

## Full Length Article

Elastic, electronic and optical properties of the two-dimensional PtX<sub>2</sub> (X = S, Se, and Te) monolayer

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## ABSTRACT

Through hybrid functional calculations, we study the elastic, electronic and optical properties of the two-dimensional (2D) PtX<sub>2</sub> (X = S, Se and Te) monolayer. The lattice constants increases and the band gap values decrease monotonously with increasing atomic number of chalcogenide elements. The tensile strain can reduce the band gaps and affect optical properties of 2D PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayers. Also, the indirect band structures are kept under considered strain range. Our results show that about −3% of compressive strain can induce semiconductor-to-metal transition. Moreover, the in-plane stiffness are 81 N/m for PtS<sub>2</sub>, 64 N/m for PtSe<sub>2</sub>, and 40 N/m for PtTe<sub>2</sub>, which are smaller than that of 2D MoX<sub>2</sub> monolayers.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, two-dimensional (2D) layered transition-metal dichalcogenides (TMDs) have been attracting significant attention due to their intriguing physical properties and potential applications in electronics and optoelectronics [1–6]. Unlike graphene, most of TMDs monolayers have sizable band gaps in range of 1–3 eV [1,7–9], which paves the way to consider these materials for new-generation field nano-devices. For example, MoS<sub>2</sub> monolayer possesses a direct band gap of ~1.8 eV [10] and the mobility of about 200–500 cm<sup>2</sup>/V/s, which makes it well suited for applications in transistors [2,11], and photo-detectors [2].

More recently, Wang et al. reported a newly synthesized PtSe<sub>2</sub> monolayer through the direct deposition of Se atoms on a Pt substrate [12], which has renewed interest in the 2D Pt-based chalcogenides [13,14]. It was shown by the photo-degradation experiment that PtSe<sub>2</sub> monolayer can serve as a visible light-driven photocatalyst. The Raman spectroscopy measurement on PtSe<sub>2</sub> found that the Raman active modes showed a clear intensity and position dependence with film thickness [15]. Li et al. found that the indirect band gaps of PtSe<sub>2</sub> monolayer can be tuned over a wide range via strain engineering [16]. Also, the strong electronic hybridization of interlayer S atoms make the few-layered PtS<sub>2</sub>

to be a promising electronic material with tunable bandgap and relatively high mobility [17]. Manchanda et al predicted that hydrogenation may be an effective tool to introduce ferromagnetism in the 2D PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer [18]. In addition, PtX<sub>2</sub> have been reported to be a good candidate for excellent thermoelectric application due to the very high Seebeck coefficients and strain can effectively tuned the thermoelectric properties [19,20]. Notably, the electron mobility of PtSe<sub>2</sub> and PtS<sub>2</sub> monolayer are even larger than that of black phosphorus (1000 cm<sup>2</sup>V<sup>−1</sup> s<sup>−1</sup>) [21]. These properties make PtX<sub>2</sub> a potential candidate for novel applications in nanoelectronics, photocatalyst and optoelectronics.

However, further developments and applications of PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer are restricted by the absence of a systematic research work on PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer. The studies of some properties of PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer, such as in-plane stiffness, are still not clear. In this work, through first-principles calculations, we systematically investigate the elastic, electronic and optical properties of the 2D PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer.

## 2. Computational methods

All the calculations performed in this work are based on density functional theory method as implemented in the Vienna ab initio simulation package (VASP). The exchange–correlation functional is treated by the generalized gradient approximation (GGA) with the Perdew–Burke–Ernzerhofer (PBE) [22]. Because GGA underestimated the band gap [23], the hybrid functional Heyd–Scuseria–Ernzerhof (HSE06) [24,25] is also used for band structure

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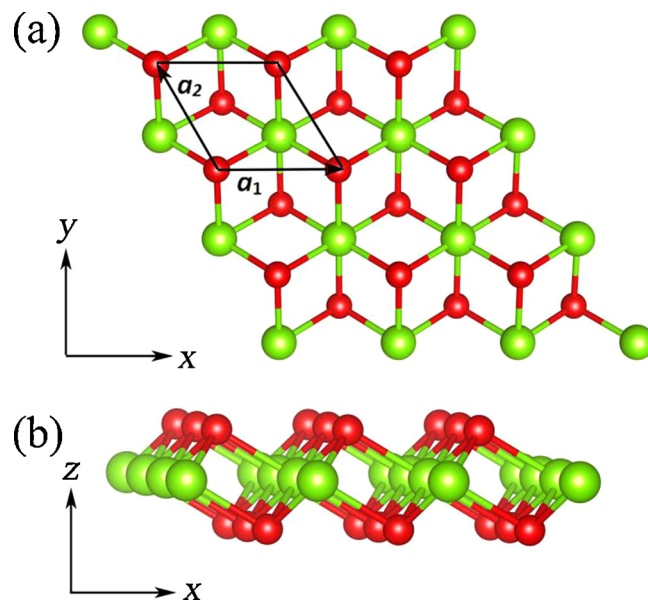
E-mail address: [xiacongxin@htu.edu.cn](mailto:xiacongxin@htu.edu.cn) (C. Xia).

calculations. Following the Monkhorst-Pack scheme [26], the Brillouin zone is sampled by a  $15 \times 15 \times 1$  k-point mesh for the PBE and the  $7 \times 7 \times 1$  k-point for the HSE06 calculations. Energy cutoff for plane-wave expansion is set to 500 eV. Meanwhile, to avoid any artificial interlayer interaction, a larger vacuum layer of 18 Å along z direction can be used for the 2D  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer. All the structures are fully relaxed using the conjugated gradient method until the Hellmann-Feynman force on each atom was below 0.01 eV/Å.

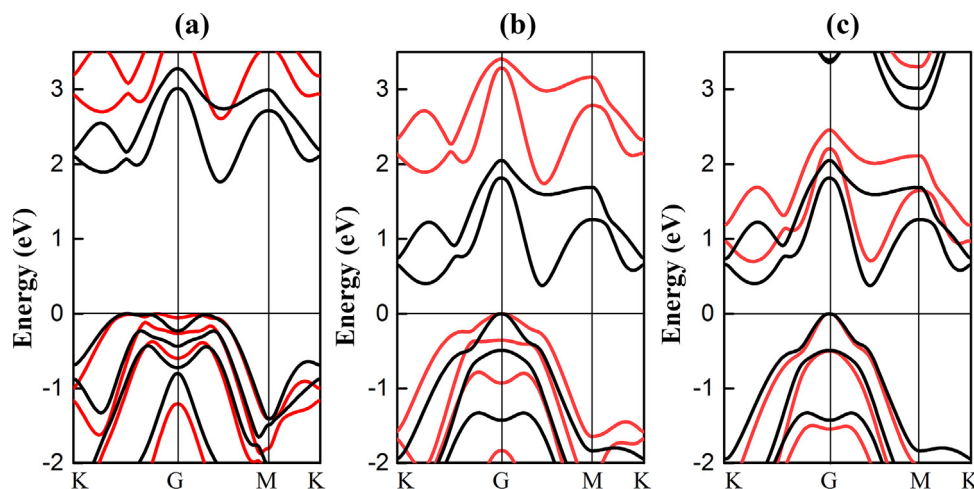
### 3. Numerical results and discussions

#### 3.1. Structural parameters and electronic structures of $\text{PtX}_2$ monolayer

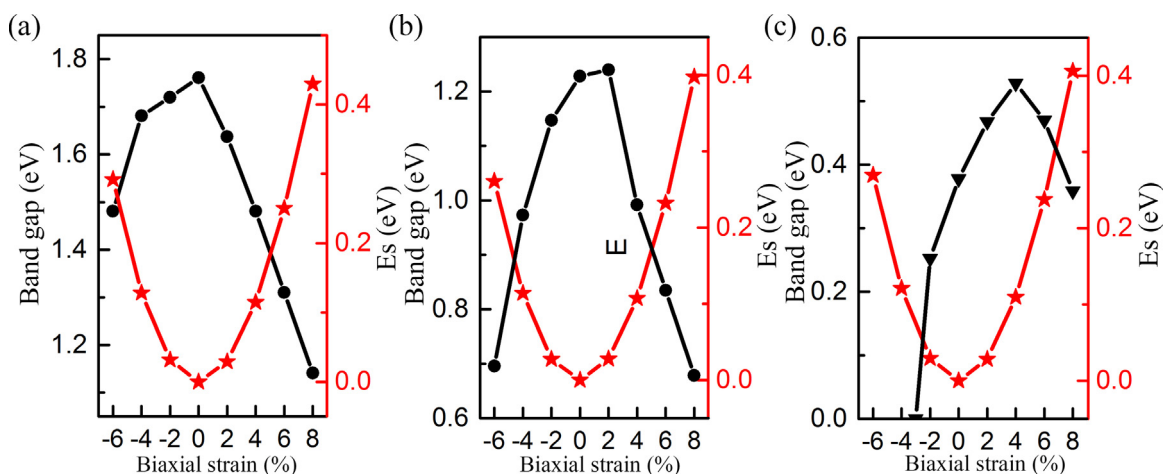
We start briefly our calculations on the structural parameters and electronic structures of the  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer structures with two X atoms and one Pt atom per unit cell, where it can be cleaved from the (0001) surface of the bulk  $\text{PtX}_2$ , as shown in Fig. 1. The optimized lattice constants can be seen in Table 1, which are very close to previous experiment and theory values [12,14,27]. We can see that the calculated values of Pt–X bond length are found in good agreement with other calculation results [14]. The values increase as X changes from S to Te due to the increasing atom size of S, Se, Te.



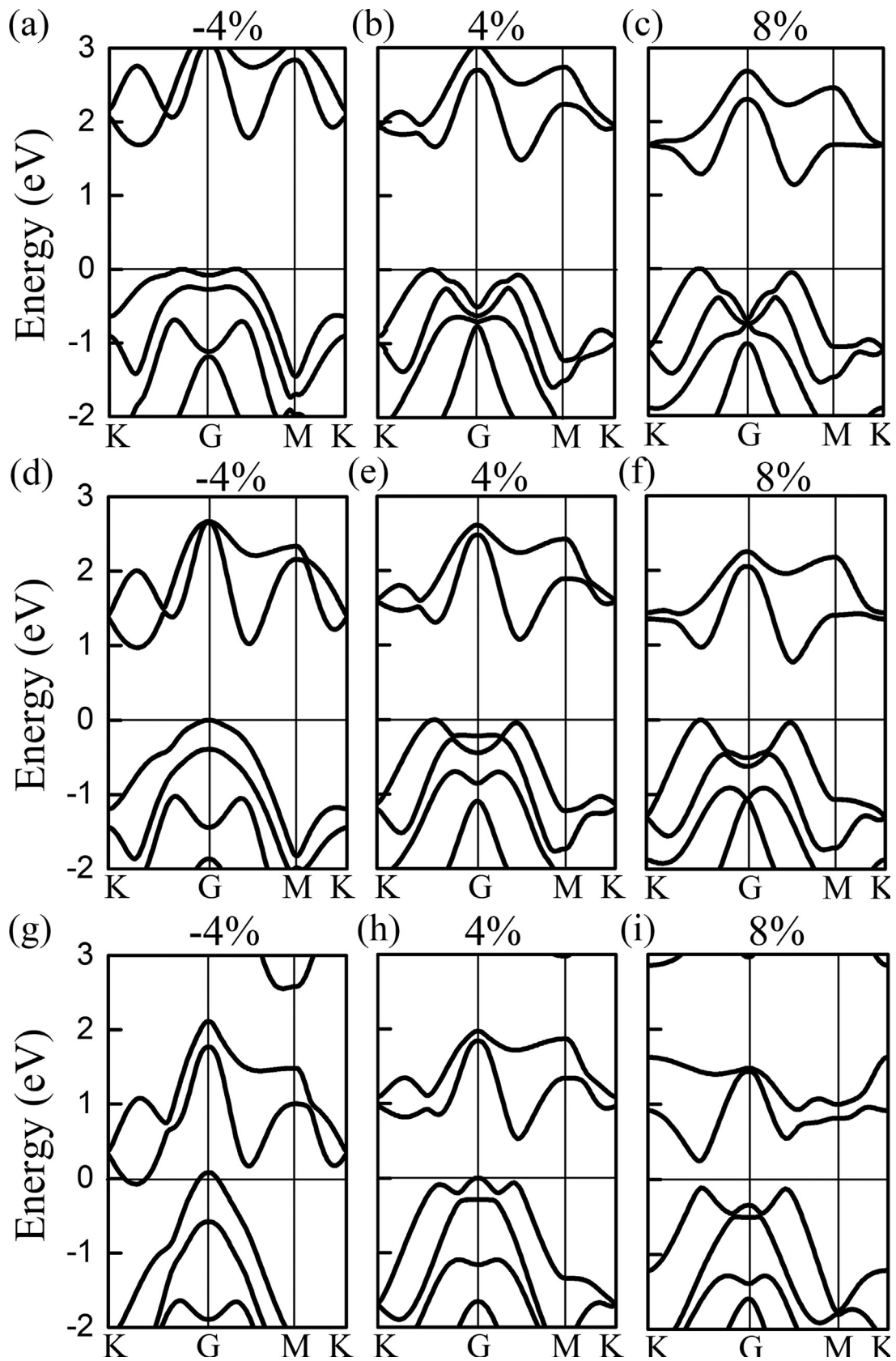
**Fig. 1.** (a) Top view and (b) side view of 2D  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer. The green and red balls denote Pt and chalcogenide atoms, respectively. The rhombic regions present the unit cells.



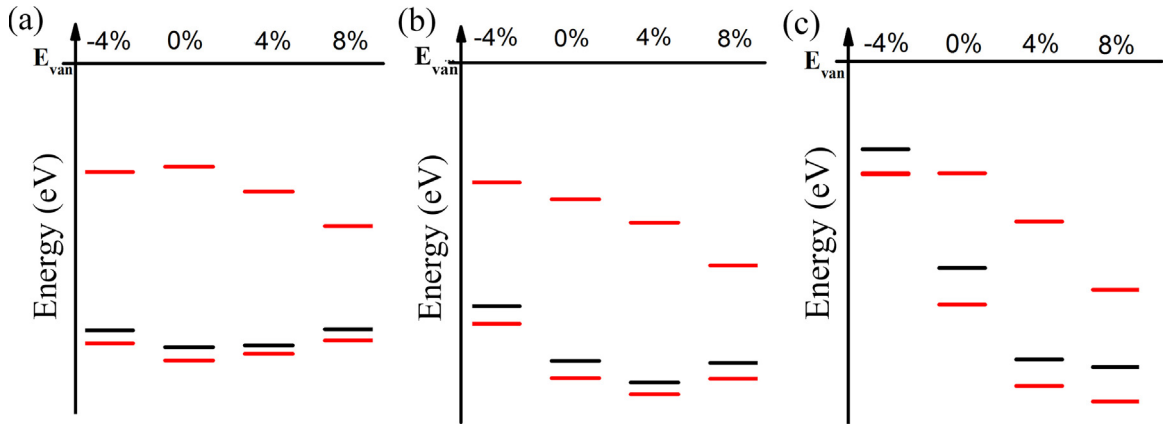
**Fig. 2.** Calculated band structures of (a)  $\text{PtS}_2$  monolayer, (b)  $\text{PtSe}_2$  monolayer, and (c)  $\text{PtTe}_2$  monolayer. The fermi level is set at the VBM. Red and black lines are GGA-PBE + SOC and HSE06 + SOC calculated results.



**Fig. 3.** The evolution of strain energy and band gap of (a)  $\text{PtS}_2$ , (b)  $\text{PtSe}_2$  and (c)  $\text{PtTe}_2$  monolayers under biaxial strain using GGA-PBE + SOC.



**Fig. 4.** Electronic band structure of (a)  $\text{PtS}_2$ , (b)  $\text{PtSe}_2$ , and (c)  $\text{PtTe}_2$  monolayers corresponding to the applied biaxial strain -4%, 4% and 8%, respectively.



**Fig. 5.** The band alignment of (a)  $\text{PtS}_2$  monolayer, (b)  $\text{PtSe}_2$  monolayer, and (c)  $\text{PtTe}_2$  monolayer with different strains. The horizontal red lines represent conduction band minimum (CBM) and the valence band maximum (VBM) of  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer. The black crossed lines represent the Fermi level, and the  $E_{\text{vac}}$  stands for the vacuum level. All values were aligned with respect to the vacuum level.

**Table 1**

The structural parameters and elastic parameters of single-layer  $\text{PtX}_2$  on GGA-PBE level.  $a$  and  $d$  are the distance between Pt atom and X ( $X = \text{S, Se, Te}$ ) atom, respectively.  $t_1$  and  $t_3$  are the fitting parameters,  $\nu$  and  $C$  are the Poisson's ratio and in-plane stiffness, respectively.

System	$a$ (Å)	$d$ (Å)	$t_1$	$t_3$	$\nu$	$C$ (N/m)
$\text{PtS}_2$	3.58	2.40	60.2	32.1	0.27	80.59
$\text{PtSe}_2$	3.75	2.53	52.2	26.3	0.25	64.35
$\text{PtTe}_2$	4.02	2.76	46.8	32.9	0.35	40.15

In order to understand the electronic characteristics of  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer, in Fig. 2, we also present the band structures by using GGA-PBE + SOC and HSE06 + SOC calculations. It can be seen clearly from Fig. 2 that for the three  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayers, the conduction band minimum (CBM) and valence band maximum (VBM) lie in different high-symmetrical  $k$ -points, which indicates that all the  $\text{PtS}_2$ ,  $\text{PtSe}_2$  and  $\text{PtTe}_2$  monolayer materials are semiconductors with indirect band gaps of 1.76 (2.61), 1.23 (1.73) and 0.38 (0.7) eV for GGA-PBE + SOC (HSE06 + SOC), respectively. Also, Fig. 2 shows that the general features of the band structures calculated by GGA-PBE + SOC and HSE06 + SOC are similar, except that the band gap calculated by HSE06 + SOC is larger than that by PBE + SOC method. This is because PBE usually underestimates the band gap values of semiconductor materials. Our results calculated by PBE and HSE06 are in great agreement with previous results [27,28].

### 3.2. Mechanical properties of $\text{PtX}_2$ monolayer

In addition, according to previous studies on mechanic properties of 2D semiconducting material, the related elastic properties can be represented by two parameters: in-plane stiffness  $C$  and Poisson's ratio  $\nu$ . In order to calculate the elastic constants, the  $\text{PtX}_2$  rectangular  $1 \times 2$  supercell is considered. The in-plane stiffness is calculated as  $C = (1/S_0)(\partial^2 E / \partial \epsilon^2)$ , where  $S_0$  is the equilibrium area of the supercell,  $E$  is the total energy of the strained system and  $\epsilon$  is for the uniaxial strain. Moreover, the Poisson's ratio is defined as  $\nu = -\epsilon_{\text{trans}} / \epsilon_{\text{axial}}$ , where  $\epsilon_{\text{trans}}$  and  $\epsilon_{\text{axial}}$  are the transverse and axial strains, respectively. In our calculations, the two lattice constants  $\epsilon_a$  and  $\epsilon_b$  change from  $-2\%$  to  $2\%$  in an increment of  $1\%$ . We obtain 25 data points, and at each point the structure is fully re-optimized and the corresponding total energy is calculated. The calculated total energy can be written as  $E_s = t_1 \epsilon_y^2 + t_2 \epsilon_x^2 + t_3 \epsilon_y \epsilon_x$ , in which  $E_s$  is the total strain energy per unit cell, defined as  $E_s = E_{\text{tot}} - E_0$ , where  $E_{\text{tot}}$  is the total energy of the strained unit cell, and  $E_0$  is the total energy under equilibrium state.  $\epsilon_a$  and  $\epsilon_b$  are the strains along the  $x$  and  $y$  directions, respectively, and

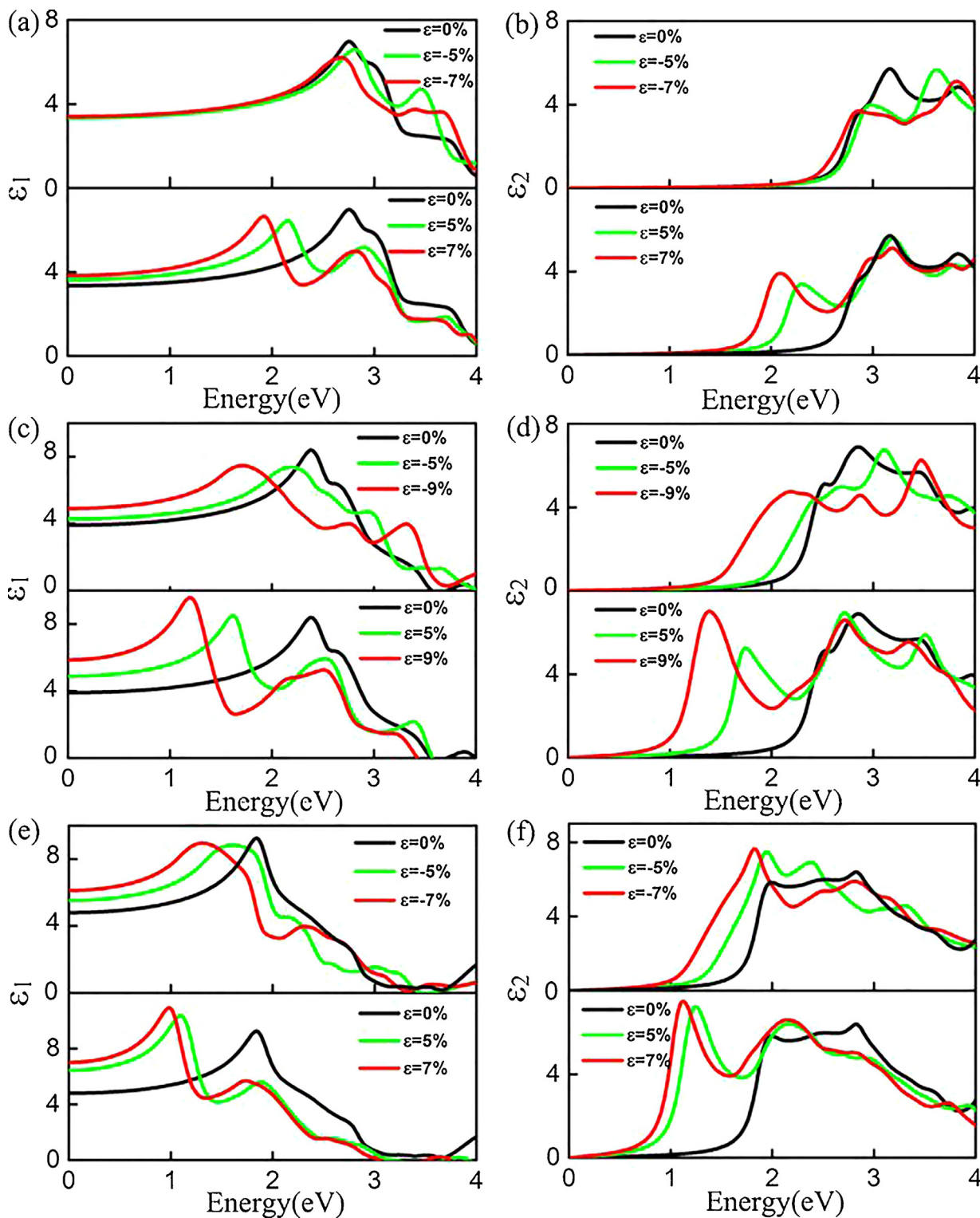
$t_1$ – $t_3$  are related coefficients. It is found that  $t_1$  is almost equal to  $t_2$  due to isotropy in the honeycomb symmetry [29]. The in-plane stiffness and Poisson's ratio finally can be calculated using  $C = (1/S_0)(2t_1 - t_3^2/2t_1)$  and  $\nu = t_3/2t_1$ . The related results are list in Table 1. It can be seen from Table 1 that the fitting parameters and as well as elastic constant  $C$  and  $\nu$ . The in-plane stiffness  $C$  of  $\text{PtS}_2$ ,  $\text{PtSe}_2$  and  $\text{PtTe}_2$  are 80.59, 64.35 and 40.15 N/m, respectively, which are relatively smaller than that of  $\text{MoS}_2$  [30] and graphene [31], indicating that the former is less stiffer than the latter. Moreover, their Poisson's ratios are 0.27, 0.25 and 0.35, respectively. In order to testify the accuracy of our calculation, we also calculate values of  $C$  and  $\nu$  by using the present method for  $\text{ZrS}_2$  monolayer are 77 N/m and 0.20, which are in good accord with previous theoretical results [32]. In addition, it is clear that the in-plane stiffness degrades with increasing atomic number of chalcogenide atoms. As we know, the electronegativity is the scale of the ability of an atom to attract electrons in a compound. The greater the electronegativity of the element, the stronger the ability of its atoms to attract electrons in the compound. The electronegativity decreases as we go down the periodic table, from S to Te, which results in a weaker interaction between the Pt and X atoms. Thus, the in-plane stiffness of  $\text{PtX}_2$  decreases when X goes from S to Te. The trend of the in-plane stiffness is similar as that of 2D  $\text{GaX}$  ( $X = \text{S, Se, Te}$ ) monolayer from S to Te [33].

### 3.3. Tunable band gap under uniform strain

It is well known that strain technology is widely employed in modulating the electronic properties of semiconductors. Here, we systematically investigate electronic properties of the  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer considering strain effects. Numerical results in Fig. 3 show that whether tensile or compressive strain, the strain energy increases monotonically with the increases of strain within the loaded range, demonstrating the deformation of  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer is elastic. In addition, the harmonic approximation is well preserved under the strain  $-0.02 \leq \epsilon_{xy} \leq 0.02$ , and beyond this value, the  $E_s$ – $\epsilon$  curve becomes inharmonic because the contributions of higher order terms are not negligible.

The variation of the band gaps of  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer calculated by GGA-PBE + SOC as a function of strain is summarized in Fig. 3. In the case of tensile strain, the gap value first increases, and then decreases linearly with increasing of tensile strain. While for compressive strain, the bandgap monotonically decreases. In contrast, the variation of  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer under compress strain does not exhibit linear feature, mainly due to the CBM transfers among several high symmetry, which can be seen in Fig. 4. Most interestingly, the band





**Fig. 6.** The real part  $\epsilon_1$  and the image part  $\epsilon_2$  of the dielectric function of the (a,b)  $\text{PtS}_2$  monolayer, (c,d)  $\text{PtSe}_2$  monolayer and (e,f)  $\text{PtTe}_2$  monolayer, corresponding to the applied biaxial strain 5%, 7%, 9% and -5%, -7%, -9%, along the x-y plane.

gap of  $\text{PtTe}_2$  monolayer reduced to zero after the compress strain reached 3%, as shown in Fig. 3, which is in good agreement with the works of Guo et al [34], indicating our calculation is correct. All the results testify that the band gap of the  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer can be modified over a wide range, which opens up new opportunities for their applications in nanoelectronic devices.

In order to understand the mechanism of the band gap change under the influences of applied strain, in Fig. 4, we calculate the band structures of  $\text{PtX}_2$  with applied different strains by using the PBE + SOC. For compressive strain from 0%–8%, the VBM located at  $\Gamma$  has not been changed. While the CBM gradually moves from the middle between  $\Gamma$  and M to the middle between G and K. However, for tensile strain, the VBM of  $\text{PtX}_2$  monolayer is found to move

from  $\Gamma$  to X with slow upward shift, while the CBM at the middle between  $\Gamma$  and M remain unchanged with biaxial tensile strain. However, for the PtTe<sub>2</sub> monolayer in the case of 8% tensile strain, Fig. 4 shows that it is a direct band gap semiconductor because the CBM and VBM lie at the middle between K and  $\Gamma$  points. Moreover, the spin-orbit splitting at  $\Gamma$  point of PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer monotonically decreases with the increasing strain from –6% to 8%. To further analyze the electronic characteristics of PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer with 4%, 8% and –4% strain, the band alignments are also calculated, as shown in Fig. 5. We can find that for the PtS<sub>2</sub> monolayer, tensile and compressive strains can result in lowering the CBM while shifting upward the VBM. For PtSe<sub>2</sub> monolayer, increasing tensile strain can induce the VBM first decreases and then increases, and the CBM increases; while compressive strain can increase the levels of CBM and VBM. On the other hand, for PtTe<sub>2</sub> monolayer, the levels of VBM and VBM decrease with increasing strain. Thus, it can be seen that the electronic structures of PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer show similar behavior mainly due to the same atomic configuration and spatial symmetry group.

### 3.4. Optical properties

The frequency-dependent dielectric function  $\varepsilon(\omega)$  is a complex quantity dealing with the most important aspect of optical properties. The  $\varepsilon(\omega)$  can be expressed as  $\varepsilon(\omega) = \varepsilon_1(\omega) + i\varepsilon_2(\omega)$ . The imaginary part  $\varepsilon_2(\omega)$  of the dielectric function could be calculated from the momentum matrix elements between the occupied and unoccupied wave functions.

$$\varepsilon_2(\omega) = \frac{4\pi^2 e^2}{m^2 \omega^2} \sum_{nn'} \int |P_{nn'}(k)|^2 \frac{dS_k}{\nabla w_{nn'}(k)} \quad (1)$$

The real part  $\varepsilon_1(\omega)$  of the dielectric function can be derived from the imaginary part  $\varepsilon_2(\omega)$  using the Kramers-Kronig relations.

$$\varepsilon_1(\omega) = 1 + \frac{2}{\pi} p \sum_{nn'} \int \frac{w' \varepsilon_2(w')}{w'^2 - \omega^2} dw' \quad (2)$$

In Fig. 6, we present the imaginary part  $\varepsilon_2(\omega)$  dispersion of PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer along in-plane light polarization direction, considering different strain values. The results show that the threshold energy values decrease with increasing strain, which is due to the results of the decrease of the band gap of PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer. Moreover, the threshold energy decreases obviously with the increase of tensile strain at higher magnitude of strain. However, when the PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer is applied by the compression strain, the threshold energy decreases in a smaller magnitude than tensile strain. The trends are exactly consistent with the band gap variation in Fig. 2. On the application of all the studied strain, the structure peak is found to be red shifted towards lower energy as shown in Fig. 6. Thus, strain can affect obviously the optical transitions and optical properties of 2D PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer.

In order to understand clearly the real part  $\varepsilon_1(\omega)$  of the dielectric function of PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer, Fig. 6 presents the real parts  $\varepsilon_1(\omega)$  as a function of photon energy in the PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer, considering different strain values. It is clear from Fig. 6(a, c, e) that the real parts  $\varepsilon_1(\omega)$  of dielectric function are zero at certain photon energy, and then decreases to negative value with increasing photon energy. In addition, Fig. 6 also shows that the values of the static dielectric constants  $\varepsilon_1(0)$  are increased when strain is increased in the PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer. The trends are exactly opposite to the change of band gap in Fig. 2. It can be understood within the framework of Penn model expression for semiconductors,  $\varepsilon_1(0) \approx 1 + (\hbar w_p / E_g)^2$ , in which static dielectric constant is inversely proportional to the band gap.

## 4. Conclusions

In summary, through first-principles calculations, we have studied the elastic, electronic and optical properties of the PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer. The studies find that the 2D PtS<sub>2</sub>, PtSe<sub>2</sub> and PtTe<sub>2</sub> monolayers show similar elastic, electronic and optical properties because they share the same atomic configuration and spatial symmetry group. The in-plane stiffness degrades gradually with increasing atomic number of chalcogenide atoms, which are less stiffer than MoS<sub>2</sub>. Upon applying the tensile strain, the gap value decreases approximately linearly. While the variation of band gaps under compressive strain does not exhibit linear feature. The structure peak of strained PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer is found to be red shifted towards lower energy in the optical absorption edge, which makes it a compelling candidate for optoelectronic devices. Moreover, the ability to modulate the band gap of PtX<sub>2</sub> monolayer over an appreciable range of biaxial strain opens up new opportunities for their applications in nanoelectronic devices.

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