Photoelectron spectroscopy of lithium hydride anion

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We present negative ion photoelectron spectra of the smallest stable molecular negative ion, the lithium hydride anion. Photoelectron spectra, recorded using 2.540 eV photons, are reported for the LiH(D) (X\(^2\Sigma^+\)) + e\(^-\) \rightarrow LiH(D) (X\(^2\Sigma^+\)) transitions of \(^7\)LiH\(^-\) and \(^7\)LiD\(^-\). Adiabatic electron affinities of 0.342 \(\pm\)0.012 eV and 0.337 \(\pm\)0.012 eV were determined for \(^7\)LiH and \(^7\)LiD, respectively. The experimentally determined electron affinities led to anion dissociation energy \((D_0)\) values of 2.017 \(\pm\)0.021 eV for \(^7\)LiH\(^-\) and 2.034 \(\pm\)0.021 eV for \(^7\)LiD\(^-\) relative to their \(Li^+\) and \(H^-\) asymptotes. Franck-Condon analyses yielded the following molecular parameters for the ground state of \(^7\)LiH\(^-\): \(B_c=6.43 \pm 0.18\) cm\(^{-1}\), \(r_e=1.724 \pm 0.025\) Å, and \(\omega_r=920 \pm 80\) cm\(^{-1}\); and the following parameters for the ground state of \(^7\)LiD\(^-\): \(B_c=3.62 \pm 0.06\) cm\(^{-1}\), \(r_e=1.724 \pm 0.015\) Å, and \(\omega_r=650 \pm 45\) cm\(^{-1}\). In addition, we have observed the alkali hydride anions: \(^7\)LiH\(^-\), \(^7\)LiD\(^-\), Li\(_2\)D\(^-\), NaD\(^-\), and Na\(_2\)D\(^-\). No photodetachment signal was observed for the lithium dihydride anion, \(^7\)LiD\(^2\)-, using 2.540 eV photons.

I. INTRODUCTION

The lithium hydride anion is the smallest, stable molecular negative ion. Interest in this anion stems not only from its fundamental nature, but also from its kinship to other systems in which polar, closed shell molecules interact with electrons. Considerable theoretical attention has been focused on the negative ion states of polar molecules due to the unique types of electron binding available to these systems. In the case of polar ionic molecules, which include the alkali halides and iodides, the nature of electron binding in the anion ground states has been described in terms of a molecular orbital picture. For alkali halide negative ions, theoretical studies by Jordan and Simons, together with photodetachment studies by Lineberger and co-workers have yielded ground state descriptions in which the excess electron is localized on the electropositive alkali atom in a low-lying, nonbonding orbital of the neutral molecule. \textit{Ab initio} calculations on the ground state (\(^2\Sigma^+\)) of LiH\(^-\) have been performed by Simons and Jordan, Jordan, Liu and co-workers, and Rümmers and Meyer. The electron binding in LiH\(^-\) is expected to be similar to that in the alkali halide anions, but with a reduced localization of charge on the alkali atom. To date, the considerable difficulty associated with the generation of LiH\(^-\) has precluded its spectroscopic characterization. Here, we present the photoelectron spectra of \(^7\)LiH\(^-\) and \(^7\)LiD\(^-\) which were recorded using 2.540 eV photons. Adiabatic electron affinities as well as bond dissociation energies, rotational constants, equilibrium bond distances, and vibrational frequencies for the ground states of these negative ions are also reported.

II. EXPERIMENTAL METHOD

Negative ion photoelectron spectroscopy is conducted by crossing a mass-selected beam of negative ions with a fixed-frequency photon beam and energy analyzing the resultant photodetached electrons. Our negative ion photoelectron spectrometer has been described previously. Briefly, negative ions are generated in a high temperature, supersonic expansion ion source. The details of this source and of ion production are discussed below. Anions generated in the source are accelerated, collimated, and transported via a series of ion optical components before being mass-selected using an \(EXB\) Wien velocity filter. The mass-selected ion beam is then focused into a field-free, collision-free interaction region, where it is crossed with the intracavity photon beam of an argon ion laser operated at 488 nm (2.540 eV) and at circulating powers of \(\sim\)100 W. A small solid angle of the resulting photodetached electrons is accepted into the input optics of a magnetically shielded, hemispherical electron energy analyzer, where the electrons are energy analyzed and counted. The resulting photoelectron spectra were calibrated by recording Li\(^+\) spectra before and after each \(^7\)LiH\(^-\) or \(^7\)LiD\(^-\) spectrum and comparing the measured electron binding energies to the established electron affinity of the lithium atom.

III. PRODUCTION OF LITHIUM HYDRIDE ANION

Preceding this study, only two observations of LiH\(^-\) have been reported. Some time ago, Heinicke and co-workers reported observing LiH\(^-\) produced in a Penning ion source. More recently, Middleton reported observing LiH\(^-\) produced in a cesium cation sputter source using a cathode containing lithium hydride powder. Since both of these approaches have been shown to produce an astonishingly wide variety of molecular anions, we placed them both in our queue of prospective ion sources for producing LiH\(^-\) for the present study. Our initial attempts to produce this ion utilized a Penning ion source, similar in design to that used by Heinicke, since we already had considerable experience using this type of source to produce molecular anions. Employing this source and Hein...
Sarkas et al.: Lithium hydride anion

icke's source conditions, we were able to produce substantial currents of both Li− and LiH−, just as he reported. Despite numerous attempts, however, we were unable to produce LiH− via this route.

While the sputter ion source of Middleton is a proven approach for generating 7LiH−, this type of source is known to produce ions with extremely high internal temperatures.35 With this in mind, we placed the sputter ion source approach further down our queue in favor of ion production schemes which were more likely to produce anions with internal temperatures appropriate for spectroscopic studies. Our next several attempts to produce the lithium hydride anion involved an array of hot cathode discharge source configurations followed by a variety of “pickup” ion source schemes in which hydrogen or hydrogen-containing gases (including CH4, NH3, and H2O) were reacted with lithium beams. In none of these cases, however, did we make a definitive observation of LiH−.

The ion source configuration which eventually produced LiH− is based on coexpanding intimately mixed lithium vapor and hydrogen gas in a supersonic jet. A coexpansion scheme had been earlier employed by Dagdigian to produce neutral beams of lithium hydride.36 Our approach for producing the anions was carried out using the same high temperature, supersonic expansion ion source used in our study of Li+.37 The main portion of this source consists of a stainless steel (SS 304) high temperature oven divided into separately heated reservoir and nozzle sections. Both sections are heated by evenly spaced tantalum wire (0.5 mm diameter) heaters insulated using high purity, multihole alumina rods (99.9% Al2O3, McDaniel). High purity lithium metal (99.9% Aldrich) is heated in the reservoir to 1210 K to yield approximately 20 torr of lithium vapor which is coexpanded with 100–200 torr of preheated H2 or D2 (99.9%) into high vacuum through a 0.15 mm diameter nozzle. The nozzle section is maintained at 1300 K in order to avoid clogging. A negatively biased, hot thoriated iridium filament injects low energy electrons directly into the expanding jet in the presence of a predominantly axial magnetic field, thereby generating negative ions. Typical conditions include negative filament bias voltages of 70–110 V along with emission currents of 40–70 mA. The beam is skimmed by a high temperature conical skimmer maintained at 1000 K, and ions are extracted into the spectrometer. Under these conditions, typical currents measured downstream of the ion-photon interaction region (at beam energies of 500 eV) were 1.0–3.0 pA for 7LiH− and 2.0–6.0 pA for 7LiD−. A representative mass spectrum showing 7LiH− is presented in Fig. 1. A mass spectrum showing 7LiD−, which was recorded using a different Wien filter electric field setting, is presented in Fig. 2. Both spectra show peaks corresponding to the lithium monohydride anions while also showing much weaker intensities of the dihydride anions. In this respect, our production scheme differs from those of Heinicke and Middleton, both of whom report substantially higher intensities of the dihydride anions than of the mono-hydride anions. We have also utilized this approach to

![FIG. 1. Mass spectrum of the negative ions generated in our high temperature, supersonic expansion ion source by coexpansion of lithium and hydrogen. This spectrum shows the production of 7LiH− along with a very small amount of 7LiH2.](image1)

![FIG. 2. Mass spectrum of the negative ions generated in our high temperature, supersonic expansion ion source by coexpansion of lithium and deuterium. The molecular anions present in the spectrum are 7LiD−, 7LiD2, Li−, and LiD−.](image2)
electron binding energy is obtained by subtracting the center-of-mass electron kinetic energy from the photon energy. No signal was observed outside the energy window shown in the spectra.

generate currents of 0.1–3.0 pA of other alkali hydride anions, e.g., Li2D- (see Fig. 2), NaD-, NaD2-, NaD3-, and NaD4-.

IV. PHOTOELECTRON SPECTRA AND ANALYSIS

The photoelectron spectra of 7LiH- and 7LiD- are presented in Fig. 3. These spectra were recorded using 2.540 eV photons. The features in both spectra belong to single electronic band systems due to the LiH(D) [X 'X+] +e- + LiH(D) -[X 'X+] photodetachment transitions. In both spectra, the most intense feature corresponds to the vibrational origin (v' = 0, v" = 0) band. The dominant features to the high electron binding energy (EBE) sides of the origin bands in the photoelectron spectra. The rotational correction is made since photodetachment is expected to be dominated by transitions which approximately preserve rotational quantum number.39,40 Also, the most highly populated rotational levels of 7LiH- and 7LiD- correspond to J = 6 and J = 9, respectively, at a temperature of 840 K. The values obtained here for the adiabatic electron affinities of 7LiH and 7LiD are 0.342±0.012 eV and 0.337±0.012 eV, respectively. The error bars are chosen to account for errors in absolute kinetic energy scale calibrations, errors in determining the energy scale compression factors, and errors in the peak fitting procedures.

The adiabatic electron affinities were then used to obtain bond dissociation energies for the anions relative to their Li[7Li-H-(D-)]-[7LiH(D)] asymptotes. Values of D0 for 7LiH- and 7LiD- in their 2Σ+ ground states were calculated from the thermochemical cycle;

\[ D_0[7\text{Li}-\text{H}^-(\text{D}^-)] = D_0[7\text{Li}-\text{H}(\text{D})] + \text{EA}[7\text{LiH}(\text{D})] - \text{EA}[\text{H(D)}] \]

using our measured electron affinities, the literature values for the 7LiH and 7LiD dissociation energies,41,42 and the literature value of the atomic electron affinity of hydrogen.40 The D0 values determined in this manner are 2.017 ±0.021 eV for 7LiH- and 2.034±0.021 eV for 7LiD-.

The modeled spectra of both 7LiH- and 7LiD-, constructed using the energetic and spectroscopic parameters reported above, are presented in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5, respectively, along with the actual photoelectron spectra. The simulation for 7LiD- produces a rather good fit of the real spectrum. In the case of 7LiH-, the correspondence is also good with respect to most spectral features, but there is clearly some deviation from the fit on the high EBE side of the \( v' = 1 - v'' = 0 \) peak. If the 7LiD- spectrum is exam-
Modeled and actual photoelectron spectra of $^7\text{LiH}^-$ and $^7\text{LiD}^-$. The former was generated using the energetic and anion spectroscopic parameters reported in this work. The modeled spectrum is shown as a solid line while the actual spectrum is represented by points.

V. DISCUSSION

The results of this work are consistent with the picture, provided by theory, that the excess electron resides in the low-lying nonbonding lowest unoccupied molecular orbital (LUMO) of neutral lithium hydride. The adiabatic electron detachment energies determined here are found to be 83% of the neutral dissociation energies. Furthermore, the equilibrium bond lengths determined in this work indicate that only an 8% bond elongation accompanies the attachment of an excess electron to lithium hydride.

The results presented here agree rather well with the parameters predicted by theory. The adiabatic electron affinity determined here for $\text{LiH}^-$ is in good agreement with several ab initio calculations and with the pseudopotential calculation of Garrett. When a zero point energy correction is made to the electron affinity value reported by Jordan and Simons, nearly perfect agreement is achieved.

The $\text{LiH}^-$ dissociation energy found here is in excellent agreement with theoretical predictions. The anion equilibrium bond distance found here is also in accord with theoretical predictions, although most theoretical studies expected a slightly smaller bond elongation (~5%) relative to the neutral molecule. The only significant deviation from theoretical predictions is with respect to vibrational frequencies, where the predicted frequencies are ~20% larger than those reported here.

In summary, we have presented the 488 nm photoelectron spectra of $^7\text{LiH}^-$ and $^7\text{LiD}^-$. Adiabatic electron affinities of 0.342±0.012 eV and 0.337±0.012 eV were determined for $^7\text{LiH}$ and $^7\text{LiD}$, respectively. The experimentally determined electron affinities led to dissociation energy ($D_0$) values of 2.017±0.021 eV for $^7\text{LiH}$ and 2.034±0.021 eV for $^7\text{LiD}^-$. Franck-Condon analyses yielded the following spectroscopic parameters for the ground state of $^7\text{LiH}^-$: $B_y=6.43±0.18$ cm$^{-1}$, $r_e=1.724±0.025$ Å, and $\omega_e=920±80$ cm$^{-1}$; and the following parameters for $^7\text{LiD}^-$: $B_y=3.62±0.06$ cm$^{-1}$, $r_e=1.724±0.015$ Å, and $\omega_e=650±45$ cm$^{-1}$.
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