

# A machine learning approach for estimating the bubblepoint pressure of world crude oils

Tran Nguyen Thien Tam\*, Hoang Trong Quang, Do Pham Minh Huong



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## ABSTRACT

The pressure at which the first bubble of gas exits the reservoir oil is known as the bubblepoint pressure. This parameter affects multiphase flow in pipes and the overall recovery factor of oil from a reservoir. Therefore, it's crucial to accurately estimate the crude oil bubblepoint pressure. There have been a lot of studies on calculating the bubblepoint pressure from laboratory data, which can be summarized into two main approaches: empirical correlations and machine learning (ML) algorithms. In this study, the authors implement both empirical correlations and ML algorithms with Decision Tree (DT), K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN), Artificial Neural Network (ANN), and Group Method of Data Handling (GMDH). The data was collected from the open literature for world crude oils. The estimation results of the two approaches mentioned above are compared by regression metrics: Mean Squared Error (*MSE*), Root Mean Squared Error (*RMSE*), and Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ). It was found that the GMDH algorithm has the accurate prediction results with the low *MSE* and *RMSE* (336605.4 and 580.177) and the highest  $R^2$  (0.9228). Trend analysis was carried out to strengthen model selection. The influence of input features on the prediction results indicates that the GMDH algorithm has the most stability. Therefore, the GMDH model is selected for estimating the bubblepoint pressure.

**Key words:** bubblepoint pressure correlation, decision tree, k-nearest neighbors, artificial neural network, group method of data handling

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the reservoir's initial condition, oil is a solution that involves gas. The bubblepoint pressure (pb) is defined as the pressure at which the first gas bubbles exit from the oil<sup>1</sup>. Bubblepoint pressure is a key parameter for PVT and fluid properties calculations, production optimization, reservoir characterization, and reservoir simulation. Therefore, it is crucial to accurately calculate the bubblepoint pressure. Typically, bubblepoint pressure is measured by sampling fluid from the reservoir and analyzing the PVT (pressure-volume-temperature). However, this method is expensive and takes a lot of time to implement<sup>2</sup>. For this reason, many mathematical methods have been developed to utilize measured data to quickly and accurately estimate bubblepoint pressure. There are two common approaches for estimating bubblepoint pressure: the first is empirical correlations, and the second is machine learning algorithms. The first approach has many methods with some famous correlations, for instance, Standing<sup>3</sup>, Vazquez and Beggs<sup>4</sup>, Glaso<sup>5</sup>, Al-Marhoun<sup>6</sup>, and Petrosky and Farshad<sup>7</sup>. The second approach has undergone formidable development in recent years. In the age of artificial intelligence and machine learning, researchers have more

powerful tools to solve petroleum engineering problems. Many studies focus on the application of machine learning for estimating oil bubblepoint pressure. The most common machine learning algorithm and earliest used to estimate  $p_b$  is ANN, for example, according to studies by Osman et al.<sup>8</sup>, Rasouli et al.<sup>9</sup>, Obanijesu and Araromi<sup>10</sup>, Alimadadi et al.<sup>11</sup>, Al-Marhoun et al.<sup>12</sup>, Adeeyo<sup>13</sup>, Fath et al.<sup>14</sup>, Hassan et al.<sup>15</sup>. Over time, many other vigorous ML algorithms have been implemented for bubblepoint pressure prediction. These algorithms include support vector machines<sup>16-19</sup>, genetic algorithms<sup>20,21</sup>, or groups of machine learning algorithms<sup>22-24</sup>.

In this study, the authors extend predictive methods based on ANN, DT, KNN, and GMDH. Research data collected from the many literature. To identify the most optimal method in this work, we use statistical metrics for the regression problem, including *MSE*, *RMSE*, and  $R^2$ .

## 2 METHODS

As stated previously, there are two usual methods for estimating the bubblepoint pressure: empirical correlations and machine learning algorithms. Below is a summary of the methods belonging to the two main

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50 groups above.

51 **Empirical correlations**

52 **Standing**

53 In 1947, Standing developed a method for bubblepoint  
54 pressure with inputs of solution gas-oil ratio ( $R_s$ ), gas  
55 specific gravity ( $\gamma_g$ ), reservoir temperature (T), oil  
56 gravity (API)<sup>3</sup>.

$$p_b = 18.2 \left[ \left( \frac{R_s}{\gamma_g} \right)^{0.83} (10)^a - 1.4 \right] \quad (1)$$

$$a = 0.00091 (T - 460) - 0.0125 (API) \quad (2)$$

57 **Vazquez & Beggs**

58 Vazquez and Beggs (1980) proposed a correlation for  
59 bubblepoint pressure as follows<sup>4</sup>:

$$p_b = \left[ \left( C_1 \frac{R_s}{\gamma_g} \right) (10)^a \right]^{c_2} \quad (3)$$

$$a = C_3 \left( \frac{API}{T} \right) \quad (4)$$

**Table 1: C<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, and C<sub>3</sub> values**

Parameter	API ≤ 30	API ≥ 30
C <sub>1</sub>	27.624	56.18
C <sub>2</sub>	10.914328	0.84246
C <sub>3</sub>	-11.172	-10.393

60 **Glaso**

61 In 1980, Glaso developed a method for bubblepoint  
62 pressure as below<sup>5</sup>:

$$\log(p_b) = 1.7669 + 1.7447 \log(A) - 0.30218 [\log(A)]^2 \quad (5)$$

$$A = \left( \frac{R_s}{\gamma_g} \right)^{0.816} \frac{(T - 460)^{0.172}}{(API)^{0.989}} \quad (6)$$

63 **Al-Marhoun**

64 Al-Marhoun (1988) presented a simple correlation as  
65 follows:

$$p_b = aR_s^b \gamma_g^c \gamma_o^d T^e \quad (7)$$

66 with  $a = 5.38088 \times 10^{-3}$ ,  $b = 0.715082$ ,  $c = -1.87784$ ,  $d$   
67  $= 3.1437$ , and  $e = 1.32657$

**Petrosky & Farshad**

In 1995, Petrosky and Farshad recommended a corre-  
lation as below:

$$p_b = \left[ \frac{112/727R_s^{0.577421}}{\gamma_g^{0.8439} (10)^x} \right] - 1391.051 \quad (8)$$

$$x = 7.916 (10^{-4}) (API)^{1.5410} - 4.561 (10^{-5}) (T - 460)^{1.3911} \quad (9)$$

**Machine learning algorithms**

**Artificial Neural Network (ANN)**

An ANN is an algorithm that is based on biologi-  
cal processes and simulates the functions of the ner-  
vous system. Typically, an ANN structure has three  
layers: an input layer, a hidden layer, and an output  
layer. Each individual node has input data, weights,  
a bias, and an output. The output values are deter-  
mined through transfer functions. Some of the most  
common transfer functions are: the Sigmoid func-  
tion, the ReLU (Rectified Linear Unit) function, the  
Leaky ReLU function, the Hyperbolic Tangent func-  
tion, the Softmax function, and the Heaviside func-  
tion<sup>25</sup>.

The essence of the ANN process is to learn from  
the data to renew the weights. The updating of the  
weights is performed continuously through two pro-  
cesses: forward propagation and backpropagation<sup>26</sup>.

**K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN)**

The KNN is a supervised ML algorithm that makes  
predictions based on the neighbor data points in a fea-  
ture space. In this algorithm, we choose the K value  
to represent the number of neighboring points to cal-  
culate the distance between the new point and the  
K neighboring points. Then, identify the K-nearest  
neighbors with the smallest distances and compute  
the weighted average of the target values of these  
neighbors. Finally, assign this average value as the es-  
timated value for the new data<sup>27</sup>.

**Decision Tree (DT)**

The DT is a structure that includes nodes and  
branches, and class attributes are represented on the  
internal nodes of the tree. Based on the class attri-  
butes, it works by splitting the dataset into subsets.  
This process is called attribute selection<sup>28</sup>.

The Information Gain method is the popular method  
for attribute selection. This approach calculates the  
information gain for each attribute and selects the one  
with the highest gain as the splitting attribute at each  
node<sup>28</sup>.

111 **Group Method of Data Handling (GMDH)**

112 The GMDH was developed by A.G. Ivakhnenko in the  
 113 1966 and has found applications in various fields. The  
 114 basic procedure of GMDH is to construct the high-  
 115 order polynomial form, which relates input variables  
 116 to a single output variable. For each feature, build  
 117 candidate models with different polynomial degrees  
 118 and evaluate the models' performance using MSE. In  
 119 the end, perform an iterative solution to find the best  
 120 overall model with the input features<sup>29</sup>.

121 The Group Method of Data Handling neural network,  
 122 also known as the GMDH-type neural network, is  
 123 a GMDH's spectrum that combines the automated  
 124 model selection of ANN and feature extraction of  
 125 GMDH<sup>30</sup>.

126 **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

127 **Data**

128 The research data was collected from the open liter-  
 129 ature on world crude oils<sup>31-37</sup>. It includes 567 data  
 130 points with descriptive statistics, as shown in Table 2.

131 **Results of estimating the bubblepoint pres-  
 132 sure (BPP) of world crude oils**

133 **Empirical correlations**

134 *a. Standing correlation*

135 Using equations (1) and (2), we have the predicted re-  
 136 sults versus measured results of BPP, shown in Fig-  
 137 ure 1.

138 *b. Vazquez & Beggs correlation*

139 Using equations (3) and (4), we have the comparison  
 140 results shown in Figure 2.

141 *c. Glaso correlation*

142 Using equations (5) and (6), we have the predicted re-  
 143 sults versus measured results of BPP, shown in Fig-  
 144 ure 3.

145 *d. Al-Marhoun correlation*

146 Using equation (7), we have the comparison results  
 147 shown in Figure 4.

148 *e. Petrosky & Farshad correlation*

149 Using equations (8) and (9), we have the predicted re-  
 150 sults versus measured results of BPP, shown in Fig-  
 151 ure 5.

152 **Machine learning algorithms**

153 *a. Artificial Neural Network (ANN)*

154 Using Google Colab with the Keras library, we have  
 155 the BPP comparison results shown in Figure 6.

156 *b. K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN)*

157 Using the KNeighborsRegressor function in Google  
 158 Colab, we have the BPP predicted results versus mea-  
 159 sured results, shown in Figure 7.

*c. Decision Tree (DT)*

Using the DecisionTreeRegressor function in Google  
 Colab, we have the BPP comparison results shown in  
 Figure 8.

*d. Group Method of Data Handling (GMDH)*

Using Google Colab with Keras library, we have the  
 BPP predicted results versus measured results, shown  
 in Figure 9.

**Compare results**

Table 3 summarizes the statistical results for esti-  
 mating bubblepoint pressure by using the regression  
 model's metrics, which include: mean squared er-  
 ror, square root of mean squared error, coefficient  
 of determination. The results show that the GMDH  
 has the highest  $R^2$  (0.9228) and low MSE and RMSE  
 (336605.4 and 580.177).

**Trend Analysis**

Trend analysis (TA) is a method to study the relation-  
 ship between features and prediction targets. TA can  
 also identify key relationships between input param-  
 eters and  $p_b$  predicted values and identify the most ro-  
 bust model. In this study, four input parameters  $R_s$ ,  
 $\gamma_g$ , API and  $T_f$  were selected to perform TA.

*a. Trend analysis for gas solubility*

With  $T = 102$  °F,  $API = 28.3$ ,  $\gamma_g = 0.996$ , and  $R_s$  taken  
 from a data set of 567 points, the trend analysis for gas  
 solubility is shown in Figure 10.

Most models show that as  $R_s$  increases,  $p_b$  also in-  
 creases; only in the model by Al-Marhoun correla-  
 tion with a low  $R^2$  value display predicted values of  $p_b$   
 much different from the other models, and the graph  
 line has many zigzags. The trend displayed by the  
 GMDH model shows a rigorous relationship between  
 the parameter for trend analysis and the model's pre-  
 dicted values. At the same time, the predicted values  
 versus  $R_s$  of the GMDH model are a straight, contin-  
 uously increasing line with smooth form.

*b. Trend analysis for oil API gravity*

With  $R_s = 226$  (SCF/STB),  $T = 102$  °F,  $\gamma_g = 0.996$ , and  
 API taken from a data set, the result is shown in Fig-  
 ure 11.

Most models show that as API increases,  $p_b$  decreases,  
 except the Al-Marhoun model. The GMDH model  
 shows this trend clearly with a straight, continuously  
 decreasing line.

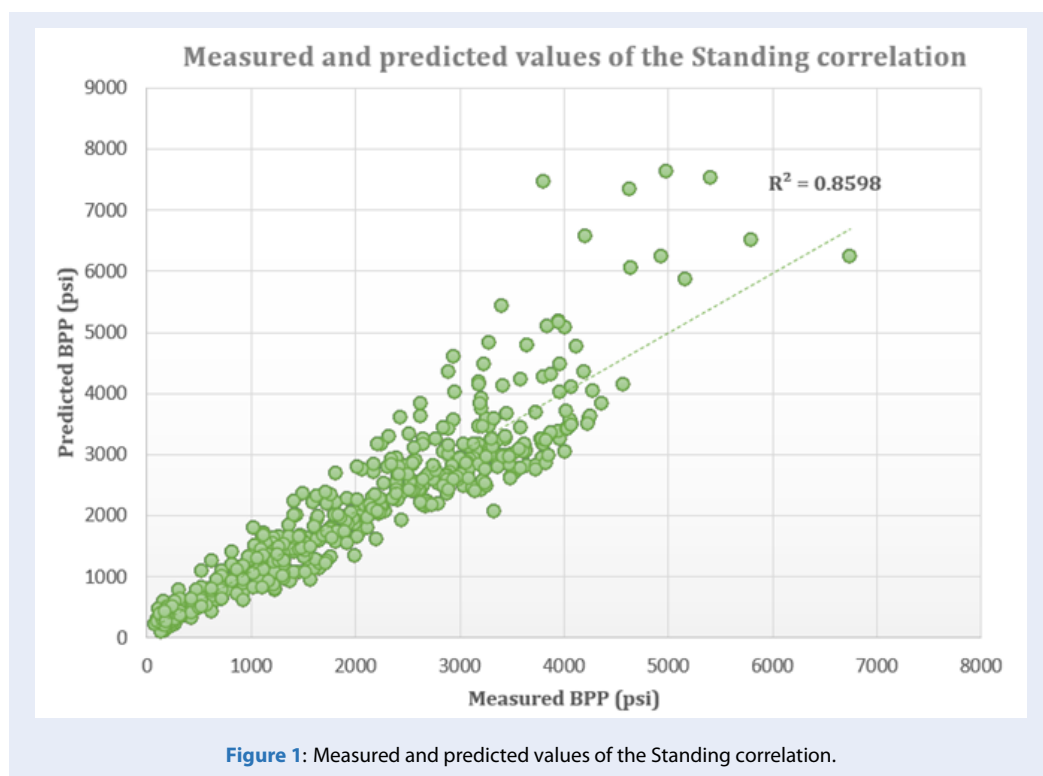
*c. Trend analysis for temperature*

With  $R_s = 226$  (SCF/STB),  $API = 28.3$ ,  $\gamma_g = 0.996$ , and  
 $T$  taken from a data set, the trend analysis for temper-  
 ature is shown in Figure 12.

Typical, all models show that as temperature in-  
 creases,  $p_b$  increases. However, some models exhibit a

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics for experimental PVT data used in the study**

Parameter	Temperature (F)	Solution gas oil ratio (SCF/STB)	API	Gas specific gravity	Bubble point pressure (psi)
Mean	193.86	636.92	35.10	1.1976	1931.97
Standard deviation	51.99	405.76	6.00	0.4554	1261.45
Variance	2698.71	164349.73	35.93	0.2070	1588447.71
Minimum	74.00	26.00	19.40	0.1590	79.00
Maximum	306.00	2496.00	56.50	3.4445	6741.00



**Figure 1:** Measured and predicted values of the Standing correlation.

**Table 3: Summary of the statistical results for estimating bubblepoint pressure**

Model	MSE	RMSE	R <sup>2</sup>
Standing	251165	501	0.8498
Vazquez & Beggs	354078	595	0.8460
Glaso	280723	530	0.8526
Al-Marhoun	2044426	1430	0.4706
Petrosky & Farshad	6096167	2469	0.8058
ANN	441419	664.394	0.737
KNN	420474	648.440	0.7947
DT	355461.982	596.206	0.788
GMDH	336605.4	580.177	0.9228

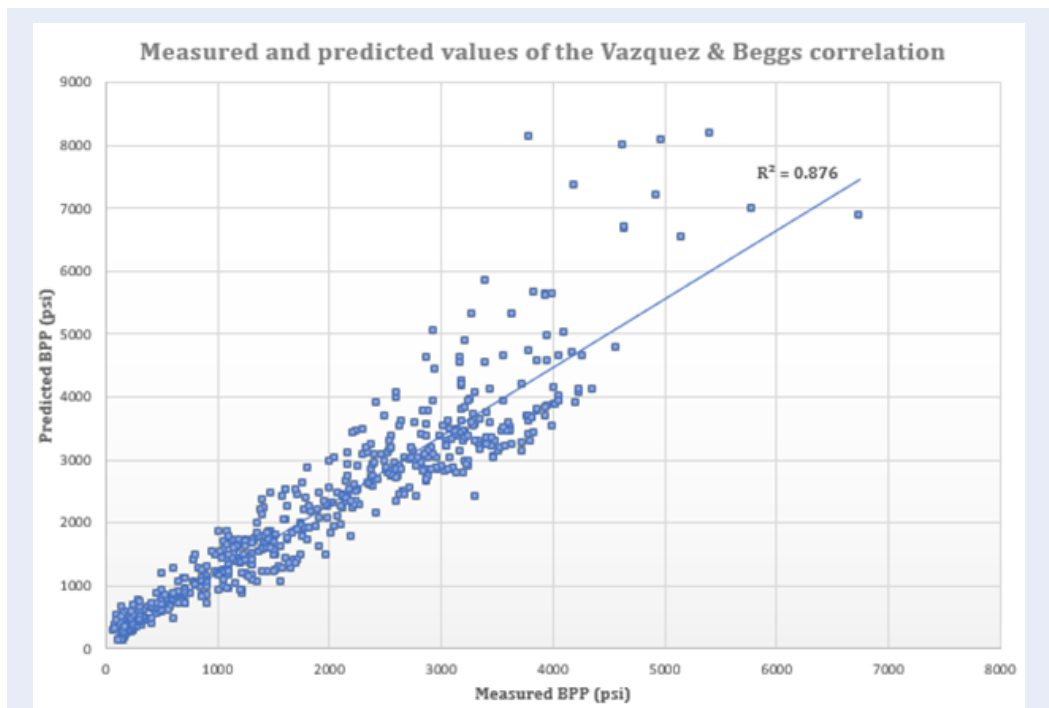


Figure 2: Measured and predicted values of the Vazquez & Beggs correlation.

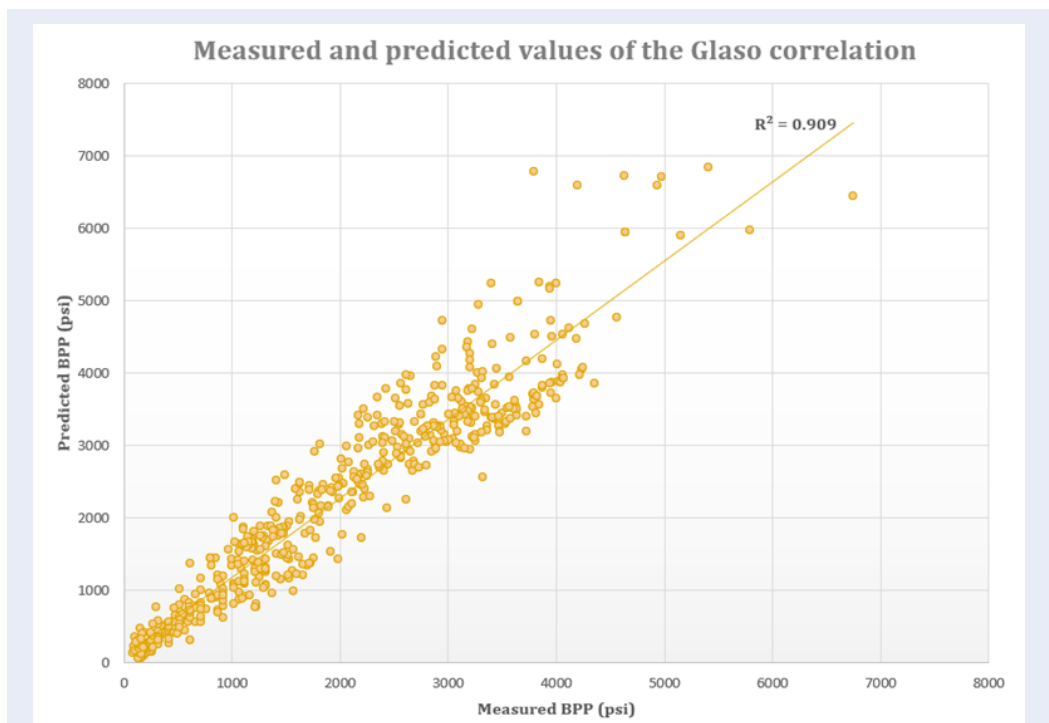


Figure 3: Measured and predicted values of the Glaso correlation.

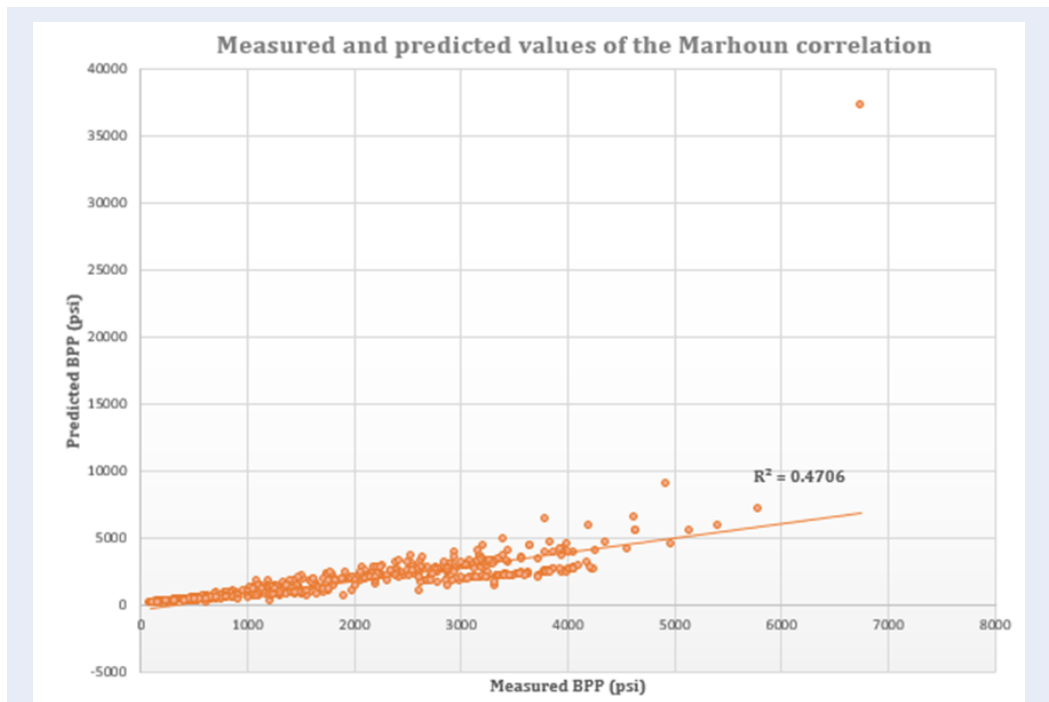


Figure 4: Measured and predicted values of the Marhoun correlation.

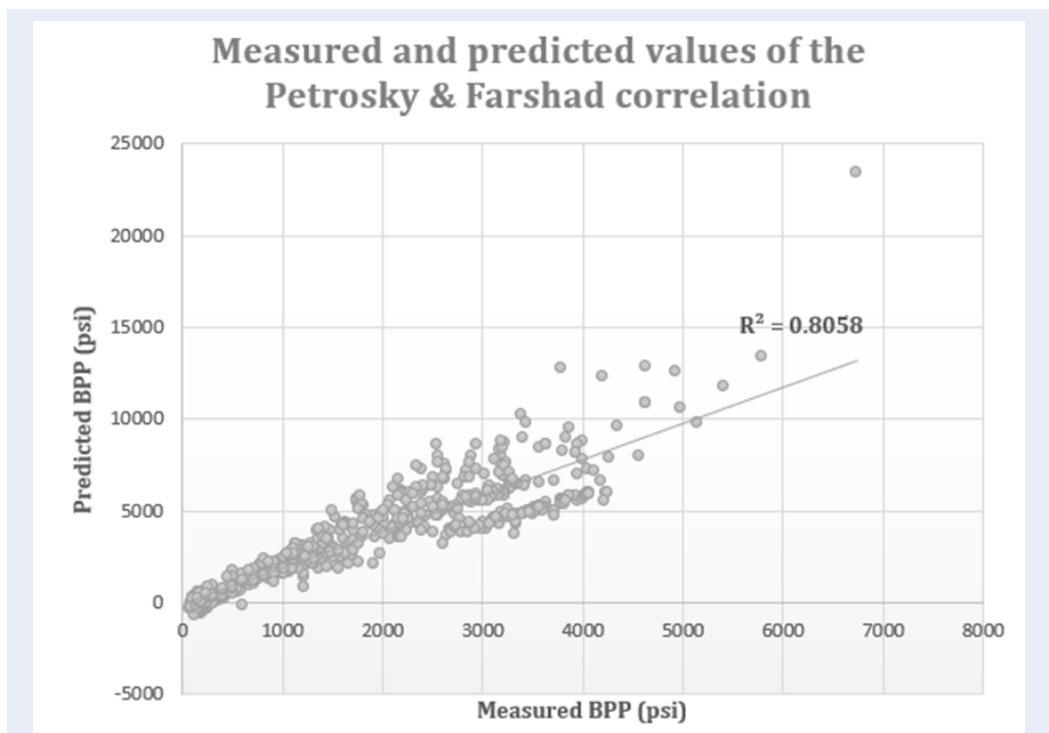


Figure 5: Measured and predicted values of the Petrosky & Farshad correlation.

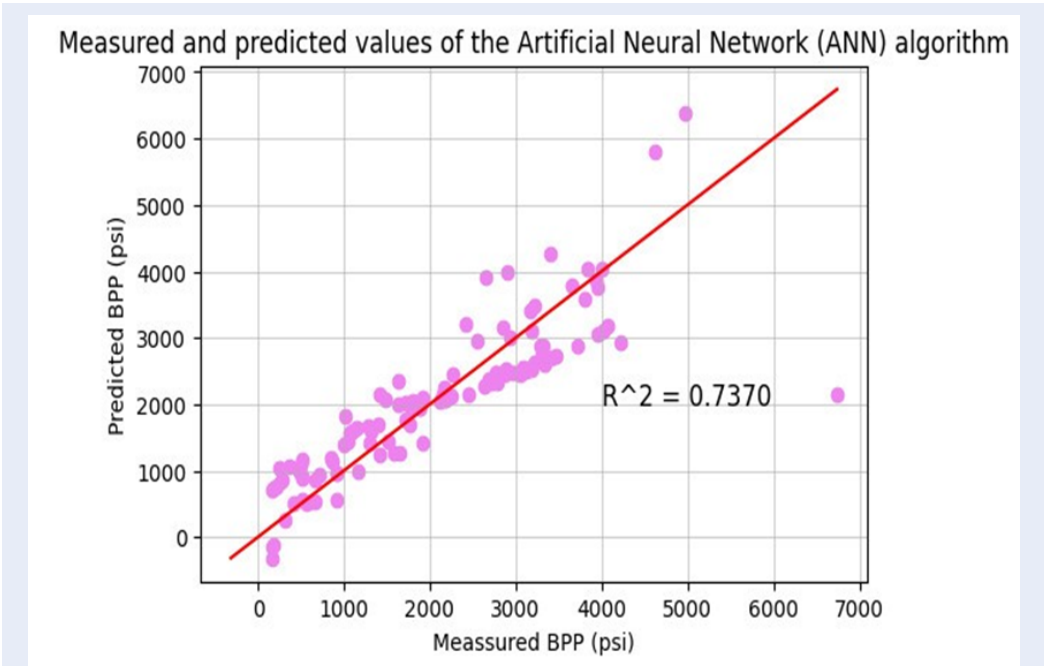


Figure 6: Measured and predicted values of the ANN algorithm.

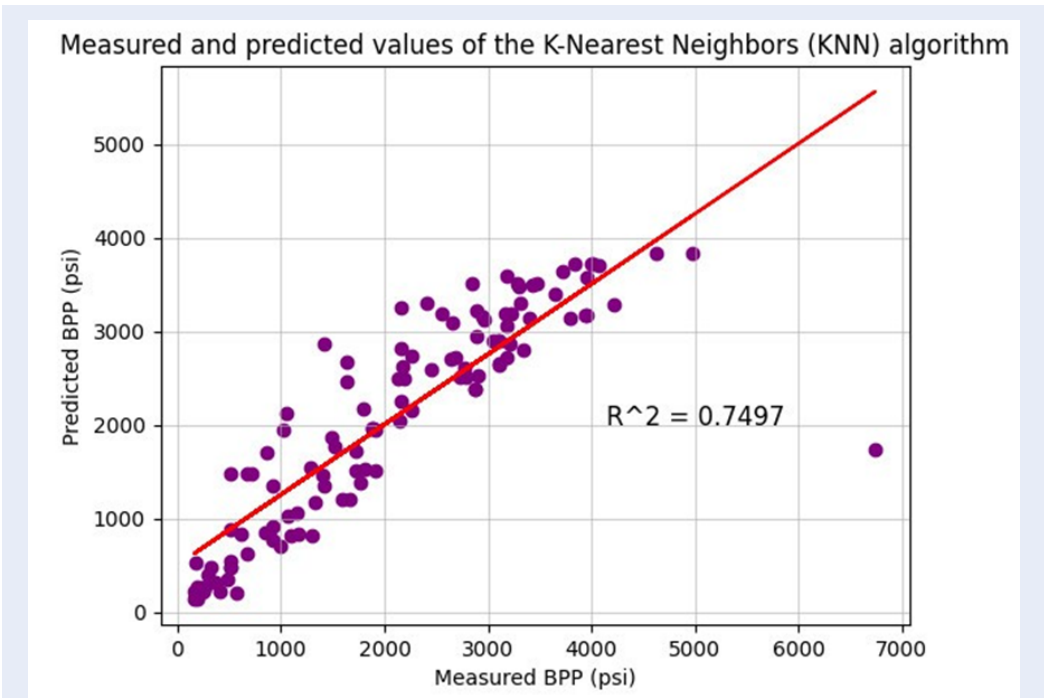


Figure 7: Measured versus predicted values of the KNN algorithm.

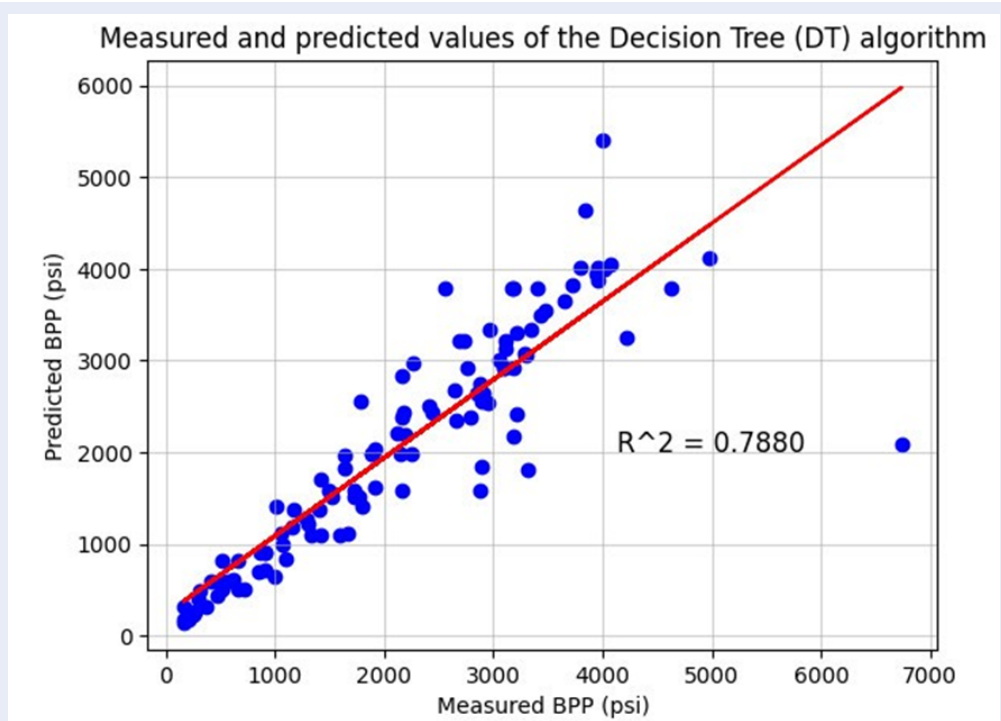


Figure 8: Measured and predicted values of the DT algorithm.

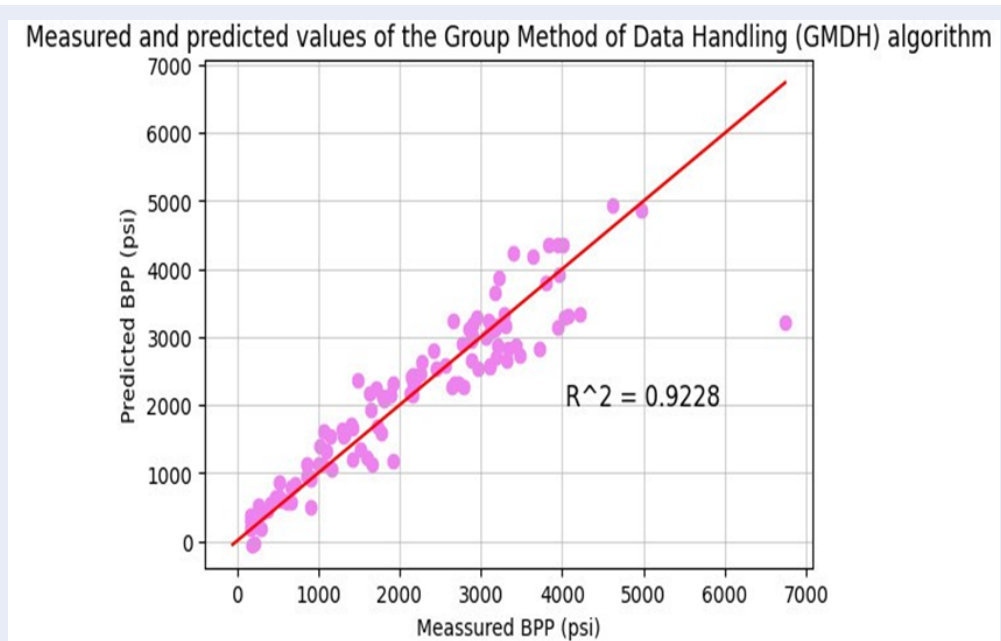
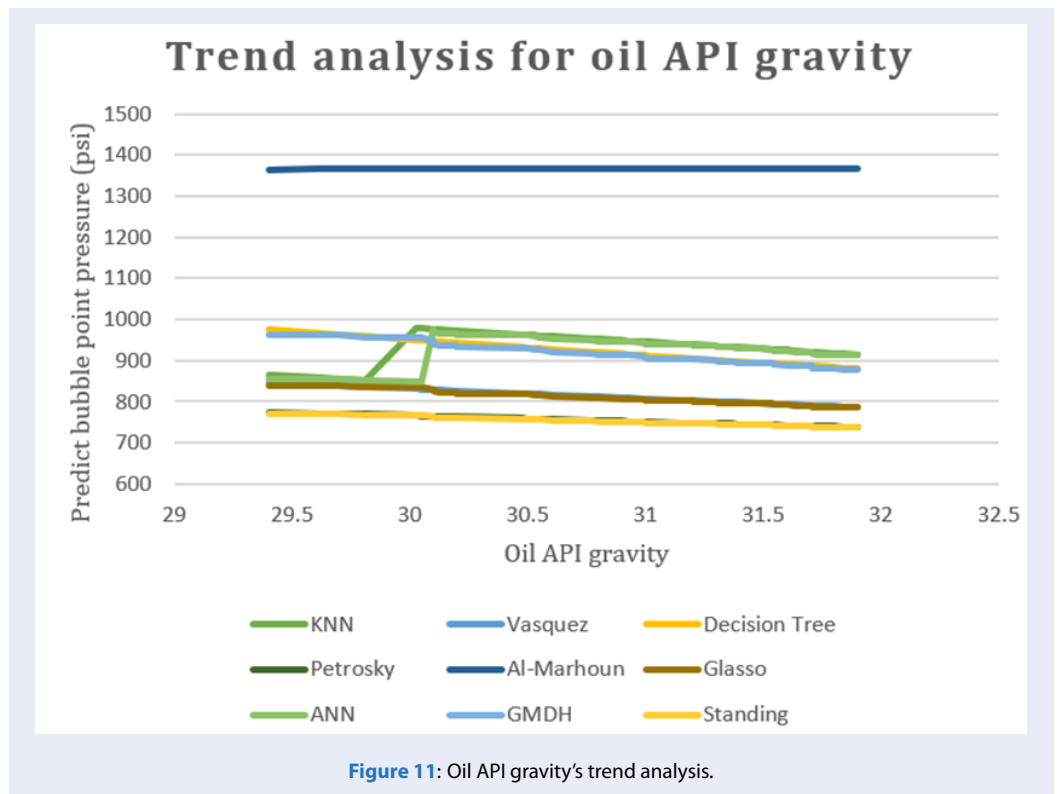
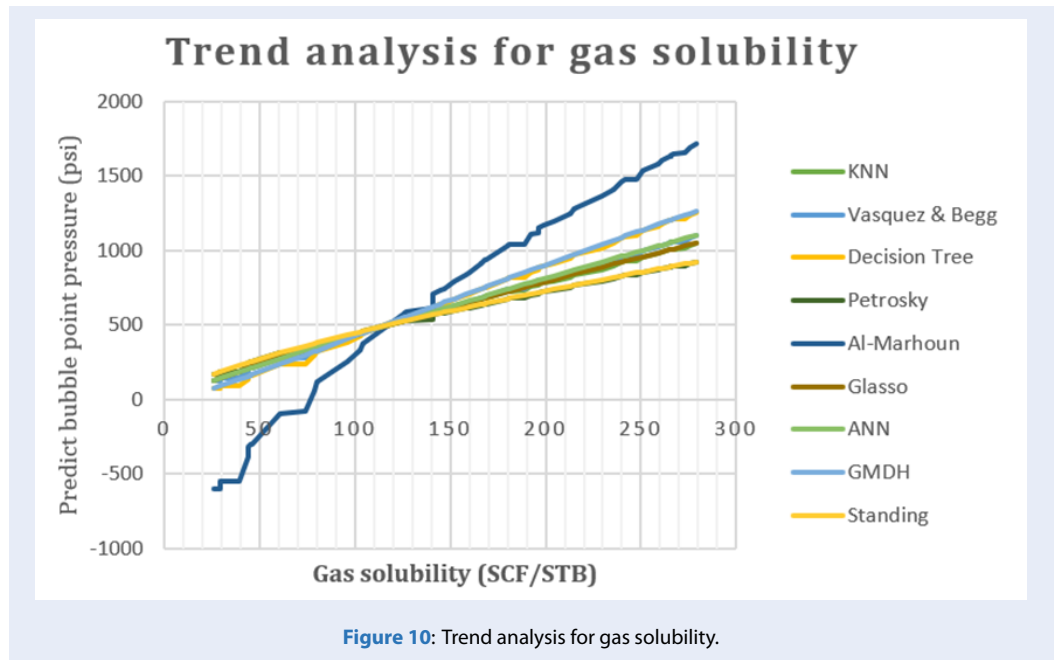
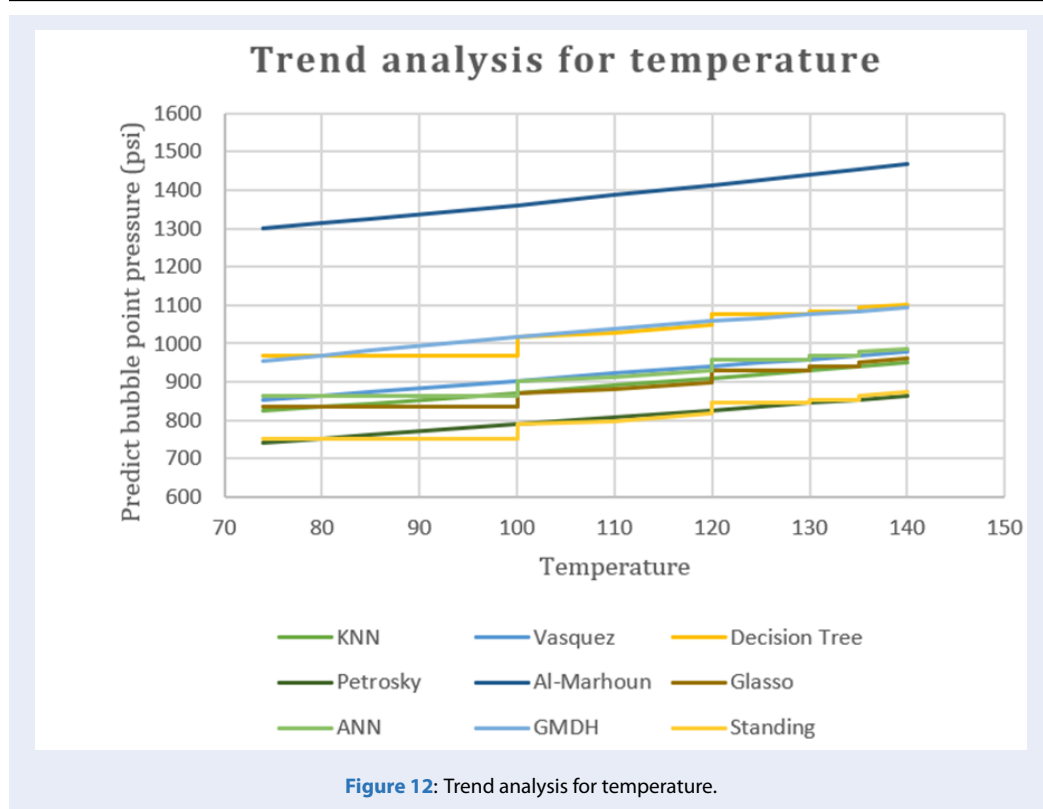


Figure 9: Measured and predicted values of the GMDH algorithm.







211 stepped form, and the Al-Marhoun model is far apart  
 212 from the group of other models.

213 *d. Trend analysis for gas specific gravity*

214 With  $R_s = 226$  (SCF/STB),  $API = 28.3$ ,  $T = 102$  °F,  
 215 and  $\gamma_g$  taken from a data set, the trend analysis for  
 216 gas specific gravity is shown in Figure 13.

217 Basically, all models show that as gas specific grav-  
 218 ity increases,  $p_b$  decreases, but some models exhibit  
 219 a graph line in a slightly winding form.

## 220 CONCLUSIONS

221 In this study, a dataset with 567 data points on crude  
 222 oils at some geographical location in the world with  
 223 four input parameters ( $R_s$ ,  $\gamma_g$ ,  $API$ , and  $T$ ) was used  
 224 to estimate crude oil bubblepoint pressure ( $p_b$ ) by two  
 225 main approaches: empirical correlations and machine  
 226 learning algorithms. The result shows that the GMDH  
 227 algorithm is the model that gives the best estimation  
 228 for bubblepoint pressure.

229 In addition, trend analysis of input parameters also  
 230 shows that GMDH graph lines tend to be stable. This  
 231 strongly confirms that the GMDH model is highly re-  
 232 liable in bubblepoint pressure estimation and can be  
 233 used for the calculation of other crude oil PVT data  
 234 sets. The authors suggest that further research on the  
 235 overfitting phenomenon is needed to increase the re-  
 236 liability of model selection.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that there are no conflicts of in-  
 terest associated with this study.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

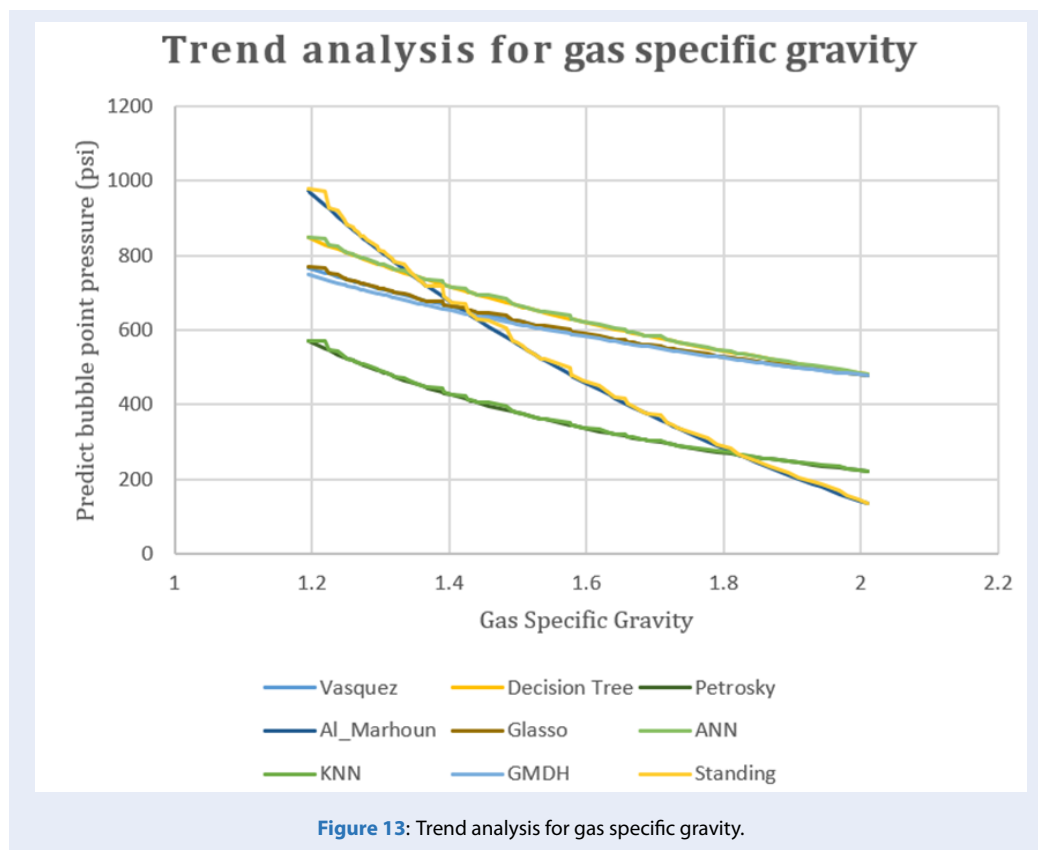
Tran Nguyen Thien Tam designed the research, col-  
 lected data, and wrote the manuscript. Do Pham  
 Minh Huong performed the calculations. Hoang  
 Trong Quang drawn the figures. All authors discussed  
 the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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# Ứng dụng phương pháp học máy để ước lượng áp suất điểm bọt cho dầu thô thế giới

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## TÓM TẮT

Áp suất tại đó bong bóng khí đầu tiên thoát ra khỏi dầu vỉa chứa được gọi là áp suất điểm bọt. Thông số này ảnh hưởng đến dòng chảy đa pha trong đường ống và hệ số thu hồi dầu từ vỉa chứa. Do đó, điều quan trọng là phải ước tính chính xác áp suất điểm bọt dầu thô. Đã có rất nhiều nghiên cứu về tính toán áp suất điểm bọt từ dữ liệu trong phòng thí nghiệm, có thể tóm lược thành hai cách tiếp cận chính: tương quan thực nghiệm và thuật toán học máy. Trong nghiên cứu này, các tác giả thực hiện tính toán theo cả hai cách tương quan thực nghiệm và thuật toán học máy với Cây quyết định (DT), K láng giềng gần nhất (KNN), Mạng nơ-ron nhân tạo (ANN) và Phương pháp xử lý dữ liệu nhóm (GMDH). Dữ liệu được thu thập từ các tài liệu đã công bố về dầu thô thế giới. Kết quả ước lượng của hai cách tiếp cận trên được so sánh bằng các tham số đánh giá mô hình hồi quy bao gồm: sai số toàn phương trung bình (MSE), căn bậc hai của sai số bình phương trung bình (RMSE) và hệ số xác định ( $R^2$ ). Kết quả cho thấy thuật toán GMDH cho dự đoán chính xác với MSE và RMSE thấp (336605,4 và 580,177) và  $R^2$  cao nhất (0,9228). Phân tích xu hướng được thực hiện để tăng tính tin cậy cho việc lựa chọn mô hình. Ảnh hưởng của các thông số đầu vào đến kết quả dự đoán chỉ ra rằng mô hình GMDH có độ ổn định cao nhất. Vì vậy, mô hình GMDH được lựa chọn để ước lượng áp suất điểm bọt của dầu thô.

**Từ khoá:** tương quan áp suất điểm bọt, cây quyết định, k láng giềng gần nhất, mạng nơ-ron nhân tạo, phương pháp xử lý dữ liệu nhóm

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