Orbital ordering of layered manganites from resonant soft X-ray scattering

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Abstract

We present measurements of Mn L-edge resonant soft X-ray scattering on single-layered manganites with different sizes of cations. Orbital ordering of Pr\textsubscript{0.5}Ca\textsubscript{1.5}MnO\textsubscript{4} exhibits a stronger three-dimensional character and a dramatically enhanced transition temperature, as compared with those of La\textsubscript{0.5}Sr\textsubscript{1.5}MnO\textsubscript{4}. The c-axis correlation length of orbital ordering in Pr\textsubscript{0.5}Ca\textsubscript{1.5}MnO\textsubscript{4} is about half of the in-plane correlation length. Our results indicate that reduction in one-electron bandwidth and quenched disorder strongly enhances the stabilization of charge–orbital ordering.

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1. Introduction

Physical phenomena, such as colossal magnetoresistance and metal–insulator transition, of correlated electron compounds typically arise from the interplay among the spin, charge, orbital, and lattice degrees of freedom [1]. For example, the colossal magnetoresistance of manganites are strongly affected by the lattice distortion resulting from the Jahn–Teller effect or the sizes of the A-site cations; the latter leads to the change of the effective one-electron bandwidth and quenched disorder. The smaller the average radius \(r_A\) of the A-site cations is, the narrower the bandwidth is. Such a narrowing of bandwidth tends to stabilize the charge–orbital ordering [2]. The mismatch between the ionic radii of divalent and trivalent cations, i.e., quenched disorder, also affect the stabilization of spin and charge–orbital ordering [3,4].

To observe orbital ordering directly is a difficult task. Experimental results of resonant X-ray scattering (RXS) at the Mn 1s threshold of La\textsubscript{0.5}Sr\textsubscript{1.5}MnO\textsubscript{4} have been presented to be direct evidence for orbital ordering [5]. However, RXS detects the 3d charge ordering indirectly via the 1s \(\rightarrow\) 4p transition and the hybridization between 4p and 3d electronic states. Calculations based on a local-density approximation including on-site Coulomb interactions [6,7] and multiple scattering theory [8] indicate that RXS measurements pertain mainly to Jahn–Teller distortion, instead of directly observing 3d orbital ordering. In contrast, resonant soft X-ray scattering around the Mn L-edge (2p \(\rightarrow\) 3d) are dipole-allowed and suitable for probing the Mn 3d charge–orbital orderings directly and with high sensitivity.

Here, we present measurements of Mn L-edge resonant soft X-ray scattering on La\textsubscript{0.5}Sr\textsubscript{1.5}MnO\textsubscript{4} and Pr\textsubscript{0.5}Ca\textsubscript{1.5}MnO\textsubscript{4}...
to measure the transition temperature and the correlation length of the orbital ordering with variations of one-electron bandwidth and quenched disorder.

2. Experimental setup

Single crystals of La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ and Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ were grown with the floating zone method, and were characterized with X-ray diffraction at room temperature. La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ has a larger $\tau_F$ (~1.28 Å) than that of Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ (~1.18 Å); Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ also has a much smaller variance of ionic radii of the A-site ions [9].

We measured resonant soft X-ray scattering on single crystals of La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ and Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ at 90 K with the elliptically polarized-undulator beamline of National Synchrotron Radiation Research Center (NSRRC), Taiwan. Crystals were cut with [1 1 0] surface normal, and aligned in a two-circle soft X-ray diffractometer with the [1 1 0] and [0 0 1] axes defining the scattering plane. The E vector of photons were perpendicular to the scattering plane, and the energy resolution was 0.14 eV at 640 eV.

3. Results and discussion

With measurements of soft X-ray scattering, we found that orbital ordering in both La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ and Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ exhibits a modulation vector ($\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} 0$) in reciprocal lattice units. Fig. 1 shows the photon-energy dependence of the Mn $L$-edge scattering intensities around the $\{00\}$ scans. The correlation length is defined as the inverse of the half-width at the half-maxima in the $q$ scan. The measured $\xi_{110}$ and $\xi_{001}$ are 340 and 75 Å, respectively, for La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$, and 668 and 370 Å for Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$. The results indicate that the in-plane correlation $\xi_{110}$ of Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ about twice of that of La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$. In addition, the ratio of $\xi_{001}/\xi_{110}$ in the orbital ordering of Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ is 0.55, significantly larger than that of La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$, 0.22.

Based on the correlation lengths measured at the same temperature in the two compounds with different ordering temperatures, we show that the reduction in one-electron bandwidth and quenched disorder strongly enhances the stabilization of orbital ordering. Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ also exhibits a more three-dimensional-like orbital ordering than that of La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$.

Fig. 1. Photon-energy dependence of the Mn $L$-edge ($\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} 0$) scattering of La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ and Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$, denoted as LSMO and PCMO, respectively. The inset displays the temperature dependence of the ($\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} 0$) scattering intensities.

Fig. 2. Momentum-transfer dependence of Mn $L$-edge resonant ($\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} 0$) scattering of La$_{0.5}$Sr$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ and Pr$_{0.5}$Ca$_{1.5}$MnO$_4$ along the [1 1 0] and [0 0 1] directions recorded at 90 K.
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References