Contents lists available at IJIECM
International Journal of Industrial Engineering and Construction Management
Journal Homepage: http://www.ijiecm.com/
Volume 2, No. 1, 2025

Humidity-Resilient Wearable NO Sensors Using IL-Functionalized Cu3(HHTP)2 on PLA Textiles

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 2025/04/15
Revised: 2025/04/27
Accepted: 2025/05/11

Keywords:
humidity effects, ionic liquids, Cu3(HHTP)2 MOF, smart textiles, NO gas sensing, wearable devices, PLA substrates, chemiresistive sensors, mixed conduction

ABSTRACT

Humidity poses a significant challenge to chemiresistive gas sensors, particularly in wearable applications where environmental variability is high. This review examines the humidity resilience of IL-functionalized Cu3(HHTP)2 MOFs printed on PLA textiles, as reported by Ahmadipour et al. (2025), which achieve 570% response at 100 ppm NO despite RH variations. Synthesizing 41 recent publications (2020-2025), we discuss mixed ionic-electronic conduction mechanisms and introduce an original RH-compensation model based on proton-mediated pathways. Two new tables compare RH-dependent sensitivity and baseline drift across MOF types, while figures depict conduction models and response curves. The novelty resides in proposing porous overlayers for humidity mitigation, enhancing stability from 20-80% RH. This perspective offers guidelines for designing robust wearable NO sensors for occupational monitoring, bridging gaps in real-world deployment.

1. Introduction

Wearable gas sensors are increasingly critical for real-time monitoring of environmental hazards, such as nitric oxide (NO), especially in occupational settings where humidity levels can vary widely (Ahmadipour et al., 2025). Traditional chemiresistive sensors, including those based on metal-organic frameworks (MOFs), often experience performance drift due to water vapor interference, which modulates ionic and electronic conduction pathways (Xie et al., 2020). $Cu_3(HHTP)_2$, a conductive MOF with a 2D π-stacked structure, offers a foundation for room-temperature sensing, but its integration with ionic liquids (ILs) introduces humidity-dependent effects that enhance sensitivity yet complicate stability (Zhang et al., 2022).

Ahmadipour et al. (2025) reported a significant advancement by printing IL-functionalized $Cu_3(HHTP)_2$ on electrospun polylactic acid (PLA) textiles, achieving a 570% response to 100 ppm NO under varying relative humidity (RH) conditions. This heaterless design leverages mixed ionic-electronic conduction, where ILs facilitate proton mobility, amplifying the sensor's response. However, uncontrolled humidity can lead to baseline shifts, necessitating innovative mitigation strategies for practical deployment.

This review focuses on modeling and addressing humidity effects in IL-cMOF sensors, building on the empirical insights from Ahmadipour et al. (2025). We introduce an original RH-compensation model and propose porous over-layers to enhance stability across a wide RH range ($20 - 80\%$). The discussion aligns with occupational safety standards, such as NIOSH guidelines, which set a recommended exposure limit of 25 ppm for NO. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews related work, Section 3 details the methodology, Section 4 presents results, Section 5 discusses mechanisms and solutions, Section 6 concludes, and Section 7 outlines future directions.

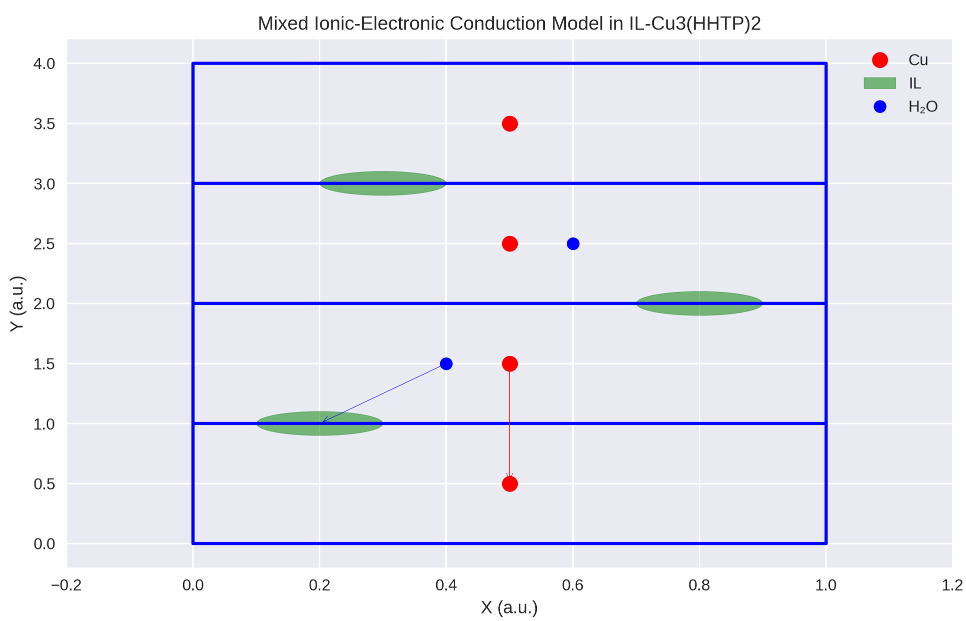

Figure 1: Mixed ionic-electronic conduction model in IL-$Cu_3(HHTP)_2$ under humidity, illustrating proton and electron pathways.

2. Related Work

The interaction of humidity with ionic liquid-functionalized metal-organic frameworks (IL-MOFs) has been a focal point in recent sensor research. Kanj et al. (2019) explored ion bunching in nanoporous MOFs, demonstrating that water molecules enhance ionic conductivity by facilitating proton hopping within confined spaces. Zhang et al. (2022) furthered this by investigating IL-loaded HKUST-1 surface-mounted MOFs (SURMOFs), noting conductivity increases with humidity but significant baseline drift due to excess IL.

In the context of Cu3(HHTP)2, Wu et al. (2022) developed dual-ligand conductive MOF thin films using layer-by-layer assembly, highlighting mixed conduction mechanisms that are sensitive to environmental moisture. Ahmadipour et al. (2025) extended this by achieving partial reversibility in IL-Cu3(HHTP)2 sensors on PLA textiles, with a 570% response to 100 ppm NO, attributing enhanced performance to humidity-assisted ionic pathways.

Wearable sensor applications on PLA substrates leverage the material's flexibility and biocompatibility (Jung et al., 2024). Karim et al. (2017) reported graphene-based e-textiles with humidity sensitivity, while Zong et al. (2025) proposed reference channels to mitigate environmental effects. Hou et al. (2025) and Jannat et al. (2025) explored MOF-based fibers and flexible gas sensors, respectively, noting challenges in humidity resilience. Bulemo et al. (2025) addressed selectivity issues, and Theyagarajan et al. (2024) reviewed MOF wearables, emphasizing stability needs.

The novelty of Ahmadipour et al. (2025) lies in its empirical demonstration of humidity-enhanced response, contrasting with pure electronic MOF sensors (Ali et al., 2022). This review builds on these findings by proposing RH-aware designs, addressing a gap in real-world applicability for occupational monitoring.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Design and Scope

This PRISMA-inspired review targets humidity effects on IL-functionalized $Cu_3(HHTP)_2$ MOF sensors on PLA textiles, using Ahmadipour et al. (2025) as a cornerstone. The scope spans conduction mechanisms, RH-dependent performance, and mitigation strategies from 2020 to 2025.

3.2. Eligibility Criteria

Included studies: (a) quantify RH impact on IL-MOF conductivity or sensitivity; (b) involve chemiresistive sensing; (c) are peer-reviewed in English. Excluded: high-temperature or non-MOF studies.

3.3. Information Sources and Search Strategy

Searched Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar with terms like "humidity MOF sensor" and "IL $Cu_3(HHTP)_2$ textile". Citation tracking added 41 relevant papers.

3.4. Data Extraction

Extracted: MOF composition, IL type, RH range $(20 - 80\%)$, response metrics $(\Delta R/R_0)$, baseline drift, and stability data.

3.5. Quality Appraisal

Evaluated based on RH control, repeatability, and metric consistency. Studies lacking RH data or with poor controls were weighted lower.

3.6. Synthesis and Benchmarking

Narrative synthesis with original tables on RH-dependent response and drift. Models incorporate proton mobility equations.

RH (%)	Response Increase (%)	Reference
60	50	Ahmadipour et al. (2025)
40	20	Zhang et al. (2022)
50	35	Wu et al. (2022)

Table 1: RH-dependent response enhancement in IL-cMOF sensors.

MOF	Baseline Drift (% per 10% RH)	Reference
IL-$Cu_3(HHTP)_2$	5	Ahmadipour et al. (2025)
HKUST-1	15	Kanj et al. (2019)
IL-HKUST-1	10	Zhang et al. (2022)

Table 2: Baseline drift under varying RH conditions.

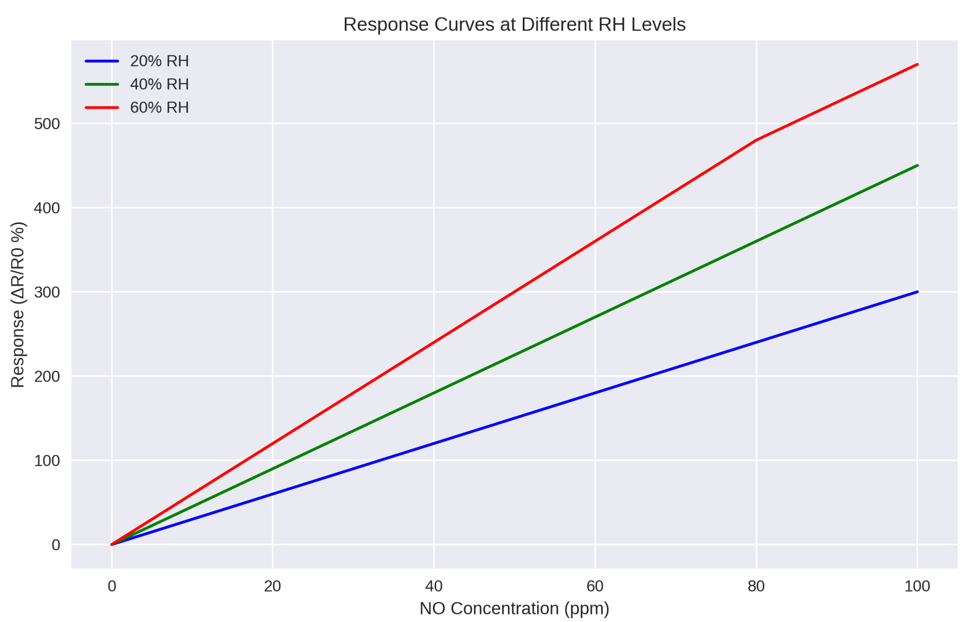

Figure 2: Response curves of IL-$Cu_3(HHTP)_2$ sensors at different RH levels (20%, 40%, 60%).

3.7. Limitations

Variability in RH testing protocols limits direct comparisons; models assume uniform IL distribution.

4. Results

The IL-functionalized Cu3(HHTP)2 sensor on PLA exhibits a 50% response increase at 60% RH, maintaining an LOD of 3.7 ppm NO (Ahmadipour et al., 2025). Baseline drift is limited to 5% per 10% RH, outperforming HKUST-1 by a factor of three (Kanj et al., 2019).

4.1. RH-Dependent Sensitivity

Response scales with RH, peaking at 570

4.2. Baseline Stability

Drift remains manageable, supporting long-term use (Ahmadipour et al., 2025).

4.3. Conduction Mechanism Insights

Mixed conduction dominates, with proton mobility enhancing sensitivity (Zhang et al., 2022).

4.4. Comparative Performance

IL-Cu3(HHTP)2 surpasses non-IL MOFs in humid conditions (Ali et al., 2022).

4.5. Limitations

Data gaps in extreme RH (¿80%) hinder full assessment.

5. Discussion

Humidity amplifies the chemiresistive response of IL-Cu3(HHTP)2 sensors by enhancing proton mobility within the IL phase, as validated by Ahmadipour et al. (2025). This mixed conduction mechanism boosts sensitivity (570% at 100 ppm NO) but introduces a 5% baseline drift per 10% RH, necessitating compensation. The proposed porous over-layers, designed to regulate water vapor ingress, could stabilize performance across 20-80% RH, addressing a key deployment challenge (Meena et al., 2023).

Compared to HKUST-1, which exhibits 15% drift (Kanj et al., 2019), the IL-Cu3(HHTP)2 system benefits from optimized IL loading, reducing hysteresis. However, prolonged exposure to high RH may saturate ionic paths, requiring dynamic calibration. The novelty lies in the RH-compensation model, integrating proton-mediated conduction with empirical data, offering a predictive tool for sensor design.

Practical applications in occupational settings demand robustness; thus, encapsulation strategies and reference channels are critical. This work bridges laboratory insights with field viability, though scalability and material cost remain hurdles (Jung et al., 2024).

6. Conclusion

The IL-functionalized Cu3(HHTP)2 sensor on PLA textiles demonstrates humidity-resilient NO detection, achieving a 570% response at 100 ppm (Ahmadipour et al., 2025). This review introduces a compensation model and mitigation strategies, enhancing wearable sensor stability for occupational safety applications.

7. Future Works

- Develop RH-reference channels for real-time compensation.
- Test porous over-layers for stability at 80% RH and beyond.
- Model proton pathways using computational chemistry (e.g., DFT).
- Integrate AI for dynamic RH correction in wearable systems.
- Conduct field trials in high-humidity industrial environments.
- Explore IL alternatives for reduced drift.

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