

Jahn–Teller Effect on Framework Flexibility of Hybrid Organic–Inorganic Perovskites

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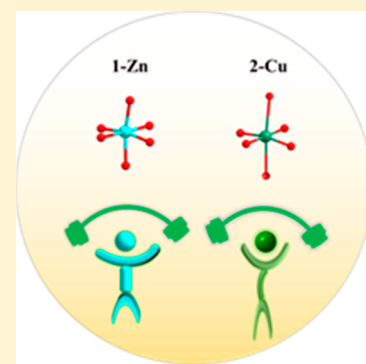
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Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Here we study the Jahn–Teller (JT) effect on framework flexibility of two analogous hybrid organic–inorganic perovskites, $[\text{C}(\text{NH}_2)_3][\text{Zn}(\text{HCOO})_3]$ (1-Zn) and $[\text{C}(\text{NH}_2)_3][\text{Cu}(\text{HCOO})_3]$ (2-Cu). Single-crystal nanoindentation measurements show that the elastic moduli and hardnesses of 1-Zn are up to $\sim 52.0\%$ and $\sim 25.0\%$ greater than those of the JT active 2-Cu. Temperature-dependent X-ray diffraction measurements indicate that the thermal expansion along the b -axis is switched from negative to positive by replacing Zn^{2+} with Cu^{2+} on the B-site. These stark distinctions in framework flexibility are primarily attributed to the $\sim 10.0\%$ elongation of Cu–O bonds induced by the JT effect and associated alterations in octahedral tilting and hydrogen-bonding. Our results demonstrate the prominence of the JT effect in the emerging hybrid perovskites and highlight the possibilities of tuning materials' properties using orbital order.



The JT effect arises from the fact that degenerate electronic states can undergo a lowered energy of their ground state by lifting this degeneracy via a geometrical distortion.¹ This orbital order with a quadrupolar nature has far-reaching consequences in modern chemistry and physics of perovskite materials because the emergence of JT active transition metal ions (e.g., Cu^{2+} , Cr^{2+}) on the B-site significantly complicates the electronic nature of the structure.² Such JT coupling triggers low-symmetry MX_6 octahedral distortions which are responsible for many intriguing properties in perovskite oxides. For example, the discovery of high-temperature superconductivity in cuprates is largely related to the electron pairing via the JT polaron formation.³ Likewise, the origin of colossal magnetoresistance in manganites involves the JT distortion-induced lattice-polaronic effects.⁴

Recently, the significance of JT effect has been increasingly noted by researchers in the emerging field of hybrid organic–inorganic perovskites (HOIPs).^{5–10} Compared with compact conventional ABO_3 perovskites, the presence of organic components in HOIPs enables the JT distortion to influence the perovskite structure and corresponding physical properties via hydrogen bonding and other dispersion forces.^{11–13} For example, in $[\text{Gua}][\text{Cu}(\text{HCOO})_3]$ ($\text{Gua} = \text{C}(\text{NH}_2)_3^+$), the coupling of the JT effect and the A-site organic Gua cation via hydrogen bonding induces the occurrence of a new type of

hybrid improper ferroelectricity which is not possible in conventional perovskites.⁵

More interestingly, further theoretical studies about another JT active analogue, $[\text{Gua}][\text{Cr}(\text{HCOO})_3]$, reveal the hybridization of the JT distortion of Cr^{2+} , and the rotational modes of the Gua cation can also induce such improper ferroelectric ordering.⁸ A very recent experimental work echoes the aforementioned significance of the JT effect in creating new functionalities by showing the facile control from an orbital order–disorder to a multipolar reorientation transition through simply varying the metal composition of $[\text{Gua}][\text{Cu}_x\text{Cd}_{1-x}(\text{HCOO})_3]$.¹⁰ Motivated by these unprecedented discoveries, exploiting the JT effect in HOIPs is particularly meaningful and could provide new avenues for creating novel functionalities that traditional JT active perovskites cannot endow.¹⁴

Here we study the JT effect on the framework rigidity and thermal expansion of $[\text{Gua}][\text{Zn}(\text{HCOO})_3]$ (1-Zn) by comparison with the JT active analogue $[\text{Gua}][\text{Cu}(\text{HCOO})_3]$ (2-Cu). Both 1-Zn and 2-Cu crystallize in the orthorhombic system with comparable lattice parameters ($Pnna$, $a = 8.3493(3)$ Å, $b = 8.9089(4)$ Å, and $c = 11.7276(5)$ Å for 1-Zn; $Pna2_1$, $a = 8.5212(3)$ Å, $b = 9.0321(3)$ Å, and $c = 11.3497(4)$ Å for 2-

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70 Cu).¹⁵ In their perovskite-like structures, the A-, B-, and X-sites
 71 are Gua, Cu²⁺/Zn²⁺, and HCOO⁻, respectively (Figure 1a,b).

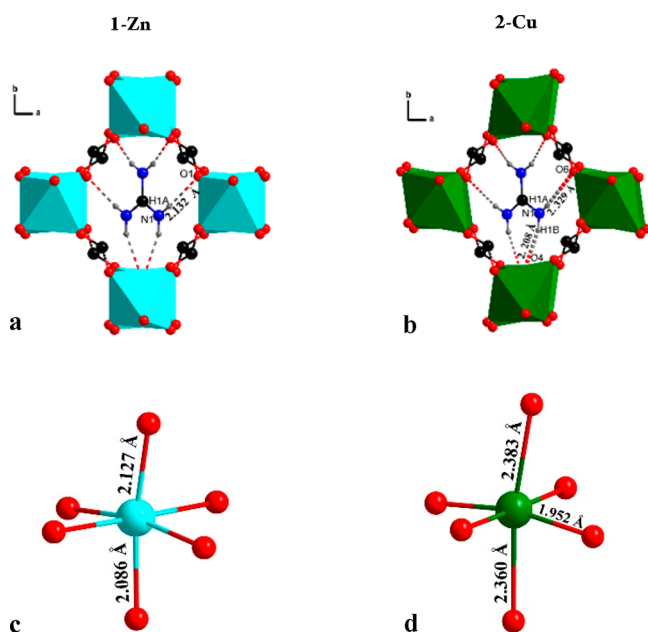


Figure 1. Framework structures of [Gua][Zn(HCOO)₃] (1-Zn) (a) and [Gua][Cu(HCOO)₃] (2-Cu) (b); the coordination environments of Zn²⁺ and Cu²⁺ ions in 1-Zn (c) and 2-Cu (d). Color scheme: Zn²⁺, turquoise; Cu²⁺, green; N, blue; O, red; C, black; H, gray. The N–H...O bonds are presented as dashed lines, and the two thicker dashed lines in panel b highlight the elongated H...O bonds induced by the JT effect in 2-Cu.

72 In addition, each [C(NH₂)₃⁺] cation forms six N–H...O
 73 hydrogen bonds with the pseudocubic framework unit in both
 74 compounds. Though the atomic radii of Zn²⁺ and Cu²⁺ are
 75 almost identical (0.74 Å vs 0.73 Å), their coordination bond
 76 distances are significantly different. In 1-Zn, the ZnO₆
 77 octahedra exhibit a trivially distorted coordination geometry
 78 with Zn–O bond lengths ranging from 2.086 to 2.127 Å.
 79 However, two Cu–O bonds are significantly elongated to 2.360
 80 and 2.383 Å, and the other four are compressed to 1.852–2.000
 81 Å in the CuO₆ octahedra of 2-Cu (Figure 1c,d). Although the
 82 CuO₆ octahedron deforms considerably, the magnitudes of O–
 83 Cu–O angles (82.26–105.87° and 168.34–179.25°) are
 84 comparable to the corresponding O–Zn–O angles (82.27–
 85 105.53° and 167.2–178.85°). Interestingly, the adjacent JT axes
 86 of CuO₆ octahedra within the *ab*-plane are arranged
 87 alternatively orthogonal along [110] and $\bar{1}\bar{1}0$, leading to an
 88 anisotropic packing fashion compared with that in 1-Zn.

89 We first examine the JT effect on elastic modulus (*E*) and
 90 hardness (*H*) properties. Nanoindentation measurements were
 91 performed on selected 1-Zn and 2-Cu single crystals using a
 92 three-sided pyramidal Berkovich tip in the quasi-static
 93 mode,^{16–19} where the indenter was along the orientations of
 94 the principal axes [normal to (110), (110), and $\bar{1}\bar{1}0$], face
 95 diagonals [normal to (111) and $\bar{1}\bar{1}1$], and body diagonal
 96 [normal to (011)] of the pseudocubic perovskite unit cell
 97 (Figures S1 and S2), respectively. Representative load–
 98 indentation depth (*P*–*h*) curves obtained on relevant crystal
 99 faces of both HOIPs are displayed in Figure 2a (full data are
 100 shown in Figures S3 and S4). Clearly, faces of 2-Cu crystals
 101 were indented to much greater depths compared to those of 1-

Zn crystals at the same load, indicating its less framework
 rigidity.^{20,21} The average values of the *E* and *H* normal to
 relevant crystal faces of 1-Zn and 2-Cu are shown in Figure 2b,c
 and Table S1.²² Strikingly, the *E* values of 1-Zn are up to
 ~38.0%, 52.0%, and 49.0% greater than those of 2-Cu along the
 axial, face-diagonal, and body-diagonal directions, respectively.
 The *H* values show a similar trend, though the discrepancies are
 reduced to ~25.0%, 13.0%, and 21.0%, respectively.

To understand the origin of the marked difference in *E* and
H between these two HOIPs, we examine their underlying
molecular structures. As the O–Zn–O and O–Cu–O angles
show only less than 1.0% difference, the bond angles do not
lead to any significant influences in framework robustness.¹⁵
In this regard, the substantial difference in mechanical strengths
between 1-Zn and 2-Cu primarily arises from the 10.0%
elongation of Cu–O bond lengths due to the strong JT
distortions. As expected, the stretched Cu–O bonds can be
more easily deformed under indentation stress compared with
the nondistorted Zn–O bonds; thus, 2-Cu is significantly more
compliant than 1-Zn. Interestingly, the least difference in *E*
between 1-Zn and 2-Cu occurs from the axial direction, while
their face- and body-diagonal directions show larger modulus
differences. As seen in Figures S1 and S2, half and all JT axes in
the pseudo cubic unit cell of 2-Cu are deformed when being
indented axially and diagonally, respectively. The former
indentation situation involves less compliant CuO₆ octahedra
than the later, hence resulting in lower rigidity contrasts along
axial orientations than diagonal directions. In terms of hardness
properties, the lower resistance of 2-Cu toward plastic
deformation also mainly arises from the drastic elongation of
the Cu–O bonds due to the JT distortion. The vulnerable Cu–
O bonds are more sensitive to external stress, which could
generate more ruptures and facilitate the formation of more
dislocations and slippages, hence giving rise to much lower *H*
values compared with the zinc counterpart.

Moreover, we investigate the thermally induced framework
flexibility of 1-Zn and 2-Cu in the range of 120–300 K via
temperature-dependent single-crystal X-ray diffraction
(SCXRD). As shown in Table S2, no phase transitions are
observed in both HOIPs in the measured temperature range.
Upon heating, both 1-Zn and 2-Cu expand linearly along the
a and *c* axes with thermal expansion coefficients $\alpha_{a(1-Zn)} = 39.8(3)$
and $\alpha_{c(1-Zn)} = 26.6(5)$ MK⁻¹, and $\alpha_{a(2-Cu)} = 51.8(5)$ and
 $\alpha_{c(2-Cu)} = 25.7(5)$ MK⁻¹, respectively (Figures S5).^{24–26} Strikingly, 1-Zn
exhibits negative thermal expansion (NTE) along the *b*-axis
with $\alpha_{b(1-Zn)} = -5.2(5)$ MK⁻¹, while 2-Cu shows positive
thermal expansion (PTE) along corresponding direction
 $\alpha_{b(2-Cu)} = 3.2(7)$ MK⁻¹ (Figure 3a). Such an interesting
positive-to-negative switch is primarily attributed to the distinct
hydrogen-bonding modes in these two HOIPs. To elucidate the
NTE mechanism in 1-Zn, we decompose the six hydrogen
bonds within a pseudocubic unit cell along three orthogonal
axes. As seen in Table S3, the total projections of hydrogen-
bonding (N–H...O distance) along the *b*-axis is ~50% larger
than that along *a*,²⁷ which consequently leads to significantly
higher constraints of the pseudocubic unit cell along *b*- than *a*-
axis upon thermal perturbation. In this regard, the *a*-axis
expands so rapidly that the *b*-axis has to shrink upon heating as
illustrated using the “hinge-strut” model in Figure 3b.²⁸
However, the situation in 2-Cu is different because of the
lattice distortion induced by the JT effect. Though the total
projections of hydrogen-bonding along *a*- and *b*-axis in 2-Cu
are reminiscent of those in 1-Zn, the hydrogen-bonding angle

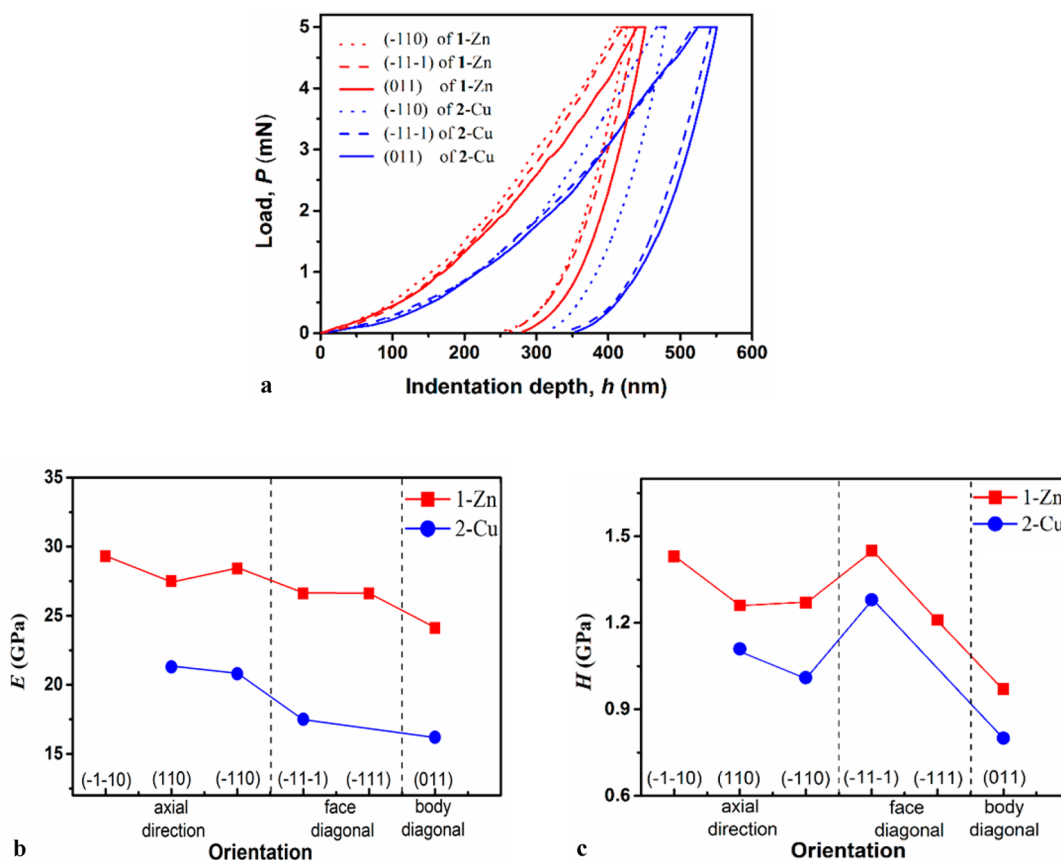


Figure 2. (a) Representative load–indentation depth (P – h) curves, obtained normal to the axial, face-diagonal, and body-diagonal direction oriented facets of 1-Zn and 2-Cu crystals; extracted experimental data of (b) E and (c) H . The error bars are smaller than experimental data points (the lines drawn between data points give a guide to the eye).

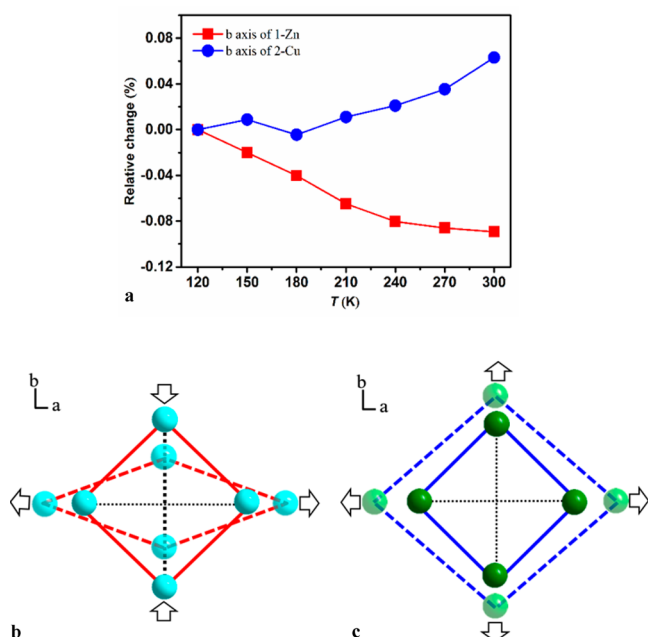


Figure 3. Thermal expansion behavior of frameworks 1-Zn and 2-Cu. (a) Relative changes of b -axis lengths of 1-Zn and 2-Cu as a function of temperature (T); (b, c) “hinge-strut” models of 1-Zn and 2-Cu at low (solid lines) and high temperature (dashed lines), where the black dotted lines represent the summed hydrogen-bonding along the a - and b -axis and the thickness of the lines indicates their strengths.

changes dramatically. As seen in Tables S4, the bond angles of $N1-H1A\cdots O6$ and $N1-H1B\cdots O4$ in 2-Cu are $\sim 9^\circ$ and $\sim 2^\circ$ larger than the corresponding $N1-H1A\cdots O1$ angle in 1-Zn, which lead to ~ 0.20 and ~ 0.08 Å longer $H1A\cdots O6$ and $H1B\cdots O4$ bond lengths. These stretched H-bonds significantly weaken the linking strengths between the Gua and framework along the b -axis in 2-Cu, thus giving rise to large enough thermal expansivity which cannot be compensated by the a -axis expansion upon heating. Such a cooperative process, coupled with octahedral tilting, lead to an opposite “hinge-strut” motion compared with the scenario 1-Zn; hence, PTE occurs along the b -axis in 2-Cu. Additional structural data are detailed in Figures S6 and S7 and Table S5.

As the hydrogen-bonding constraints in 2-Cu are weaker than those in 1-Zn, its framework vibration is expected to be larger than that of 1-Zn.²² This is confirmed by the equivalent isotropic atomic displacement parameters (U_{iso}) of the B-site metal ions extracted from temperature-dependent SCXRD, where the U_{iso} of Cu atoms are $\sim 50\%$ larger than those of Zn atoms in the whole measured temperature range (Figure 4), indicating the average positions of Cu atoms in 2-Cu are less localized upon heating.

We also performed high-pressure powder X-ray diffraction measurements to compare the hydrostatic behavior between 1-Zn and 2-Cu (Figures S8–S10 and Table S6). Our results reveal the 1-Zn and 2-Cu exhibit pressure-induced phase transitions at about 1.82–2.87 and 0.66–0.82 GPa, respectively, demonstrating 2-Cu is less robust than 1-Zn under hydrostatic conditions (Figure S8). The unit cell volume (V) versus 193

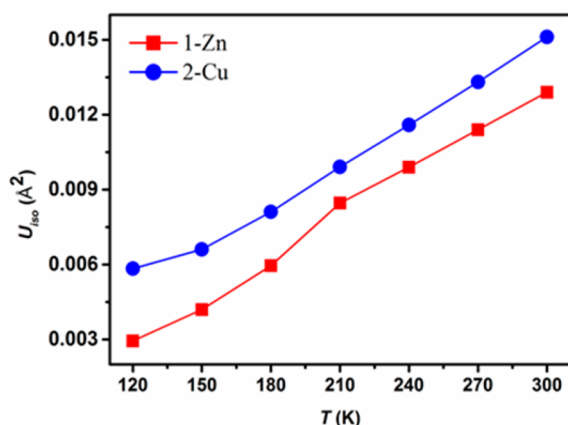


Figure 4. Equivalent isotropic atomic displacement parameters (U_{iso}) for zinc atoms in framework 1-Zn and copper atoms in 2-Cu as a function of temperature (T).

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194 pressure (P) data prior to phase transitions (0–1.82 GPa for 1-
195 Zn, 0–0.66 GPa for 2-Cu) were fit with the second-order
196 Birch–Murnaghan equations of state using the PASCAL
197 software,²⁴ and the isothermal bulk moduli (B) of 2-Cu is
198 25.6(29) GPa, which is smaller than the 30.3(28) GPa of 1-Zn,
199 further indicating the higher framework flexibility of 2-Cu over
200 1-Zn.

201 In summary, we have investigated the JT effect on the
202 framework flexibility of two analogous hybrid perovskites 1-Zn
203 and 2-Cu using combined nanoindentation and diffraction
204 techniques. Our results show that these two compounds exhibit
205 significantly different elastic moduli, hardnesses, thermal
206 expansion, and high-pressure behavior which are primarily
207 caused by their distinct M–O ($\text{M} = \text{Cu}, \text{Zn}$) bond lengths
208 induced by the strong JT distortion. Our present work
209 demonstrates the prominence of JT effect on physical
210 properties of HOIPs and also provides the principles of
211 controlling materials' properties using another type of degree of
212 freedom, namely orbital order.¹⁰

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

215 The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the
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217 CIF files (ZIP)

218 Experimental details and supplementary figures, graphs,
219 and tables (PDF)

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Notes

229 The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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