# Theoretical study of the molecular and electronic structure of methanol on a TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) surface

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We present density-functional-theory calculations of the molecular and electronic structure of methanol adsorption on stoichiometric  $TiO_2(110)$  surface. We have investigated 11 different molecular and dissociated adsorption structures of CH<sub>3</sub>OH at 1 monolayer coverage. The relative stabilities of different structures depend on the chemisorption-induced charge transfer, the relative strengths of different types of hydrogen bonds, the steric hindrance between methyl groups and the surface stress. We found the intermolecular hydrogen bonding to play an important role in stabilizing the overlayer. We also investigated the occupied and unoccupied surface electronic structures show that the highest-occupied molecular orbital of CH<sub>3</sub>OH is near the valance-band maximum, which reflects the character of CH<sub>3</sub>OH as a hole scavenger on TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces. The unoccupied partially solvated or "wet" electron states for CH<sub>3</sub>OH on TiO<sub>2</sub> are primarily distributed on H atoms of methyl groups. Despite many different structural motifs, the wet-electron-state energy primarily correlates with the surface dipole moment.

DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevB.80.235416

PACS number(s): 68.43.Bc, 73.20.Hb, 68.43.Fg

## I. INTRODUCTION

 $TiO_2$  is a large band-gap semiconductor with a wide range of applications including in photocatalysis, decontamination, and solar-energy conversion.<sup>1-7</sup> The generation of electronhole pairs by band-gap excitation with near-ultraviolet light can instigate the decomposition of organic molecules adsorbed on TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces. As one of the simplest organic molecules, methanol adsorbed on TiO2 surfaces has been intensively investigated by both experiment and theory in the context of catalysis and photocatalysis.<sup>8-24</sup> Methanol can adsorb on TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces either molecularly or dissociatively. Scanning tunneling microscopy (STM) and temperatureprogrammed desorption (TPD) measurements show that the dissociation of CH<sub>3</sub>OH is exothermic at oxygen-atom vacancies on reduced TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces.<sup>11,12,16,21</sup> Also, chemical and TPD studies have been interpreted in terms of the partial  $CH_3OH$  dissociation on the stoichiometric  $TiO_2(110)$  surface whereby a proton is transferred from OH of methanol to bridging surface O atom of the surface to form a methoxy and an OH species.<sup>12,16,21</sup> The structure of CH<sub>3</sub>OH on TiO<sub>2</sub> is complicated, as we will show by density-functional-theory (DFT) calculations; many distinct molecular and dissociative structures can coexist on account of both the intermolecular or molecule-surface hydrogen bonding with nearly equal chemisorption enthalpies.<sup>8,17,22</sup> In part because of this complexity, the precise understanding of the adsorption structure of CH<sub>3</sub>OH on the most extensively studied rutile  $TiO_2(110)$ surface is still lacking.

In order to understand the photocatalytic activity of methanol it is also important to determine how it interacts with photogenerated electrons and holes. In the photocatalysis literature it is well established that methanol acts as a hole trap,<sup>10</sup> and a sacrificial agent in the photocatalytic production of  $H_2$ .<sup>25,26</sup> To best of our knowledge, however, there have neither been studies to determine the nature of the methanol-

hole interaction nor has it been established whether holes interact more strongly with the molecular or the deprotonated form.

The situation is different for photogenerated electrons, for which the interaction with protic solvents has been studied through a joint time-resolved two-photon photoemission (TR-2PP) spectroscopy and DFT electronic-structure investigation. These studies discovered the two-dimensional (2D) partially solvated electron states at the H<sub>2</sub>O/TiO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>3</sub>OH/TiO<sub>2</sub> interfaces.<sup>19,27,28</sup> The idea of surface-solvated electron state, which was dubbed the "wet-electron state,"29 comes from the studies of excess electrons bound by dipolar forces to surfaces of small  $(H_2O)_n^ (n \ge 2)$  clusters.<sup>29-40</sup> Solvated electrons in protic solvents are one of the most fundamental chemical reagents of significant interest in many physical and chemical contexts.<sup>29–35,37,38,40–49</sup> In  $(H_2O)_n^$ clusters, dangling H atoms, which do not participate in strong hydrogen bonds (HBs), present the most electrophilic acceptor sites for stabilizing excess electrons.<sup>29,35,50,51</sup> Yet most experimental and theoretical studies of solvated electrons have focused on the liquid phase or on systems consisting of small to intermediate size protic solvent anion clusters. In more recent TR-2PP studies, Wolf and coworkers have studied solvation of electrons injected into the conduction bands (CBs) of H<sub>2</sub>O and NH<sub>3</sub> multilayers on metal surfaces. In these studies as well, the dangling H atoms at the adsorbate vacuum interface have been proposed as the primary electron solvation sites.<sup>52–55</sup>

2PP spectra for H<sub>2</sub>O/TiO<sub>2</sub> surface show a resonance 2.4 eV above the Fermi level ( $E_{\rm F}$ ) that can act as an intermediate level in two-photon photoemission process. Based on chemical evidence and DFT calculations, we attributed this resonance to the 2D wet-electron states. An electron transiently occupying the wet-electron state decays back to the CB through resonant charge transfer (RCT) with a lifetime of ~15 fs.<sup>56</sup> As in (H<sub>2</sub>O)<sub>n</sub><sup>-</sup> clusters and H<sub>2</sub>O multilayers on

metals, the DFT calculations show that the 2D wet-electron state is also stabilized by the dangling H atoms.<sup>27</sup> Because the H atoms of H<sub>2</sub>O molecules on the stoichiometric TiO<sub>2</sub> surface are engaged in favorable HBs, however, the 2.4 eV resonance primarily corresponds to electrons stabilized by the minority bridging hydroxyl (OH<sub>b</sub>) species. The OH<sub>b</sub> species form through the dissociation of water molecules at the bridging oxygen (O<sub>b</sub>) vacancies on the partially reduced TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces. These highly reactive O<sub>b</sub> vacancy defects form under reducing conditions on  $TiO_2(110)$  surfaces.<sup>4,12,57</sup> From these experimental and theoretical studies we concluded that (i) the wet-electron-state energy depends on the H<sub>2</sub>O-molecule coverage and chemisorption structure; (ii) they have one-dimensional or 2D character depending on the templated growth of H<sub>2</sub>O molecules on the metal-oxide substrate [e.g., on TiO<sub>2</sub>(110)-surface H<sub>2</sub>O molecules form linear chains]; (iii) they present the lowest-energy pathway for the nonadiabatic electron transfer at metal-oxide/aqueous interfaces; and (iv) they may participate in photocatalytic reduction processes on metal-oxide surfaces.<sup>28</sup>

Encouraged by the results on  $H_2O/TiO_2$ , we performed similar experiments and calculations on CH<sub>3</sub>OH adsorbed on  $TiO_2(110)$  surface.<sup>19,56</sup> In close correspondence with the H<sub>2</sub>O case, an analogous wet-electron state appears 2.3 eV above the  $E_{\rm F}$ . By contrast to the H<sub>2</sub>O case, however, the lifetime of wet electrons at CH<sub>3</sub>OH/TiO<sub>2</sub> interface can extend to >100 fs time scale depending on the molecular coverage and deuterium isotope (CH<sub>3</sub>OD) substitution. The dynamical response reveled by TR-2PP showed that both the wet-electron population and its average energy relative to  $E_{\rm F}$ decay in a biphasic manner; we assigned the initial 30-40 fs time-scale process to inertial solvation that stabilizes the wet-electron state with respect to RCT; and a longer 100 fs to picosecond time-scale component to diffusive solvation, which further stabilizes the injected electrons within the CH<sub>3</sub>OH overlayer. Surprisingly, this latter component has a factor of 2.2 slower decay rate for the equivalent CH<sub>3</sub>OD overlayer. We attributed the deuterium isotope effect to proton-coupled electron transfer based on a  $\Delta$ -SCF calculation, which indicated how the overlayer response, involving hydrogen bond (HB) breaking and methanol OH deprotonation, might stabilize the wet-electron state.<sup>19,28</sup> Thus, TR-2PP studies along with DFT calculations on CH<sub>3</sub>OH/TiO<sub>2</sub> provide molecular-level insights into the photophysical and photochemical processes, which are initiated by the optical injection of electrons into the wet-electron states. Therefore, there is a strong motivation to study in greater detail both the diversity of chemisorption structures of CH<sub>3</sub>OH/TiO<sub>2</sub> interface and how they interact with the photogenerated carriers.

Here, we calculate by DFT 11 different chemisorption structures of 1 monolayer (ML)  $CH_3OH$  on stoichiometric rutile  $TiO_2(110)$  surface. We report the structure-dependent chemisorption energies, the overlayer electronic structures, surface-adsorbate charge-transfer properties, and surface dipole moments. The properties of wet-electron states for different adsorption structures and their correlation with the electrostatic properties of the interface also are discussed in detail.



FIG. 1. (Color online) The structure of the  $TiO_2(110)$  surface. Small gray and large red spheres indicate the titanium and oxygen ions.  $O_1$ - $O_4$  are the  $O_{3c}$  atoms, and  $O_5$  and  $O_6$  are the bridging O atoms. (a) Top view of the  $(2 \times 1)$  surface unit cell. (b) Side view showing the slab geometry.

## **II. COMPUTATIONAL METHODS**

Plane-wave pseudopotential DFT calculations are used to characterize various optimized molecular structures of CH<sub>3</sub>OH chemisorption on TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) surface. The calculations are carried out with the "Vienna *ab initio* simulation package code" (VASP).<sup>38–40</sup> The O 1*s* and Ti 1*s* to 3*p* electrons are treated as core states. The generalized gradient approximation (GGA) with the spin-polarized Perdew-Burke-Ernzerhof functional<sup>58</sup> and the projector-augmented wave potential are used for all of the calculations.<sup>59</sup>

The surface is modeled with slabs cut out of a TiO<sub>2</sub> crystal to expose the (110) surface. As shown in Fig. 1, TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) surface contains five- and six-coordinate Ti atoms (Ti<sub>5c</sub> and Ti<sub>6c</sub>), and two- and three-coordinate O atoms. Above the surface plane, the two-coordinate O atoms bond to the Ti<sub>6c</sub> atoms forming the so-called bridging oxygen rows. The periodically repeated slabs are decoupled by 10 Å vacuum gaps. A Monkhorst-Pack grid of  $(3 \times 3 \times 1) k$  points is used for the  $(2 \times 1)$  surface unit cell. The molecules are adsorbed on both sides of the slab. The positions of all atoms are allowed to relax until the force acting on each is less than 0.02 eV Å<sup>-1</sup>. We use a 400 eV plane-wave cutoff for optimization of the molecular structure and a 520 eV cutoff for the static calculations of the electronic structure.

## **III. RESULTS**

#### A. CH<sub>3</sub>OH adsorption structure

We investigated different adsorption structures of 1 ML CH<sub>3</sub>OH on TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) surface. We define 1 ML coverage by 100% occupation of Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites by CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecules. According to our calculations, for 1 ML coverage, two CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecules can adsorb for each TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) (2×1) surface unit cell, despite the likely steric hindrance between the adjacent methyl groups.<sup>12</sup>

Like  $H_2O$ , on the stoichiometric TiO<sub>2</sub>-surface CH<sub>3</sub>OH adsorbs preferentially with its O atom forming a bond with Ti<sup>4+</sup> ions at Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites. The H atom of OH can form either molecule-surface or intermolecular HB. Moreover, there is evidence that methanol can deprotonate at OH to form a methoxy at Ti<sub>5c</sub> site and OH<sub>b</sub> species on the O<sub>b</sub> rows.<sup>12,21</sup> We



FIG. 2. (Color online) The top and side views of 11 different optimized adsorption structures for 1 ML coverage with one  $CH_3OH$  molecule at each  $Ti_{5c}$  site on the (2×1) surface unit cell. The blue doted lines indicate the hydrogen bonds and the numbering identifies the specific bonds that are compared in Table I.

have investigated  $2 \times 1$  surface unit-cell structures where both CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecules adsorb molecularly, one of the two molecules within the unit-cell deprotonates, and both molecules deprotonate (Fig. 2). We also investigated a proposed additional adsorption site for a  $(3 \times 1)$  unit cell where in order to relive steric hindrance one of the two CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecules in the unit cell is located at a bridging site between two Ti<sub>5c</sub> atoms and the other is on top of the remaining Ti<sub>5c</sub> site; such structure has been proposed to rationalize why in TPD measurements 1 ML coverage corresponds to the occupation of 70% of Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 2 shows the optimized structures of 11 distinct stable adsorption configurations that we have studied. We identified four molecular structures (M1–M4), five half-dissociated structures (HD1–HD5), and two fully dissociated structures (D1 and D2). The bridging site between two  $Ti_{5c}$  sites was found to be unstable with respect to adsorption on top of  $Ti_{5c}$  sites. Therefore, for the theoretical structures the steric hindrance does not prevent CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecules from occupying each  $Ti_{5c}$  site.

The M1 molecular adsorption structure has two methanol molecules oriented in the same direction and adsorbed on each  $Ti_{5c}$  atom in the 2×1 surface unit cell. The hydroxyl H atoms form HBs with the neighboring  $O_b$  atoms. M2 is similar to M1 but the two methanol molecules are oriented in the opposite direction to form HBs to the opposing  $O_b$ -atom rows. This allows the methyl groups to adopt different configurations than in M1, thereby reducing the steric hindrance between them. In the M3 and M4 structures, one molecule

within the unit cell forms an HB to the proximate O<sub>b</sub> atom while the other molecule interacts with the first molecule through an intermolecular HB. Even though the most stable structure is M3 according to our calculations, as far as we know, such intermolecular bonding structures have not been previously studied by theory. The HD1 and HD2 structures are based on the M1 and M2 structures, respectively, where one H atom is transferred within the existing HB from CH<sub>3</sub>OH to O<sub>b</sub> atom to form the corresponding HB between OH<sub>b</sub> and O atom of methoxy formed at the Ti<sub>5c</sub> site. The HD3 structure is similar to HD2, however, each methyl group points in a different direction, as shown in Fig. 2. The HD4 and HD5 structures are obtained from the M3 and M4 structures by transferring the H atom to Ob site within the molecule-surface HB. The D1 and D2 structures are the two fully deprotonated M1 and M2 structures.

Because it has been shown that the molecular adsorption energies on TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces have significant dependence on the slab thickness, we have investigated the methanol adsorption energy as a function of the number of O-Ti-O layers in a slab. The adsorption energies  $E_{ads}$  are defined by  $E_{ads}$ =  $1/n[E_{CH_3OH/TiO_2}-(E_{TiO_2}+nE_{CH_3OH})]$ , where  $E_{TiO_2}$  and  $E_{CH_3OH}$  are the total energies of the clean surface and free CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecule and *n* is the number of CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecules within the unit cell. The higher  $E_{ads}$  corresponds to a more stable structure. Figure 3 gives the layer-number-dependent adsorption energy for different structures. As reported previously, the adsorption energies oscillate between the odd and even number of layers and converge slowly as the number of



FIG. 3. (Color online) The adsorption energy dependence on the slab thickness for the different adsorption structures in Fig. 2.

layers is increased.<sup>17,60–65</sup> In order to get reliable adsorption energies, we have studied up to 11-layer thick slabs, for which the energy difference with respect to the corresponding ten-layer slab is smaller than 0.03 eV. We have also checked how treating the 3p electrons of Ti as valance electrons affects adsorption energies. Based on 11-layer calculations of the M3, HD4, and D1 structures, we found that the adsorption energy decreases by only 0.04–0.06 eV, in agreement with trends reported by Deskins.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, the order of stability of different structures does not depend on the basis set.

The molecular M3 structure, with adsorption energy of 0.63 eV, is the most stable one we found. As already pointed out, this structure has one intermolecular and one moleculesurface HB, indicating that both kinds of HBs need to be considered to understand the chemisorption of CH<sub>3</sub>OH on TiO<sub>2</sub>. In agreement with this finding, the HD5, HD4, and M4 structures, which also have intermolecular HBs, are more stable than the other structures with only molecule-surface HBs. The two fully dissociated structures D1 and D2 have the lowest  $E_{ads}$  of 0.30 and 0.34 eV, respectively. Thus, we also conclude that for CH<sub>3</sub>OH/TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) surface the molecular chemisorption is favored over the partially or fully dissociated forms. In reality, however, both species are likely to exist on TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) surface.

The chemisorption of CH<sub>3</sub>OH on TiO<sub>2</sub> can be understood by elaborating the adsorbate-substrate charge transfer. Substantial charge transfer is evident from the adsorbate-induced work-function change in 2PP spectra of CH<sub>3</sub>OH-covered  $TiO_2$  surfaces, which will be calculated in due course.<sup>18,56</sup> Figure 4 presents the spatial distribution of charge transfer upon CH<sub>3</sub>OH adsorption on TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) surface for three representative structures. The charge densities of the donor  $\rho_+$ and acceptor  $\rho_{-}$  sites are defined by the difference  $\rho_{+}$  $= \pm (\rho_{\text{TiO}_2} + \rho_{\text{CH}_2\text{OH}} - \rho_{\text{CH}_2\text{OH}/\text{TiO}_2})$  between the noninteracting surface and adsorbate and the chemisorbed state. We have also performed Bader charge analysis of the electron density, which is reported in Table S1 of the supplementary materials,<sup>67</sup> in order to get numerical atomic-level chargetransfer information. From the charge redistribution and Bader analysis, we gain insight into the molecule-surface bond formation. For the M3, HD4, and D1 structures in Fig.



FIG. 4. (Color online) Top and side views of the donor and acceptor charge-transfer spatial distributions for the M3, HD4, and D1 structures.

4 we conclude that upon forming Ti-O bond there is charge transfer from Ti<sub>5c</sub> atom and as well as methyl group to O atom of methanol or methoxy. The net positive charge on Ti<sub>5c</sub> and negative charge on O of the adsorbate is the basis for the partially ionic Ti-O bond. For the molecularly adsorbed CH<sub>3</sub>OH, there is also charge transfer from H of OH group to surface O<sub>b</sub> upon forming the molecule-surface HB. For the deprotonated structures, there is charge transfer within the molecule-surface HB from the H atom of OH<sub>b</sub> species to the O atom of methoxy. In the intermolecular HBs, charge is transferred from H atom of OH on one molecule to O atom of the neighboring molecule. There is also substantial charge transfer to  $O_{3c}$  sites of the surface, especially in the proximity of methoxy species. Finally, charge is transferred from above to below Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites upon coordination with methanol or methoxy.

Several factors that can affect the relative stability of different adsorption structures include the strengths of bonds between the adsorbate and substrate (Ti<sub>5c</sub>-O and HB), the relative strengths of the intermolecular versus moleculesubstrate HBs, the relative stabilities of the molecular and deprotonated forms, the steric hindrance between the methyl groups, and the adsorbate-induced lattice strain.<sup>68</sup> Table I gives the Ti-O and HB lengths of the optimized adsorption structures from the 11-layer slab calculations. We found that the intermolecular HBs are always quite strong as judged by their lengths, which vary from 1.49 to 1.67 Å. This is shorter than 1.80 Å for the corresponding intermolecular HBs calculated for 1 ML of  $H_2O$  on  $TiO_2(110)$  surface.<sup>27</sup> These strong intermolecular HBs appear to be responsible for the particular stability of the structures that posses them. Because of the steric hindrance between the methyl groups, however, initial structures in DFT calculations with two intermolecular HBs are not stable and converge to either the M3 or M4 structures. Therefore, we do not expect methanol to form linear hydrogen-bonded chains as proposed for CH<sub>3</sub>OH in the liquid phase and anion clusters.<sup>69</sup> The role of steric interactions can be further appreciated if we compare

TABLE I. The adsorption energy, the Ti-O and hydrogen bond lengths, the work-function change, the relative surface dipole moment, the wet-electron-state energy relative to CBM, and the CH<sub>3</sub>OH (OCH<sub>3</sub>) HOMO energy ( $E_{HOMO}$ ) relative to VBM, are given for different adsorption structures. The reference energies for the wet-electron state and CH<sub>3</sub>OH HOMO (OCH<sub>3</sub>) are the CBM and VBM, respectively. The numbering of H and O atoms is specified in Fig. 2.

	$E_{ads}$ (eV)	O-H <sub>(1)</sub> (Å)	O-H <sub>(2)</sub> (Å)	Ti-O <sub>(1)</sub> (Å)	Ti-O <sub>(2)</sub> (Å)	$\Delta \varphi$ (eV)	$\frac{\Delta p}{(10^{-3} \text{ e}/\text{\AA})}$	$E_{wet}$ (eV)	E <sub>HOMO</sub> (eV)
M1	0.37	1.71		2.23		-2.25	5.5	2.70	-0.58
M2	0.47	1.62	1.62	2.35	2.35	-1.89	1.8	2.98	-0.47
M3	0.63	1.63	1.56	2.25	2.63	-2.14	6.1	2.79	-0.46
	$(0.59)^{a}$								
M4	0.53	1.67	2.42	2.42	2.39	-2.51	8.2	2.40	-0.46
HD1	0.49	1.62	1.96	1.87	2.27	-1.96	3.0	2.90	-0.32
HD2	0.42	1.67	1.94	2.43	1.85	-2.08	5.6	2.78	-0.43
HD3	0.50	2.15	2.22	2.23	1.87	-2.30	7.8	2.54	-0.41
HD4	0.55	1.49	1.58	2.19	2.07	-1.76	1.2	3.13	-0.40
	$(0.49)^{a}$								
HD5	0.57	1.49	2.00	2.20	2.00	-1.63	1.0	3.13	-0.27
D1	0.30	1.80		1.89		-1.60	0.0	3.26	-0.21
	$(0.26)^{a}$								
D2	0.34	1.88	1.90	1.86	1.87	-1.97	4.0	2.90	-0.17

<sup>a</sup>Calculated with pseudopotential that treats Ti 3p as valence electrons.

the  $E_{ads}$  of M1 with M2 (or D1 with D2); methyl groups pointing in different directions minimize the steric hindrance leading to higher stability. Another aspect, which affects the adsorption energy, is the distortion of the TiO<sub>2</sub> lattice. In Table S2 of the supplementary materials we give the displacements of the surface-layer Ti and O atoms for 11-layer slab calculations for M3, HD4, and HD5 structures with respect to the optimized structure of the bare 11-layer thick slab. We notice that for the HD4 and HD5 structures, the distortion of the surface layer is stronger than for the M3 structure. The strong lattice distortion is caused by the methoxy group, which has a Ti-O bond that is substantially shorter (1.8-2.1 Å) than the corresponding methanol bond (2.2-2.4 Å), and also induces stronger charge transfer to the substrate. The cost of the lattice distortion, however, may explain in part why the M3 structure has a lower energy than the HD4 and HD5 structures.

In addition to the structures reported in Fig. 2 and Table I, we investigated several HD structures where H of  $OH_b$  has transferred to the neighboring  $O_b$  site whereby the methanol molecules form two HBs and the methoxy has no HBs. These structures have similar adsorption energies as the reported HD structures but otherwise do not provide additional insights into CH<sub>3</sub>OH chemisorption.

## **B.** Electronic structure

We have also investigated the electronic structure of  $CH_3OH/TiO_2(110)$  surface. In Fig. 5 we plot the total density of states (DOS) and its projection onto the adsorbed  $CH_3OH$  molecule for the representative M3, HD4, and D1 structures. The energy is reported with respect to the conduction-band minimum (CBM). To establish the correct reference energy for the comparison of the unoccupied DOS

at the surface from DFT calculations with that from 2PP experiments, we note that infrared-absorption and conductivity measurements locate  $E_{\rm F} \sim 120$  meV below the CBM for mildly reduced rutile TiO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>19,56,70-72</sup> As is expected for DFT calculations, the calculated band gap of TiO<sub>2</sub> with the GGA functional is around 1.6 eV, which is less than the experimental optical band gap of 3.0 eV.<sup>73</sup> We expect, however, that the DFT excitation energies of the unoccupied states with respect to the CBM do not suffer from the same errors as the quasiparticle gap.<sup>74</sup>

Considering the adsorbate-localized DOS, we note that the highest-occupied molecular orbital (HOMO) of the three structures, as reported in Table I, is just below the valance-



FIG. 5. (Color online) The total (black) and partial (red and blue) DOS for the M3, HD4, and D1 structures. The reference energy is the conduction-band minimum.



FIG. 6. (Color online) The correlation of the wet-electron energy for different adsorption structures with work-function change and the relative surface dipole moment.

band maximum (VBM). By contrast, the HOMO of  $H_2O$  is more than 5 eV below VBM.<sup>61–65,75,76</sup> This result is consistent with CH<sub>3</sub>OH being a hole scavenger.<sup>10</sup> If we compare in detail the adsorbate localized DOS of the three structures, it is evident from Fig. 5 that the methoxy contribution is closer to VBM and has larger DOS than the methanol contribution. The deprotonation accumulates more electron charge density on O atom of methoxy raising its energy with respect to  $CH_3OH$ . Based on these results, it is evident that on  $CH_3OH$ -covered  $TiO_2$ -surface methoxy is the more favorable hole-trapping site than methanol. This suggests that trapping of photogenerated holes may provide the thermodynamic driving potential for proton transfer from  $CH_3OH$  to the substrate.

Chemisorption-induced charge transfer also affects the work function of CH<sub>3</sub>OH/TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces. We have calculated the work functions for the bare  $TiO_2(110)$  surface and different structures of 1 ML CH<sub>3</sub>OH chemisorbed on TiO<sub>2</sub> using the 11-layer slab by subtracting the calculated  $E_{\rm F}$  from the vacuum level energy obtained from the analysis of the electrostatic potential. For the bare TiO<sub>2</sub> surface, the work function we obtain is 6.82 eV with respect to VBM, which is comparable to previous theoretical results.77-80 The GGA band gap of TiO<sub>2</sub> being approximately 1.6 eV, locates the vacuum level at ~5.2 eV above CBM. In 2PP measurements, the work function is strongly surface-preparation dependent but for a stoichiometric surface it was reported to be 5.6 eV.<sup>70</sup> In other photoemission experiments it was found to be 5.3 eV.<sup>81</sup> The experimental work function suggests, therefore, that the GGA valence band may be as much as 0.1-0.4 eV too high.

Because of the uncertainty in the absolute value of work function, in Table I and Fig. 6 we report the chemisorptioninduced work-function change relative to the bare surface. The calculated reduction in the work function by adsorption of 1 ML CH<sub>3</sub>OH is 1.6-2.3 eV depending on the adsorption



FIG. 7. (Color online) The top and side views of the spatial distribution of wet-electron orbitals for the different adsorption structures for 1 ML  $CH_3OH$  on  $TiO_2$ .

structure. The large variation in the work function is not associated with the molecular vs deprotonated chemisorption; rather it is associated with more subtle structural motifs. The work-function change in 2PP measurements on the stoichiometric  $TiO_2(110)$  surface was found to be 1.2 eV.<sup>18</sup> The lower experimental value may reflect that the actual CH<sub>3</sub>OH coverage for the nominally 1 ML structure corresponds to the filling of only 70%  $Ti_{5c}$  sites.<sup>12</sup>

The work-function change is strongly correlated with the surface dipole moment.<sup>82,83</sup> From the slab model calculation, we can define the density of dipole moment of the surface layer by  $p = \int_{z_0}^{c/2} z \rho(z) dz$ ,<sup>27,84,85</sup> where c is the cell parameter (thickness of the slab plus vacuum) in the z direction. The center of the slab is taken as the starting point of the integration  $z_0$  as dictated by symmetry. We note that our procedure allows us to obtain only the relative dipole values because the slab thickness is not sufficient to represent the long-range electrostatic forces required for convergence in determination of the absolute value of the dipole moment. Nevertheless, the relative values reported in Table I for different structures still provide useful information. We report surface dipole moments in Table I and Fig. 6 relative to the D1 structure, for which it is set to zero. The D1 structure has the smallest surface dipole moment, and therefore, induces the smallest change in the work function.

## C. Wet-electron states

Motivated by the discovery of the CH<sub>3</sub>OH-induced wetelectron states in TR-2PP experiments,<sup>19</sup> we examined the calculated unoccupied electronics structure associated with CH<sub>3</sub>OH overlayer on of TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) surface. In the analysis of the unoccupied DOS, we find contributions from the diffuse states of the methanol overlayer that appear at adsorption structure-dependent energies. Because these states are predominantly associated with the adsorbate H atoms, we associate them with the wet-electron states. The unoccupied DOS in Fig. 5 indicates the wet-electron states of the representative M3, HD4, and D1 structures. The energy of the lowest wet-electron state with respect to CBM reported in Table I is defined as described in Ref. 27.

We note that the wet-electron-state energies of different adsorption structures fall in a relatively narrow range between 2.4 and 3.3 eV above the CBM. The M4 and D1 structures have the lowest and the highest wet-electron energies of 2.40 and 3.3 eV, respectively. In Fig. 7 we plot the spatial distributions of the wet-electron-state orbitals. For every adsorption structure, the wet-electron state is distributed mostly on top of H atoms of the methyl groups. The reason why H atoms of OH groups have only a minor contribution to the wet-electron states is that in most structures it forms strong molecule-surface or intermolecular HBs. The only exception is M4, where the HB from the OH in CH<sub>3</sub>OH to the bridging O is rather weak as judged by its 2.42 Å bond length. Therefore, in this case the hydroxyl H atom can be considered a favorable dangling acceptor site that helps to stabilize the wet-electron state. A more general trend, however, can be discerned in Fig. 6, where we compare the relationship between the wet-electron-state energy and the



FIG. 8. (Color online) The top and side views of the spatial distribution of wet-electron orbitals for HD4 and M3 structures with additional 0.5 ML H of atoms added to the  $O_b$  sites.

work-function change; we find that a low wet-electron-state energy requires a high dipole density, and therefore is associated with a large work-function change.

In order to examine further the correlation of wet-electron states with the dipole moment, we have also examined the effect of adding 0.5 ML of H atoms to the M3 and HD4 structures. These structures are shown in Fig. 8 along with the wet-electron orbital distributions. Such OH<sub>b</sub> species are expected on partially reduced TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces on account of molecular dissociation of impurity H<sub>2</sub>O and CH<sub>3</sub>OH at O<sub>b</sub>-atom vacancy defects. As described in our previous work on H<sub>2</sub>O-covered TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces,<sup>27</sup> H atoms at O<sub>b</sub> sites transfer their valance electrons to Ti 3d states.<sup>86</sup> Through this charge transfer. H atoms contribute to the surface dipole moment. By increasing the dipole-moment density in this way, the energies of wet-electron states are reduced to 2.17 and 2.01 eV for the M3 and HD4 structures with the additional 0.5 ML of H atoms. The wet-electron-state energy decrease for the HD4 structure is 1.12 eV, which is larger than 0.62 eV for the M3 structure. This large energy stabilization can be in part attributed to formation of a dangling H atom on the surface. We note that adding 0.5 ML H to the HD4 structure causes the CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecule in the unit cell to form intermolecular and molecule-surface HBs at the cost of dissociating the HB between methoxy and OH<sub>b</sub>. Consequently, OH<sub>b</sub> remains dangling making it a favorable wet-electron acceptor site. We note that in structures with intermolecular HBs one of the adsorbates within the unit cell is subject to two HBs. Adding 0.5 ML of H atoms to 1 ML of methanol allows each adsorbate within the unit cell to potentially have two HBs. The strain associated with such structures, however, is too large causing one of H atoms to remain dangling. Thus, on reduced TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces, the formation of additional OH<sub>b</sub> species will introduce the dangling H-atom sites that effectively stabilize wet electrons. This prediction is consistent with 2PP measurements of wet-electron states for the stoichiometric and reduced TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces.<sup>18,19</sup>

### **IV. DISCUSSION**

The question of whether the CH<sub>3</sub>OH dissociates or not on stoichiometric  $TiO_2(110)$  surface has been of considerable

interest.<sup>8,12,16,17,22</sup> Distinct features at 295 and 350 K in TPD scans for multilayer  $CH_3OH$  films on reduced  $TiO_2(110)$  surface have been attributed, respectively, to the molecular and deprotonated species, which desorb from Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites as CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecules. Single-molecule-resolved STM measurements by Dohnálek and coworkers at room temperature show that CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecules can diffuse along the Ti<sub>5c</sub> rows without dissociating until they encounter an Ob vacancy site. The defect-induced dissociation introduces H and CH<sub>3</sub> species on top of O<sub>b</sub> rows. According to the TPD measurements, desorption of these dissociated species from O<sub>b</sub> rows occurs at even higher temperature of 400-550 K.12 The STM measurements of Dohnélek and coworkers, however, were performed at a very low coverage where intermolecular interaction between proximate CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecules could not influence the chemisorbed state.<sup>23</sup> According to our calculations, the intermolecular interactions can substantially alter stability of the molecular versus dissociated species. In a calculation for TiO<sub>2</sub> slabs with four to six layers for similar structure to our M1 structure, but at 0.25 ML coverage, de Armas et al.<sup>17</sup> found that whether the molecular or dissociated form of CH<sub>3</sub>OH is more stable depends on the number of layers that are used in the calculation. Nudged elasticband calculations from the same group for a six-layer slab show that the molecular adsorption is more stable by 0.02 eV than the corresponding deprotonated structure, and barrier to the interconversion is 0.11 eV. One should keep in mind, however, that these results are not converged with respect to the slab thickness.

The main result of our study on the relative chemisorption energies at 1 ML coverage of CH<sub>3</sub>OH on TiO<sub>2</sub>(110) surface is that the intermolecular HB is very important to stabilize the adsorption. Based on our 11-layer slab calculation, the most stable structure corresponds to the molecular adsorption M3, which forms one intermolecular and another moleculesurface HB. Transferring the proton across the moleculesurface HB to O<sub>b</sub> row transforms the M3 structure into the HD4 structure, which is less stable by 0.08 eV. The fully intermolecularly hydrogen-bonded methanol chains, which could mediate Grotthuss-type proton transport on the surface,<sup>87–90</sup> are not stable because of the steric hindrance of methyl groups.

Our study shows that for CH<sub>3</sub>OH on TiO<sub>2</sub> there are many possible related adsorption structures with nearly equal adsorption energies for the molecular and deprotonated forms, for example, M2, HD2, and HD3. The molecular M3 structure is clearly the most stable structure, but for other nearly as stable structures, such as the M4 and HD5, the deprotonated form is predicted to be the more stable one. Thus, the extent to which methanol exists in a deprotonated form on CH<sub>3</sub>OH/TiO<sub>2</sub> surface depends on the details of potentialenergy surfaces for the interconversion of structures such as M4 transforming either into the deprotonated HD5 structure or the most stable M3 structure. Because the energy differences between the five most stable structures is <0.2 eV, it is likely that  $CH_3OH/TiO_2(110)$  surfaces are highly inhomogeneous and contain a distribution of the structural motifs that arise from deprotonation, intermolecular, and moleculesubstrate HBs, and possible H-atom migration that we have not discussed explicitly. The interconversion between different forms could be catalyzed by species such as  $OH_b$  or impurity  $H_2O$  molecules, and even by photogenerated holes.<sup>91</sup> Although the assignment of the TPD features at 295 and 350 K to the molecular and deprotonated forms of  $CH_3OH$  is plausible, in light of our finding of different stability of the intermolecular and molecule-surface HBs, the two features could also be attributed to differences in HB strengths of different molecular chemisorption structures.

We note that Henderson *et al.*<sup>12</sup> found <sup>1</sup> ML CH<sub>3</sub>OH coverage to correspond to only 70% of the surface Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites. To explain this, they proposed that on account of steric hindrance between the methyl groups one CH<sub>3</sub>OH molecule within the  $2 \times 1$  unit cell occupies a Ti<sub>5c</sub> site while the other molecule adsorbs in a bridging site between two Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites. Our calculations show that the steric hindrance is indeed an important factor in determining the CH<sub>3</sub>OH overlayer structure but there is no stable adsorption minimum at the proposed bridging site. The steric hindrance between methyl groups, however, can cause some of the Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites to be blocked, resulting in a monolayer coverage that is significantly less dense than if all the Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites were available.

Our DFT study for the stoichiometric  $\text{TiO}_2$  surface gives the wet-electron-state energy of different structures in the 2.4–3.3 eV range above CBM, which is consistent with the experimental 2PP spectra. The wet-electron-state energies do not show much sensitivity to whether CH<sub>3</sub>OH is deprotonated or not. Adding 0.5 ML of H atoms onto O<sub>b</sub> rows to simulate the situation that would exist on reduced surfaces, such as used in Refs. 19 and 56 reduces the wet-electronstate energy to the 2.0–2.2 eV range. Thus, the calculated wet-electron-state energies for the stoichiometric or reduced surfaces are entirely consistent with the experimental observation of a peak at 2.3 eV with a 0.6 eV width. The experimental width most likely reflects the inhomogeneity of methanol adsorption structures and the structure-dependent resonance energies.

For H<sub>2</sub>O adsorbed on TiO<sub>2</sub>, the possibility of having both intermolecular and molecule-surface HBs leaves no dangling H atoms as acceptor sites. Therefore, the OH<sub>b</sub> species on reduced surfaces provide the primary dangling H-atom sites, which bring the wet-electron-state energy down to 2.4 eV above  $E_{\rm F}$ .<sup>27</sup> For CH<sub>3</sub>OH on the stoichiometric TiO<sub>2</sub> surface, the wet-electron-state density is distributed mainly on H atoms of the methyl groups. Because CH<sub>3</sub>OH can make only one HB per molecule, any extra OH<sub>b</sub> species formed either by deprotonation or methanol dissociation at O<sub>b</sub> vacancy defect sites form strong HBs with short bond lengths with O atoms of methanol or methoxy at Ti<sub>5c</sub> sites; therefore, OH<sub>b</sub> species are not favorable acceptor sites in a vertical photoinduced charge transfer. Rather, our calculations show that the less acidic methyl H atoms are the more favorable electron acceptor sites. Methyl H atoms offer multiple acceptor sites that cannot participate in HBs, making them superior for stabilizing the diffuse wet-electron orbitals that the more acidic hydrogen-bonded OH species. The propensity for electron solvation by methyl H atoms has also been found in calculations on methanol clusters.<sup>69</sup>

Instead of the defect-induced formation of  $OH_b$  species on  $H_2O/TiO_2$  surfaces,<sup>27</sup> the wet-electron energy in the case of  $CH_3OH/TiO_2$  surface is mostly determined by the surface

dipole moment, as can be seen in Fig. 6. This is consistent with the previous studies on  $H_2O$  clusters, where the dipolar forces define the wet-electron binding energy.<sup>38,40,92</sup> Although adding 0.5 ML of  $OH_b$  to  $CH_3OH/TiO_2$  surface lowers the wet-electron-state energy, the main role of  $OH_b$  is to increase the surface dipole moment. The additional  $OH_b$  species form HBs with methanol and methoxy species, rather than remaining as dangling H-atom acceptor sites. Because of this sensitivity on the surface dipole moment, at the solid-liquid interface we expect the acidic conditions to favor the stabilization the wet-electron states for  $CH_3OH$ -covered TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces.

The wet-electron states for H<sub>2</sub>O and CH<sub>3</sub>OH on  $TiO_2(110)$  surface have been recently investigated by DFT calculations using atomic basis sets.<sup>93</sup> The results obtained and conclusions drawn are significantly different from our 2PP experiments<sup>19,56</sup> and the present theoretical work. Using the double zeta and polarization (DZP) and DZP++ basis sets, Koitaya et al. obtained much higher wet-electron-state energies for both H<sub>2</sub>O/TiO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>3</sub>OH/TiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces. For instance, they report the wet-electron-state energy for the molecular and dissociated CH<sub>3</sub>OH structures at 1 ML to be  $\geq$ 4.9 eV. The discrepancy with our calculations can be attributed to (i) their reference energy  $E_{\rm F}$  being located apparently about 1 eV below CBM whereas experimental one is only  $\sim 120$  meV below the CBM (Refs. 19, 56, and 70); and more importantly, (ii) their atomic basis sets not being sufficiently diffuse to describe accurately wet-electron states. Koitaya et al. found that the more diffuse DZP++ basis can reduce the wet-electron-state energy by as much as 0.7 eV with respect to the DZP basis sets. Other theoretical studies have investigated the convergence of diffuse solvated electron states on surfaces of H<sub>2</sub>O clusters with respect to the size of basis sets employed.<sup>94–98</sup> For instance, Kim et al.

have shown that at least a TZ2P++ basis set is required to describe  $H_2O$  anion clusters.<sup>98</sup> Tellingly, the much higherenergy wet-electron states found by Koitaya *et al.* are mainly associated with  $OH_b$  species, which in our calculations do not support the lowest-energy wet-electron states. The planewave basis set we are using is nearly complete, and therefore, we believe provides better description of the diffuse wet-electron states associated with H atoms of methyl groups than a more limited atomic basis set such as DZP++.

In summary, we have investigated the adsorption structures and wet-electron states of 1 ML CH<sub>3</sub>OH adsorbed on rutile  $TiO_2(110)$  surface. Among the 11 stable structures we have found, the molecular adsorption M3 and halfdissociated HD3 and HD4 structures with intermolecular HBs are the most stable ones. The wet-electron states distribute mostly on the H atoms of methyl groups, rather than the more acidic OH species, which are engaged in strong HBs. The wet-electron-state energies for different structures are strongly correlated with the surface dipole moment. Because different methanol structures have similar wet-electron-state energies, the molecular response to the injection of charge into the wet-electron state might be very complicated and structure dependent. To investigate the solvation dynamics of excited wet electrons on CH<sub>3</sub>OH/TiO<sub>2</sub> interface, theoretical methods beyond DFT, which can treat the excited electron dynamics including adiabatic and nonadiabatic electron transfer will need to be used.99-101

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was funded through grants from ARO (Grant No. W911NF-07-1-0052) and NSF (Grant No. CHE-0650756). Calculations were performed in the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, a user facility sponsored by the DOE Office of Biological and Environmental Research.

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