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Research Article

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Structural, electronic, optical and thermoelectric analysis of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ Vacancy ordered double perovskites

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Abstract

It is compulsory to develop technologies able to generate energy at negligible cost to the environment. Therefore, in present work, lead free vacancy ordered double perovskites Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ were reported as green energy materials on basis of full potential linearized augmented plane wave method calculations. The study has been carried out in terms of structural, electronic, optical and thermoelectric properties. It was noted from values of tolerance factor and formation energy that both Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ compounds are stable in perovskite structure. The band gaps were calculated in close resemblance with experiments. These values (2.09 eV Rb₂TeBr₆ and 2.10 eV for Cs₂TeBr₆ with EV-GGA) were examined in visible range of electromagnetic spectrum. The optical properties such as real and imaginary parts of dielectric function, optical conductivity and reflectivity ensured the use of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ compounds for solar cell applications. Also, the reasonable values of Seebeck coefficients and figure of merit proposed the studied compounds for thermoelectric power generation.

Keywords: vacancy ordered double perovskites; optical conductivity; solar cell; figure of merit; Seebeck coefficient

1. Introduction

Presently, our earth's atmosphere is facing with rapid increase in greenhouse gases due to extensive use of fossil fuels for energy application. This causes unusual changes in climate, as result weathers are becoming more intensive. Therefore, it is necessary to develop technologies able to generate energy at negligible cost to the environment. Producing energy through solar cells is considered one of the cheaper options to provide very clean and cheap energy [1]. In this perspective, lead halide perovskites are recognized as best photovoltaic materials [2-3]. This class achieved solar energy conversion efficiency more than 25 % [4] due to high mobility of charge carriers, large absorption coefficients [5] and large carrier diffusion length [6]. Recently, lead halide perovskites were also reported as excellent materials for thermoelectric power generation [7-13]. Where, a gradient of temperature across these materials can causes motion of free charge carriers and generate a voltage [10]. Regardless of multifunctional character of lead halide perovskites, it is important that improved version of the next common solar cell materials must be lead free, economical and environmental friendly.

Vacancy ordered double perovskites, were widely studied as alternative of lead perovskites. As result, compounds of this class were proven as good conductors and have been considered as solar cell absorbers [14-19]. This group of compounds is generally represented by A_2BX_6 , where, A, B are cations, and X is a halide [20]. The structure of A_2BX_6 compounds has close similarity to the structure of cubic perovskite ABX_3 with half of the B sites cation removed in an organized method. Rb_2TeBr_6 and Cs_2TeBr_6 prepared with A_2BX_6 structure are still required to be exposed completely from theoretical point of view for possible applications. These compounds were

extensively studied for structural properties at experimental and theoretical sides [21-25]. Peresh et al. [26] calculated band gap of Rb_2TeBr_6 and Cs_2TeBr_6 as 2.14 and 2.12 eV from their experiments. These band gaps lie within visible range of electromagnetic spectrum [27]. Therefore, Rb_2TeBr_6 and Cs_2TeBr_6 compounds should be studied for solar cell applications. Also, thermoelectric properties of these materials must be predicted to guide future experiments. In this article, I report my full potential linearized augmented plane wave method calculated results of structural, electronic, optical and thermoelectric properties of $\text{Rb/Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6$ with physical insight. I hope that my calculations will motivate the experimenters to carry further analysis of these compounds for solar cells and thermoelectric generators and will cover missing theoretical data in literature.

2. Research Techniques

2.1 Computational Details

In present work, simulations were performed with the Wien2k code of full potential linearized augmented plane wave method [28]. The exchange correlation function was treated with generalized gradient approximation of Wu-Cohen (WC-GGA) [29] and Engle –Vosko (EV-GGA) [30]. Also WC-GGA Coupled modified Beck Johnson (MBJ) [31] was taken in calculation of electronic properties. The thermoelectric properties were computed within classical transport theory integrated in BoltzTrap code [32].

2.2 Convergence study

The energy within self-consistent field (SCF) was converged using the product of cut-off wave factor (K_{max}) with smallest muffin-tin radii (RMT) as 7, the upper limit value to angular momentum vector (l_{max}) as 12 and k points mesh as $7 \times 7 \times 7$ within Monkhorst and Pack [33]. These values ensured balance computational accuracy and calculation time. The atomic radii

(R_{MT}) of for Rb, Cs, Te and Br were taken as 2.5, 2.5, 2.4, 2.34 a.u as result of internal structure optimization. Also, the positions of atoms listed in **Table 1** were obtained after optimization of internal structure.

2.3 Materials

This research focus on lead free vacancy ordered double perovskites Rb_2TeBr_6 and Cs_2TeBr_6 . These are important research compounds due to their small cost in both and environmental and financial terms. The vacancy ordered double perovskites family has cubic conventional unit cell (having four formula units) with nine atoms in each formula unit as shown in **Fig. 1**. The structure of these compounds is often described as consisting of isolated $[TBr_6]^{2-}$ octahedral [34] with monovalent Rb/Cs site cations to balance charge.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Structure properties

Experimentally, Rb_2TeBr_6 and Cs_2TeBr_6 were found to be stable in cubic phase with Fm-3m space group. To check stability theoretically, the tolerance factors (t) were calculated via below equation [35]

$$t = \frac{r_{Br}}{r_{Te}} - n_{Rb/Cs} \left(\frac{n_{Rb}}{Cs} - \frac{r_{Rb/Cs}/r_{Te}}{\ln(r_{Rb/Cs}/r_{Te})} \right) \quad (1)$$

Here, r_{Te} , $r_{Rb/Cs}$ and r_{Br} are ionic radii Te, Rb/Cs and Br atoms, respectively. Taking the values of these radii from [24], the values of t were calculated as 4.12 and 3.95 for Rb_2TeBr_6 and Cs_2TeBr_6 . By definition, $t < 4.18$ indicate cubic perovskites [35]. Therefore, it is proved that studied compounds are stable in cubic perovskites phase.

Now to find formation energy, E (F) of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ compounds the following equation has been used [17]

$$E(F) = E(\text{Rb/Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6) - 2(E_{\text{Cs/Rb}}) - (E_{\text{Te}}) - 6(E_{\text{Br}}) \quad (2)$$

Here in eq. 2, $E(\text{Rb}_2/\text{Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6)$ is the total energy of Rb_2TeBr_6 or Cs_2TeBr_6 , and $E_{\text{Cs/Rb}}$, E_{Te} and E_{Br} are the energies of constituent atoms in $\text{Rb/Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6$ compounds. All these values are given in **Table 2**. The negative values of calculated $E(F)$ in the table indicate the formation reaction of studied compounds is exothermic. The compounds formed through exothermic reaction are considered to be stable [36]. Therefore, $\text{Rb/Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6$ compounds remains stable after formation.

After confirmation of cubic phase stability with perovskite structure, the lattice parameters were calculated by volume optimization process by force field approximation (**Fig. 2**) followed by fitting the obtained data in Birch-Murnaghan equation [37]. The WC-GGA was used as exchange correlation function for optimization process. The calculated parameters were assembled in **Table 3** with corresponding data available in literature. The values of lattice constant are in reasonable agreement with the available experimental and theoretical values. However, these values are little overestimated from experimental values. This overestimation is common trend in GGA calculations [38]. Since, the values of bulk modulus are unavailable. My calculated values will be reference for future works. However, these values follow common trend [39-40] of decreasing as the cation go down the group (Rb to Cs).

3.2 Electronic properties

The electronic properties of $\text{Rb/Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6$ compounds were calculated using WC-GGA, EV-GGA and MBJ. Band structure calculated through these exchange correlation potential are depicted in **Fig. 3** and the corresponding values of band gap are grouped in **Table 4** along with available experimental values. These band structures were plotted in Gnuplot by considering point sampling as $\Gamma(0, 0, 0)$, $L(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2})$, $X(\frac{1}{2}, 0, \frac{1}{2})$ and $W(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{3}{4})$ in reciprocal lattice. The

maximum of valence band of both the Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ compounds lie at W while the minimum of conduction band lies at L symmetry point. Therefore, the studied compounds are indirect band gap materials in W→L direction. The band gap (E_g) values in **Table 4** follow the order as E_g (WC-GGA) < E_g (EV-GGA) < E_g (MBJ). However, E_g values through EV-GGA are in close resemblance with experimental values [26]. Therefore, I will use these values for calculation of optical and thermoelectric properties. It worth to note that band gap values lies with visible range of electromagnetic spectrum. It is expected that Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ may be used effectively for solar cell applications.

Fig. 4 shows the DOS calculated via EV-GGA because DOS calculated through WC-GGA, EV-GGA and MBJ has similar nature. To explain the figure, electronic configurations of Rb, Cs, Te and Br were treated as [Kr]5s¹, [Xe]6s¹, [Ar]4d¹⁰5s²5p⁴ and [Ar]3d¹⁰4s²4p⁵. The valence band maximum of both the compounds is composed of completely filled Te-5s² states and partially filled Br-4p⁵ (as they are contributed from 0 to -3 eV) states. Where, conduction band minimum is contributed from partially filled 5p⁴ states of Te. Therefore, the energy difference between these states defines band gap and fundamental transition predict p-type conductivity in both the Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ compounds. The distribution of the states toward remaining valence and conduction band can be observed from the **Fig. 4**.

3.3 Optical properties

The optical properties depend upon band gap (E_g) of a material. As E_g defines the absorption edge. The calculated band gap of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ is 2.09/2.10 eV with EV-GGA. A material having band gap in range of 1.8-3.1 eV are considered to have excellent optical properties for solar cells applications. Therefore, to check fitness of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ vacancy ordered perovskites, I have calculated the optical properties in term of real and imaginary parts of dielectric function ($\epsilon_1(\omega)$)

and $\epsilon_2(\omega)$), optical conductivity ($\sigma(\omega)$) and reflectivity ($R(\omega)$) in energy range of 0-6 eV and depicted in **Fig. 5**. Where, blue and black solid lines are representative of optical parameters of Rb_2TeBr_6 and Cs_2TeBr_6 , respectively.

Since, Rb/ Cs_2TeBr_6 perovskites have cubic structure as described above, the linear dielectric tensor has only one components $\epsilon(\omega) = \epsilon_1(\omega) + i\epsilon_2(\omega)$ [41]. The **Fig 5 (a)** shows the calculated real part, $\epsilon_1(\omega)$. $\epsilon_1(\omega)$ demonstrates the extent to which a material gets polarized when exposed to electromagnetic radiation. This function gets started from static value $\epsilon_1(0)$. This $\epsilon_1(0)$ is related with band gap of a material by Penn's model [42]

$$\epsilon_1(0) \approx 1 + \left(\frac{\hbar\omega_p}{E_g} \right)^2 \quad (3)$$

As discussed earlier that both the studied compounds have nearly equal band gaps. This results nearly equal value of $\epsilon_1(0)$. Beyond $\epsilon_1(0)$, $\epsilon_1(\omega)$ get increases to maximum value $(\epsilon_1(\omega))_{\text{Max}}$ and then starts decreasing and enter to negative values. The photons having energy in the region of negative value get reflected when incident on Rb/ Cs_2TeBr_6 compounds and the optical nature of materials shifts to metallic region [43]. The $\epsilon_1(\omega)$ is only distinguishable for Rb/ Cs_2TeBr_6 in energy range of 4-6 eV. This may be attributed to nearly same band structures of Rb/ Cs_2TeBr_6 compounds.

The real part of dielectric function $\epsilon_2(\omega)$ reflects the absorption behavior of a material. Its value starts at energy nearly equal to band gap because the transfer of charge carriers between conduction and valence bands initiates as clear from **Fig. 5 (a)**. The maximum peak values of $\epsilon_2(\omega)$ are around 2.9 eV for both the Rb/ Cs_2TeBr_6 compounds. The origin of this peak is attributed by interband transition from partially filled $5p^4$ states of Te to and partially filled Br- $4p^5$ states. The maximum absorption occurs in visible region of electromagnetic spectrum. Therefore, both the Rb/ Cs_2TeBr_6 compounds are best for solar cell fabrication.

The frequency dependent optical conductivity $\sigma(\omega)$ displayed in **Fig 5 (c)** has similar behavior as $\epsilon_2(\omega)$. Because, photon absorbed by charges cause transitions and results optical conductivity. The maximum $\sigma(\omega)$ of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ compounds has nearly same values as seen from the figure. It occurs when the incident photon energy becomes 2.9 eV. Beyond this energy limit, $\sigma(\omega)$ gets decrease in ultraviolet region of electromagnetic spectrum.

The calculated reflectivity $R(\omega)$ of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ compounds is illustrated in **Fig 5 (d)**, where, the zero frequency limit is less than is 15 % for both perovskites. With increase of incident photon energy, $R(\omega)$ gets increase and reaches at maximum value of 40 % in ultra violet energies. In this region negative values of $\epsilon_1(\omega)$ were recorded., In this energy range, the absorption behavior becomes decreased and Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ compounds response as metals to the incident photons.

3.4 Thermoelectric properties

The Thermoelectric materials convert heat into electrical energy via Seebeck effect [44]. A material with high electrical conductivity (σ/τ), Seebeck coefficients (S) and figure of merit (ZT), and low thermal conductivity (κ/τ) is considered to be suitable for thermoelectric power generation. In present case, our calculated κ/τ with its electronic (κ_e/τ) and the lattice (κ_L/τ) contribution, σ/τ for Rb₂TeBr₆ and Cs₂TeBr₆ are shown in **Fig. 6**. Whereas, computed S, carrier concentration (n) and ZT are depicted in **Fig. 7**.

The computed (κ_e/τ) for the Rb₂TeBr₆ and Cs₂TeBr₆ compounds is shown in **Fig. 6 (a)** while κ_L/τ calculated through slack equation [45] is plotted in **Fig 6 (b)**. These figures summarize that phonon (electron) contribution toward heat transfer decreases (increase) with increase in temperature. To study overall effect of heat transfer, the κ_e/τ and κ_L/τ are combined in **Fig 6 (c)** to total lattice thermal conductivity (κ/τ). This figure indicates that κ/τ decrease up to 350 K and then increase as temperature rises. On other side, the **Fig 6 (d)** approves the semiconductor

behavior of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ vacancy ordered double perovskites. Because the increase in temperature increases intrinsic carrier's concentration, this turns an increase in electrical conductivity (σ/τ).

The temperature gradient in a material produces potential difference which is worth to note, because the ratio of potential difference and temperature gradients defines the S. Which can be quantum mechanically expressed as [46]

$$S = \left(\frac{8\pi^2}{3e}\right) \left(\frac{K_B^2}{h^2}\right) \left(\frac{\pi}{3n}\right)^{\frac{2}{3}} m^* T \quad (4)$$

Where, n is carrier concentration, m* is carriers effective mass, K_B represent Boltzmann constant and h is plank constant. The computed S for Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites is shown in **Fig. 7 (a)**.

Where, S for both the compounds shows similar behavior. The value of S linearly decreases with increase in temperature. This is justified by the fact that S has inverse relation to n (eq. 4). **Fig. 7(b) shows** that value of n increases with the increase in temperature. This increase results a decrease in S of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites. Furthermore, the positive values of S explore Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites as p-type semiconductors which are early predicted by DOS plots.

An important quantitative which characterize the thermoelectric effectiveness of a materials is its figure of merit (ZT). The calculated ZT versus temperature for Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites is given in **Fig. 7 (c, d)**. These figures make it clear that ZT of both the compounds have also similar behavior. Up to 500 K the ZT values linearly increases with increase in temperature. Above this temperature, gradual changes have been seen in ZT. Maximum values of ZT were computed as 0.580 for Cs₂TeBr₆ and 0.578 for Cs₂TeBr₆ at 800 K. Our reported values of ZT will guide future studies.

4. Conclusions

This article described the structural, electronic, optical and thermoelectric properties of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆, vacancy ordered double perovskites. The structural and electronic properties were compared with experimental and theoretical values available in scientific literature. From density of states plots it was found that the fundamental band gap lies between Br-4p⁵ and 5p⁴ states of Te. Being the band gaps in visible region of electromagnetic spectrum, optical fitness of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites for solar cells was checked by calculating optical parameters such as real and imaginary parts of dielectric function, optical conductivity and reflectivity. The spectrum of these values within 0-6 eV confirmed maximum absorption of visible photons and maximum reflection of ultraviolet photons. This excellent behavior proposed Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites as best materials for solar cell fabrications. Furthermore, the computed values of Seebeck coefficients and figure of merit confirmed the effectiveness of studied perovskites for thermoelectric power generation.

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Figures caption

Fig. 1 The (a) conventional and (b) primitive uni cell of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites

Fig. 2 The volume optimization curves for Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites

Fig. 3 Calculated band structures of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites through WC-GGA, EV-GGA and MBJ

Fig. 4 Density of states for Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ vacancy ordered double perovskites

Fig. 5 Calculated (a) real $\epsilon_1(\omega)$ and (b) imaginary $\epsilon_2(\omega)$ parts of dielectric function, (c) optical conductivity $\sigma(\omega)$ and (d) reflectivity $R(\omega)$ for Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites

Fig. 6 Temperature dependent (a) electronic, κ_e/τ (b) lattice, κ_L/τ and (c) total, κ/τ thermal conductivity and (d) electrical conductivity (σ/τ) of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites

Fig. 7 (a) Seebeck coefficient, S (b) carrier concentration (n) of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites and Figure of merit, ZT of (c) Rb₂TeBr₆ and (d) Cs₂TeBr₆ at different temperatures

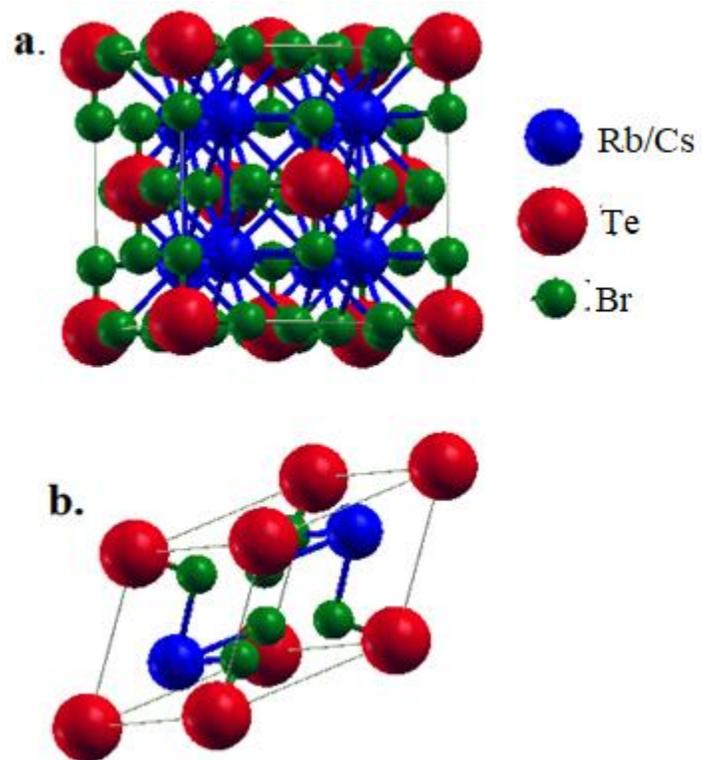


Figure 1

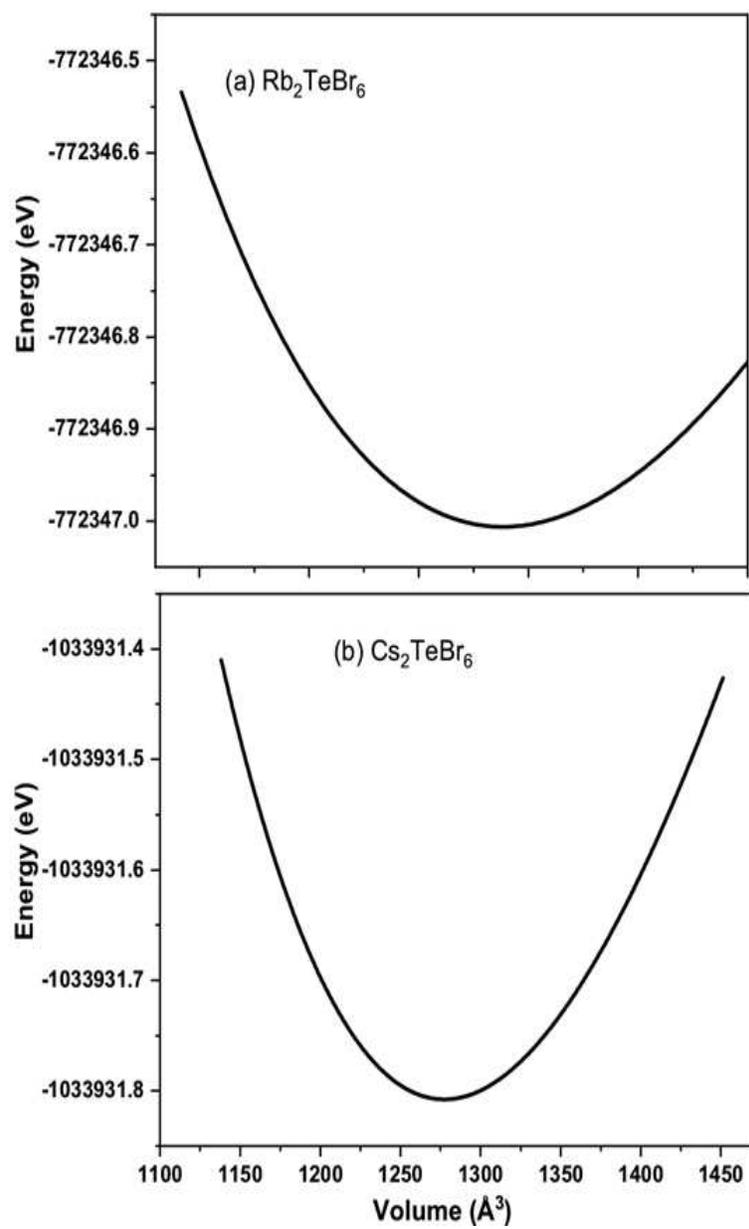


Figure 2

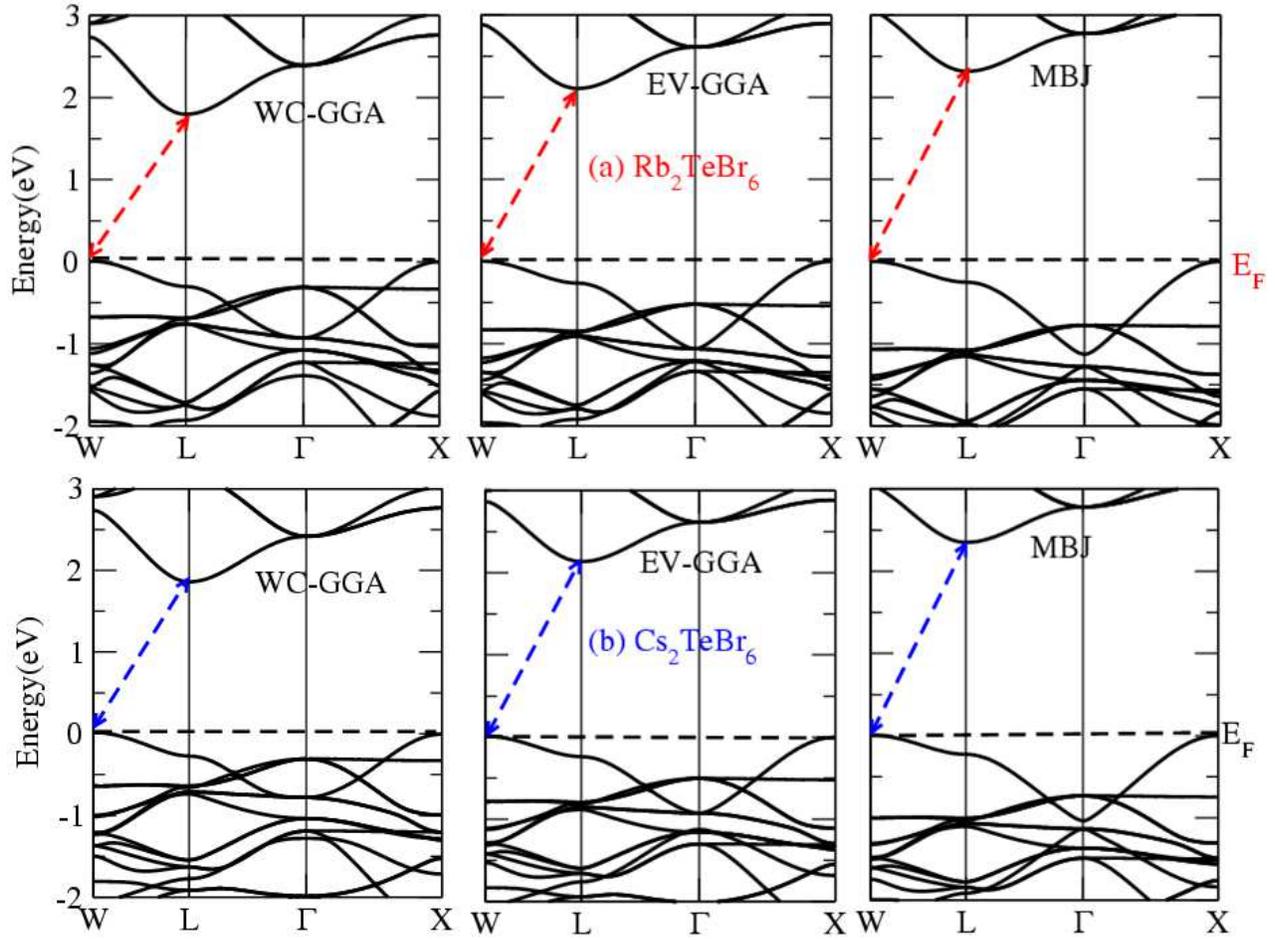


Figure 3

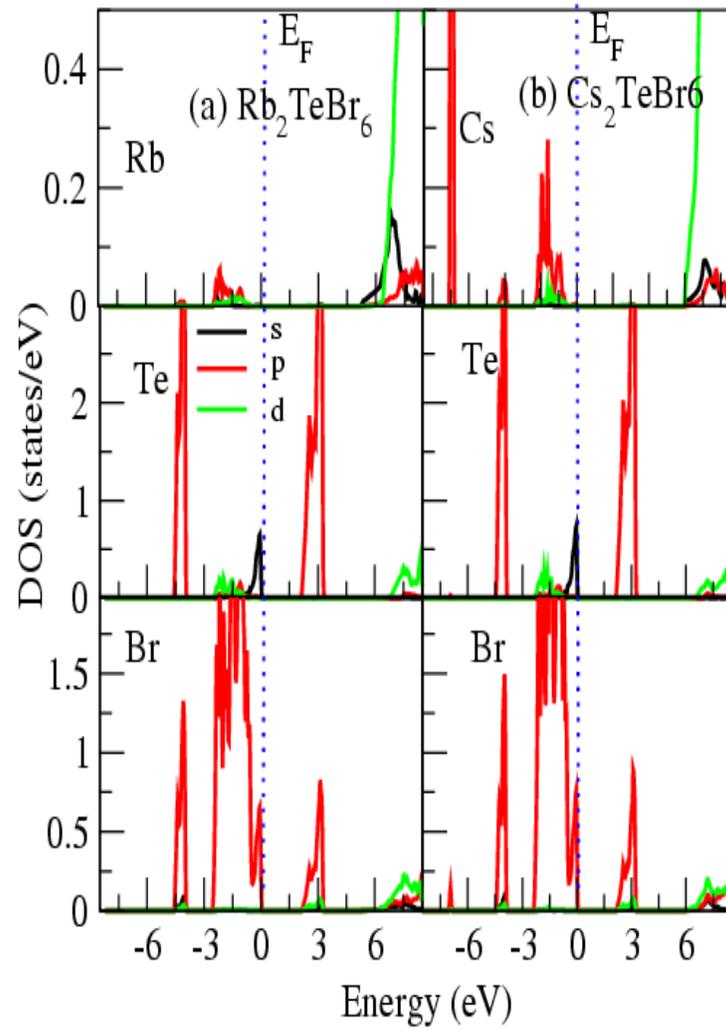


Figure 4

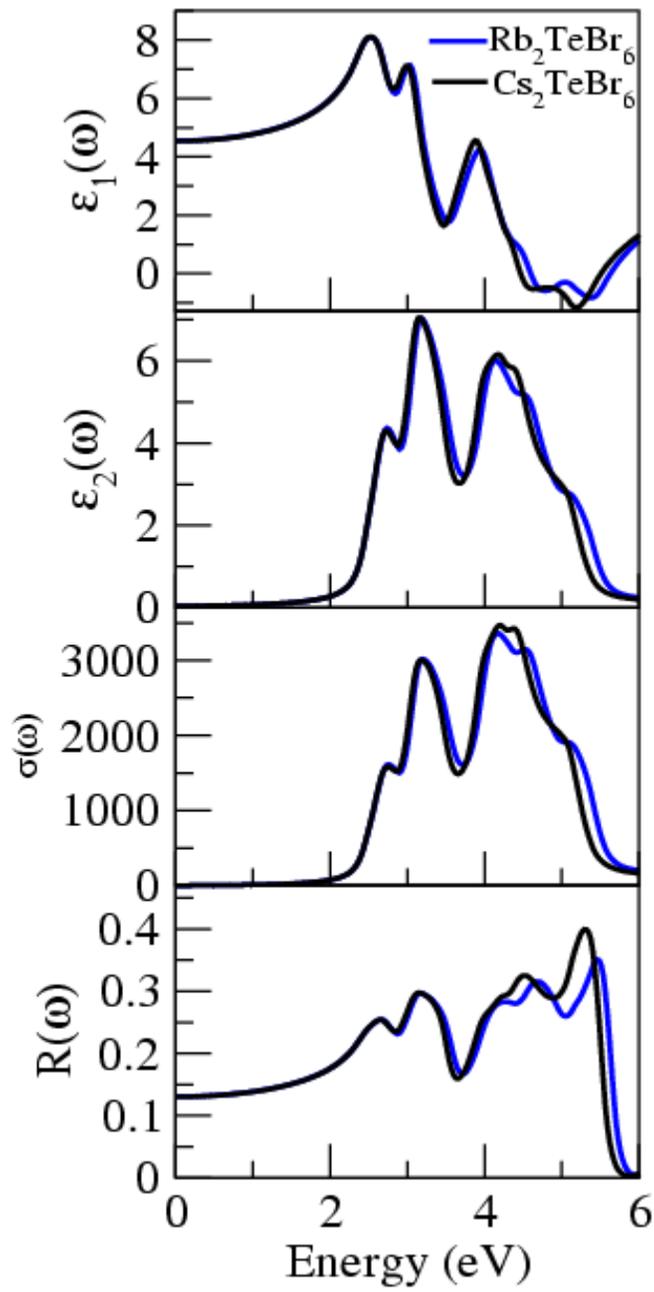


Figure 5

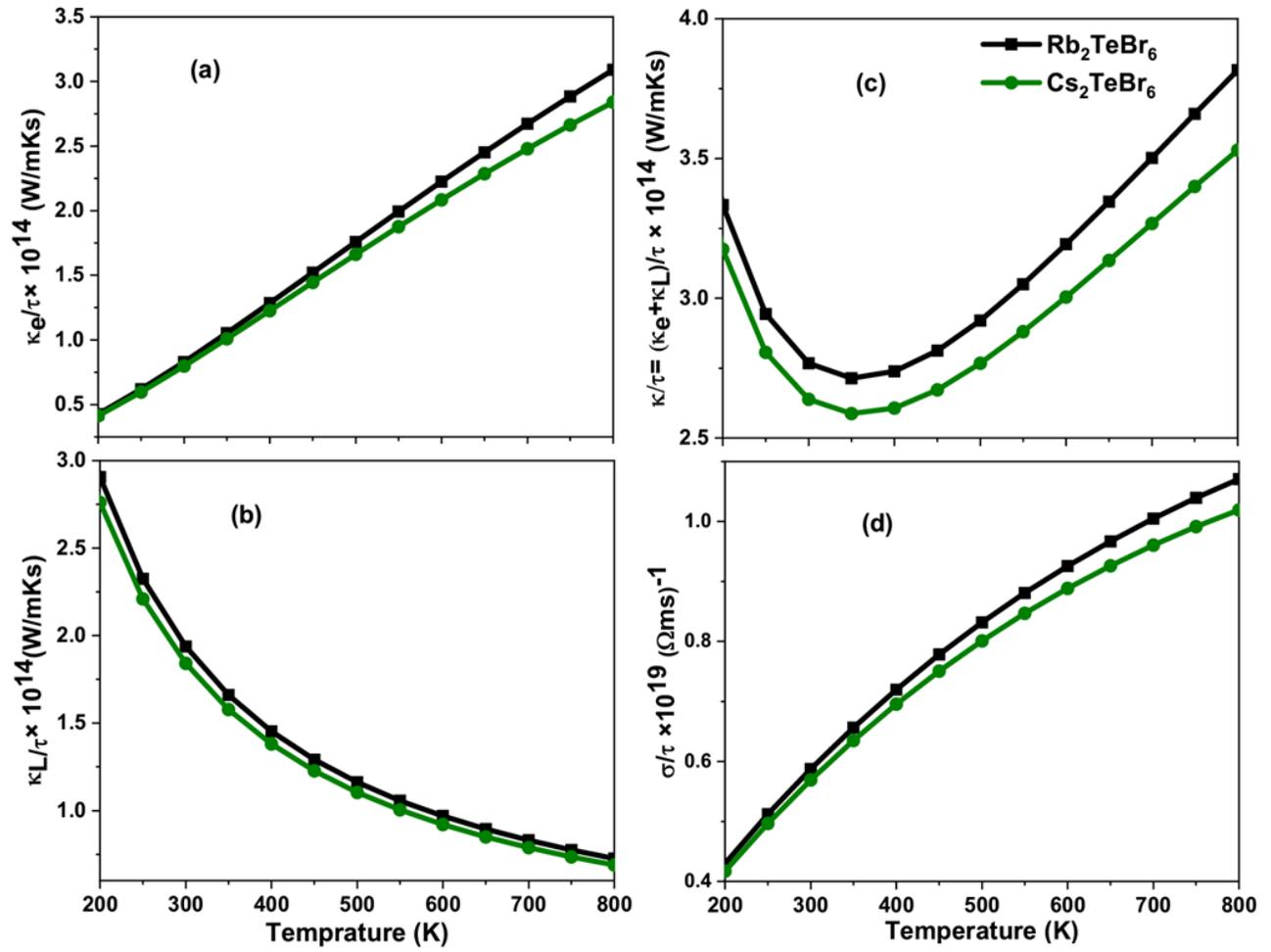


Figure 6

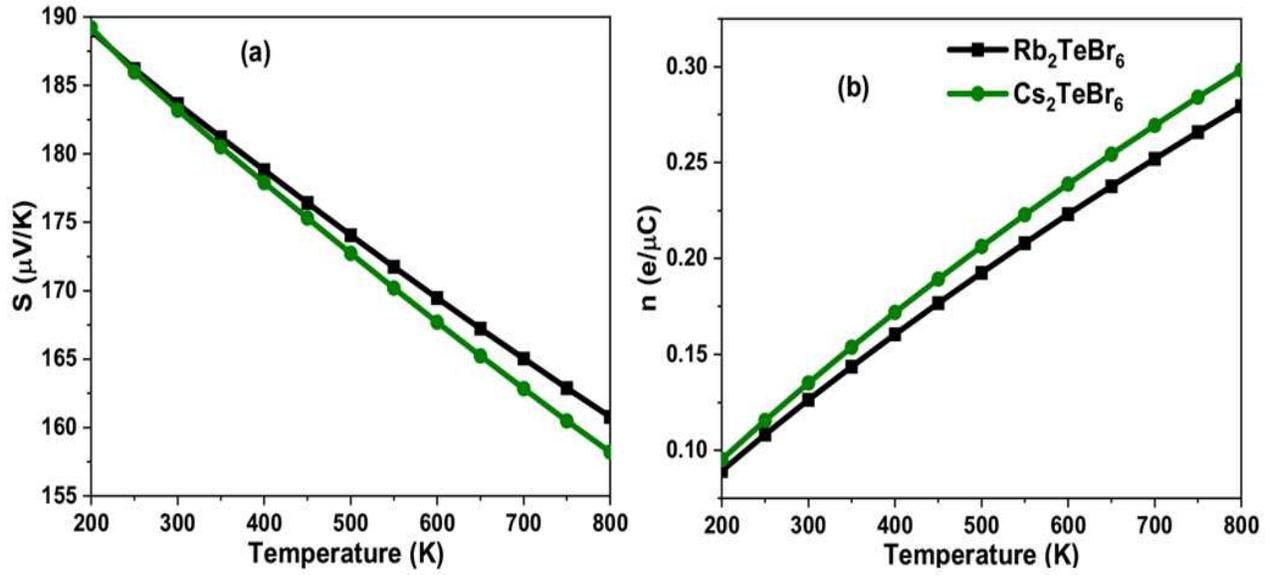


Figure 7

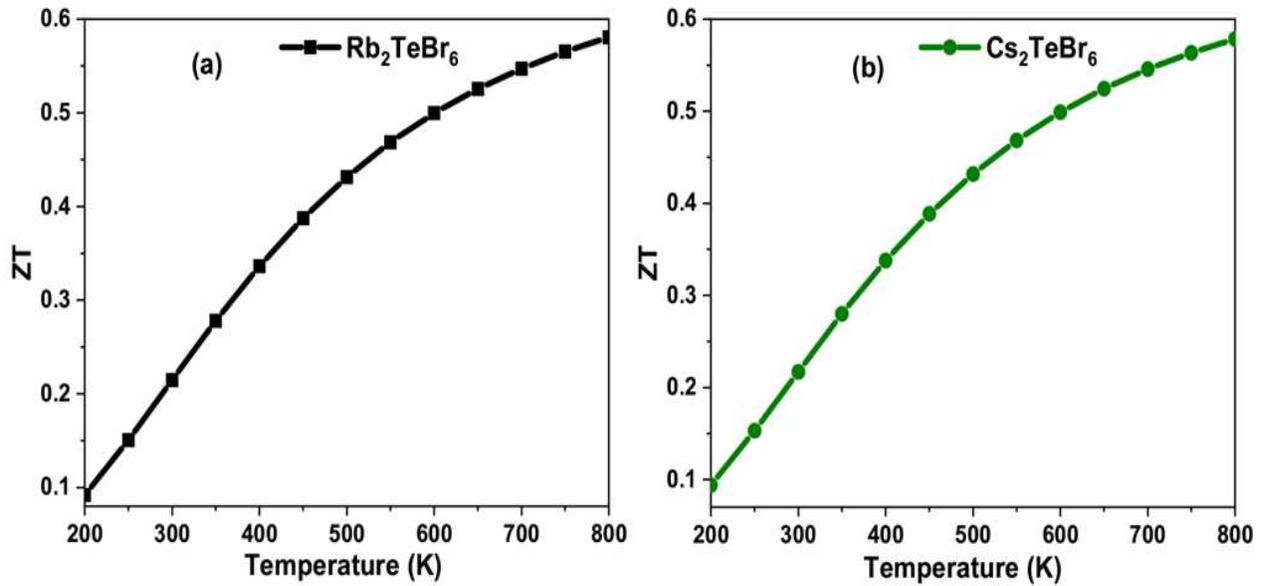


Figure 7

Table 1 Optimized atomic positions of Rb_2TeBr_6 and Cs_2TeBr_6

Atom	Positions		
	x	y	z
Rb_2TeBr_6			
Rb	0.25	0.25	0.25
Rb	0.25	0.25	0.75
Te	0	0	0
Br1	0	0	0.25272951
Br2	0	0	0.74727049
Br3	0	0.25272951	0
Br4	0	0.74727049	0
Br5	0.25272951	0	0
Br6	0.74727049	0	0
Cs_2TeBr_6			
Cs	0.25	0.25	0.25
Cs	0.25	0.25	0.75
Te	0	0	0
Br1	0	0	0.25118388
Br2	0	0	0.74881612
Br3	0	0.25118388	0
Br4	0	0.74881612	0
Br5	0.74881612	0	0
Br6	0.74881612	0	0

Table 2 The ground state energies of bulk Cs, Se, Te, and Cl atoms and $\text{Rb}/\text{Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6$ perovskites with formation energies in eV

Parameter	Rb_2TeBr_6	Cs_2TeBr_6
$E_{\text{Cs/Rb}}$	-81080.61	-211873.32
E_{Te}	-184853.11	-184853.11
E_{Br}	-70885.37	-70885.37
$E(\text{Rb}_2/\text{Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6)$	-772347.01	-1033931.81
$E(\text{F})$	-20.46	-19.4

Table 3 The calculated values of lattice parameter (a_0), Volume (V), Bulk modulus (B) through WC-GGA with available experimental and theoretical results

Parameter		Rb_2TeBr_6	Cs_2TeBr_6
a_0 (Å)	This	10.7433	10.8549
	Exp.	10.713 [21]	10.873 [22]
	Theo.	10.719 [23]	10.874 [23]
		10.743 [24]	11.043 [24]
10.651 [25]			
V (Å ³)		1238.42	1277.41
B (GPa)		27.08	26.64

Table 4 The calculated band gaps through WC-GGA, EV-GGA and MBJ with experimental results

Band gap	Method	Rb_2TeBr_6	Cs_2TeBr_6
This	WC-GGA	1.77	1.83
	EV-GGA	2.09	2.10
	MBJ	2.31	2.33
Exp.		2.14 [26]	2.12 [26]

Figures

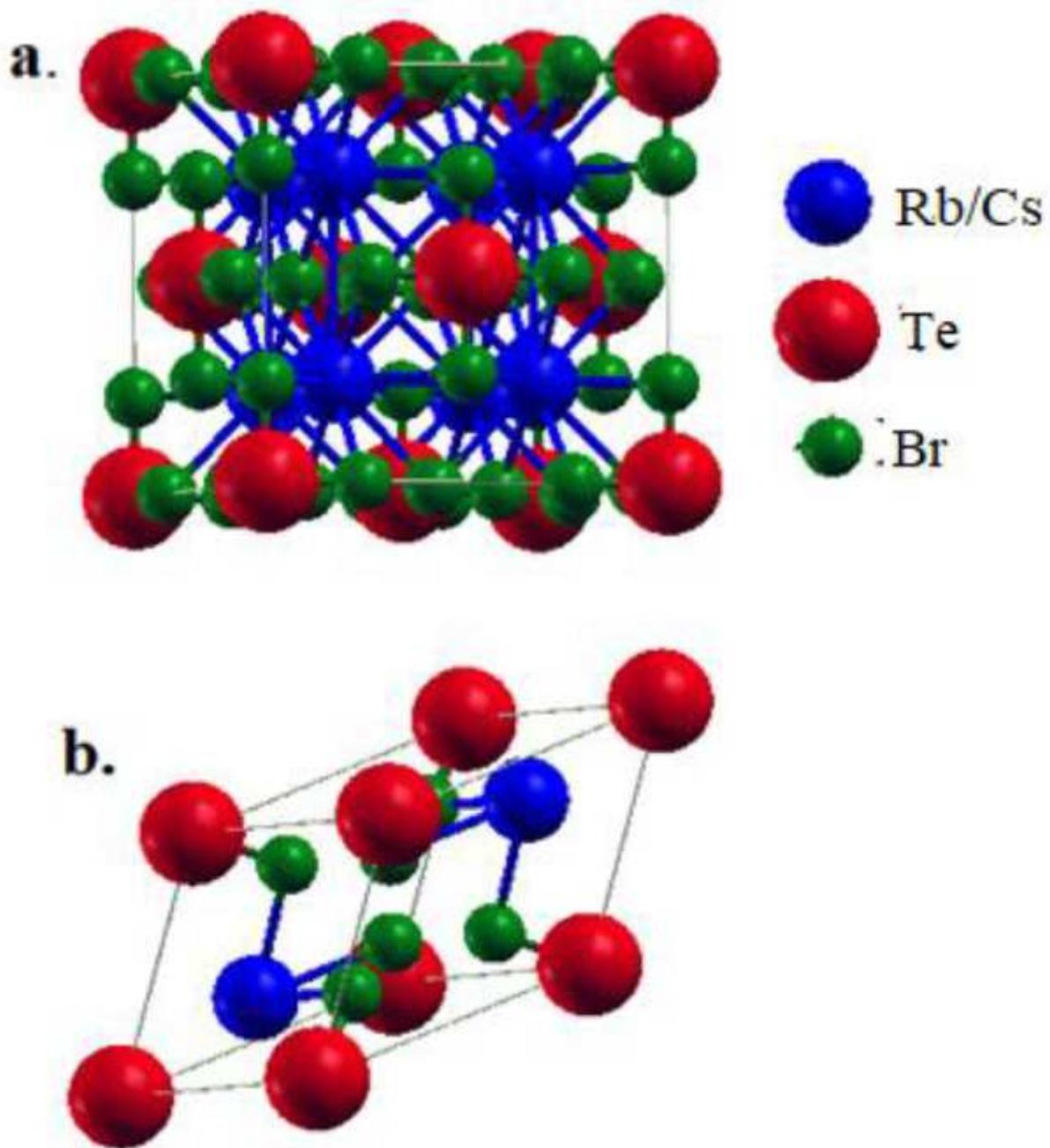


Figure 1

The (a) conventional and (b) primitive unit cell of $\text{Rb/Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6$ perovskites

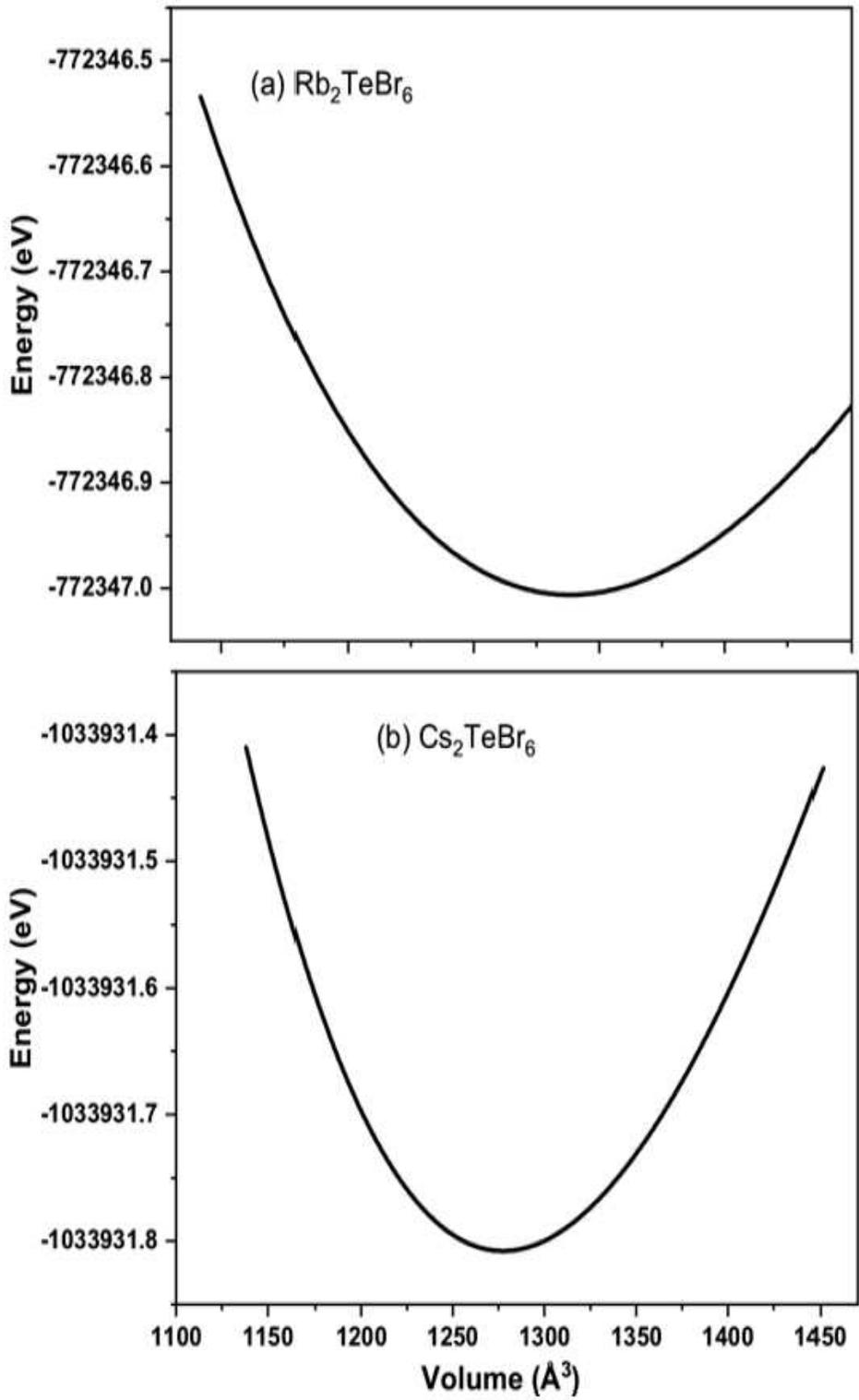


Figure 2

The volume optimization curves for Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites

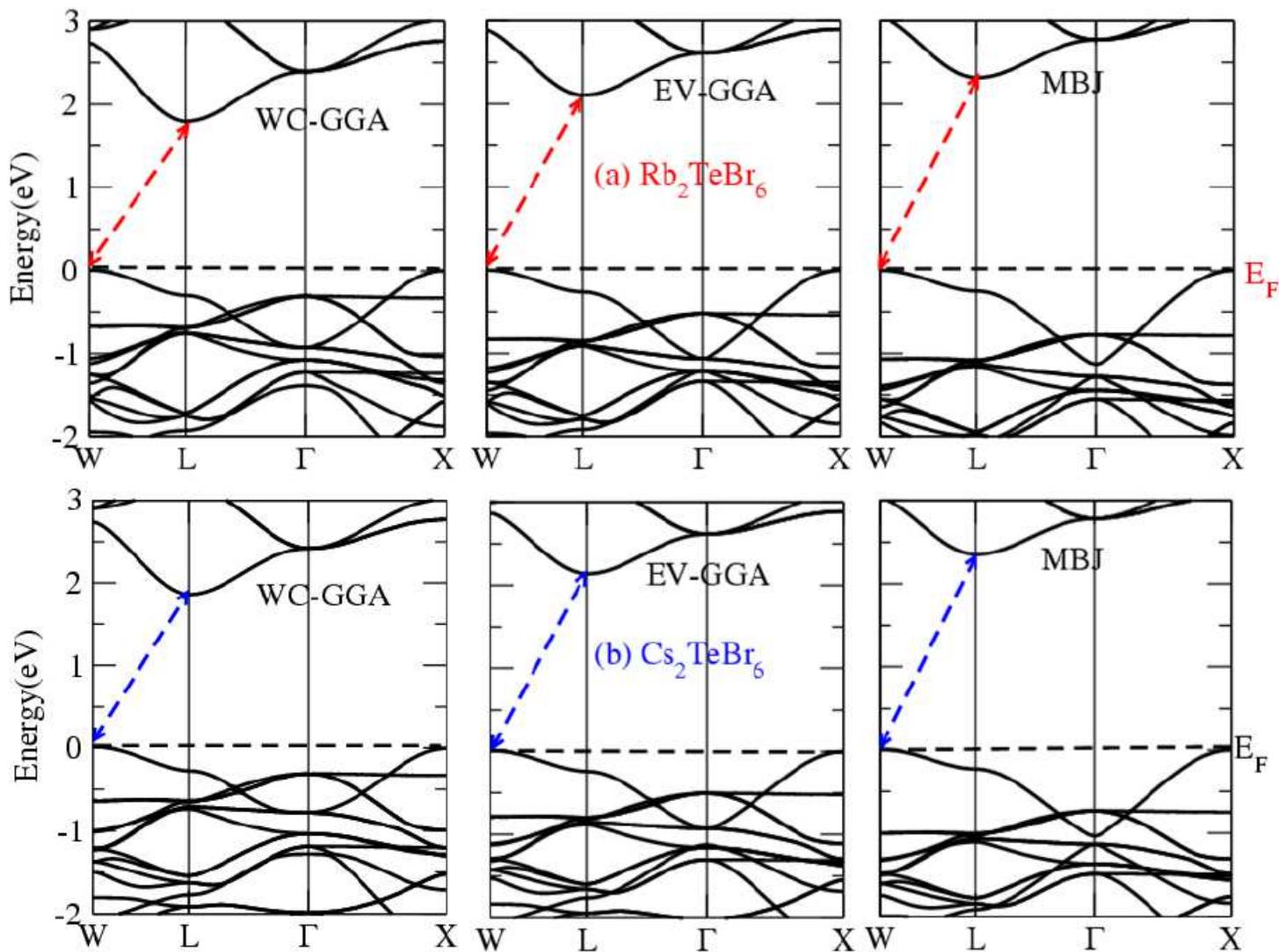


Figure 3

Calculated band structures of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites through WC-GGA, EV-GGA and MBJ

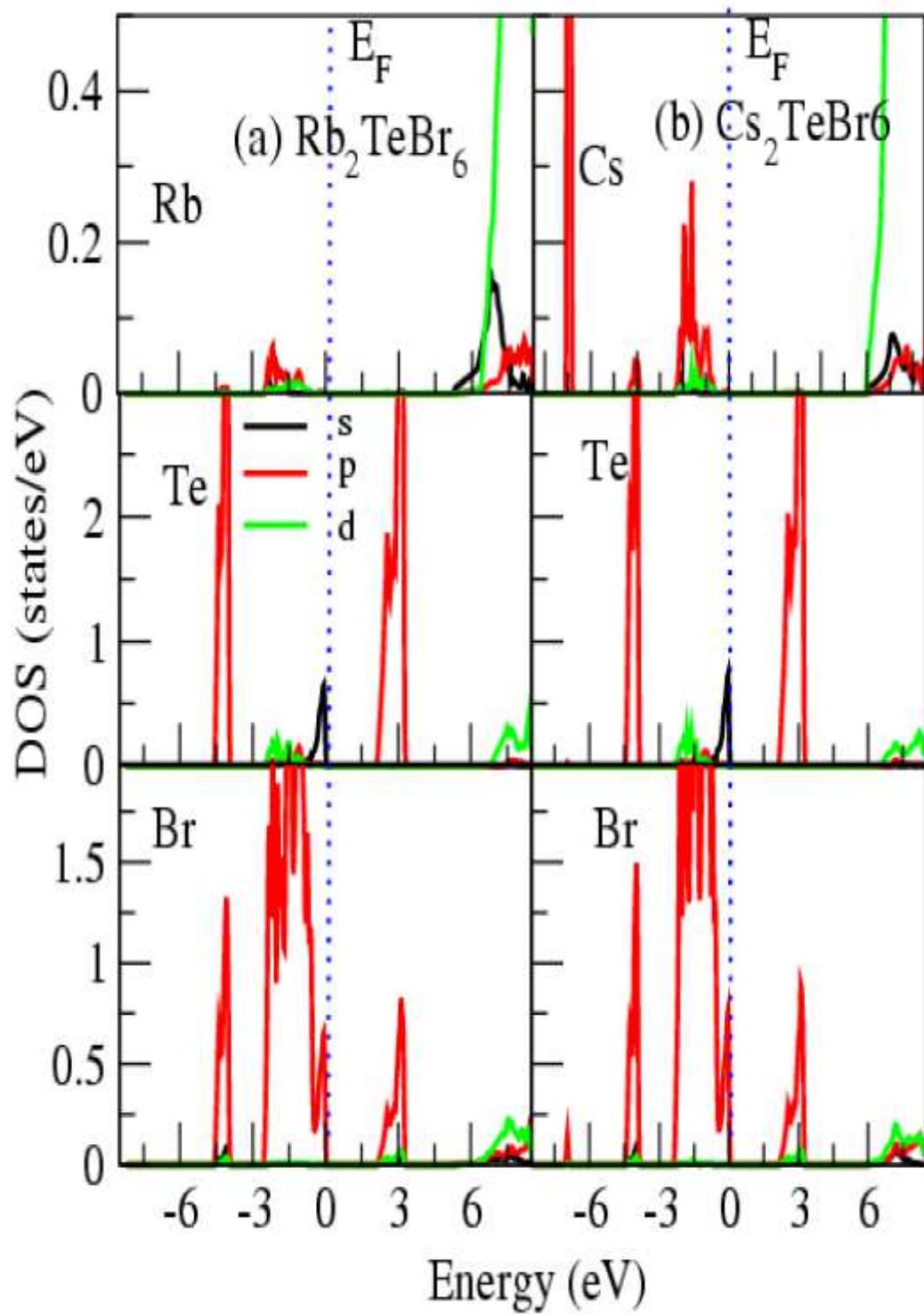


Figure 4

Density of states for Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ vacancy ordered double perovskites

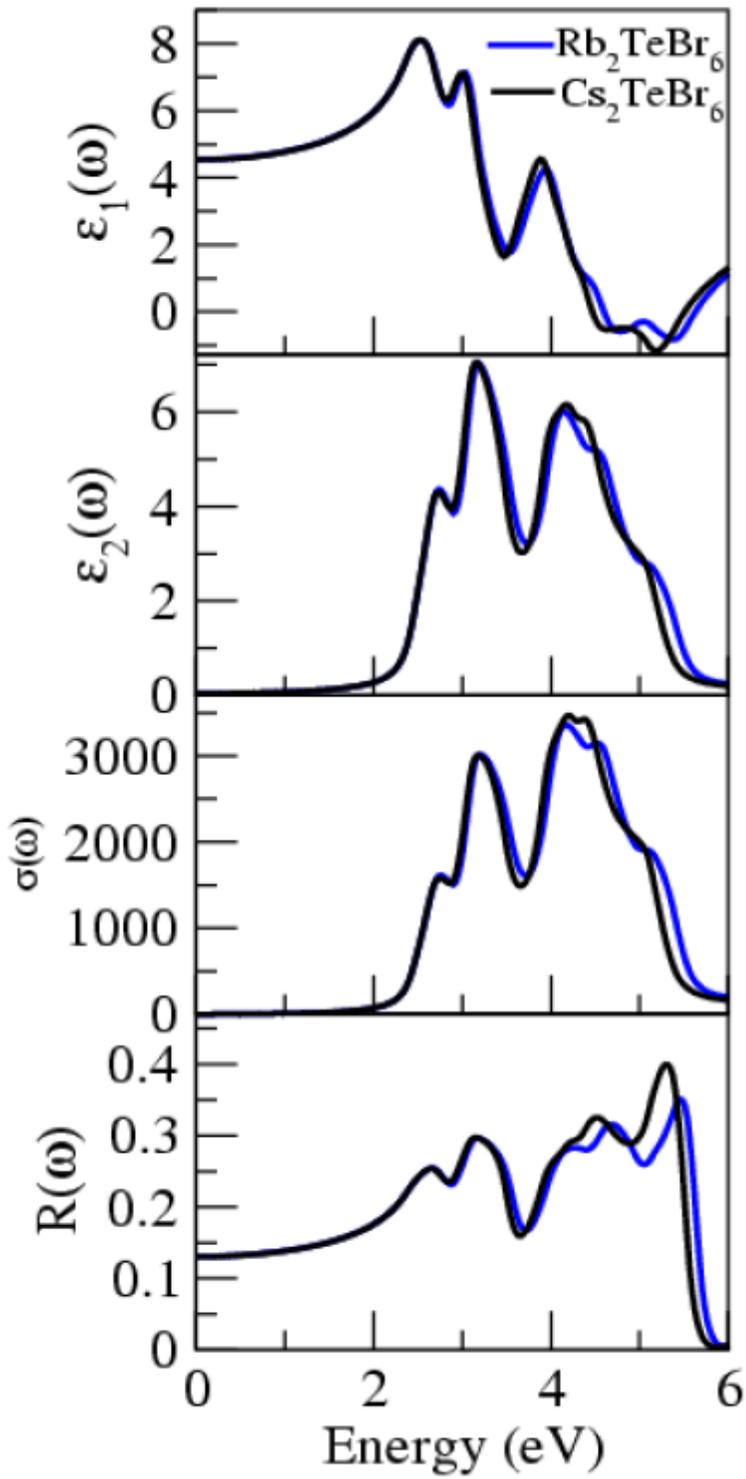


Figure 5

Calculated (a) real $\epsilon_1(\omega)$ and (b) imaginary $\epsilon_2(\omega)$ parts of dielectric function, (c) optical conductivity $\sigma(\omega)$ and (d) reflectivity $R(\omega)$ for Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites

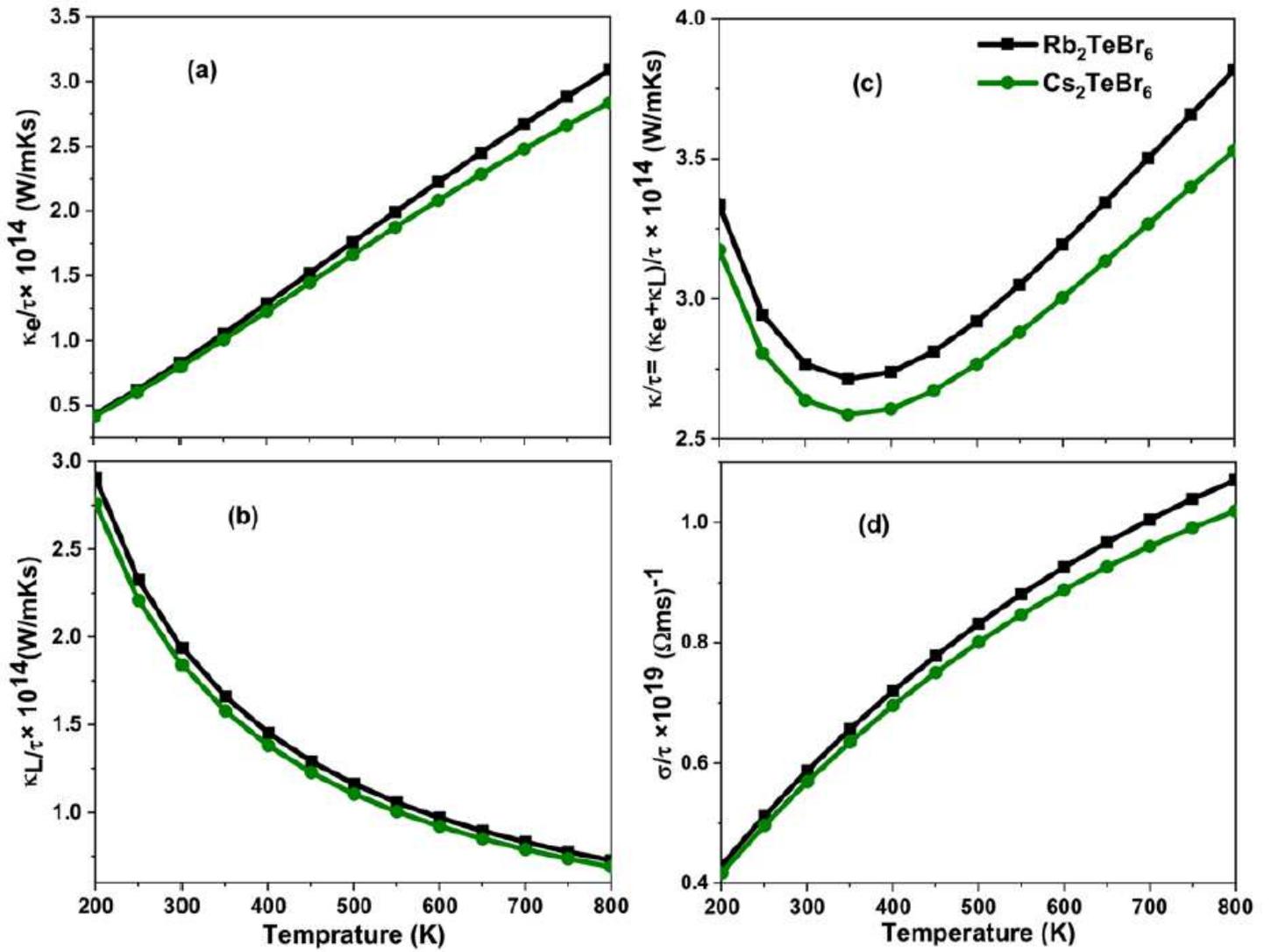


Figure 6

Temperature dependent (a) electronic, κ_e/τ (b) lattice, κ_L/τ and (c) total, κ/τ thermal conductivity and (d) electrical conductivity (σ/τ) of Rb/Cs₂TeBr₆ perovskites

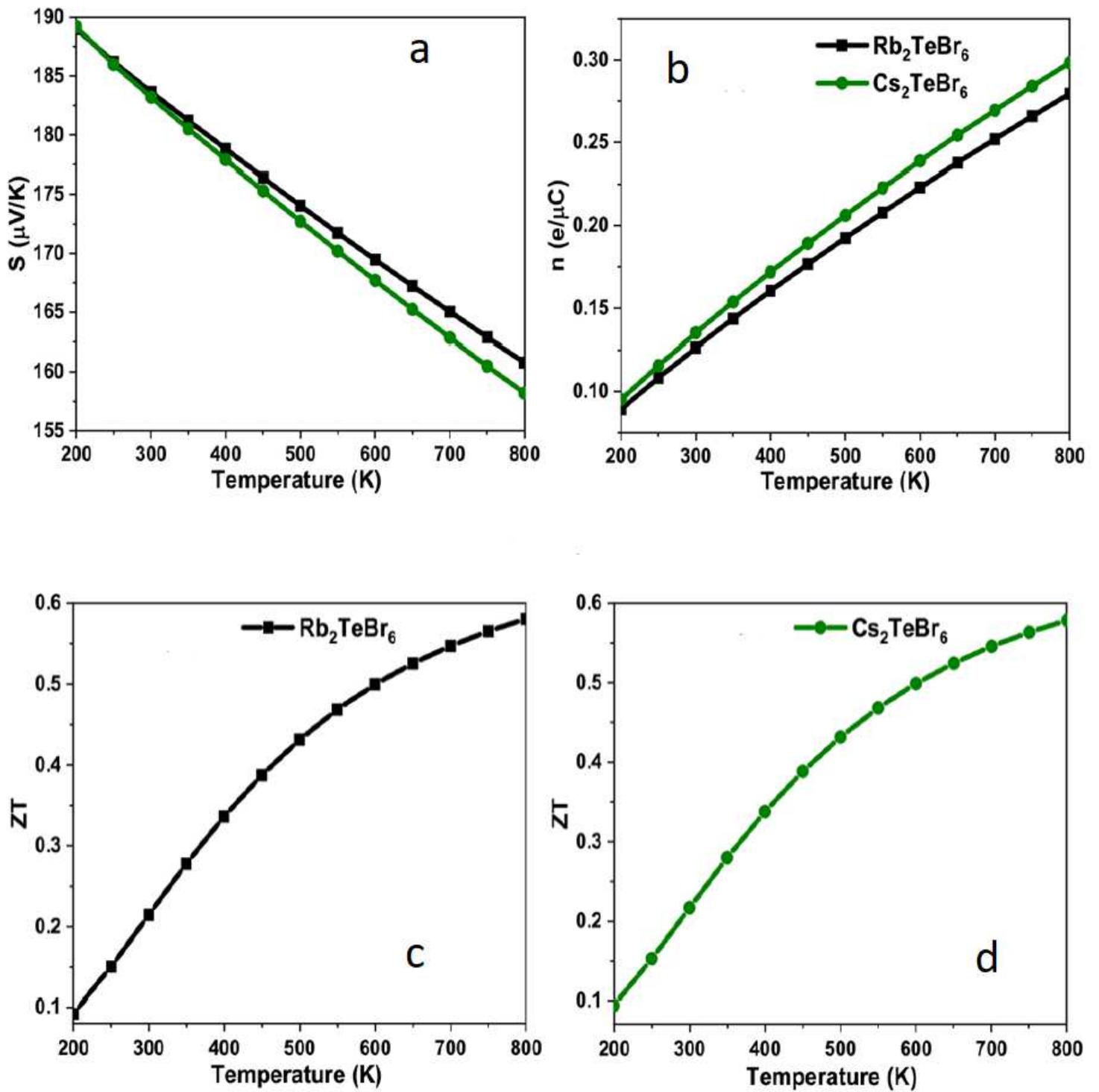


Figure 7

(a) Seebeck coefficient, S (b) carrier concentration (n) of $\text{Rb}/\text{Cs}_2\text{TeBr}_6$ perovskites and Figure of merit, ZT of (c) Rb_2TeBr_6 and (d) Cs_2TeBr_6 at different temperatures