($-R_{\text{NOx}}$ in mol m⁻² s⁻¹), normalized by the surface area, were calculated as follows:^{13,14}

$$-R_{\text{NOx}} = \frac{F_{\text{NOx}} \times x}{W \times S} \quad (3)$$

where F_{NOx} is the molar flow rate of NO_x (in mol s⁻¹), *x* is the conversion of NO, *W* is the weight of catalyst (in g), and *S* is the BET surface area (in m² g⁻¹). The apparent activation energies (E_a , in kJ mol⁻¹) can be calculated from the Arrhenius plots of the reaction rates.

2.4. Catalyst Characterization. The N₂ adsorption–desorption analysis of catalysts was carried out using a Quantachrome Autosorb-1C instrument at a liquid nitrogen temperature (–196 °C). Powder X-ray diffraction (XRD) patterns of the samples were measured on a Bruker D8 diffractometer with Cu Kα ($\lambda = 0.15406$ nm) radiation. Raman spectra of the SCR catalysts were recorded on a homemade UV resonance Raman spectrometer (UVR DLPC-DL-03) with a 532 nm laser beam He–Cd laser. The temperature-programmed reduction of hydrogen (H₂-TPR) was carried out on a Micromeritics AutoChem 2920 chemisorption analyzer. XPS measurements were carried out on an X-ray photoelectron spectrometer (AXIS Supra/Ultra) with Al Kα radiation (1486.7 eV). Temperature-programmed desorption of ammonia (NH₃-TPD) was carried out in a fixed-bed quartz tube flow reactor with an inner diameter of 4 mm, and the concentration of NH₃ was continually monitored by an FTIR spectrometer (IS10 Nicolet). The *in situ* DRIFTS experiments were performed on

an FTIR spectrometer (Nicolet ISS50) equipped with an MCT/A detector. The experimental details can be found in the Supporting Information.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. NH₃–SCR Catalytic Activity and Textural Properties. Figure 1a depicts the NO_x conversion of fresh Ce₁Zr₁O_x and Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x catalysts at a GHSV of 250 000 h⁻¹. The results show that Ce₁Zr₁O_x exhibited low NO_x conversion, with a maximum NO_x conversion of 74% at 400 °C. Significant enhancement of NO_x conversion was realized over Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x with the addition of W into Ce₁Zr₁O_x. The low-temperature activity of Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x (below 300 °C) was improved by increasing the W/Ce molar ratio from 0.3 to 0.5. However, when further increasing the W/Ce molar ratio to 0.7 and 0.9, the NO_x conversion at low temperatures decreased. The W/Ce molar ratio in Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x showed little effect on the high temperature activity (above 300 °C). For Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x, the N₂ selectivity was near 100% (Figure S1a). Additionally, Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x exhibited excellent NH₃–SCR activity even under a high GHSV of 500 000 h⁻¹, where over 80% NO_x conversion was obtained in the range of 250–450 °C (Figure S2).

The hydrothermal stability of an SCR catalyst at high temperature is important for practical application. Here, the effects of the hydrothermal aging temperature on the catalytic performance of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x were examined. As the results in Figure 1b show, compared to Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x, an obvious decrease in the low temperature activity and enhancement of the high temperature activity were observed for Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-700. The improved activity of SCR catalysts at high temperatures after hydrothermal aging was also observed in previous studies,^{10,11} and it could be associated with the decreased NH₃ oxidation activity, which would divert NH₃ from the SCR reaction.¹⁵ Furthermore, the low-temperature activity slightly decreased with the increase of the hydrothermal aging temperature. It is worth noting that, after being severely hydrothermally aged at 850 °C for 16 h, Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-850 still exhibited higher NH₃–SCR activity than that of fresh Ce₁Zr₁O_x in the temperature range of 250–500 °C. The NO_x conversion of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-850 was more than 80% in the temperature range of 300–500 °C. In addition, all the hydrothermally aged Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x catalysts possessed high N₂ selectivity in the SCR reaction, as shown in Figure S1b. The above results suggested that Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x possessed excellent hydrothermal stability.

The BET specific surface area, pore diameter, and pore volume were investigated by N₂ physisorption. As shown in Table S1, the surface areas of Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x with the molar ratio of W/Ce = 0.3, 0.5, and 0.7 were higher than that of Ce₁Zr₁O_x. However, excessive addition of W to Ce₁Zr₁O_x resulted in a severe loss of surface area. The BET surface area of Ce₁W_{0.9}Zr₁O_x (49.3 m²/g) was much lower than that of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x (92.0 m²/g). This result indicated that the addition of W to Ce₁Zr₁O_x can affect the structural parameters of Ce₁Zr₁O_x and that optimizing the W addition amount is important to obtain samples with a high surface area.

As listed in Table 1, after hydrothermal aging at 700 °C for 16 h, the surface area and pore volume of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x decreased from 92.0 m²/g to 16.6 m²/g and from 0.10 cc/g to 0.05 cc/g, respectively. In addition, a sharp increase of the average pore diameter was observed for the Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-700 sample. This indicated that sintered particles and extra secondary piled pores formed in Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x after the hydrothermal aging treat-

Table 1. Structural Parameters of Ce₁Zr₁O_x, Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x, and Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-T Catalysts from N₂ Physisorption Results

samples	S _{BET} ^a (m ² /g)	pore diameter ^b (nm)	pore volume ^c (cc/g)	R _S × 10 ¹⁰ at 200 °C ^d (mol/s ⁻¹ /m ⁻²)
Ce ₁ Zr ₁ O _x	73.2	4.3	0.08	6.7
Ce ₁ W _{0.5} Zr ₁ O _x	92.0	4.3	0.10	23.3
Ce ₁ W _{0.5} Zr ₁ O _x -700	16.6	12.4	0.05	35.6
Ce ₁ W _{0.5} Zr ₁ O _x -750	16.1	13.0	0.05	37.2
Ce ₁ W _{0.5} Zr ₁ O _x -800	12.2	13.4	0.04	36.4
Ce ₁ W _{0.5} Zr ₁ O _x -850	10.2	13.4	0.03	35.8

^aBET surface area. ^bAverage pore diameter. ^cTotal pore volume.

^dSCR reaction rates at 200 °C normalized by catalyst surface area.

ment.¹⁶ However, the surface area and pore volume of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x declined to a small degree when further increasing the hydrothermal-aging temperature. Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-850 exhibited a surface area of 10.2 m²/g and pore volume of 0.03 cc/g.

The XRD patterns of CeO₂, ZrO₂, Ce₁Zr₁O_x, and Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x catalysts are depicted in Figure 2a. The data showed that Ce₁Zr₁O_x exhibited the structures of cubic fluorite CeO₂ (JCPDS 43-1002) with diffraction peaks at 28.5°, 47.5°, and 56.3° and tetragonal ZrO₂ (JCPDS 50-1089) with P42/nmc space group diffraction peaks at 30.3°, 50.4°, and 60.2°.^{17,18} This indicated that a Ce–Zr solid solution was not formed in the prepared Ce₁Zr₁O_x sample.¹¹ An explanation for this phenomenon is that stepwise precipitation of Ce(OH)₃/Ce(OH)₄ and Zr(OH)₄ took place owing to the slow increase in the pH value of the hot Ce–Zr–urea solution during the preparation of the catalysts¹⁹ and subsequently resulted in the formation of CeO₂ and ZrO₂ phases after calcination treatment. For Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x, no typical XRD diffraction peaks assigned to tungsten oxide or zirconium oxide were detected. The main peaks in the XRD pattern of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x were attributed to *c*-CeO₂, while the intensity of diffraction peaks was decreased compared to Ce₁Zr₁O_x. The same phenomenon was also found for the other Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x samples (Figure S3). Rietveld refinement was performed using TOPAS software from BRUKER to obtain precise lattice parameters and crystalline size. It was found that the grain size of Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x was much smaller than that of Ce₁Zr₁O_x (Table S2). Moreover, the lattice parameters of *c*-CeO₂ in Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x obtained by Rietveld refinement were almost equal to those of Ce₁Zr₁O_x (Table S2). The results suggested that ZrO₂ and WO₃ should exist mainly as homogeneously dispersed crystallites or in an amorphous state rather than Ce–Zr or W–Zr solid solutions in Ce₁W_aZr₁O_x.²⁰

The XRD patterns of hydrothermally aged Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-T are shown in Figure 2b. It can be seen that besides the characteristic diffraction peaks of *c*-CeO₂ (PDF 43-1002), solid solution of *t*-Zr_{0.84}Ce_{0.16}O₂ (PDF 38-1437) and Ce₄W₉O₃₃ (JCPDS 25-0192) appeared for the Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-700 catalyst, indicating the occurrence of phase segregation and new phase formation after hydrothermal aging at 700 °C for 16 h. Compared with Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-700, little change can be observed for the XRD patterns of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-750, Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-800, and Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-850. However, it was found by Rietveld refinement that the lattice parameters of cubic CeO₂ decreased and the characteristic peaks corresponding to cubic CeO₂ shifted to a higher value with increasing hydro-

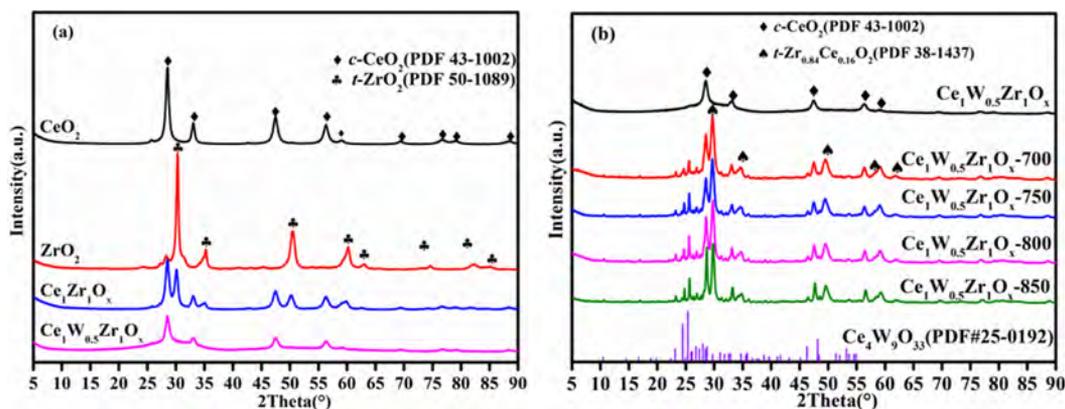


Figure 2. Powder XRD of fresh (a) and hydrothermally aged (b) catalysts.

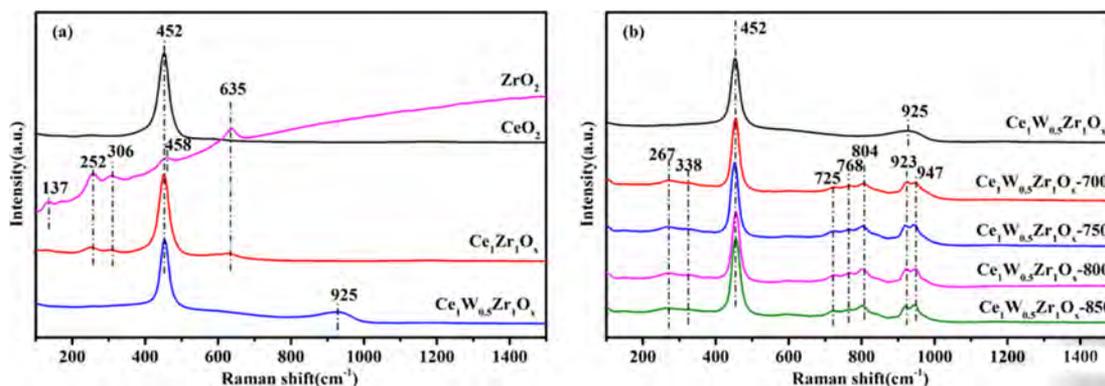


Figure 3. Visible Raman spectrum of fresh (a) and hydrothermally aged (b) catalysts.

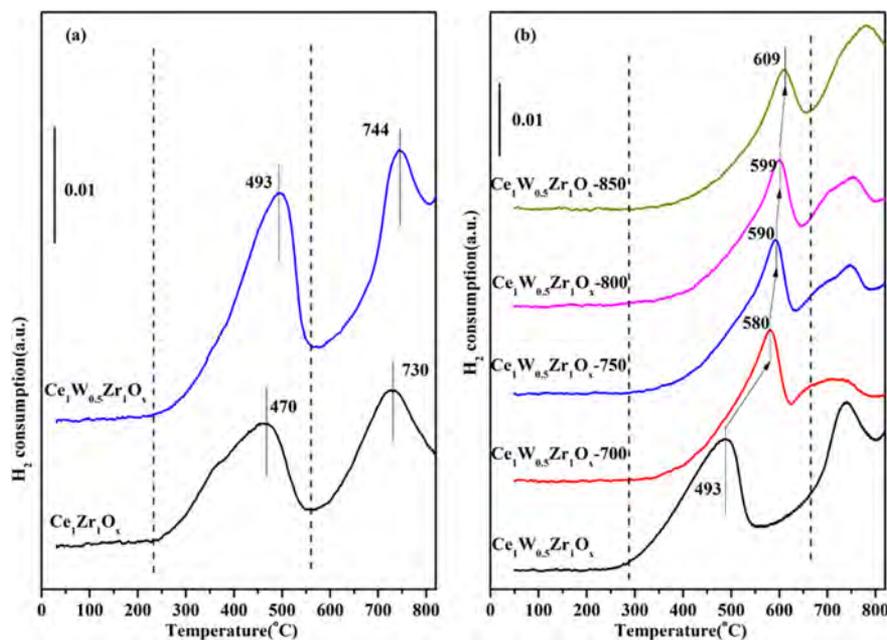


Figure 4. H_2 -TPR results of fresh (a) and hydrothermally aged (b) catalysts.

thermal aging temperature (Table S2 and Figure S4). This indicated that a Ce-based ceria–zirconia cubic solid solution formed though the replacement of Ce^{4+} (0.097 nm) by the smaller Zr^{4+} (0.084 nm) owing to the diffusion of ions at a high temperature during the hydrothermal-aging treatment.²⁰ The formation of a cubic and tetragonal ceria–zirconia solid solution

is consistent with the reported ZrO_2 – CeO_2 phase diagram below 1400 °C.²¹

Figure 3a shows the Raman spectra of CeO_2 , ZrO_2 , $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$, and $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ samples. One prominent peak at around 452 cm^{-1} can be observed in the Raman spectrum of CeO_2 , which can be assigned to the CeO_2 cubic fluorite peak due to the F_{2g}

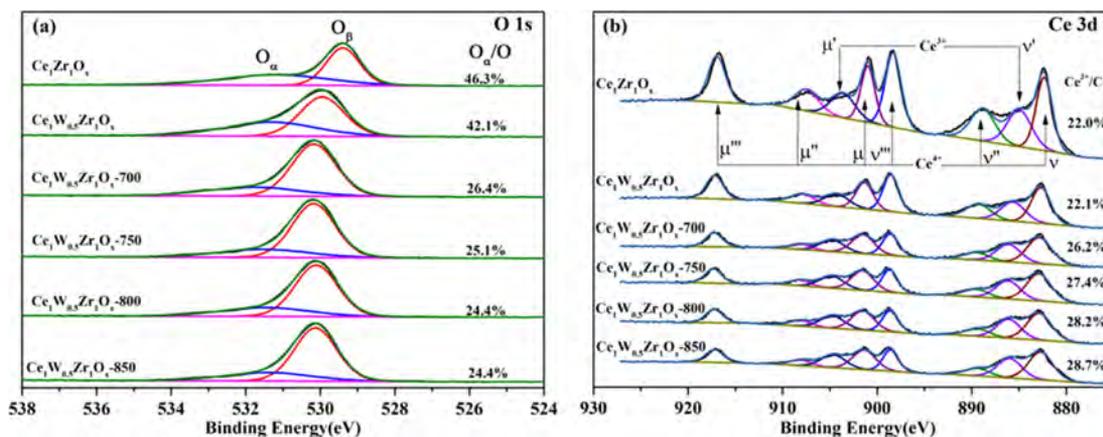


Figure 5. XPS for (a) O 1s and (b) Ce 3d of fresh and hydrothermally aged catalysts.

symmetric breathing mode of oxygen atoms surrounding the cerium ion.²² The characteristic bands of *t*-ZrO₂ at 137, 252, 306, 458, and 635 cm⁻¹ were observed for the ZrO₂ sample.²³ For the Ce₁Zr₁O_x sample, the Raman-active modes of *c*-CeO₂ (452 cm⁻¹) and *t*-ZrO₂ (252, 306, and 635 cm⁻¹) appeared. For the Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x catalyst, the intensity of the CeO₂ cubic fluorite peak became weaker, and the bands attributed to *t*-ZrO₂ disappeared. This suggested that the addition of tungsten species inhibited the crystallization of CeO₂ and ZrO₂, in accordance with the results of XRD analysis. In addition, a broad band at around 925 cm⁻¹ appeared in the spectrum of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x, which could be related to amorphous tungsten oxide or the symmetrical W=O stretching mode of highly dispersed tungsten oxides.^{13,24}

The Raman spectra of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-T are shown in Figure 3b. Several new peaks related to tungstate species at 267, 338, 725, 768, 804, 923, and 947 cm⁻¹ were observed, which are reported as characteristic bands of Ce₂(WO₄)₃.^{25,26} However, no Ce₂(WO₄)₃ phase was observed in Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-T by XRD analysis. It was reported that the mutual transformation of Ce₄W₉O₃₃ and Ce₂(WO₄)₃ could easily occur at temperatures below 800 °C (6(Ce₂(WO₄)₃) + O₂ ⇌ 4CeO₂ + 2-(Ce₄W₉O₃₃)).²⁷ The XRD results of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-T in Figure 2b verified the existence of Ce₄W₉O₃₃. Taking these facts into account, we deduced that these Raman modes could be assigned to Ce₄W₉O₃₃. This suggests that tungsten species in Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-T were mainly in the form of cerium tungstates instead of tungsten trioxide.

3.2. Redox Ability and Surface Species. H₂-TPR was conducted to investigate the reducibility of Ce₁Zr₁O_x and Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x catalysts. The amounts of H₂ consumed were determined by the integration of H₂-TPR peaks. As shown in Figure 4a, the Ce₁Zr₁O_x catalyst showed two reduction peaks at around 470 and 730 °C. The H₂ consumption peak at 470 °C was ascribed to the reduction of surface-capping oxygen of Ce⁴⁺-O-Ce⁴⁺ in stoichiometric ceria and the peak centered at ~730 °C was assigned to the reduction of bulk oxygen of Ce³⁺-O-Ce⁴⁺ in nonstoichiometric ceria.^{6,9} After tungsten addition, the reduction peak of the surface oxygen species on Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x shifted to higher temperatures, indicating that the reducibility of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x was attenuated by W doping, in good agreement with previous reports.^{20,28} Notably, the amount of H₂ consumption for surface oxygen over Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x (373 μmol/g) was higher than that of Ce₁Zr₁O_x (264 μmol/g), suggesting the existence of more reducible surface oxygen

species on Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x than on Ce₁Zr₁O_x. In addition, the reduction peak centered at 744 °C might be attributed to the overlapped reduction peaks of bulk Ce and W.⁸

The H₂-TPR curves of hydrothermally aged Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x are shown in Figure 4b. After being hydrothermally aged at 700 °C for 16 h, the reduction peak of surface oxygen showed a shift of ~90 °C to higher reduction temperatures. When further increasing the hydrothermal aging temperature, the reduction peak of surface oxygen shifted slightly to higher temperatures. It is worth noting that severely aged Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-850 still retained a certain amount of reducible surface oxygen species. Moreover, the broad peak of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-T above 650 °C, composed of a shoulder peak at lower temperature and a main peak at higher temperature, could be attributed to the overlapping reduction peaks of bulk oxygen species from cerium tungstates and CeO₂. In addition, the hydrogen consumption of bulk oxygen increased in the sequence Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-700 < Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-750 < Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-800 < Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-850, which might be due to the formation of Ce-Zr solid solutions, as the inclusion of Zr in the ceria lattice is known to increase the reducibility of the bulk ceria.²⁹

XPS measurements were carried out to clarify the chemical state of elements on the surface of fresh and hydrothermally aged catalysts. As shown in Figure 5a, the corresponding O 1s peak could be deconvoluted into two sub-bands: the peak located at around 528.9–530.1 eV was attributed to the lattice oxygen O²⁻ (denoted as O_β), while the one at around 530.8–531.5 eV was assigned to surface oxygen species such as O₂²⁻(O⁻) (denoted as O_α).¹⁸ Surface oxygen O_α is more active in the oxidation of NO to NO₂, which is beneficial to SCR activity via the “fast SCR” reaction.³⁰ According to the peak-fitting results, the O_α/(O_α + O_β) molar ratios of Ce₁Zr₁O_x and Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x were 46.3% and 42.1%, respectively. It can be speculated that the O_α/(O_α + O_β) ratio was not the decisive factor for the greatly improved NH₃-SCR activity of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x. After hydrothermal aging at 700 °C for 16 h, the O_α/(O_α + O_β) molar ratio of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-700 was 26.4%, which was decreased almost by 50% compared to that of Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x. However, with the further increase of the hydrothermal aging temperature, little change of the O_α/(O_α + O_β) molar ratio could be found. Even after being hydrothermally aged at 850 °C for 16 h, Ce₁W_{0.5}Zr₁O_x-850 still contained a certain amount of surface oxygen O_α.

Figure 5b exhibits the Ce 3d XPS results. The peaks labeled μ, μ', μ'', μ''', ν, ν', and ν'' represent Ce⁴⁺, and the peaks labeled μ' and ν'

ν' are associated with Ce^{3+} .⁹ It could be concluded that Ce^{4+} and Ce^{3+} coexisted on the surface of all catalysts. The Ce^{3+}/Ce ratios were calculated by the following formula:³¹

$$\text{Ce}^{3+}/(\text{Ce}^{3+} + \text{Ce}^{4+}) (\%) = \frac{S(\mu') + S(\nu')}{\sum [S(\mu) + S(\nu)]} \times 100$$

It was reported that the main source of Ce^{3+} in CeO_2 -based catalysts is the intrinsic O_v of reduced CeO_2 , which has a positive correlation with surface oxygen species, thus Ce^{3+}/Ce and O_v/O should have identical rising/falling trends.³² In this study, $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ and $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ possessed equal Ce^{3+}/Ce ratios, while the O_v/O of $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ was lower than that of $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$. In addition, the Ce^{3+}/Ce ratio increased and the O_v/O ratio decreased with increasing hydrothermal aging temperature. We deduce that the microcrystalline or amorphous $\text{Ce}^{3+}-\text{O}-\text{W}^{6+}$ oxides in $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ and crystalline $\text{Ce}_4\text{W}_9\text{O}_{33}$ in $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-T}$ (verified by XRD and Raman) represent another source of Ce^{3+} .³³ The Zr 3d and W 4f spectra of $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ and $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-T}$ showed little difference, suggesting that hydrothermal aging treatment did not influence the valence states of tungsten and zirconium. (Figure S5)

3.3. Surface Acidity. NH_3 -TPD was carried out to investigate the acidic properties of the catalysts. As shown in Figure 6, three overlapping peaks can be observed in the NH_3

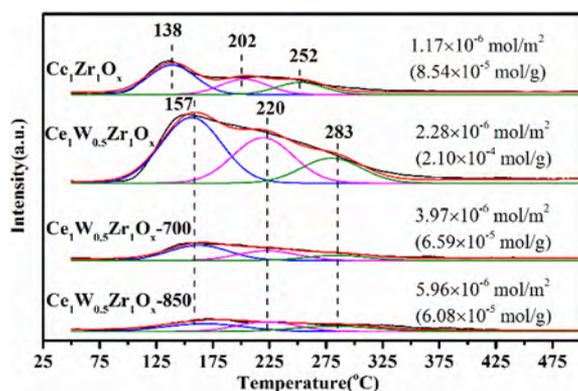


Figure 6. NH_3 -TPD patterns for the $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$, $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$, $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-700}$, and $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-850}$ catalysts.

desorption profile of $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$. The NH_3 desorption peaks centered at 138 °C should originate from ionic NH_4^+

coordinated to weak Brønsted acid sites.^{16,34} Since it is very difficult to identify the strong Brønsted acid sites and Lewis acid sites according to the NH_3 -TPD profiles, both the peaks centered at 202 and 252 °C were ascribed to strong acid sites.³⁴ Compared with $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$, the NH_3 desorption profiles of $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ and $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-T}$ moved to higher temperature by about 20 °C, indicating their stronger acid strength than that of $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ catalysts. In addition, the NH_3 desorption amounts were 8.54×10^{-5} mol/g for $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ and 2.10×10^{-4} mol/g for $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$, respectively. This meant that the NH_3 storage capacity of the cerium/zirconium mixed oxides was greatly increased by the addition of W. After hydrothermal aging treatment at 700 °C for 16 h, the NH_3 desorption amount of $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-700}$ was 6.59×10^{-5} mol/g. Further increasing the hydrothermal aging temperature to 850 °C, the NH_3 desorption amount of $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-850}$ was 6.08×10^{-5} mol/g, which was close to that of $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-700}$. When normalized to the surface area, the NH_3 desorption amounts per unit area for $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-700}$ and $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x\text{-850}$ are 3.97×10^{-6} mol/(m²) and 5.96×10^{-6} mol/(m²), respectively, which are higher than that of 1.17×10^{-6} mol/(m²) for $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ and 2.28×10^{-6} mol/(m²) for $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$. This meant that W addition and hydrothermal-aging treatment even have promoting effects on the acid site density.

In order to further investigate the surface acid sites, the *in situ* DRIFTS of NH_3 adsorption was carried out. Figure 7a shows the spectra of NH_3 species chemically adsorbed onto $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ and $\text{Ce}_1\text{W}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ at 200 °C. The bands at 1602 and 1224 cm^{-1} and 1186 cm^{-1} were attributed to the asymmetric and symmetric bending vibrations of N–H bonds in the NH_3 coordinated to Lewis acid sites, respectively, while the bands at 1681 and 1433 cm^{-1} and 1440 and 1415 cm^{-1} can be ascribed to the symmetric and asymmetric bending vibrations of N–H bonds in NH_4^+ chemisorbed on Brønsted acid sites, respectively.^{34,35} The negative bands at 3658 and 3766 cm^{-1} can be ascribed to the O–H stretching mode in the surface hydroxyl groups, which could also represent Brønsted acid sites.³⁶ The three small peaks in the range of 3168–3350 cm^{-1} corresponded to the N–H stretching vibration modes of NH_3 coordinated to the Lewis acid sites.¹⁷ The addition of tungsten to $\text{Ce}_1\text{Zr}_1\text{O}_x$ markedly increased the amount of both Brønsted and Lewis acid sites. According to Li et al.'s report,³⁷ the Lewis acid sites should originate from CeO_2 and some of the unsaturated W^{m+} cations of WO_3 crystallites; additionally, the Brønsted acid sites formed on the W–O–W or W=O sites of $\text{Ce}_4\text{W}_9\text{O}_{33}$. In addition, the main difference

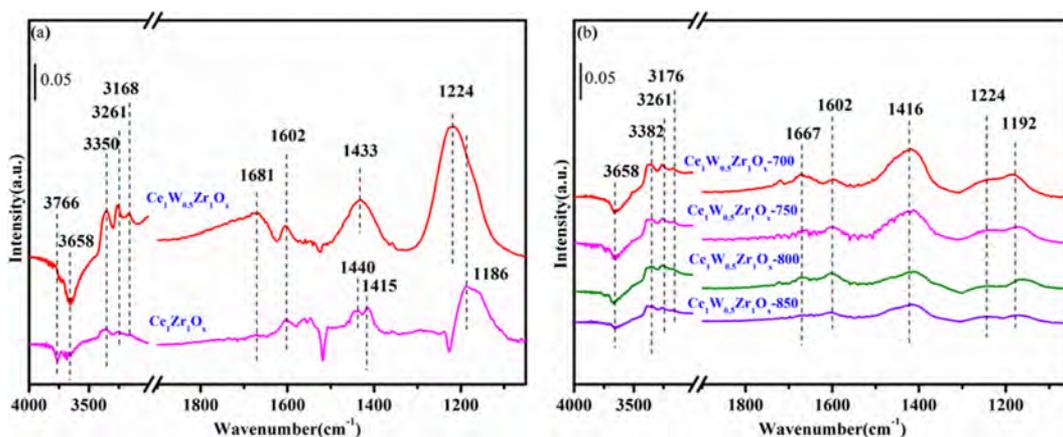


Figure 7. *In situ* DRIFTS of NH_3 adsorption of fresh (a) and hydrothermally aged (b) catalysts at 200 °C.

between the spectra of $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ and $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ lies in the band attributed to Lewis acid sites: a blue shift occurred from $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ (1186 cm^{-1}) to $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ (1224 cm^{-1}), verifying that extra Lewis acid sites for NH_3 adsorption were induced by WO_x species.³⁸ The acidic properties of hydrothermally aged $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ catalysts were also investigated by *in situ* NH_3 adsorption DRIFTS. As shown in Figure 7b, the intensity of the bands attributed to Brønsted acid sites ($1416, 1667\text{ cm}^{-1}$) and Lewis acid sites ($1192, 1602, \text{ and } 1224\text{ cm}^{-1}$) decreased after hydrothermal aging.

3.4. Interaction of the W and Ce in $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$

Acidity and redox ability are both important for catalysts in the SCR reaction. The significant enhancement of SCR activity for Ce–Zr materials by doping with WO_3 was mainly attributed to the promotion of acidity in previous reports.²⁰ In this work, the W addition to $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ significantly increased the Brønsted acid sites and Lewis acid sites, according to the results of NH_3 -TPD and *in situ* DRIFTS of NH_3 adsorption. In addition, ceria is considered to be an active species in ceria–zirconia-based SCR catalysts due to its redox cycle between Ce^{3+} and Ce^{4+} .¹⁷ In the current study, the addition of W to $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ decreased the Ce surface atomic concentration with almost no change in the Ce^{3+}/Ce molar ratio (Table S3 and Figure 5a), indicating that $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ should contain fewer redox sites on the surface than $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$. The H_2 -TPR results suggested that $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ had a higher reduction temperature than $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$, which suggested lowered reducibility after tungsten addition (Figure 4a). Moreover, fewer surface nitrate species were formed on $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ compared with $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$, according to the results of *in situ* DRIFTS of $NO + O_2$ adsorption (Figure S6). The NO conversion of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ during NO oxidation experiments was much lower than that of $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ over the whole temperature range (Figure S7). Therefore, W addition to $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ had no promotional effects on the redox ability.

According to the XPS and XRF results (Table S3), the surface atomic ratio of Ce/Zr in $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ (4.1) was much higher than its bulk atomic ratio (0.9). This indicated that CeO_2 tended to be distributed on the surface, while ZrO_2 served as the bulk phase in $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$. For $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$, the surface atomic ratio of Ce/Zr decreased to 0.8, which was approximately equal to its bulk Ce/Zr atomic ratio (0.9). In addition, the surface atomic ratio of W/Ce (0.5) was equal to its bulk W/Ce atomic ratio (0.5). The results indicated that the addition of tungsten stabilized W species and promoted the formation of a homogeneous Ce–W–Zr system with no phase separation on the surface.³⁹ Recently, Iwasaki et al. proposed that the existence of large amounts of interfacial acidic-redox sites from the interaction of Ce with WO_3 was critical to the higher SCR activity of WO_3/CeO_2 than a mixture of CeO_2 and WO_3/ZrO_2 .¹³ In our work, the WO_3 content in $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ was around 26 wt % according to XRF characterization. We prepared 26 wt % $WO_3/Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ by the wet impregnation method for comparison. It was found that the NO_x conversion of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ was much higher than that of 26 wt % $WO_3/Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ (Figure S8). Taking these things into account, we deduce that the interaction of the W and Ce in $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ resulted in the tight coupling and homogeneous dispersion of redox-acid sites, which are critical for the SCR reaction.^{13,20}

3.5. Hydrothermal Stability. After hydrothermal aging, a significant decrease in surface area and acidity as well as new phase formation occurred for $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$, and those factors might make the main contribution to the decrease in the low

temperature activity of this catalyst. The SCR reaction rates were normalized by the surface specific area in consideration of the big difference in BET area between $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ and $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ -T, and the real SCR reaction rates are also shown in Table 1. The data showed that the reaction rates per unit area of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ -T were higher than that of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$. It is worth noting that little difference in SCR reaction rates was observed for $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ -T hydrothermally aged in the temperature range of 700–850 °C.

The apparent activation energy of a catalytic reaction is a significant factor in evaluating the role of a catalyst in the catalytic reaction and the efficiency of the catalyst.⁴⁰ Steady-state kinetics studies were carried out for $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$, $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ -700, and $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ -850, and the Arrhenius plots of $\ln R$ against 1000 times the inverse temperature ($1000/T$) are presented in Figure 8. An apparent activation energy of

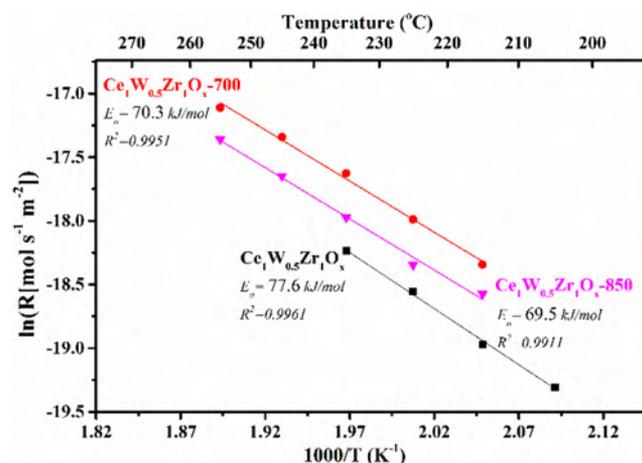


Figure 8. Kinetic results of NH_3 -SCR over the fresh and hydrothermally aged $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ catalysts.

70.3 kJ/mol was obtained for the NH_3 -SCR reaction over the $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ -700 catalyst, which was slightly lower than that of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ (77.6 kJ/mol). Further increasing the hydrothermal aging temperature had no influence on the apparent activation energy of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ -850 (69.5 kJ/mol). Therefore, the reaction path should be unaffected by the hydrothermal aging treatment in consideration of the similar apparent activation energy barriers.

Taking these things into account, the excellent SCR activity of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ -T should be attributed to the Ce–W active sites and the stability of its structure. On one hand, the formation of Ce–W oxide species, mainly $Ce_4W_3O_{33}$, could provide tighter coupling of acid-redox sites, which have been proven to possess higher intrinsic activity.²² However, the exposure of Ce–W oxide species, which can be involved in the SCR reaction, was limited due to the low surface area of hydrothermally aged $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ catalysts. On the other hand, the XRD, Raman, and N_2 physical adsorption results showed that changes in the textural properties of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ -T after hydrothermal aging at 700–850 °C were insignificant. The TG-DSC results of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ showed that a sharp exothermic peak at 683 °C could be observed in the DSC curve (Figure S9). This suggested that the transition of ZrO_2 from the amorphous phase to thermostable tetragonal $Zr_{0.84}Ce_{0.16}O_2$ occurred.^{41,42} Although the crystallite grain size of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1O_x$ tended to increase after the hydrothermal aging treatment, it was much smaller than that of the hydrothermally aged $Ce_1Zr_1O_x$ catalyst under the same

hydrothermal aging temperature (Table S2). The thermal stability of tetragonal $Zr_{0.84}Ce_{0.16}O_2$ might also contribute to the hydrothermal stability of $Ce_1W_{0.5}Zr_1Ox-T$.¹¹

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.est.8b03732.

Information regarding catalyst preparation details, characterization methods, N_2 selectivity during SCR reaction, *in situ* DRIFTS of $NO + O_2$ adsorption, NO oxidation, TG-DSC, and additional results (PDF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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