

# Role of the Surface Chemistry of Ceria Surfaces on Silicate Adsorption

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## Supporting Information

**ABSTRACT:** Ceria nanoparticles (NPs) have been widely explored as a promising material in various fields. As synthesized under various physicochemical conditions, it exhibits the different surface chemistry. Here, the role of hydroxyl and nitrate group on ceria surface, formed under various physicochemical conditions, for the silicate adsorption was experimentally and theoretically investigated based on the adsorption isotherms and theoretical analyses using density functional theory (DFT) calculation. Experimental results acquired from adsorption isotherms with Freundlich model indicated that the nitrate group shows a much higher affinity with silicate than the hydroxyl groups. These phenomena were demonstrated through the theoretical approaches that exhibit the binding energy of the NO<sub>3</sub>–ceria (−4.383 eV) on the SiO<sub>2</sub> surface being much higher than that of the OH–ceria (−3.813 eV). In good agreement with the experimental and the theoretical results based on adsorption properties, the results of chemical mechanical planarization (CMP) also show that the nitrate groups significantly enhance the removal of SiO<sub>2</sub> than the hydroxyl groups. The results investigated in this study will provide researchers, studying the ceria NPs, with guidelines on the importance of exploring the surface chemistry of ceria.

**KEYWORDS:** ceria, surface chemistry, adsorption isotherm, DFT, calculation, CMP



## 1. INTRODUCTION

As a promising material, ceria has received significant interest in various field including the water–gas shift reaction,<sup>1,2</sup> gas sensors,<sup>3</sup> fuel cells,<sup>4,5</sup> UV blocking,<sup>6</sup> and chemical mechanical planarization (CMP)<sup>7</sup> due to its low redox potential. Ceria nanoparticles (NPs) can be synthesized via hydrothermal,<sup>8,9</sup> solvothermal,<sup>10</sup> precipitation,<sup>11</sup> thermal decomposition,<sup>12</sup> and sol-gel.<sup>13,14</sup> Although the shapes and sized of ceria NPs is similar as various synthesis methods, their physicochemical properties are quite different.<sup>15–18</sup>

Ceria NPs in the aqueous medium are sensitive to the changes in their physicochemical conditions including pH, ionic strength, temperature, and concentration,<sup>19</sup> which have influence on their agglomeration.<sup>20</sup> In the case of NPs of size less than 100 nm, they are extremely sensitive to changes in their physicochemical environments due to the higher surface energy of NPs than that of larger particles.<sup>21</sup> Ceria NPs, synthesized under various physicochemical conditions, exhibit different isoelectric points (IEPs) from pH 5.2 to 11.2.<sup>15–18</sup> The difference in the IEP values which varied with physicochemical conditions was interpreted through various ways in the literature.

The hydroxyl groups, one of the most common functionals, can be generated on the ceria surface by dissociation reaction of H<sub>2</sub>O on defect site<sup>22–24</sup> or by protonation of outermost

oxygens of the surface in acid solution.<sup>25</sup> Generally, ceria is functionalized with the hydroxyl groups in aqueous medium. However, ceria inevitably containing large concentrations of nitrate ions which originated from the precursor such as cerium nitrate hexahydrate induces the covalently bound nitrate groups on the ceria surface.<sup>15</sup> Although both the hydroxyl and nitrate group play an important role in the surface chemistry of ceria, there has been no reports related to the effect of surface chemistry of ceria on the adsorption behavior of anion.

Here, we have experimentally and theoretically investigated the effect of the hydroxyl and nitrate group on the ceria surface, formed under various physicochemical conditions, on the adsorption behavior of silicate as anion. To focus on the impacts of surface chemistry of ceria, other variables, the size and shape, were kept constant by preparing solution-grown ceria (NO<sub>3</sub>–ceria) and ion-exchanged solution-grown ceria (OH–ceria). To elucidate the interaction between ceria and silicate, adsorption isothermal analysis of silicate on ceria were performed. As the results of adsorption isothermal analysis with the Freundlich model, the NO<sub>3</sub>–ceria exhibits much higher affinity with silicate than the OH–ceria. An associated quantum

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mechanical study using density functional theory<sup>26</sup> to elucidate the role surface chemistry of ceria shows that NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria has much higher binding energy with SiO<sub>2</sub> film than that of OH-ceria. As one of applications of ceria NPs, they has been widely used for chemical mechanical planarization (CMP) due to its remarkable characteristics including high SiO<sub>2</sub> removal rate.<sup>27</sup> The evaluation of CMP shows that the removal amount of SiO<sub>2</sub> film of the NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria is 1.3 times higher than that of the OH-ceria. These results are well-correlated with the experimental results based on adsorption isotherms and the theoretical analyses using DFT calculation.

## 2. EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

**Materials.** An aqueous dispersion of solution-grown ceria ( $d_{\text{mean}} \sim 60$  nm, France) was obtained from Rhodia Inc. TEM images of ceria nanoparticles are shown in Figure S1 in the Supporting Information. To replace nitrate group with hydroxyl group, the suspensions were adjusted to pH 10.5. After aging, these were centrifuged during 20 min at 30000 rpm. The supernatant was decanted, and solids were redispersed in deionized water. This procedure was repeated several times to remove impurities. Finally, ceria was dried in an oven over 6 h at 110 °C. The specific surface area, measured via Brunauer-Emmett-Teller (BET) method using N<sub>2</sub> gas adsorption at 77K (Autosorb-1, Quantachrome, Syosset, NY) of NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria are 15.0 and 13.4 m<sup>2</sup>/g, respectively. Sodium metasilicate (Na<sub>2</sub>SiO<sub>3</sub>·9H<sub>2</sub>O) in deionized water was obtained from Sigma-Aldrich. The ionizable acrylic polymer, poly(acrylic acid) (PAA, Polysciences Inc.;  $M_w = 10000$  g/mol) was used as dispersant for ceria. Blanket SiO<sub>2</sub> films were grown a 1.4 μm thickness on 8 inch diameter Si wafer by plasma-enhanced tetraethyl orthosilicate (PETEOS). Each of these 8 inch wafers were cut into several 6 cm × 6 cm pieces for polishing.

**Suspension Preparation.** NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria was dispersed at 1.0 wt % in deionized water, respectively. PAA was added to the suspension at a weight fraction of 2% versus ceria for a stable suspension. The pH was adjusted to 7.0. The suspension was aged for 12 h at room temperature using a mixer (Ball mill, Nanointech, Korea).

**Characterization Methods.** To identify the characteristics of ceria surface, fourier-transform infrared spectra were recorded with an FT-IR spectrometer (Nicolet 5700, ThermoElectron, Madison, WI, US) in the range 4000–500 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Samples were prepared by mixing the dried ceria powders with KBr using agate mortar and pestle.

Ceria suspensions were prepared for electrokinetic analysis. Two identical suspensions were prepared for each ESA test. Separate acid (1.0 N HCl) and base (1.0 N NaOH) titrants were used to adjust the suspension pH, beginning at the natural pH and subsequently combined to generate a complete titration curve. For analysis of electrokinetic behavior, suspensions were prepared at a solids mass fraction of 1.0 % ceria powder with 0.01 M NaNO<sub>3</sub> solution. The electrokinetic curves of the ceria suspensions were determined by the electrokinetic sonic amplitude (ESA) technique (ESA-9800, Matec Applied Sciences, Hopkinton, MA) as a functional of pH. The ESA technique can be used to determine  $\text{pH}_{\text{iep}}$  during a titration with a high degree of accuracy. The details of this electroacoustic technique, its application to ceramic systems, and the estimated measurement precision were reported previously.<sup>28</sup>

The adsorption isotherm for silicate ion and PAA on ceria was determined at room temperature by the solution-depletion method using an inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy (ICP-AES, Perkin-Elmer Optima 4300 DV, Waltham, MA) and total organic carbon analyzer (TOC-5000A, Shimadzu Corp, Kyoto, Japan), respectively. Ceria was dispersed at 1.0 and 5.0 wt % solid content in various concentrations of silicate ion and PAA solutions, respectively. The pH was adjusted to 7.0. Suspensions were equilibrated for 12 h under mixing. The suspensions were centrifuged, and the supernatant was filtered using a 0.02 μm Anotop 25 syringe filter and then analyzed using ICP and TOC. Results were corrected for a background value using a blank solution derived from a native ceria suspension in the

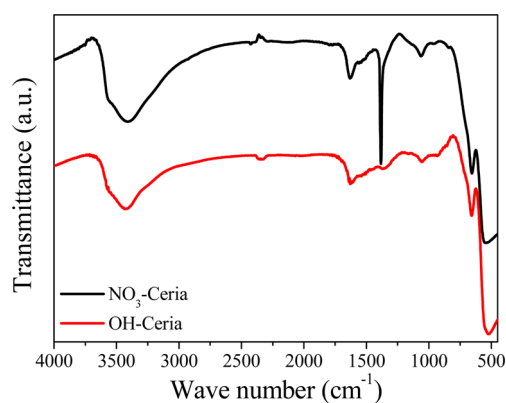
absence of additives. The ICP and TOC values were converted to mass using an experimentally determined calibration curve. Adsorption isotherms were derived from the difference between the amount added and the amount remaining in the supernatants.

**Computational Detail.** For the ceria nanoparticle, functionalized with both of the nitrate and hydroxyl groups, adsorption on the SiO<sub>2</sub> surface was calculated at the density functional level of theory. Here, we used the (001) plane of SiO<sub>2</sub> with H-termination on the oxygen atoms to describe wet process of the experiment. In addition, the Ce atoms were octahedrally coordinated by oxygen related functionals for the calculation of functionalized ceria. The energy calculations were performed with PW91 method generalized gradient approximation (GGA) and plane wave model using CASTEP program.<sup>26</sup> The supercell of 30.000 Å × 9.956 Å × 13.896 Å was used for the calculation, which represents nanotube length along the tube axis as *c*. All atoms were described using Vanderbilt ultrasoft pseudopotentials and cutoff energy of 240 eV where the set of *k*-points used to expand the electronic wave function based on the Monkhorst-Pack scheme within  $5.0 \times 10^{-5}$  eV/atom of total energies convergence. The adsorption energies of functionalized ceria on the (001) SiO<sub>2</sub> were calculated by following equation,  $E_b = E[\text{functionalized ceria} + (001) \text{SiO}_2] - E[\text{functionalized ceria}] + E[(001) \text{SiO}_2]$ .

**CMP Field Evaluation.** The CMP field evaluation was performed using slurries including NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria with and without PAA. The 6 cm × 6 cm pieces were polished for 1 min on CMP tool (POLI-300, G&P Tech. Inc., Korea) with an industry standard CMP pad (IC 1000/Suba IV, Rohm and Haas Electronic Materials, USA). The polishing test conditions are shown in Table S1 in the Supporting Information. The removal rate of each sample was determined by measuring before and after film thickness using ellipsometry (MM-16, Horiba Jobin Yvon, Longjumeau, France)

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

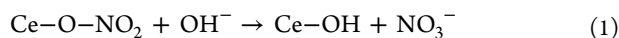
Figure 1 shows the FT-IR spectrum of the NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and the OH-ceria. It is well known that the broad stretching band from



**Figure 1.** FT-IR spectra of NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria.

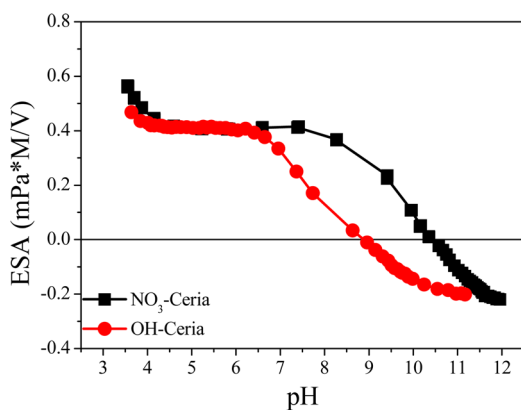
3200 to 3600 cm<sup>-1</sup> corresponds to the hydroxyl groups, and the adsorption peaks at 400–750, 1640, and 1360 cm<sup>-1</sup> presented on the surface of NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria correspond with the CeO<sub>2</sub> stretching frequency, the H<sub>2</sub>O bending mode from the vapor phase condensation on a surface,<sup>29,30</sup> and Ce–OH stretching frequency, respectively.<sup>31</sup> The remarkable difference between the NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria is shown at 1380 cm<sup>-1</sup> in the spectra, appearing in the strong stretching band. It is closely related to a nitrate group on the surface of ceria.<sup>32,33</sup> To focus on the impacts of the surface chemistry of ceria while other variables including the size and shape were kept constant, the nitrate group was replaced with hydroxyl group through the ion-exchange method. As pH increased, nitrate groups were

gradually released and entirely replaced by hydroxyl groups at pH above 10.5.<sup>15</sup>



The shift of the stretching band from 3408 to 3428  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  in OH-ceria is shown due to the decrease of the absorption superposition between nitrate groups and hydroxyl groups by ion-exchange reaction.<sup>34</sup> And the strong stretching band at 1380  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  disappeared in the spectra. This means that the nitrate group was successfully replaced with hydroxyl groups according to eq 1. Elemental analysis data also show that the N content was decreased by replacing a nitrate group with hydroxyl group and N was not observed in OH-ceria (see Table S2 in the Supporting Information). In the case of OH-ceria, the N content was not detected because the nitrate group of  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria was replaced by a hydroxyl group. These results show that the surface chemistry of the ion-exchanged solution-grown ceria (OH-ceria) is similar to that of calcined ceria functionalized with the hydroxyl groups in the absence of chemisorbed or physisorbed species (see Figure S2 in the Supporting Information).

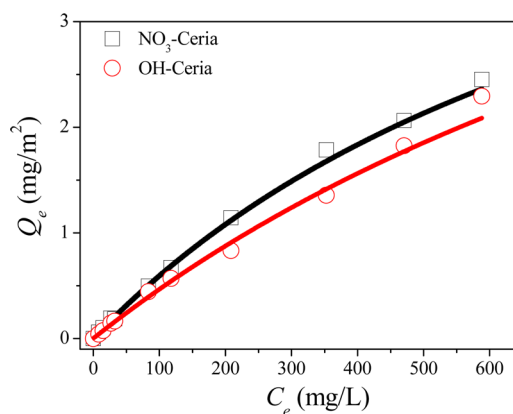
The electrokinetic behaviors of ceria particles with nitrate and hydroxyl group are shown in Figure 2. The IEP of  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria occurs at pH 10.42. After replacing nitrate group with hydroxyl group according to eq 1, the IEP was shifted from 10.42 to 8.85.



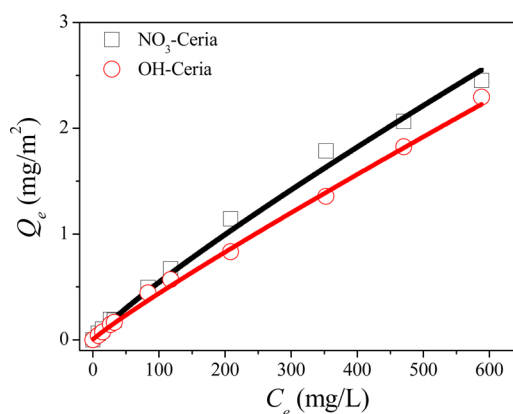
**Figure 2.** Electrokinetic behaviors of  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria and OH-ceria as a function of pH.

This result indicates that the surface chemistry of OH-ceria is similar to that of calcined ceria in the absence of chemisorbed or physisorbed species (see Figure S3 in the Supporting Information). The surface charge of ceria remains the same value since both nitrate ion and hydroxyl ion are monovalent state. We estimated that the nitrate group on the surface induced the increased hydration state since the IEP is strongly dependent on the state of hydration of the material surface.<sup>18</sup> As a result, the surface chemistry of OH-ceria became the same with that of calcined ceria in the absence of chemisorbed or physisorbed species by substituting nitrate group with hydroxyl group.

To elucidate the interaction between ceria and silica, adsorption isotherms of silicate ions on ceria were performed. Figure 3 and 4 show the adsorption isotherm of silicate ion on  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria and OH-ceria at pH 7.0. The studies, related to the adsorption properties of the silicate ion on the ceria surface, are important since they directly correspond with CMP perform-



**Figure 3.** Langmuir plots for adsorption isotherm of silicate ion on  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria and OH-ceria.



**Figure 4.** Freundlich plots for adsorption isotherm of silicate ion on  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria and OH-ceria.

ance. However, there are few studies.<sup>35,36</sup> Hingston et al.<sup>37–39</sup> has studied the adsorption model of  $\text{Si}(\text{OH})_4$  as silicon ion that adsorbs on metal oxides. However, it may come to a good adsorption result in aqueous by complete speciation of the dissolved silicate species.<sup>36</sup> As a function of silicate ion concentration, the adsorbed amount of silicate ion on ceria was measured. Data of adsorption isotherms were fitted using Langmuir and Freundlich model.

The Langmuir adsorption isotherm model assumes that the silicate ion is homogeneously adsorbed on ceria surface by monolayer.<sup>40</sup> The Langmuir model is expressed by the following equation:

$$C_e/Q_e = C_e/Q_m + 1/(K_L Q_m) \quad (2)$$

$Q_e$  is the adsorbed amount of silicate per specific surface area of ceria at equilibrium ( $\text{mg}/\text{m}^2$ ),  $C_e$  is the concentration of silicate ion in the bulk solution ( $\text{mg}/\text{L}$ ),  $Q_m$  is the maximum adsorbed amount ( $\text{mg}/\text{m}^2$ ) of silicate on ceria surface, and  $K_L$  is related to the affinity of adsorption ( $\text{L}/\text{mg}$ ).

The Freundlich adsorption isotherm model assumes that the silicate ion is adsorbed on ceria surface by heterogeneous systems. The Freundlich model is expressed by the following equation:

$$Q_e = K_F C_e^{1/n} \quad (3)$$

$Q_e$  is the adsorbed amount of silicate ion per specific surface area of ceria at equilibrium ( $\text{mg}/\text{m}^2$ ),  $C_e$  is concentration of

silicate ion in the bulk solution (mg/L). The Freundlich constant,  $K_F$  and  $1/n$  is correlated a constant to the relative adsorption capacity and intensity of adsorption, respectively. The values of  $K_F$  and  $1/n$  can be determined from the intercept and slope of linear plot of  $\log Q_e$  versus  $\log C_e$ .

$$\log Q_e = \log K_F + 1/n \log C_e \quad (4)$$

Table 1 shows the constants of the Langmuir and Freundlich isotherms. The higher correlation coefficient values ( $R^2$ ) of the

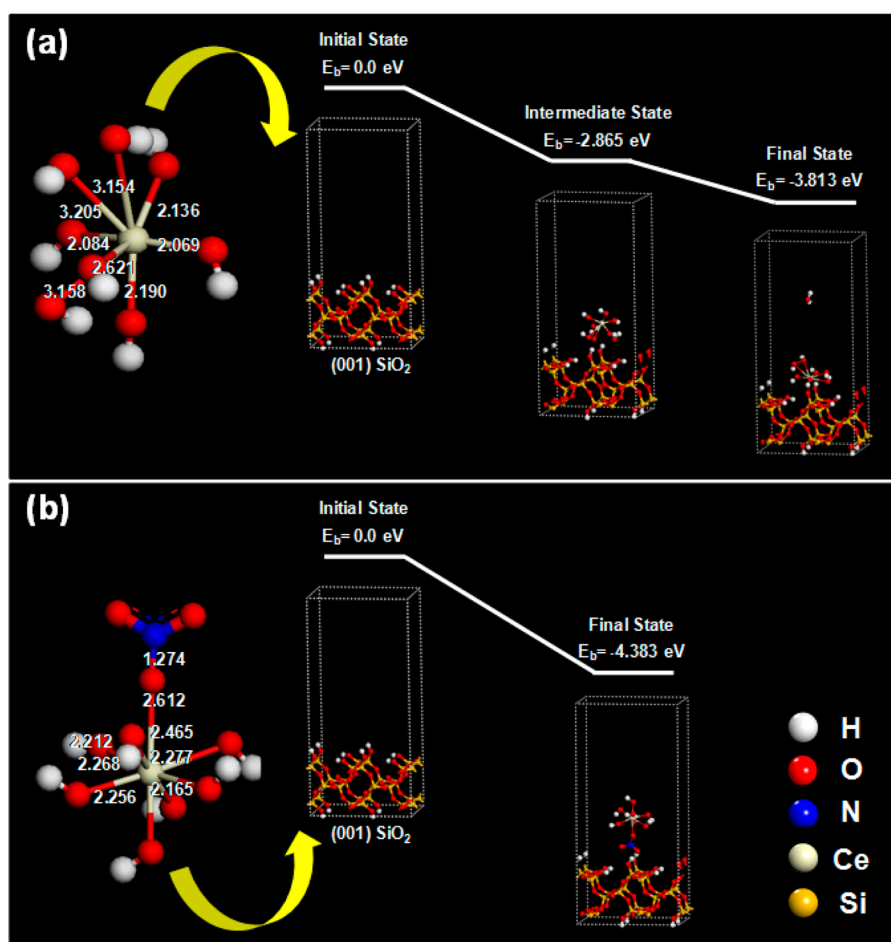
**Table 1. Langmuir and Freundlich Constants of Silicate Ion Adsorption on Ceria**

	Langmuir constant			Freundlich constant		
	$Q_m$ (mg/m <sup>2</sup> )	$K_L$ (L/mg)	$R^2$	$K_F$	$n$	$R^2$
NO <sub>3</sub> -ceria	6.08	0.0011	0.8947	0.0097	1.1453	0.9973
OH-ceria	4.21	0.0009	0.7968	0.0064	1.0897	0.9971

Freundlich model indicate that adsorption data of silicate ion on ceria are better fitted with the Freundlich isotherm model than the Langmuir isotherm model. The adsorption isotherm constants are important in understanding the interaction between ceria and SiO<sub>2</sub> film during CMP. A higher value of  $n$  indicates a higher affinity between adsorbate and adsorbent.<sup>41</sup>

As presented in Table 1, the  $K_F$  and  $n$  values of NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria are higher with a silicate ion at pH 7 than those of OH-ceria. This indicates that a nitrate group on the surface induces ceria to high affinity with the silicate ion. Several researchers have reported that highly reactive sites such as Ce<sup>3+</sup> species on the ceria surface have significantly influenced on the reaction with SiO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>42–44</sup> The Ce(III)/Ce(IV) ratios of the NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria particles were evaluated using X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS). The Ce(III)/Ce(IV) ratios of the NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria particles are 0.085 and 0.119, respectively (see Figure S4 and Table S3 in the Supporting Information). The difference in the Ce(III)/Ce(IV) ratio between NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria is not significant due to a low concentration of Ce<sup>3+</sup>. Thus, in this study, the surface chemistry such as nitrate and hydroxyl group have significantly influence on silicate adsorption.

On the other hand, various dispersants have been used to disperse ceria in aqueous media.<sup>19,20,45,46</sup> The anionic dispersant, poly(acrylic acid) (PAA), is widely used to disperse ceria nanoparticles in the CMP process since the insufficient repulsive forces between the abrasives and SiO<sub>2</sub> film surface can induce defects such as microscratches on the wafer surface.<sup>47–49</sup> Thus, the ceria nanoparticles are dispersed with PAA for CMP application. Figure S5 and S6 in the Supporting Information show the adsorption isotherm of PAA on NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria and OH-ceria at pH 7.0. PAA has a carboxylic (–COOH) groups, which

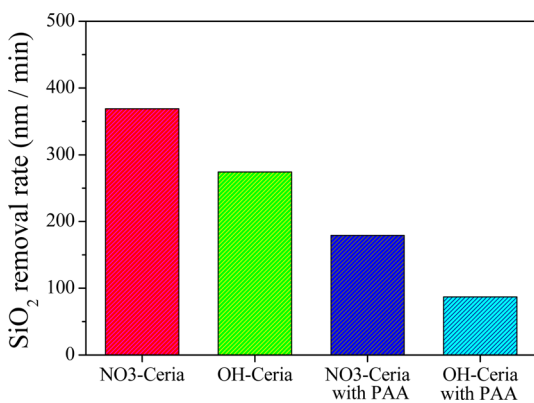


**Figure 5.** Fully optimized structures on the reaction of functionalized ceria adsorption on the SiO<sub>2</sub> (001) surface. (a) OH-ceria and (b) NO<sub>3</sub>-ceria. The numbers indicate bonding length of two atoms near the Ce atom.

are deprotonated and becomes to negatively charged carboxylate ( $-\text{COO}^-$ ) groups in aqueous with pH above its pKa of 4.5.<sup>50</sup> The adsorption of PAA on ceria surface can occur by the attractive force between negatively charged PAA and positively charged ceria. As shown in Supporting Information Table S4, the higher correlation coefficient values ( $R^2$ ) of the Langmuir model indicate that adsorption data of PAA on ceria are better fitted with Langmuir isotherm model than Freundlich isotherm model. The maximum adsorbed amount,  $Q_m$  of  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria and OH-ceria for monolayer coverage at pH 7 is 0.2247 and 0.2041  $\text{mg}/\text{m}^2$ , respectively. The affinity of adsorption,  $K_L$ , of  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria is higher than that of OH-ceria. This indicates that the nitrate group on the surface also induces ceria to high affinity with PAA.

To elucidate experimental adsorption inclination upon the functional groups, we have investigated the adsorption reaction at the molecular level through quantum mechanical calculation. First of all, we have used an octahedrally coordinated hydroxyl group and a nitrate group on the Ce atoms to describe the functionalized ceria nanoparticles (Figure 5a and b). The rest of the neighboring atoms were coordinated by a hydroxyl group for charge neutrality. In addition, the (001)  $\text{SiO}_2$  was fully optimized with a single side open to represent the  $\text{SiO}_2$  surface. Both of the sides were terminated by a hydrogen atom to describe wet chemical experiment conditions with the hydroxyl group and eliminate the end effect, respectively. The vacuum layer of the cell is set larger than 20 Å to minimize the interaction between the periodic structures (Figure 5a). In case of OH-ceria, two reaction steps could be considered. The first step is the OH-ceria adsorption on the H-terminated  $\text{SiO}_2$  surface with electrostatic attraction force. Then, for the second step, the OH-ceria adsorption on the H-terminated  $\text{SiO}_2$  surface is a water generating reaction. The binding energies of the both cases are  $-2.865$  and  $-3.813$  eV, respectively. On the other hand, only one step adsorption was considered for the  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria without generating a water molecule (Figure 5b). The binding energy of this  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria on the  $\text{SiO}_2$  surface is much higher than that of the OH-ceria as  $-4.383$  eV. This phenomenon might be due to the higher induced charge on the oxygen atom of the nitrate group. This theoretical result highly corresponds to the experimental data.

Figure 6 shows the effect of different surface chemistry on the surface on the CMP performance. The result shows that nitrate group on ceria surface induces an increased removal rate of  $\text{SiO}_2$  film, which corresponds with the adsorption isotherm



**Figure 6.** Removal rate of  $\text{SiO}_2$  film of  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria and OH-ceria at pH 7.0.

of silicate ion and theoretical analyses.  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria with PAA also shows the higher  $\text{SiO}_2$  removal rate due to an increased affinity and binding energy with silicate ion than that of OH-ceria with PAA.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

We demonstrated that surface functional groups including hydroxyl and nitrate groups have a significant influence on the adsorption properties of silicate ion on ceria surface. The adsorption data of silicate ion on ceria were fitted with Freundlich isotherm model. A  $K_F$  and  $n$  value among the constants of the Freundlich isotherms, related with affinity between ceria and silicate ion, indicated that  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria shows higher with silicate ion at pH 7 than that of OH-ceria. Theoretical analyses using density functional theory (DFT) calculation exhibit the binding energy of the  $\text{NO}_3$ -ceria ( $-4.383$  eV) on the  $\text{SiO}_2$  surface is much higher than that of the OH-ceria ( $-3.813$  eV). The experimental results and theoretical analysis indicate that the nitrate group on the ceria surface induces higher affinity and binding energy with silicate ions than the hydroxyl group, which is important for understanding the role of the surface chemistry of ceria during polishing and reaction between ceria and  $\text{SiO}_2$  film. The results investigated in this study will provide researchers, studying applications using ceria, with guidelines on the importance of understanding the surface chemistry of ceria.

#### ■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

##### Supporting Information

Additional TEM, FTIR, ESA, XPS, and EA results of ceria. Adsorption isotherms of PAA on ceria. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org/>.

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##### Author Contributions

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##### Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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