

UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

SYNTHESIS AND STRUCTURAL STUDY OF AZOLE CONTAINING CADMIUM-BASED METAL ORGANIC FRAMEWORKS FOR ELECTROCHEMICAL DETECTION OF NITROBENZENE

NURUL NABIHAH BINTI MOHAMAD ISHAK

FS 2020 8



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By

NURUL NABIHAH BINTI MOHAMAD ISHAK

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

November 2019

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DEDICATION

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To my beloved parents and family

Thank you for everything

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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By

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November 2019

Chairman Faculty : Thahira Begum, PhD : Science

Metal organic frameworks (MOFs) represent a new class of porous crystalline materials which contains of organic linkers and inorganic joints. In particular, the synthesis of MOFs with nitrogen-rich ligands are extremely versatile materials. Nitrobenzene (NB) is a carcinogenic organic compound that is widely used in the manufacturing and chemical industries. The spill of industrial waste contain high level of NB can be harmful to human health. Hence, the development of MOFs as electrochemical sensors for determination of NB are essential. Three novel mixed ligand Cd(II) MOFs, namely MOF-717 (Cd(NO₃)₂.4H₂O with 4.4'-oxybis(benzoic acid) (H₂oba) and 3,5-diamino-1,2,4triazole (Hdatrz)), MOF-718 (Cd(NO₃)₂.4H₂O with H₂oba and 3-amino-1,2,4triazole (Hatrz) and MOF-719 (Cd(NO₃)₂.4H₂O with 2,6-napthalenedicarboxylic acid (H2ndc) and Hdatrz) were successfully synthesised using solvothermal with 1 : 2 :2 molar ratio of Cd : L_1 : L_2 condition ($L_1 = H_2 oba/H_2 ndc$ and $L_2 =$ Hdatrz/Hatrz) at 120 °C. The compounds were characterised via Powder X-ray Diffraction (PXRD) analysis, Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR), Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopies, thermogravimetric analysis (TGA), Scanning Emission Microscopy (SEM), N₂ physisorption analysis and the structural determination of MOFs was performed by Single-crystal X-ray Diffraction analysis (SXRD). The peaks at low angles in the PXRD pattern indicated the formation of large lattice unit cell of the frameworks. FTIR analysis shows reduction of C=O peaks intensity and this indicated the successful bonding of H2oba/H2ndc with Cd ions. NMR analysis confirmed the presence of both ligands in the frameworks. Thermal analysis indicated the MOFs had high thermal stability MOF 717 up to 450 °C, MOF-718 up to 467 °C and MOF-719 up to 480 °C. MOF-717 and MOF-718 crystallised in a monoclinic system with C2/m space group showing three dimensional (3D) structure with fluorite (flu) topology. MOF-719 crystallised in a triclinic system

with *P*T space group showing a two dimensional (2D) underlayer structure and new topology. All the MOFs were modified with glassy carbon (GC) electrodes for electrochemical studies of nitrobenzene (NB) reduction using cyclic voltammetry (CV) and differential pulse voltammetry (DPV) techniques. MOF-717/GC electrode showed the highest electrocatalytic activity with a low detection limit (LOD) of 2.9 × 10⁻⁸ M and high sensitivity of 3.36 μ A μ M cm⁻². This is due the present of active group of nitrogen and oxygen donor ligands from MOF-717 structures. This preliminary work indicated that these materials could be effective electrocatalysts in the electrochemical detection of the environmental pollutant NB.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

SINTESIS DAN KAJIAN STRUKTUR RANGKA ORGANIK LOGAM BERASASKAN KADMIUM MENGANDUNGI AZOL UNTUK PENGESANAN ELEKTROKIMIA NITROBENZENA

Oleh

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Rangka organik logam (MOFs) merupakan bahan liang berkristal kelas baharu yang terdiri daripada penyambung organik dan blok tak organik. Sintesis MOFs khususnya dengan ligan yang mengandungi lambakan atom nitrogen adalah sangat versatil. Nitrobenzena (NB) merupakan bahan organik karsinogen yang digunakan dalam industri pembuatan dan kimia. Tumpahan sisa industri yang mengandungi NB yang tinggi boleh membahayakan kesihatan manusia. Oleh itu, pembinaan MOFs sebagai alat pengesan elektrokimia adalah sangat penting. Tiga novel campuran ligan Cd(II) MOFs, dinamakan MOF-717 (Cd(NO₃)₂.4H₂O dengan 4,4'-oxibis(asid benzoik) (H₂oba) dan 3,5-diamino-1,2,4-triazol (Hdatrz)), MOF-718 (Cd(NO₃)₂,4H₂O dengan H₂oba dan 3-amino-1,2,4-triazol (Hatrz) dan MOF-719 (Cd(NO₃)₂.4H₂O dengan asid 2,6naptalenadikarbosilik (H2ndc) dan Hdatrz) telah berjaya disintesis melalui kaedah solvoterma dengan nisbah mol 1:2:2 mewakili Cd: L1: L2 (L1 = H_2 oba/ H_2 ndc and L_2 = Hdatrz/Hatrz) pads suhu 120 °C. Semua sebatian telah dicirikan melalui Analisis Belauan Sinar-X (PXRD), Spekstroskopi Transformasi Fourier Inframerah (FTIR), Resonans Magnetik Nuklear (NMR), Analisis Termogravimetri (TGA), Mikroskopi Pancaran Imbasan (SEM), Analisis penjerapan fizikal N2 dan struktur MOFs telah ditentukan melalui Analisis Belauan Sinar-X Hablur Tunggal (SXRD). Puncak pada sudut rendah dalam corak PXRD menunjukkan formasi unit kekisi besar pada rangka. Analisis FTIR menunjukkan berlaku penurunan intensiti puncak C=O menunjukkan ikatan antara H₂oba/H₂ndc dengan ion Cd telah berjaya. Analisis NMR mengesahkan kehadiran kedua-dua ligan di dalam rangka. Analisis terma mendapati MOFs mempunyai kestabilan terma yang tinggi dengan MOF-717 setinggi 450 °C, MOF-718 setinggi 467 °C dan MOF-719 setinggi 480 °C. MOF-717 dan MOF-718 telah dihablurkan dalam sistem monoklinik dengan kumpulan ruang C2/m vang menunjukkan struktur tiga dimensi (3D) serta topologi flourit (flu).

Manakala, MOF-719 telah dihablurkan dalam sistem triklinik dengan kumpulan ruang *P*ī menunjukkan struktur lapisan dua dimensi (2D) serta topologi yang baru. Kesemua MOFs telah diubah suai dengan elektrod karbon belemin (GC) bagi kajian elektrokimia terhadap pengurangan nitrobenzena (NB) dengan menggunakan teknik Voltametri Berkitar (CV) dan Voltametri Denyut Pembezaan (DPV). MOF-717/GC elektrod telah menunjukkan aktiviti eletrokatalitik yang tinggi dengan 2.9 x 10⁻⁸ M had pengesanan (LOD) dan 3.36 μ A μ M cm⁻² sensitiviti. Ini kerana kehadiran kumpulan aktif ligan penderma nitrogen dan oksigen dari struktur MOF-717. Kajian awal ini membuktikan bahan ini boleh menjadi efektif sebagai elektrokatalis untuk pengesanan elektrokimia bahan pencemar NB pada alam sekitar.



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| A2 | Using Material Studio software | 116 |



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| AuNPs-Zn-MOF | Gold nanoparticles incorporated with MOF-5 |
|--|---|
| | biphenyldicarboxylic acid |
| BPDC | 4,4'-biphenyldicarboxylic acid |
| BTC | 1,3,5-benzenetricarboxylic acid |
| CCDC | Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre |
| Co-MOF-MPC | MOF made from cobalt chloride, 5-(4- |
| | pyridyl)tetrazole(4-H-ptz) and1,3-bi(4-pyridyl)propane |
| | (bpp) |
| Cr-MIL-101 | MOF made from chromium nitrate and |
| | benzendicarboxylic acid |
| Cu(INA) | MOF made from copper acetate and isonicotic acid |
| Hatrz | 3-amino-1,2,4- triazole |
| Hdatrz | 3.5-diamino-1.2.4- triazole |
| H2ndc | 2.6- napthalene dicarboxylic acid |
| H20ba | 4.4'-oxybis (benzoic acid) |
| HINA | Isonicotic acid |
| HKUST-1 | Hong Kong University of Science and Technology |
| | HKUST: MOE made from copper nitrates and 1.3.5- |
| | benzenetricarboxylic acid |
| IRMOE-16 | MOE made from zinc nitrate and tembenyl-2.2'- |
| | dicarboxylate (TPDC) |
| | Isoroticular MOE made from of zine nitrate and 4.4' |
| | hiphopyddiaethawdia agid |
| | |
| IRMOFS | Isoreticular MOFS |
| | Institute de Tecnologie Ouimine Matel Organie |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 MIL-68 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 MIL-68 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 MIL-68 MIL-88 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 MIL-68 MIL-88 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 MIL-68 MIL-88 MOF-5 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from iron(III) nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from zinc nitrate and benzendicarboxylic |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 MIL-68 MIL-88 MOF-5 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from iron(III) nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 MIL-68 MIL-88 MOF-5 MOF-717 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from iron(III) nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from zinc nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from zinc nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid |
| ITQMOF-1 /-2 IUPAC LOD MAF MAF-4 MgMOF-1 MgMOF-2 MIL-53 MIL-53 MIL-68 MIL-88 MOF-5 MOF-717 | Instituto de Tecnologia Quimica Metal Organic Framework, ITQMOF; MOF made from lanthanide salts and 4,4'-(hexafluoroisopropylidene)-bis(benzoic acid) International Union of Pure and Applied Chemist Limit of detection Metal azolate frameworks MAF consist of 2-methylimidazolate (Hmim) and Zn metal ions MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-3,5- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from magnesium and pyridine-2,6- dicarboxylic acid MOF made from chromium nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from ferum nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from iron(III) nitrate and bezenedicarboxylic acid MOF made from zinc nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from zinc nitrate and benzendicarboxylic acid MOF made from cadmium nitrate with 4,4'-oxybis (benzoic acid) (H ₂ oba) and 3,5-diamino-1,2,4- triazole |

| MOF-718 | MOF made from cadmium nitrate with 4,4'-oxybis (benzoic acid) (H ₂ oba) and 3-amino-1,2,4- triazole (Hatrz) ligand |
|------------|---|
| MOF-719 | MOF made from cadmium nitrate with 2,6- napthalene |
| | triazole (Hdatrz) ligand |
| MOF-74 | MOF made from magnesium nitrate and 2,5- dibydroxyterephthalic |
| MTBS | Methyl tributyl ammonium methyl sulfate |
| NHCPs-750 | Nitrogen doped hollow carbon nanospheres |
| NU-1000 | Northwestern University, NU; MOF made from zirconium chloride and tetratopic linker, 1,3,6,8-(p- |
| PCN-6 | Porous coordination network, PCN; MOF made from copper nitrate and 4,4',4"-s-triazine-2,4,6-triyl- tribenzoic acid |
| SBUs | Secondary Building Units |
| TMPP/N-OMC | Tetra (4-methoxyphenyl/porphyrin functionalised N- doped mesoporous carbon |
| TPDC | Terphenyl-2.2'-dicarboxylate |
| UiO-66 | Universitetet i Oslo, UiO (University of Oslo); MOF |
| | made from zirconium dichloride and benzene |
| | dicarboxylic acid |
| ZIF-8 | Zeolitic Imidazolate Frameworks-8; MOF made from |
| | zinc nitrate and imidazole |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of research

Porous materials are a class of materials with low density, large specific surface area, and interesting physical, mechanical, thermal and electrical properties (Nishiyabu, 2012). According to International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), these materials can be classified based on their pore diameters, which are microporous (< 2 nm), mesoporous (2-0 nm) and macroporous (> 50 nm) (Xuan *et al.*, 2012). Porous materials such as zeolites, mesoporous silica, activated carbon and microporous polymer have been intensively investigated as ideal platforms for various applications especially in gas storage, chemical sensing, energy conversion and catalysis (Benzigar *et al.*, 2018).

Since the early 1990s, research into materials with polymeric and porous structures based on organic/inorganic hybrid materials has been on the rise. In relation to this, metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) are a rapidly emerging unique type of crystalline porous materials. MOFs are self-assembled from inorganic metal clusters and organic bridging ligands via strong covalent bonds. Via a self-assembly mechanism, the extended 1 dimensional (1D), 2 dimensional (2D) and 3 dimensional (3D) structures are built where the metal centres (known as the connector) are linked by ditopic or multitopic organic ligands, known as linkers (Figure 1.1) (Kitagawa *et al.*, 2004). An important feature of MOFs is that their framework structure, pore environment, functionality can be fine controlled by the choice of metal and organic building unit. Therefore, the topology of the network is determined by the intrinsic structural features of the choice of metal ions with different oxidation states and organic linkers (Lu *et al.*, 2014).

In the synthesis of such inorganic-organic hybrid materials, transition metal or lanthanide salts are reacted with rigid, often aromatic, organic donor ligands, which feature two or more Lewis-basic functional groups, usually neutral nitrogen donors (e.g., pyridyl, cyanide groups) or neutral/anionic oxygen donors (e.g., carbonyl, alkoxy, carboxylate groups) (Robson, 2008). The synthesis of MOFs are normally conducted under mild conditions. A few methods to synthesise MOFs have been reported including conventional synthesis which used electrical heating and non-conventional synthesis at room temperature. Other alternative synthetic routes including microwave-assisted. electrochemical, mechanochemical and sonochemical methods have also been used in the synthesis of MOFs. These methods can produce MOFs with varying particle sizes and size distributions as well as the morphologies that can influence the material properties. In fact, the pore size, the pore shape, the network topology and surface functionality are more important to develop the unique structure of MOFs (Furukawa *et al.*, 2013). The structure of MOFs can also influenced by a lot of other factors, such as the coordination environment of metal ions, the metal-to-ligand molar ratio, the ligand structure, the presence of solvent molecules, counter ions, reaction temperature, pH value of the solution and many other factors (Wang *et al.*, 2010).



Figure 1.1: Extended structures of Metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) based on metal centre and linear ditopic ligands featuring different structural dimensionalities (Kitagawa *et al.*, 2004)

MOFs have numerous advantages compared to conventional porous materials like zeolites or activated carbon, in terms of their ability to fine-tune the structures by rational design and incorporate functionalities into the molecular material. MOFs possess a highly crystalline nature, extraordinarily low densities (1.0 to 0.2 g/cm³), large pore sizes (up to 29 Å), large free volume, high surface area (500-4500 m²/g), and fascinating topologies (Li *et al.*, 2009). The choice of the initial metal cluster and organic linkers makes it possible to vary some parameters, such as the pore size as well as the specific surface area which leads to new ways to produce materials with tailored physicochemical properties.

Recently, the design on isostructural MOFs have been widely studied by using derivatives of aromatic rings contains substituents as a linker. Isostructural MOFs are MOFs that have same crystal morphology with different substituents on the organic linkers (for example; NO₂, CH₃, NH₂ and Cl). These isostructural MOFs are promising as they have good active sites for specific applications such as gas adsorption, catalysis and chemical sensing. However, the presence of substituents in organic structure results in the

decrease of pore volumes and sizes (Morris *et al.*, 2011). Instead of having of one linker, the use of two different linkers were then introduced which offered advantageous in their properties with interesting crystal structures.

Many studies have reported the use of polycarboxylates and polypyridyls linkers due to their good ligating ability to metal ions and adjustable length and geometry. The approach of mixing carboxylate and pyridyl-types linkers was found to be very effective due to the versatility of oxygen donors to bind with metal ions of carboxylates and simple coordination nodes from pyridyls (Zhang *et al.*, 2012). However, pyridyl-type linkers have weak coordination ability and charge neutrality making them disadvantageous in controlling the compositions (such as metal /ligand ratio) during the synthesis (Gu *et al.*, 2010). Apart from that, azolate linkers are known as five-membered aromatic nitrogen heterocycle ligands that have strong and directional coordination bridging with metal ions (Zhang *et al.*, 2012). Hence, the strategies of designing mixed linkers consisting of polycarboxylate and azolate compounds were desirable to synthesise a wide range of coordination networks.

Many well-designed MOFs with mixed-ligands have showed fascinating physiochemical properties (Du *et al.*, 2013). Owing to their flexibility, high stability and porous structures, the diffusion of guest molecules to form permanent and highly ordered frameworks was easy. In addition, the presence of active sites in the frameworks promote host-guest interactions. (Morozan & Jaouen, 2012). These properties made MOFs promising candidates in gas separation, gas storage, and catalysis. The optical, electrical, and magnetic properties of MOFs extend their applications to chemical sensing and bioimaging. Among them, electrochemical sensing applications has received huge attention by electrodes modification with MOFs. It has been shown that the use of functional molecules and immobilization of metal nanoparticles with MOFs have improved the electrochemical sensing performance (Liu *et al.*, 2018).

Recently, MOF and MOF based composite modified electrodes have been reported have great performance as sensors in the detection of glutathione, L-cysteine, ascorbic acid, hydrogen peroxide and NADH (Arul & John, 2018). (NB) is known as an important raw material that is widely used in manufacturing industries. The huge waste disposal containing NB may lead to NB pollution which is considered harmful and can affect blood and nervous system leading to liver cancer (Emmanuel *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, development of selective and sensitive sensors for NB using electrodes modified with simple procedures is essential. Since there are limited studies on the use of MOF materials for the detection of NB, this study aimed to synthesise novel mixed-linkers MOFs using dicarboxylate and azolate derivatives as linkers. These materials were then modified with glassy carbon electrode and evaluated their electrochemical sensor properties in the detection of nitrobenzene by using cyclic voltammetry (CV) and dispersive pulse voltammetry (DPV) techniques. It is hoped that, the presence of

functional group in the organic ligands could enhance the performance of MOF modified electrodes in the nitrobenzene reduction.

1.2 Problem statement

Nitrobenzene (NB) is an important raw material in the chemical industry, which widely used as an intermediate in the synthesis of resins, pesticides, dyes and pharmaceutical (Arul & John, 2018). Generally, NB is stable in aqueous medium due to the presence of strong electron withdrawing groups in the nitro aromatic ring. There are several possible sources for NB pollution which include oil spills from industrial and domestic wastes. NB is harmful when its concentration level exceeds 0.11 mg/L and it affects mainly the blood and nervous systems in human which can lead to liver cancer (Emmanuel *et al.*, 2014). According to clear water act of USA, the permissible limit of NB in drinking water is 17 µg/L (OPPT, 1995).

Various techniques have been employed for the determination of NB in environmental samples such as High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) (Wang & Chen, 2002), Gas Chromatography (GC) (Ebrahimzadeh *et al.*, 2009), spectrophotometry (Cui *et al.*, 2010), spectrofluorimetry (Li *et al.*, 2014), and electrochemical techniques (Liu *et al.*, 2018; Velmurugan *et al.*, 2017). Among of these methods, electrochemical techniques are the most advantageous since they are low cost, highly selective, sensitive and have less time consumption (Zhang *et al.*, 2015).

Basically, the determination of NB by electrochemical techniques is by using electrodes. By fabricating the electrode with active materials containing NH₂, NO₂ and OH group, the sensitivity and selectivity towards NB detection can be enhanced. This is due to the molecular interactions of the functional groups to reduce nitrobenzene to aminobenzene. Previously, many fabricated electrodes such as SiO₂-AuNPs, Bi-film, Ni-tetraphenyl porphyrin nanocomposite, tetra(4-methoxyphenyl/porphyrin functionalised N-doped mesoporous carbon (TMPP/N-OMC), β -cyclodextrin graphene oxide (β -CD/GO, γ alumina polished (γ -Al₂O₃) and nitrogen doped hollow carbon nanospheres (NHCPs-750) modified GC electrode have been reported (Arul & John, 2018). MOF modified electrodes such as AuNPs-Zn-MOF and Co-MOF-MPC also have been reported for their good stability and permanent porosity (Yadav *et al.*, 2016; Zhang *et al.*, 2015). However, these electrodes required complicated fabrication procedure, high cost, less sensitivity and selectivity and tedious synthetic procedures.

Therefore, the designing of novel MOFs with more active site and development of selective and sensitive modified electrode sensors for the determination of NB is very important. MOFs containing of two mixed linkers with electron donor group such as oxygen and nitrogen are believed to enhance the sensing properties. Thus, the present work aims to fabricate novel mixed linkers MOFs on GC electrodes by a simple method for the selective and sensitive determination of NB.

1.3 Research objectives

The general objectives of this study are to synthesise and structurally characterise new Metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) derived from triazole and dicarboxylate linkers. The specific objectives of this research include:

- To synthesise and characterise new MOFs derived from triazole and dicarboxylate linkers via physicochemical and spectroscopic techniques including Powder X-ray Diffraction (PXRD) analysis, Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR), Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopies, thermogravimetric analysis (TGA), Scanning Emission Microscopy (SEM) and N₂ physisorption analysis.
- 2. To elucidate the structure of the novel synthesised MOFs by Single Crystal X-ray diffraction (SXRD) analysis.
- 3. To investigate the electrocatalytic properties of the novel MOFs in nitrobenzene reduction

1.4 Scope of research

The scope of this study can be divided into three parts. The first part is synthesising new MOFs by using dicarboxylate and azolate derivatives. Different parameters were investigated in order to determine optimum synthesis condition and to grow high quality crystal. These parameters included the molar ratio of metal and ligand, temperature, time, type of solvents, volume of solvents and the use of modulator (acid or base). The compounds were then characterised with Powder X-ray Diffraction (PXRD) to determine crystal lattice of the MOFs. Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy was used to determine presence of functional groups of the linkers. In order to determine the thermal stability and element composition of the MOFs, Thermogravimetric (TGA) and Elemental analysis (EA) were conducted. Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopy analysis was used to determine the presence of both ligands in the frameworks. Scanning Emission Microscopy was done to observe the morphology of the crystals. Lastly, Nitrogen physisorption analysis was carried to determine the surface area and pore volume of the MOFs.

The second part is the elucidation and structural study of the new MOFs. Single crystal X-ray Diffraction analysis was performed as to determine the crystal structures of the new MOFs with two ligands bonded to the metal ions. The crystal data collected were then solved using OLEX2 software. The solvent disorder in voids was subtracted from the reflection data by the SQUEEZE procedure as implemented in the PLATON software package. The topological study was performed using *TOPOS 4.0* Professional software. This study was conducted to determine the bridging nodes between ligands and metals.

Lastly, the potential sensing applications of the novel synthesised MOFs in the detection of nitrobenzene were investigated. Electrochemical studies were conducted using cyclic voltammetry (CV) and differential pulse voltammetry (DPV) techniques on the modified MOFs with glassy carbon (GC) electrodes.



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