

UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

PREDICTIVE MODELLING OF NANOFLUIDS THERMOPHYSICAL PROPERTIES USING MACHINE LEARNING

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FS 2021 31



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Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2021

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents (Mr Tajudeen Alade & Mrs Abiodun Felicia Alade). Without their vision and supports, this work would not have been completed.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

PREDICTIVE MODELLING OF NANOFLUIDS THERMOPHYSICAL PROPERTIES USING MACHINE LEARNING

By

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March 2021

Chairman : Mohd Amiruddin Abd Rahman, PhD Faculty : Science

Nanofluid plays significant roles in different application areas as a result of its enhanced thermal properties. Thus, studying the thermophysical properties of nanofluids has enormous technological benefits. Traditionally, the evaluations of these properties have been undertaken by experimental approaches which can be time-consuming, laborious and costly. Consequently, many researchers have developed empirical models to predict nanofluids properties. Unfortunately, many of these models grossly underestimate or overestimate the experimental values of the thermophysical properties. Hence, there is a need to develop a better approach to overcome the stated problems with the empirical models. In this regards, there have recently been series of efforts aimed at developing machine learning (ML)-based models to address the above challenges. This thesis aimed to develop machine learning algorithms to estimate the thermophysical properties of commonly used nanofluids. The machine learning algorithms used in this thesis comprise support vector regression (SVR) and artificial neural network (ANN) developed in a MATLAB computing environment. The optimization of the machine learning parameters was conducted using the Genetic Algorithm or the Bayesian Optimization Algorithm techniques. The first part of the thesis deals with modelling and prediction of the viscosity of nanofluids while the second part deals with modelling the specific heat capacity of nanofluids. For the viscosity, a systematic study of various factors that affect the viscosity of nanofluids was conducted, the results showed that an accurate prediction of viscosity of nanofluids can be accomplished using the following input parameters; volume fraction of the nanoparticles, the fluid temperature, the size of the nanoparticles, and the density of the nanoparticles. Furthermore, the four-input BSVR model proposed in this thesis showed over 50 per cent improvement in results over the five-input ANN-based model already presented in the literature and at the same time exhibits significantly improved accuracy over the existing empirical models.

For the specific heat capacity study, the following nanofluids were modelled; Al_2O_3 water, Al₂O₃-ethylene glycol (EG), CuO-water, nitrides-ethylene glycol (EG). The results of the machine learning models for each of the nanofluids were compared with simple mixing theory (model I) and thermal equilibrium based model (model II) to highlight the accuracy of the proposed techniques. For the Al₂O₃-water nanofluid, the model accuracy as measured by root mean square error (RMSE) obtained for the model I, model II, and the developed GA/SVR are 4.39×10^{-1} J/gK, 6.67 x 10^{-2} J/gK, and 1.4 x 10^{-3} J/gK, respectively. The GA/SVR results for Al₂O₃-water exhibits better accuracy than model I and Model II. In the case of Al₂O₃-EG nanofluids, the developed technique comprises of hybridization of Bayesian optimization algorithm with support vector regression (BSVR). The RMSE values obtained are $1.75 \times 10^{-1} \text{ J/gK}$, $2.77 \times 10^{-2} \text{ J/gK}$ and 4.7 x 10⁻³ J/gK for the Model I, Model II and BSVR model, respectively. The BSVR exhibited at least an order(s) magnitude improvement for the prediction of Al₂O₃-EG nanofluids compared to both existing models. A similar improvement in accuracy was obtained using machine learning for the CuO-water and nitrides-ethylene glycol (EG) nanofluids. The machine models developed in this thesis are significantly better than the other existing theoretical models for all the classes of nanofluid modelled. In summary, this thesis demonstrates that machine learning-based approaches can provide more precise prediction results for specific heat capacity and viscosity of nanofluids than existing empirical/classical models. These results will be useful for experimentalists working on nanofluids design and applications.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PEMODELAN RAMALAN SIFAT FIZIKAL HABA NANO BENDALIR MENGGUNAKAN PEMBELAJARAN MESIN

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Nano bendalir memainkan peranan penting dalam pelbagai bidang aplikasi untuk mempertingkatkan sifat haba. Oleh itu, kajian tentang sifat fizikal haba memberi banyak faedah dalam teknologi. Penilaian sifat-sifat yang dilakukan secara tradisional boleh memakan masa yang agak lama, sukar dan agak mahal. Kesannya, ramai penyelidik telah mengembangkan model empirik untuk meramal sifat nano bendalir. Namun demikian, kebanyakan model ini mendapat kurang anggaran atau terlebih anggaran nilai eksperimen sifat fizikal haba. Oleh itu, perkembangan yang lebih baik perlu dilakukan dalam menangani masalah dalam meramal sifat nano bendalir. Dengan itu, terdapat beberapa kajian telah dilakukan tertumpu kepada perkembangan model berasaskan pembelajaran mesin untuk mengatasi masalah yang telah dinyatakan di atas. Tesis ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan penggunaan pembelajaran mesin dalam menganggar sifat fizikal haba bagi nano bendalir yang biasa digunakan. Algoritma pembelajaran mesin yang digunakan dalam tesis ini merangkumi mesin vektor sokongan (SVR) dan rangkain neural buatan (ANN) yang telah dibangunkan meggunakan persekitaran pengkomputeran MATLAB. Pengoptimuman parameter pembelajaran mesin telah dibuat menggunakan teknik algoritma Genetik atau algoritma pengoptimuman bayesan. Bahagian pertama tesis ini berkenaan dengan kelikatan nano bendalir dan bahagian kedua adalah berkenaan dengan kajian kapasiti haba nano bendalir. Untuk kelikatan, kajian sistematik terhadap beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi kelikatan nano bendalir dilakukan dan hasilnya menunjukkan bahawa ramalan kelikatan nano bendalir yang tepat dapat dicapai dengan menggunakan parameter input berikut; pecahan isipadu zarah nano, suhu bendalir, ukuran zarah nano, dan ketumpatan zarah nano.

Tambahan pula, empat input bagi model BSVR yang diusulkan dalam tesis ini menunjukkan peningkatan hasil lebih daripada 50 peratus berbanding model berasaskan lima input bagi ANN yang telah dibentangkan dalam literatur dan pada masa yang sama memperlihatkan peningkatan ketepatan yang ketara berbanding model empirikal yang sedia ada. Untuk kajian kapasiti haba tertentu, nan bendalir berikut dimodelkan; Al₂O₃-

air, Al₂O₃-etilina glikol (EG), CuO-air, nitrida-etilena glikol (EG). Hasil model pembelajaran mesin untuk setiap nano bendalir dibandingkan dengan teori pencampuran sederhana (model I) dan model berdasarkan keseimbangan haba (model II) untuk menonjolkan ketepatan teknik yang dicadangkan. Untuk Al₂O₃-air, ketepatan model vang diukur dengan punca min ralat kuasa dua (RMSE) yang diperoleh untuk model I, model II, dan perkembangan GA/SVR masing-masing ialah 4.39 x 10⁻¹ J/gK, 6.67 x 10⁻¹ ² J/gK, and 1.4 x 10⁻³ J/gK. Hasil ketepatan GA/SVR bagi Al₂O₃-air lebih baik dari model I dan Model II. Bagi kes Al₂O₃-EG, teknik yang dikembangkan terdiri daripada penghibridan algoritma pengoptimuman Bayesan dengan regresi vektor sokongan (BSVR). RMSE yang diperoleh masing-masing adalah 1.75 x 10⁻¹ J/gK, 2.77 x 10⁻² J/gK and 4.7 x 10⁻³ J/gK untuk Model I, Model II dan model BSVR. BSVR menunjukkan sekurang-kurangnya sedikit peningkatan magnitud untuk ramalan Al₂O₃-EG berbanding dengan kedua-dua model yang sedia ada. Peningkatan ketepatan yang serupa diperoleh menggunakan pembelajaran mesin untuk CuO-air dan nitrida-etilena glikol (EG). Perkembangan model mesin dalam tesis ini jauh lebih baik daripada model teori lain yang sedia ada untuk semua jenis model nano bendalir. Kesimpulannya, tesis ini menunjukkan bahawa pendekatan berasaskan pembelajarn mesin dapat memberikan hasil ramalan yang lebih tepat untuk kapasiti haba dan kelikatan nano bendalir tertentu jika dibandingkan dengan model empirikal yang sedia ada. Hasil ini akan berguna bagi para eksperimental yang mengusahakan reka bentuk dan penemuan nano bendalir.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I wish to express my gratitude to Almighty Allah for giving me the opportunity to complete this dissertation. Second, I would like to thank my late mother and father for their tremendous effort on me and their vision to educate me and my siblings even with the very limited resources at their disposal. Without their efforts, I will not be in a position to complete the thesis. May Allah continue to show His mercy on them. Third, the understanding of my family; Kamilat Mopelola (my wife), Ibrahim Ibraheem (son) and Fatima Ibrahim (daughter) also played a key role in the successful completion of this thesis.

Lastly, I would like to appreciate the effort of my supervisory team including Dr Mohd Amiruddin Abd Rahman, Associate Professor Dr. Zulkifly Abbas and Dr Yazid Yaakob. They all supported me morally and academically during the period of my candidature. Their continuous encouragement played a significant role in the completion of the thesis. An important mentor worthy of acknowledgement is Dr Tawfik Saleh. I deeply appreciate his commitment to nurturing students' growth. This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Declaration by graduate student

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

			Page				
ABSTRA	АСТ		i				
ABSTRA	K		iii				
ACKNO	WLEDG	JEMENTS	v				
APPROVAL							
DECLA	DECLARATION						
LIST OF	LIST OF TABLES						
LIST OF	F FIGUR	ES	xv				
LIST OF	F APPEN	DICES	xviii				
LIST OF	F ABBRE	EVIATIONS	xix				
CHAPTI	ER						
1	INTTO		1				
1		Overview	1				
	1.1	Machina Learning: A New Frontier in Science	1				
	1.2	Drohlem Statement	2				
	1.5	Problem Statement	2				
	1.4	Structure of the thesis	3				
	1.5	Significance of the study					
	1.0	biginitedice of the study	5				
2	LITE	RATURE REVIEW	6				
	2.1	Introduction	6				
	2.2	Thermal conductivity	7				
	2.3	Viscosity of nanofluids	8				
	2.4	Specific heat capacity of nanofluids	15				
3	MOD	ELLING AND PREDICTION OF RELATIVE					
	VISC	OSITY OF NANOFLUIDS USING ARTIFICIAL					
	NEUI	RAL NETWORK AND BAYESIAN SUPPORT					
	VEC	FOR REGRESSION	18				
	3.1	Materials and Methods	19				
		3.1.1 Support vector regression (SVR) model	22				
		3.1.2 Hyperparameter optimization	24				
		3.1.3 Bayesian Optimization	25				
		3.1.4 Artificial neural networks (ANN) model	26				
		3.1.5 Evaluation of Model Performance.	28				
	2.2	3.1.6 Computational Procedures	28				
	3.2	Theoretical modelling	30				
	5.3	Result and Discussion	30				
		5.5.1 BSVK Modelling- Influence of various input	20				
		COMDINATIONS	30				
		3.3.2 The Optimal D5 vK models 3.3.3 ANN models: Our model and reported models	32 24				
	3 /	Summary	54 26				
	5.4	Summary	50				

 \bigcirc

3.3 MO	Copyright permission	
	DELLING AND PREDICTION OF SPECIFIC HEAT	
	ACITY OF NITRIDES/ETHYLENE GLYCOL-BASED	
NA	OFLUIDS USING SUPPORT VECTOR REGRESSION	
4.1	Introduction	•
4.2	Methodology	
	4.2.1 Support vector regression	
	4.2.2 Bayesian Optimization (BO) Strategy	
4.3	Analysis of the dataset	
4.4	Computational study- Bayesian/Support vector	
	regression	
4.5	Results	
	4.5.1 Performance of empirical models	
	4.5.2 Evaluation of proposed BSVR model.	
	4.5.3 Comparison of SVR models with empirical models	
46	Summary	
47	Copyright permission	
,	copyright permission	
мо	DELING AND PREDICTION OF THE SPECIFIC HEAT	
CAI	ACITY OF AL O'/WATER NANOFLUIDS USING	
	RID CENETIC ALCORITHM/SUPPORT VECTOR	
DE(PRESSION MODEL	
5 1	Introduction	
5.1	Materials and methods	
5.2	5.2.1 Detect analyzia	
	5.2.2 Dataset allalysis	
	5.2.2 Basic understanding of support vector	
	regression	
	5.2.5 Genetic Algorithm Optimization of SVR	
	parameters	
	5.2.4 The proposed GA-SVR model	
5.3	Results and discussion	
	5.3.1 Model reliability and accuracy	
	5.3.2 Effect of Volume fraction on Specific heat	
	capacity	
5.4	Summary	
5.5	Copyright permission	
APF	LICATION OF SUPPORT VECTOR REGRESSION	
ANI) ARTIFICIAL NEURAL NETWORK FOR	
PRF	DICTION OF SPECIFIC HEAT CAPACITY OF	
AQ	JEOUS NANOFLUIDS COPPER OXIDE	
6.1	Introduction	
6.2	Methodology	
	6.2.1 Support Vector Machine (SVM) Method	
	6.2.2 Artificial Neural Network (ANN) Method	
6.3	Statistical Details of Dataset	
6.4	Computational methodology	
	Computational methodology	
6.5	Results and Discussions	
6.5	Results and Discussions 6.5.1 Assessment of the proposed models	

xi

G

		6.5.2 Models Comparison	80		
	6.6	Summary	84		
	6.7	Copyright permission	84		
7	PREI	DICTING THE SPECIFIC HEA T CAPACITY OF			
	ALUI	MINA/ ETHYLENE GLYCOL NANOFLUIDS USING			
	SUPP	ORT VECTOR REGRESSION MODEL OPTIMIZED			
	WITI	H BAYESIAN ALGORITHM	85		
	7.1	Materials and methods	87		
		7.1.1 Support Vector Machine	87		
		7.1.2 Descriptions of Bayesian Optimization (BO)			
		Strategy	90		
		7.1.3 Descriptors and Statistical Analysis of Dataset	92		
		7.1.4 Bayesian Support vector regression:			
		Computational procedures and results	93		
	7.2	Results and discussions	95		
	7.3	Assessing the accuracy of the proposed model.	96		
		7.3.1 Effect of Volume fraction on Specific heat			
		capacity	101		
	7.4	Conclusion	102		
	7.5	Copyright permission	103		
8	CON	CLUSION	104		
	8.1	Significant Contribution: Viscosity of nanofluids	104		
	8.2	Significant Contribution: Specific heat capacity	105		
	8.3	Recommendation	106		
REF	ERENCE	is the second	107		
APP	APPENDICES				
BIO	BIODATA OF STUDENT				
LIST	OF PUB	BLICATIONS	221		
	-				

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF TABLES		
Table		Page
2.1	Review of previous machine learning studies on viscosity prediction	12
2.2	Framework of the research chapters in the thesis	17
3.1	Summary of the dataset used for the prediction of nanofluids viscosity	21
3.2	Statistical description of the dataset	22
3.3	Pearson's correlation between model inputs and the viscosity of nanofluids	22
3.4	Bayesian optimization procedures	26
3.5	Summary of common theoretical/empirical models for viscosity prediction	30
3.6	BSVR re <mark>sults of single input for modelling viscosity</mark> of nanofluids	31
3.7	BSVR results of two-input for modelling viscosity of nanofluids	31
3.8	BSVR results of three-input for modelling viscosity of nanofluids	32
3.9	BSVR results of four-input for modelling viscosity of nanofluids	32
3.10	BSVR results of five-input for modelling viscosity of nanofluids	32
3.11	Optimum SVR hyperparameters based on the best four model inputs $(T,S,V_{\rm f},d)$	33
3.12	Error index for the developed ANN (Net1) model and Heidari et al., 2016 model (Net2), for training and testing dataset	35
4.1	Pearson's correlation between the input features and the specific heat capacity of the nanofluids	43
4.2	The statistical descriptions of the datasets for nitrides/ethylene glycol- based nanofluid	44
4.3	Physical properties of the nanoparticles [174]	44
4.4	The optimal SVR parameters values for the prediction of the specific heat capacity of nitrides/ethylene glycol-based nanofluids	45

4.5	Performance of model I, model II and the proposed BSVR model for predicting the specific heat capacity of various nitrides/ethylene glycol nanofluid	48
5.1	Basic Statistical description of the experimental dataset for Al2O3 /water nanofluids	58
5.2	Optimized parameters for the proposed GA-SVR model	63
5.3	Comparison of proposed BSVR and existing analytic models	64
6.1	Dataset description of the SHC of CuO/water nanofluids	75
6.2	Pearson's correlation between model' inputs with SHC of CuO/EG	76
6.3	Optimised hyperparameters for the SVR model proposed	76
7.1	Pearson correlation between the input features and specific heat capacities of the nanofluid	93
7.2	Basic statistical description of the experimental dataset for Al2O3/ ethylene glycol nanofluids	93
7.3	Optimised SVR parameters for prediction of the specific heat capacity of Al ₂ O ₃ /EG nanofluid	94
7.4	Comparison of proposed BSVR and existing analytic models	97

6

LIST OF FIGURES

1	Figure	Page
1	1.1 Frequency of application of machine learning to nanofluid studies	3
2	2.1 An overview of nanofluids and thermophysical properties	7
2	2.2 Frequency of various thermophysical properties as contained in th literature	e 7
2	3.1 The architecture of the proposed ANN model (MLP)	27
	3.2 A simple illustration of the ANN procedure	29
3	3.3 Cross plot between the BSVR prediction and experimental results of the relative viscosity of nanofluid for (a) the training datase Correlation coefficient: 99.94 %, RMSE: 0.0492 and (b) testin dataset. Correlation coefficient: 99.74 %, RMSE: 0.1033	of t. g 33
3	3.4 A plot showing agreement between the BSVR prediction and th experimental values of the relative viscosity of nanofluids for th (a) training dataset and (b) testing dataset	e e 33
3	3.5 Combined cross plot of ANN prediction results and the actual value of the relative viscosity of nanofluids for the (a) training dataset an (b) testing dataset	s d 35
3	3.6 Comparison of proposed models (BSVR & ANN) with existin models for the prediction of the relative nanofluid viscosity	g 35
2	4.1 Bayesian Optimization Strategy- demonstration of the Bayesia optimization process for three iterations ($t = 2, 3, 4$). The plot revealed the objective function f () modelled by a probabilisti	n :s
	surrogate function (upper blue plots) with a posterior mean	45
	4.2 Flowchart for proposed Bayesian –support vector regression	46
	4.3 Training data cross-curve between the predicted value an experimental value of the specific heat capacities of nitrides (AlN Si ₃ N ₄ , TiN) / ethylene glycol-based nanofluids (coefficient of determination R 99 69 %)	d I, of 40
		+2
	4.4 Testing data cross- curve between predicted values and experimenta values of specific heat capacities of nitrides/ ethylene glycol-base (coefficient of determination R, 99.78 %)	ıl d 50
2	4.5 The Residual curve for training data	50

4.6	The Residual curve for testing data	51
4.7	A comparison of BSVR prediction and experimental results of specific heat capacities of nanofluids of nitrides and ethylene glycol	51
4.8	Comparison of prediction results of BSVR, Model I and Model II with experimental values	53
5.1	Flowchart for the proposed GA-SVR model	62
5.2	Graphical comparison of various errors obtained from GA/SVR model and existing analytic models	65
5.3	Cross-plot between the predicted and experimental values of the specific heat capacity of Al ₂ O ₃ /water nanofluids for training data	65
5.4	Cross-plot between the predicted and experimental values of the specific heat capacity of Al ₂ O ₃ /water nanofluids for testing data	66
5.5	Residual plot for the training dataset	66
5.6	Residual plot for the testing dataset	67
5.7	Comparison of the experimental and GA/SVR model results during the training phase	67
5.8	Comparison of the experimental and GA/SVR model results during the testing phase	68
5.9	Comparison of the experimental, Model I, Model II and GA/SVR model results during the testing	68
5.10	Effect of nanoparticles volume fraction on the specific heat capacity of Al_2O_3 /water nanofluid	69
6.1	The architecture of the proposed ANN (MLP) methods.	74
6.2	Relationship between experimental and SVR prediction results for the SHC of CuO/water nanofluids (training dataset). Correlation coefficient obtained is 99.99 %	77
6.3	Relationship between experimental and ANN prediction results for the SHC of CuO/water nanofluids (training dataset). Correlation coefficient obtained is 99.99 %	78
6.4	Relationship between experimental and SVR prediction results for the SHC of CuO/water nanofluids (testing dataset). Correlation coefficient obatined is 99.99 %	78

6.5	Relationship between experimental and ANN prediction results for the SHC of CuO/water nanofluids (testing dataset). Correlation coefficient obtained is 99.97 %	79
6.6	Residual analysis for the developed model. (a) training dataset (b) testing dataset	80
6.7	Comparing experimental values with SVR model predictions for CuO/water nanofluids(training data)	82
6.8	Comparing SVR model predictions with experimental results for testing datasets	82
6.9	Comparing the SHC of CuO/water nanofluids. (a) experimental results (b) SVR predictions (c) Model I (d) Model II	83
6.10	Comparison of different models performance (RMSE)	83
7.1	Bayesian Optimization Strategy [128]	92
7.2	Flowchart for proposed Bayesian-Support vector algorithm	95
7.3	raphical comparison of various errors obtained from our model and existing analytic models (left) MAE, (middle) AARD, (right) RMSE	98
7.4	Cross-plot between the predicted and experimental values of the specific heat capacity of Al ₂ O ₃ /EG nanofluids for training data	99
7.5	Cross-plot between the predicted and experimental values of the specific heat capacity of Al ₂ O ₃ /EG nanofluids for testing data	99
7.6	Comparison of the experimental and BSVR model results for Al ₂ O ₃ / EG nanofluid during the training	100
7.7	Comparison of the experimental and BSVR model results for Al_2O_3/EG nanofluid using testing data	100
7.8	Comparison of the experimental, proposed BSVR and existing analytical model results for Al_2O_3/EG	101
7.9	Effect of nanoparticles' volume fraction on the specific heat capacity of Al ₂ O ₃ /ethylene glycol nanofluid	102

6

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix I		
A1	The training dataset for prediction of relative viscosity of nanofluids	129
A2	Testing dataset for prediction of relative viscosity of nanofluids	168
A3	Comparison of results of machine learning models with existing models	185
A4	List of different inputs combinations and the associated ML optimal parameters and accuracy	199
A5	Code for BSVR implementation	201
В	Dataset for prediction of nitrides/ethylene glycol nanofluids using BSVR	204
C1	Dataset for modelling the specific heat capacity of Al ₂ O ₃ in water using GA/SVR method	207
C2	Code for GA/SVM	211
D	Dataset for the prediction of the specific heat capacity of CuO in water using Bayesian support vector regression and artificial neural neural network	212
Е	Dataset for the prediction of the specific heat capacity of Alumina in Ethylene glycol using Bayesian support vector regression	216

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AARD	absolute average relative error
ANN	artificial neural network
\mathbb{R}^2	coefficient of correlation
DI	deionised
d_n	density of nanoparticles
EG	ethylene glycol
MLP	multilayer perception
PG	propylene glycol
S	size of nanoparticles
SVR	support vector regression
Т	temperature
μ_{bf}	viscosity of basefluids
μ_{nf}	viscosity of nanofluids
φ_p, V_f	volume fraction of nanoparticles
b	bias term
С	box constraint
d	degree of polynomial.
e	epsilon
П	Euclidean norm
f(x)	objective function to minimize

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Energy is one of the core issues at the centre of the world's attention that physicists, chemists, material scientists, engineers and others are constantly seeking innovative means to ensure its optimum management [1]. Fundamentally, the development of methodologies for heat transfer enhancement and reduction of energy losses in the traditional and new energy sources are key components in dealing with the problems of energy wastage and harvesting [2]. Over the past few decades, researchers have pursued the use of extended-surface thermal control techniques, which include fins and microchannel in various electromechanical systems such as refrigerating, air-conditioning and cooling systems [2]. However, further improvement in terms of heat transfer enhancement using these techniques is limited due to geometric constraints in designs.

This limitation has paved way for the invention of a novel heat transfer approach that could enhance the capability of the existing heat transfer methodologies. The new mechanism involves controlling the thermal property of the cooling fluids through the suspension nanoparticles in conventional cooling fluids such as water, ethylene glycol, propene glycol, engine oil, transformer oil. Because the thermal conductivities of nanoparticles are substantially higher than conventional fluids. The introduction of a controlled amount of nanoparticles can dramatically increase the heat transfer ability of the base fluids [3]. These innovative fluids referred to as "nanofluids" was proposed by Choi in 1995 [4]. In their seminar work, they highlighted that when nanoparticles are suspended in base fluids, there is a three-fold thermal conductivity improvement in the base fluids. When such fluids are used in heat transfer equipment, the rate of heat transfer of the equipment doubles without increasing its pumping power. Using a conventional base fluid, a comparable increase in the rate of heat transfer is obtained by increasing the pumping power 10 times. This demonstrates that with nanofluids, energy optimization can be accomplished.

Since the invention, studies on nanofluids continue to grow in leaps and bounds. Currently, over 2500 journal articles have been published in the year 2020 which covers a broad spectrum of interests such as experimental, theoretical, pure and applied research. The impacts of nanofluids have been investigated in several different areas such as solar technology [5], automobile [6], refrigeration [7], heat exchangers [8]. Because of the central role played by thermophysical properties of nanofluids in the mentioned applications, many studies have been devoted to measuring the thermophysical property of nanofluids such as thermal conductivity, viscosity, density, specific heat capacity and thermal diffusivity. Amongst these properties, thermal conductivity and viscosity are the most investigated properties while the density and

specific heat capacity of nanofluids have received lesser attention to date [9]. It is important to mention that these thermophysical properties are interrelated, they are connected through one relation or the other. In other words, to fully characterize a thermal fluid for potential applications, the values of the thermophysical properties must be known [10].

The most reliable ways to determine the values of the thermophysical properties of nanofluids is via experimental measurements. However, there are specific challenges in relying exclusively on these methods. Examples of these challenges include, preparation of very stable nanofluids is not trivial, the cost of nanomaterials and measuring equipment can be significant for lab with limited funding and the process of preparing and measuring the nanofluids can be intensive especially when large samples are involved [11]. Modelling the thermophysical properties has been adopted as a way to mitigate some of the challenges mentioned above. Numerous classical models and empirical models have been developed in the literature in an attempt to forecast the thermal properties of the nanofluids [12]. In many instances, they are inadequate to accurately model the experimental results due to underlying assumptions used in their formulation [11]. To reduce the forecasting errors obtained from classical or empirical models, researchers have turned to machine learning techniques to predict nanofluids properties [11].

1.2 Machine Learning: A New Frontier in Science

Learning from data is one of the most attractive sciences in the 21st century with applications covering a gamut of disciplines such as astronomy, finance, engineering. Machine learning (ML) can uncover hidden insight from data using algorithms to learn the relationship between inputs and output [13]. Machine learning teaches the computer to derive insight from existing data thereby presenting interesting opportunities which allow for future prediction of structure-property in material science and engineering. Interestingly, ML has shown superhuman capabilities in many real-life practical tasks [14] such as a self-driving car [15], image classification [16], [17] and Playing Go [18]. Many aspects of our daily life such as email/spam classification [19]–[22], fraud detection [23], image and speech recognition have been simplified by the use of ML algorithm.

Laboratories across the globe generate phenomena amount of data on daily basis. This reality has made the use of ML for various applications quite popular recently. In a nutshell, ML presents us with a unique opportunity to learn something new from existing data. This thesis is formulated against the backdrop of the excellent opportunities which ML techniques offer in applied science. Specifically, the application of ML to the modelling of the thermophysical properties of nanofluids is the main focus of this thesis. Figure 1-1 shows the number of studies on nanofluids where ML techniques have been employed. As observed, there is a growing trend in the application of ML in the study of nanofluids.



Figure 1.1 : Frequency of application of machine learning to nanofluid studies (Science direct, Sept 2020)

1.3 Problem Statement

To gain insight into the suitability of different nanofluids for heat transfer applications, the knowledge of thermophysical properties is very paramount. Over the years, the values of these properties have been obtained using the experimental approach. However, since the process of synthesis and measurements of nanofluid properties is intensive, time-consuming and costly. Therefore, a rapid estimation of the thermophysical property using ML techniques has become a highly attractive tool [24]. This thesis focuses on employing ML techniques for improving the prediction accuracy of the thermophysical property of nanofluids. This approach is justified because the existing classical models exhibit large prediction errors from the experimental [24]. Therefore, it is essential to formulate predictive models capable of accurate estimation of these properties without the need to conduct experiments frequently.

1.4 Research Objectives

The goal of this thesis is to be able to make highly accurate predictions of nanofluids properties to a degree superior to the available classical models by using ML algorithms with optimization techniques. The main objective of this thesis is to formulate predictive models for viscosity and specific heat capacity of nanofluids using ML algorithms.

The following are the specific objectives that this thesis addresses;

- I. Modelling and prediction of viscosity of nanofluids using artificial neural network and Bayesian support vector regression algorithm. Under this objective, a systematic investigation of the influence of various parameters on viscosity prediction was conducted.
- II. Modelling and prediction of specific heat capacity of nitrides nanoparticles suspended in ethylene glycol using Bayesian support vector regression. The nitrides nanoparticles considered are aluminum nitride, titanium nitrides and silicon nitrides.
- III. Modelling and prediction of specific heat capacity of Al₂O₃ nanoparticles suspended in water using hybrid genetic algorithm and support vector regression.
- IV. Modelling and prediction of specific heat capacity of aqueous nanofluids of copper oxide using support vector regression and artificial neural network optimized with bayesian optimization.
- V. Modelling and prediction of the specific heat capacity of alumina/ ethylene glycol nanofluids using support vector regression model optimized with bayesian optimization.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured as a publication-based dissertation where each of the above research objectives represents research chapters that are already published in international journals. The general structure of the thesis is described as follows.

Chapter one introduces the innovative fluids referred to as nanofluids. This chapter also covers research objectives and the significance of the proposed study.

Chapter two examines the literature reviews covering existing ML-based studies on the thermophysical properties of nanofluids.

Chapter three covers the modelling and prediction of relative viscosity of diverse nanofluids using artificial neural network and support vector regression optimized by Bayesian algorithm. The effect of various commonly used descriptors was also investigated to know the best set of descriptors that yield the most accurate results. A comparison of the developed models with the existing ANN model and the theoretical models was conducted in this chapter.

Chapter four discusses the modelling of the specific heat capacity of aluminum nitrides, titanium nitrides, and silicon nitrides all dispersed in ethylene glycol using the support vector regression and Bayesian optimization.

Chapter five deals with modelling the specific heat capacity of Al_2O_3 in water. This chapter discusses the application of support vector regression coupled with a genetic algorithm.

Chapter six examines the use of artificial neural network and support vector regression model for predicting the specific heat capacity of aqueous CuO nanofluids. A Comparison was made between the predictive performance of the artificial neural network and the support vector regression model. Both SVR and ANN were optimized using Bayesian optimization.

Chapter seven deals with the accurate modelling and prediction specific heat capacity of alumina suspended in ethylene glycol using support vector regression hybridized with Bayesian optimization.

Chapter eight provides the general conclusion and future recommendations relating to the use of ML for predicting the thermophysical properties of nanofluids.

It is essential to point out that for each of the above research objectives, the developed models for the nanofluids materials were benchmarked with the appropriate existing models to highlights the improvement in accuracy obtained using ML techniques over the existing theoretical models.

1.6 Significance of the study

The focus of this thesis has to do with deriving insights and patterns from experimental data to make accurate predictions of nanofluids properties using ML algorithms. Specifically, this thesis provided ML-based models that can rapidly and accurately estimate the viscosity of a wide range of nanofluids. Furthermore, for specific nanofluids with technological importance, ML models were selectively developed for predicting the specific heat capacity of the nanofluids from basic input parameters. In general, ML-based results obtained show a greater accuracy compared to the traditional modelling approaches like correlations-based or empirical-based models that predict the thermophysical properties of nanofluids with lesser accuracy. The ability to predict nanofluids properties with high accuracy facilitates the fast and reliable design of heat transfer applications.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Alade, Ibrahim Olanrewaju, Mohd Amiruddin Abd Rahman, and Tawfik A. Saleh. "An approach to predict the isobaric specific heat capacity of nitrides/ethylene glycol-based nanofluids using support vector regression." *Journal of Energy Storage* 29 (2020): 101313. Q1
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