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1 Tailoring the Properties of 3D Printed Concrete through Explainable Artificial Intelligence

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7 Abstract

8 Advances on the construction front continue to rise as the next industrial revolution (Construction
9 4.0) nears. One promising front revolves around additively fabricated or simply 3D printed
10 concrete. The growing number of ongoing parallel research programs has now made it possible to
11 collect a large amount of data on such concrete as, up to this point, the open literature lacks a
12 comprehensive database. Thus, this paper presents the largest database spanning over 300
13 experiments on 3D printed concrete. This database is then examined via multilinear regression as
14 well as two explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) algorithms, namely, Random Forest and
15 XGBoost, to arrive at a working model capable of predicting the compressive strength property
16 for 3D concrete mixtures that incorporate the following seven features: age of specimens, as well
17 as the magnitude of cement, water, fly ash, silica fume, fine aggregate, and superplasticizer.
18 Findings from this work infer the superiority of XAI models in predicting the strength property of
19 3D printed concrete. Our analysis identifies two features, namely, the age of specimens and the
20 quantity of fine aggregate, as the most important features that can accurately predict the
21 compressive strength property. Finally, the deployed explainability methods successfully
22 quantified the highly nonlinear relations between the selected features and compressive strength,
23 and this newly acquired knowledge can help tailor functional concrete mixtures.

24 *Keywords:* 3D concrete; Compressive strength; Machine learning; Database.

25 1. Introduction

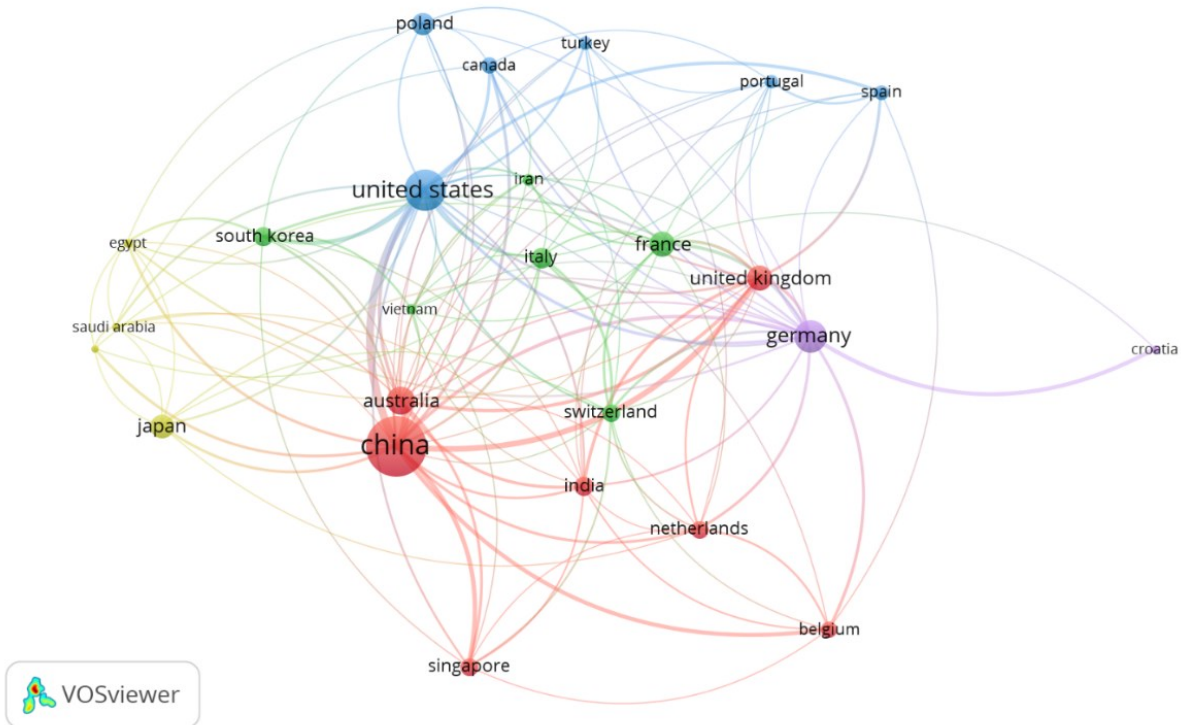
26 Traditionally, fabricating concrete relies on manually mixing and casting concrete via labor and
27 formworks. This process requires extensive resources and often yields a large quantity of waste
28 [1]. Recent works have identified such a negative impact and noted the continued loss of efficiency
29 in construction [2]. The same works have also identified 3D printing of concrete as a noteworthy
30 technology that has the potential to improve the current rates of construction productivity as well
31 as minimize concrete wastage. It goes without saying that automating the process of construction
32 brings a plethora of advantages, such as faster and safer construction [3]. According to a recent
33 analysis by Markets and Markets [4], 3D printing concrete can save on construction waste by 30
34 to 60%, reduce labor costs by 50 to 80%, and fasten production time by 50 to 70%.

35 3D printing of concrete started to prosper in the mid-1990s [5]. This technology builds in a layer-
36 after-layer approach using a 3D printer (casting equipment) [6,7]. In this printer, the raws are
37 mixed and then injected via a nozzle [8]. To maintain a proper flow, the concrete mixture is
38 designed to have acceptable pumpability and cohesiveness (to ensure strong buildability [9–11]).
39 A number of large scale structures have been constructed from 3D printed concrete [12], including
40 an apartment building [13] and a 26.3 m long bridge [14]. Figure 1 shows the latest state of 3D

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41 printed concrete in different countries around the world. This figure shows that the US, China,
42 UK, and Germany have the most impact on 3D printed concrete and projects related to this
43 material.



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Fig. 1. Participation of countries in 3D printing concrete

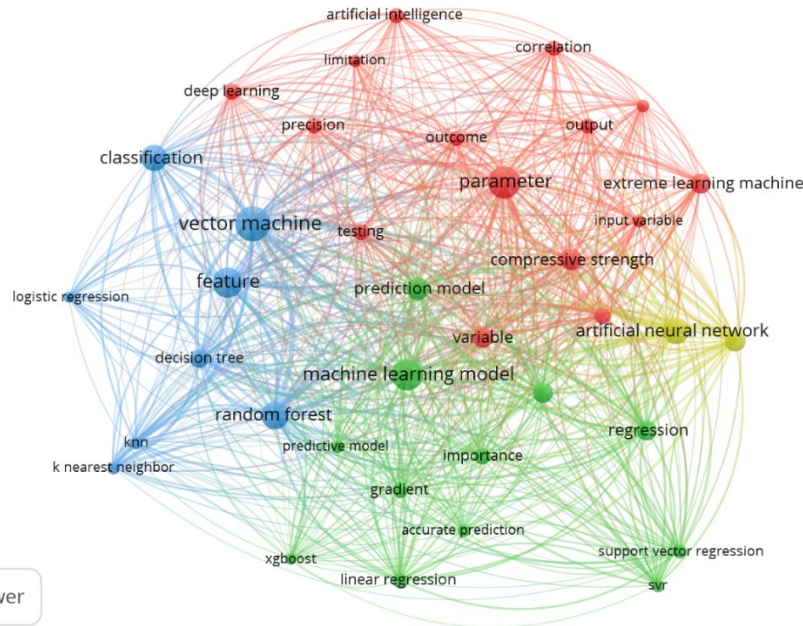
46 Now, with a series of proof of concepts being constructed and validated, efforts have been targeting
47 the creation of suitable material models to tailor 3D concrete mixtures. For example, the
48 mechanical strength of concrete (i.e., compressive strength) is tied to other properties (modulus,
49 tensile and flexural strength) and is a fixture in the codal provisions [15]. Thus, arriving at a reliable
50 material model that can predict the compressive strength of 3D printed concrete as a function of
51 mixture proportions would effective mixture designs and minimize reliance on "trial batching"
52 approaches [16].

53 These traditional design techniques are based on trial-and-error methods emanating from
54 experimental data [17]. However, the search space of such techniques exponentially grows for
55 complex phenomena of complicated nonlinear relationships and non-quantitative materials [18].
56 To overcome the complexity of such nonlinear relations, researchers started to favor nonparametric
57 models such as those created by machine learning (ML) [19]. Evidently, such predictive models
58 have been developed for various concrete derivatives – with little, if any, on 3D printed concrete
59 [20]. As such, a key motivation behind this work is to create such ML models for 3D concrete.

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60 In general, ML models are primarily data-driven, and hence they rely on the availability of dense
61 and healthy databases to uncover and map the relationships between the features involved and the
62 compressive strength of 3D printed concrete [21]. Figure 2a displays the body of works related to
63 ML in this area, and Fig. 2b shows the corresponding number of publications. The latter shows
64 considerable growth from 120 publications in 2013 to approximately 2250 publications in 2022.
65 Thus, machine learning (ML) can be selected as one of the hot topics in engineering.

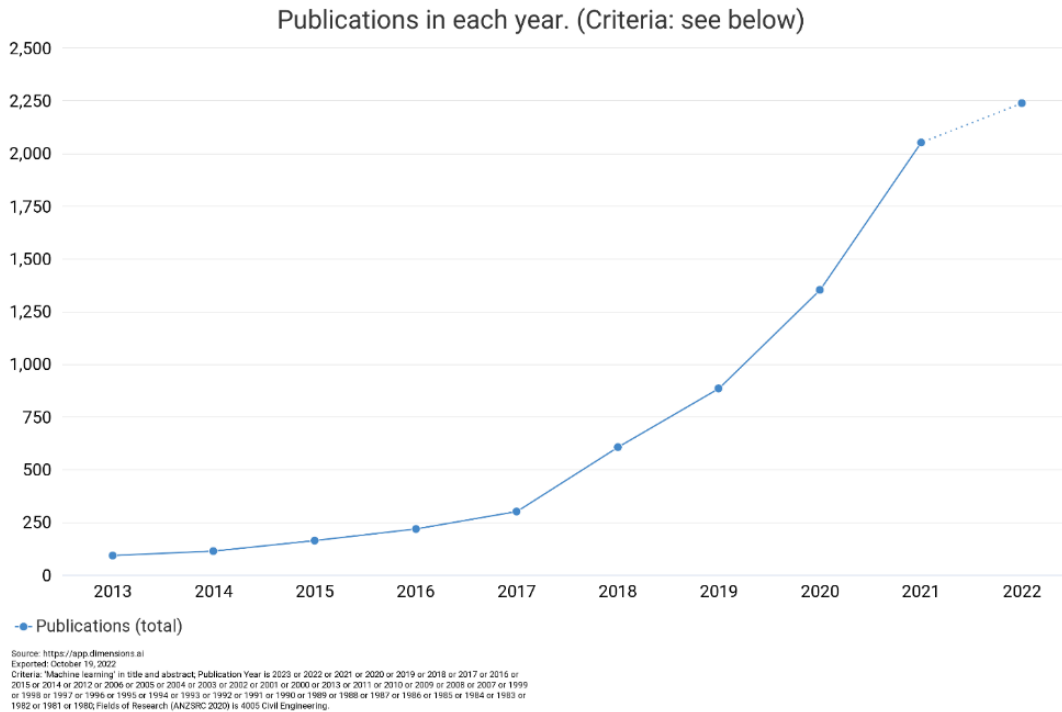


(a) Machine learning keywords in concrete

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(b) Publication trends
Fig. 2. Current state of the art

71 A closer look into the reviewed publications reveals that ML has been used to predict the
72 compressive strength of conventional concrete via artificial neural networks (ANN) [22], support
73 vector machines (SVM) [23], decision trees [24–26], to name a few. For example, Lee [27] noted
74 the high accuracy of ANN in predicting the properties of concrete mixtures. Further, Yeh et al.
75 [28] used the Genetic Operation Tree (GOT) algorithm to predict the compressive strength of high
76 performance concrete with great success. Nunez [29] concluded that ML had been verified to
77 predict various concretes' compressive strengths. Han [30] reported that ANN and the random
78 forest algorithm have high predictivity, especially in small datasets. Ozcan et al. [31] and Roa [32]
79 reported similar success in predicting the compressive strength of concrete.

80 The aim of this study, and hope behind its investigation, is to (1) compile the largest database on
81 the compressive strength of 3D printed concrete and to create explainable AI models to (2) predict
82 the compressive strength of such concrete via XAI model. Thus, we will present results from 307
83 tests gathered from 53 different publications. In this database, seven features were collected (i.e.,
84 cement, silica fume, superplasticizer, water, fine aggregate, age, and fly ash) to predict the
85 compressive strength. Then, this database was examined via multilinear regression as well as two
86 explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) algorithms, namely, Random Forest and XGBoost, to
87 arrive at material models. The results from our analysis show the superiority of the XAI models,
88 and hence these models were augmented with explainability measures, namely, feature
89 importance, accumulated local effects (ALE), and partial dependence plot (PDP), to quantify the
90 highly nonlinear relations between features and compressive strength and hence may accelerate
91 our research efforts.

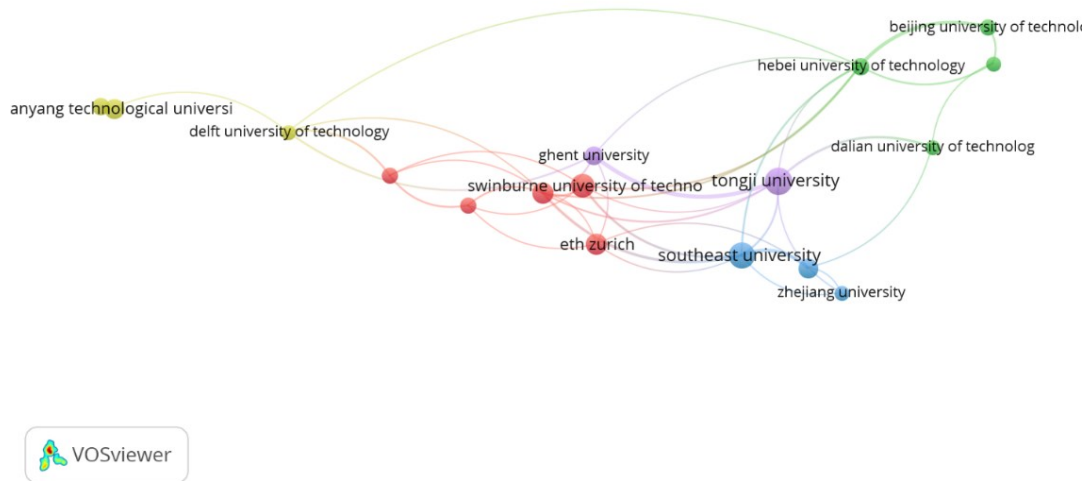
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92 2. A brief overview of 3D printing of concrete

93 2.1 Past and current efforts

94 Khoshnevis pioneered 3D printing of concrete using the contour crafting method at the University
95 of Southern California. Since then, much research and investments have been implemented to
96 improve the performance of this innovative manufacturing method in many aspects, including
97 extrudability, time setting, binder jetting, etc. [33]. Many universities and institutions have serious
98 investments in experimental and numerical research (see Fig. 3a). Similarly, Fig. 3b shows a steady
99 rise in the number of publications in this area as well.

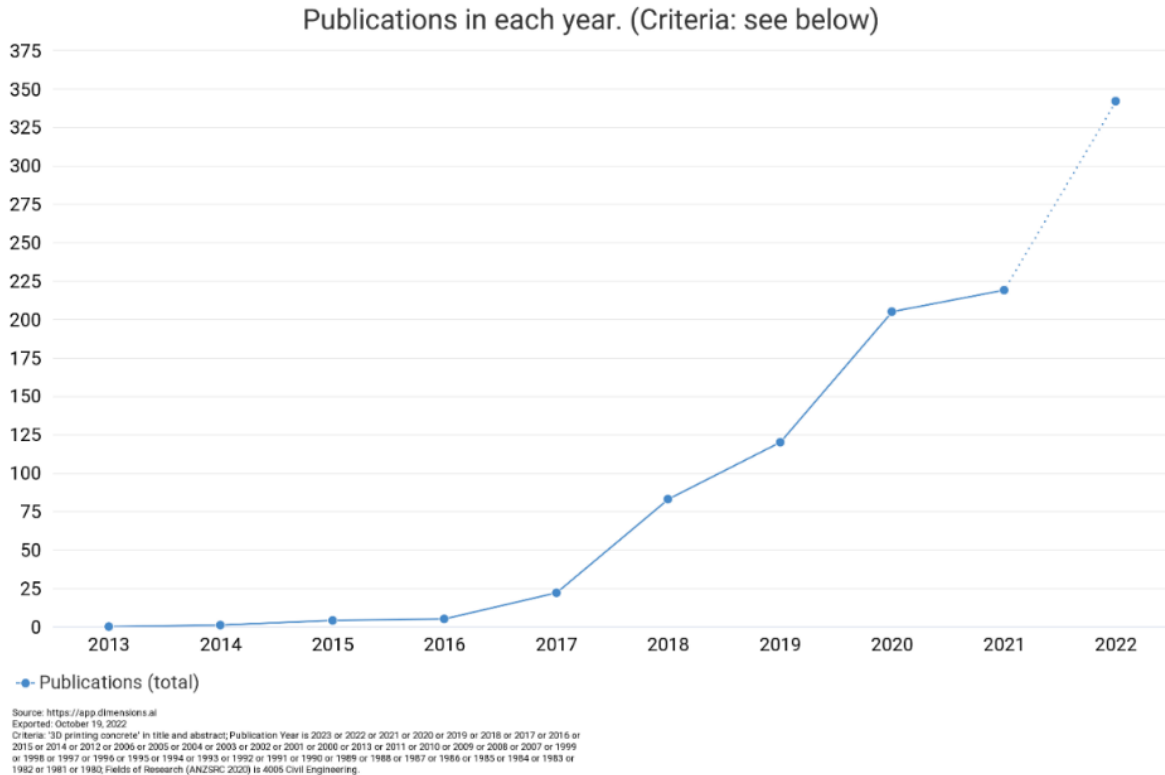


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(a) Demonstration of universities active in 3D concrete

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(b) Number of publications for 3D printing concrete [Note: as noted in the Dimension.ai database]

Fig. 3 Current state of the art

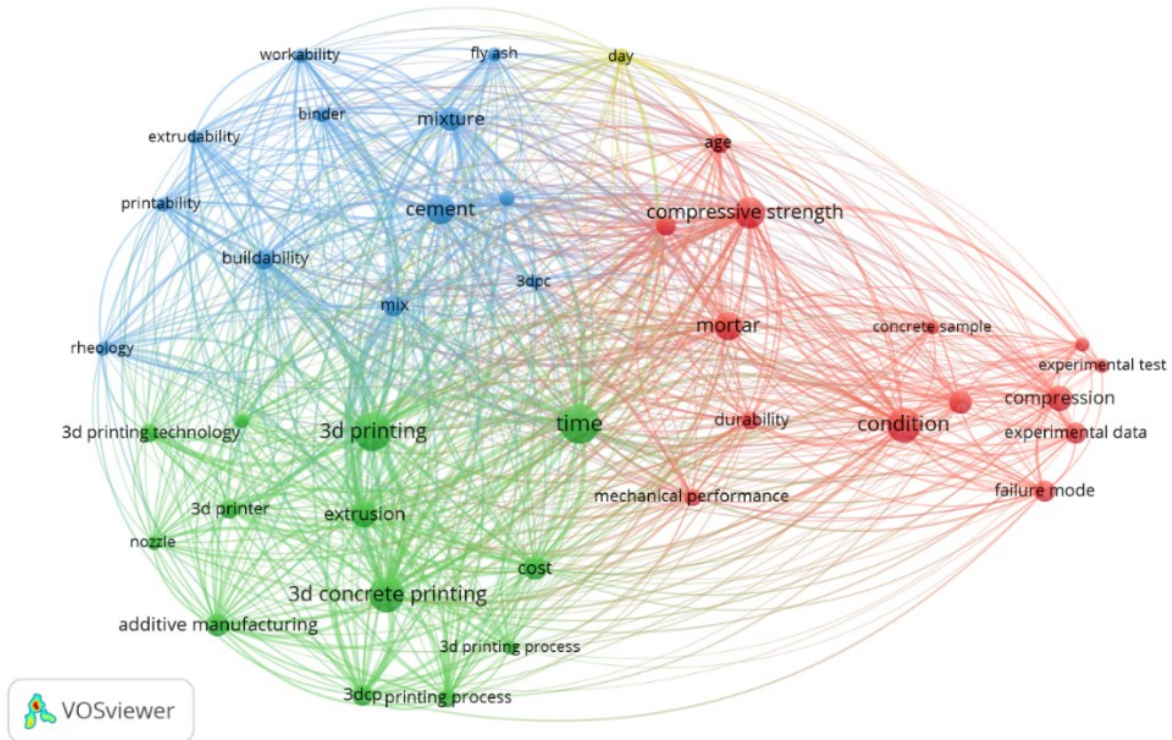
2.2 Trending areas of research

Proper grading of concrete leads to realizing stable structures [34,35][36]. There are four key areas that dominate the interest in the front of 3D concrete (see Fig. 3), namely;

1. *Extrudability* of cementitious material in a continuous manner is influenced by the size of dry materials such as fine aggregate [37][46] [39].
2. *Buildability* is defined as the ability of cementitious material to remain in a stable shape under loading [40–42].
3. *Open time* is often defined as the duration of time in which the cementitious material can maintain its performance through printing [43,44].
4. *Flowability* identifies the transportability of the cementitious materials, including fibers , during casting to the nozzle and can be evaluated via the slump test [45], the V-funnel test [46], and the jumping table test [47] [48].

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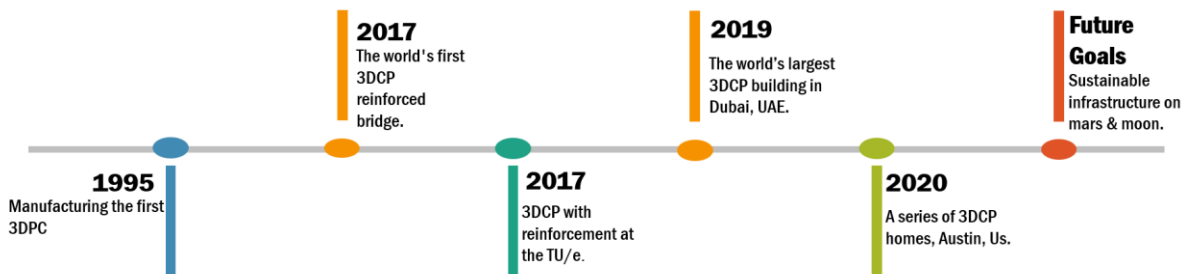
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118
119 Fig. 3 The illustration of the body of works related to 3D printing concrete [from *Dimensions.ai*
120 [49]]

121 **2.3 Notable projects**

122 As mentioned earlier, there is a continued rise and interest in adopting 3D printed concrete in
123 construction projects [50–53]. For example, recent works explored reinforcing 3D printed concrete
124 via fibers [54–56], traditional rebars and post-installed reinforcement, and mesh molds [57] Figure
125 4 shows some of the most notable and recent projects, including the building of the largest 3D
126 printed pedestrian bridge in China in 2019 [58], retaining walls for flood mitigation in China in
127 2019 [59], residual buildings in Texas for the homeless in 2019 [60], apartments in Bavaria in
128 2021 [61], shelters for troops in 2021 in California [52], and the world’s largest 3D printed
129 structure in 2021 in UAE [50]. Another future goal is to fabricate extraterrestrial habitats [62].



130
131 Fig. 4 Timeline for 3D concrete [Note: 3DPC denotes 3D printed concrete]

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132 3. Description of database and statistical analysis

133 The collected database for the present work has been compiled from 53 experimental studies and
134 contains 307 specimens. This database has seven features, namely, cement (*C*), water (*W*),
135 superplasticizer (*SP*), fly ash (*Fa*), silica fume (*SF*), fine aggregate (*FA*), age (*A*), and the response
136 as compressive strength (*CS*) of each tested specimen. The seven features were selected as noted
137 to be the most common factors and predictors in other types of concrete, such as high performance
138 concrete [63,64], self-compacting concrete [65] and normal concrete [66]. Please note that all data
139 used in this study will be provided in this paper's appendix.

140 The statistical distribution of this database is shown in Fig. 5. Similarly, Table 1 describes the
141 overview of the statistics of the data. These statistics show that the overall range of components in
142 our dataset is normal and acceptable, as commonly witnessed in recent tests. The same table shows
143 that cement, water, and fine aggregate are fairly symmetrical (skewness is between -0.5 and 0.5),
144 while age and compressive strength are moderately skewed (skewness -1 and -0.5 or between 0.5
145 and 1). Finally, fly ash, silica fume, and superplasticizer are noted to be highly skewed since these
146 components were used at various values in different experiments and were not used at all in others.

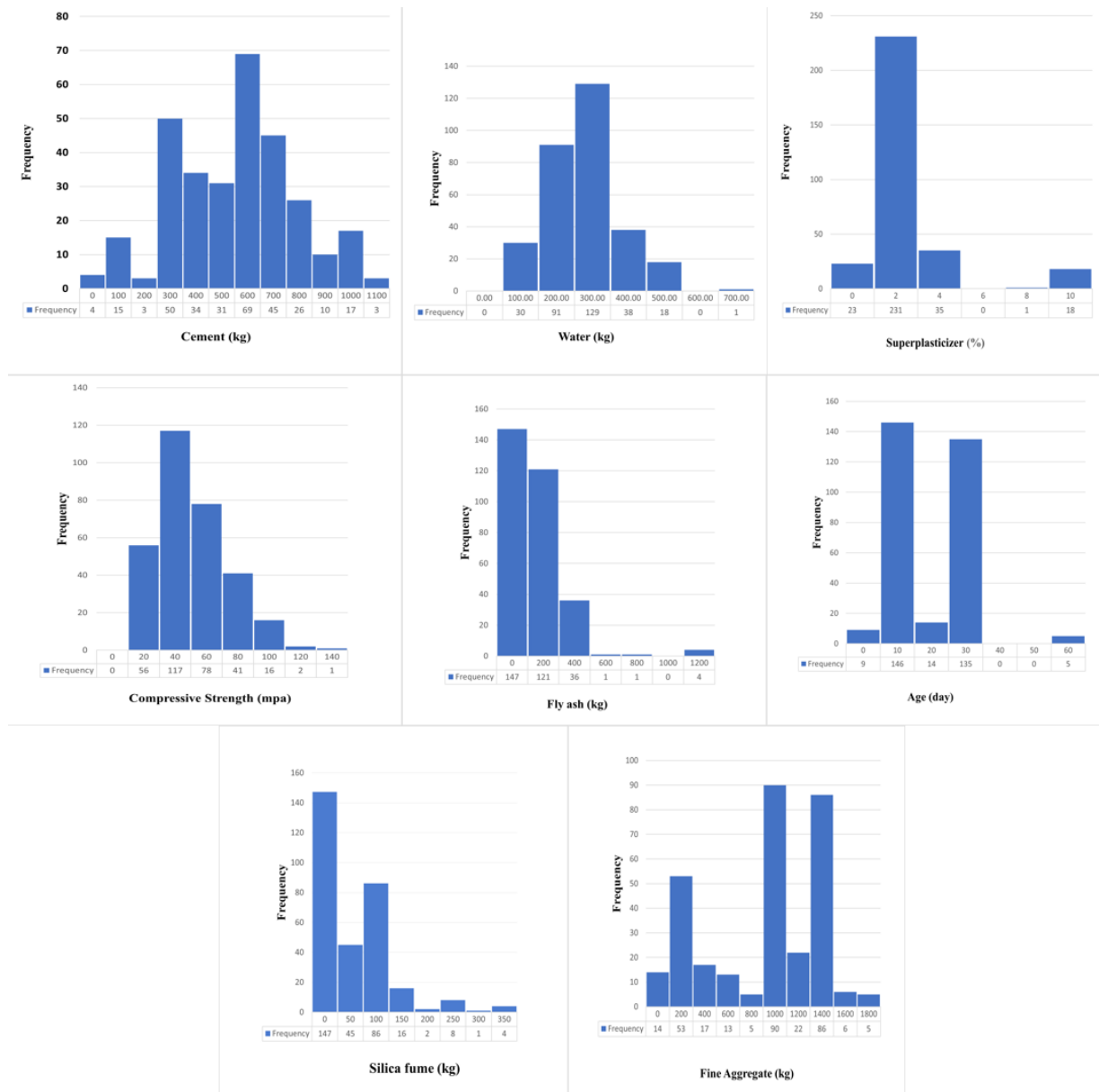
147 Table 1 Statistical insights into the features

Component	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skew	Kurtosis
Cement, C (Kg/m ³)	0	1069.41	502.18	228.88	0.37	-0.12
Water, W (Kg/m ³)	1.89	455	213.07	98.47	0.41	0.29
Fly ash, Fa (Kg/m ³)	0	1026	113.16	162.51	2.77	11.1
Silica fume, SF (Kg/m ³)	0	345	43.25	57.24	2.46	8.93
Fine aggregate, FA (Kg/m ³)	0	1623	797.83	449.89	-0.27	-1.19
Superplasticizer, SP (%)	0	3.4	1.44	3.63	6.96	57.7
Age, (day)	0.41	56	15.73	12.74	0.51	-0.33
Compressive strength, CS (MPa)	0.005	125	40.82	23.01	0.77	0.79

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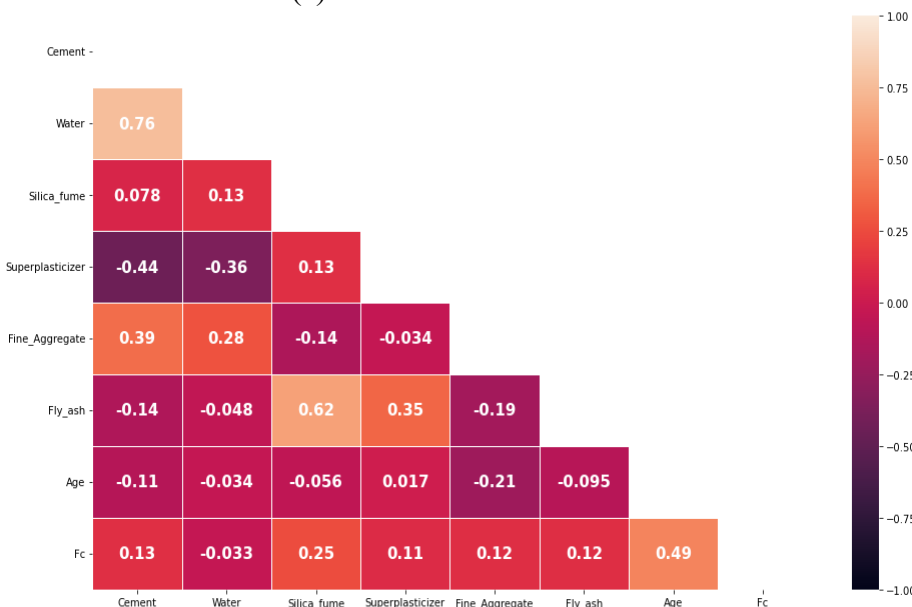
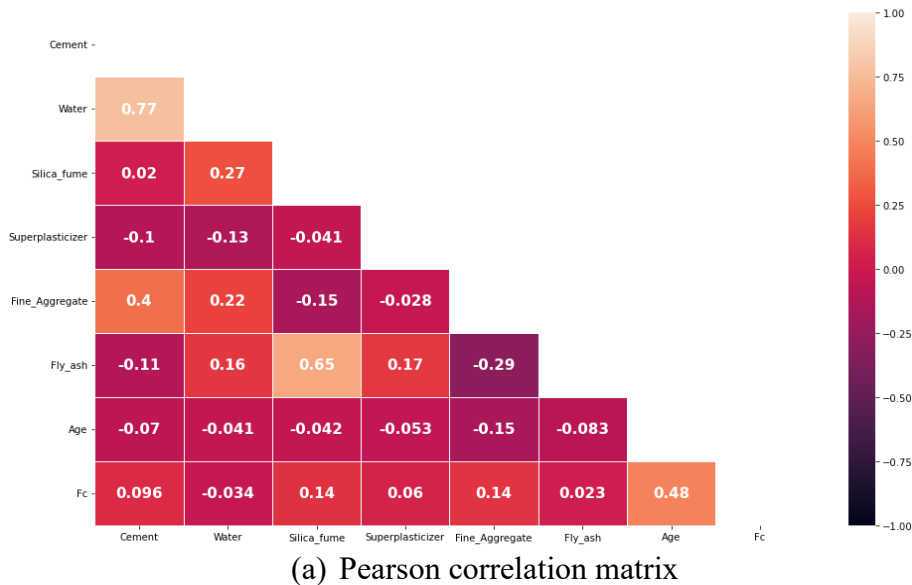
Fig. 5. The frequency of features

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151 In addition, Fig. 6a, describes the Pearson correlation matrix for the database. This matrix displays
 152 the linear relation between feature pairs to be between -1 and +1 (approaching unity implies a
 153 strong linear correlation). This matrix shows that the linear correlation between age and
 154 compressive strength is the highest and is at 0.48. Collectively, there is not a large linear correlation
 155 within the database. For instance, the Pearson correlations between cement and silica fume with
 156 compressive strength are 0.096 and 0.14, respectively.

157 It should be noted that there is a low correlation between water and superplasticizer and strength.
 158 In lieu of the Pearson correlation, the Spearman correlation matrix displays the monotonic relation
 159 within the database (see Fig. 6b). Like the Pearson correlation, the range of correlations is also
 160 between -1 and +1. From this view, the features of noteworthy monotonic relation are the age
 161 (0.49), followed by a weaker association in silica fume (0.25) and cement (0.13).



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This is a preprint draft. The published article can be found at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.istruc.2023.07.040>.

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(b) Spearman correlation matrix

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Fig. 6 Pearson and Spearman matrices

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167 **4. Machine learning algorithms**

168 The compiled database was examined through three algorithms: multilinear regression, XGBoost,
169 and Random Forest. We carried out the machine learning analysis by using the Python Scikit-learn
170 [67] package. These are briefly described herein. Please note that all codes used in this study will
171 be provided in the appendix of this paper.

172 *4.1 Multilinear regression*

173 In general, linear regression can be categorized into two classes: simple-linear regression and
174 multilinear regression [68]. The latter is of interest to this work as multilinear regression considers
175 the effects of multiple features (x) to predict a target (y) [69][70]. The formula of multilinear
176 regression is presented in Eq. 1.

$$177 \quad y = b_0 + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + \dots + b_ix_i \quad (1)$$

178 Where b_1, b_2, \dots, b_i are the weights and b_0 is the y -intercept. Please note that the error is not
179 shown in this equation.

180 *4.2 XGBoost*

181 The XGBoost is a tree-based algorithm that adopts ensemble learning (i.e., combining individual
182 models) [71]. This algorithm prevents overfitting with the regularized boosting method and can
183 automatically handle missing values. Moreover, the XGBoost can cross-validate at each iteration.
184 After each iteration, the algorithm's learning rate is adjusted as a weight on each training (i. e. Eta
185 Hyperparameter) [72].

186 *4.3 Random Forest*

187 The random forest algorithm is a collection of decision trees [73]. Each decision tree splits the
188 input data recursively using the decision nodes, and the optimal split is found by increasing the
189 entropy gain. This algorithm takes the average value of all decision trees to arrive at the final
190 outcome [74][75].

191 *4.4 Details on ML analysis*

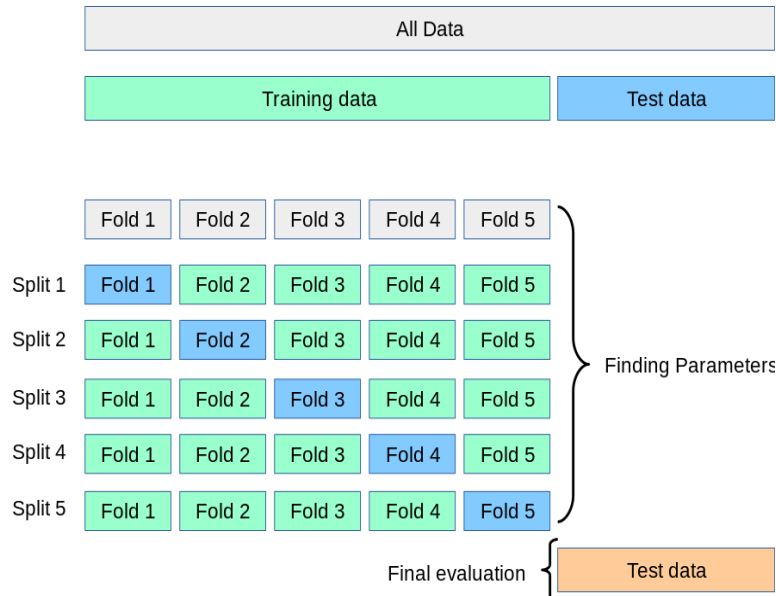
192 In this analysis, the database was split into two datasets, namely, the training dataset and the testing
193 dataset. In our model, 80% of the total dataset (261 samples) was selected as training, and remained
194 dataset (66 samples) was considered as test-size. This split ratio was arrived at via sensitivity
195 analysis and is commonly used in concrete problems, as noted in a recent review [76]. Before
196 fitting the data in our model, the dataset was normalized since there were seven different features
197 with seven different units and magnitudes. By normalization, the values of numeric features in our
198 dataset were altered to a common scale without distorting differences in the ranges of values or
199 losing information.

200 4.4.1 k-cross validation method

201 The k -cross validation method is used herein to develop all ML models [77]. In a k -fold cross
202 validation, a dataset is divided into k datasets with the same numbers. In each validation process,
203 one dataset is selected for testing the model, and remained datasets are considered for training the
204 model – see Fig. 7 [78].

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Fig. 7 Schematic of K -Cross Validation [79]

207 4.4.2 Performance Evaluation

208 Four commonly used metrics in the area of concrete were selected, namely, Mean Absolute Error
209 (MAE), Mean Squared Error (MSE), root-mean-square deviation (RMSE), and coefficient of
210 determination (R^2) in order to evaluate the accuracy of the ML models [80].

211 Mean squared error (MSE)

212 The mean squared error (MSE) is another metric that can evaluate the performance of a model. As
213 it is calculated based on the square of Euclidean distance, it is always a positive number that
214 decreases as the error approaches zero. Thus, it can be one of the preferred metrics for loss
215 functions since it exaggerates the errors (i.e., squared distances between anticipated and actual
216 values).

$$\text{MSE} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \hat{y}_i)^2 \quad (2)$$

217 Coefficient of determination (R^2)

218 The *coefficient of determination* is called R^2 and yields a value between -1 and +1. This metric
219 measures the proportion of the variance of a dependent variable that is explained by a regression
220 model and defined by:

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \hat{y}_i)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \bar{y})^2} \quad (3)$$

221 Where y_i is an observed target, \hat{y}_i is the predicted target of the regression model, both indexed by
222 i , and \bar{y} is the mean of the dependent variable.

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223 *Mean absolute error (MAE)*

224 The mean absolute error (MAE) calculates the error based on *variances* between predictions and
225 the ground truth. This metric is computed as the total sum of errors divided by the number of
226 experiments in order to take an average of errors.

$$MAE = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n |y_i - x_i|}{n} \quad (4)$$

227 *Root mean square error (RMSE)*

228 The root Mean Square Error (RMSE) is the standard deviation of the residuals (i.e., prediction
229 error) and can be calculated as shown.

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \hat{y}_i)^2}{n}} \quad (5)$$

230 **5. Discussion and results**

231 This section details the outcome of our analysis. As mentioned above, all models were assessed
232 by four different metrics, namely, mean squared error (MSE), coefficient of discrimination (R^2),
233 root mean squared error (RMSE), and mean absolute error (MAE).

234 *5.1 Multilinear regression*

235 Equation 6 presents the outcome of the multilinear regression analysis. Given the largest
236 magnitude of their weights, this equation reveals that age and superplasticizers have the largest
237 influence on the model. Table 2 further shows the performance of this model. As can be seen, this
238 model did not perform adequately and scored poorly, especially with regard to R^2 as well as in
239 relation to the observed residuals (see Fig. 8). By looking at Fig. 8; one can reinforce the notion
240 that the performance of this particular model is indeed poor. This can be an indication of the
241 assumption that linearity between the features and strength is faulty.

$$242 \quad y = 13.18 - 0.085x_1 + 0.032x_2 + 0.984x_3 + 0.0776x_4 + 0.010x_5 + 0.006x_6 + 0.567x_7 \quad (6)$$

243 Where $x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6$ and x_7 are coefficients for water, cement, age, silica fume, fine
244 aggregate, fly ash, and superplasticizer, respectively.

245 **Table 2 Performance of the multilinear regression model**

Metrics	Training dataset	Testing dataset
MSE	288.77	405.63
R^2	0.233	0.422
MAE	13.31	16.14
RMSE	16.99	20.14

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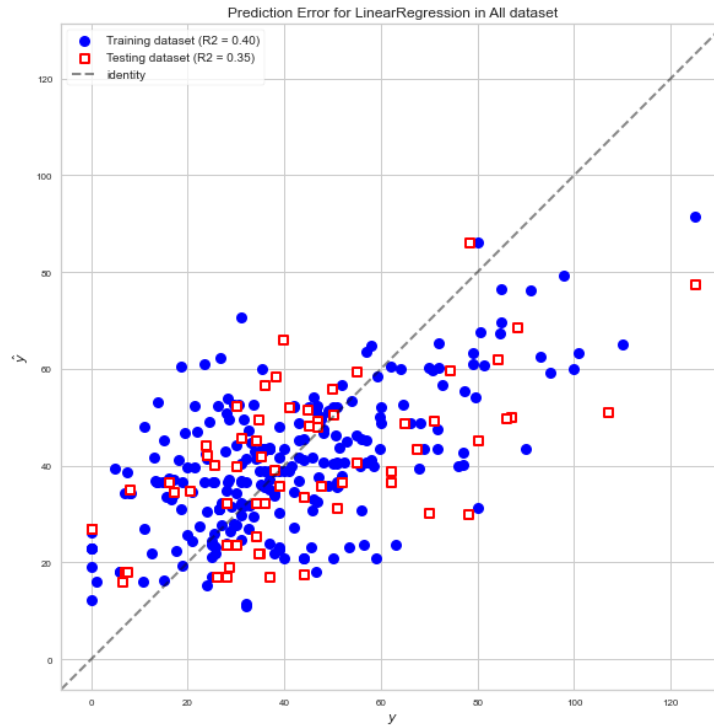


Fig. 8 Comparison of model performance

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250 *5.2 XGBoost*

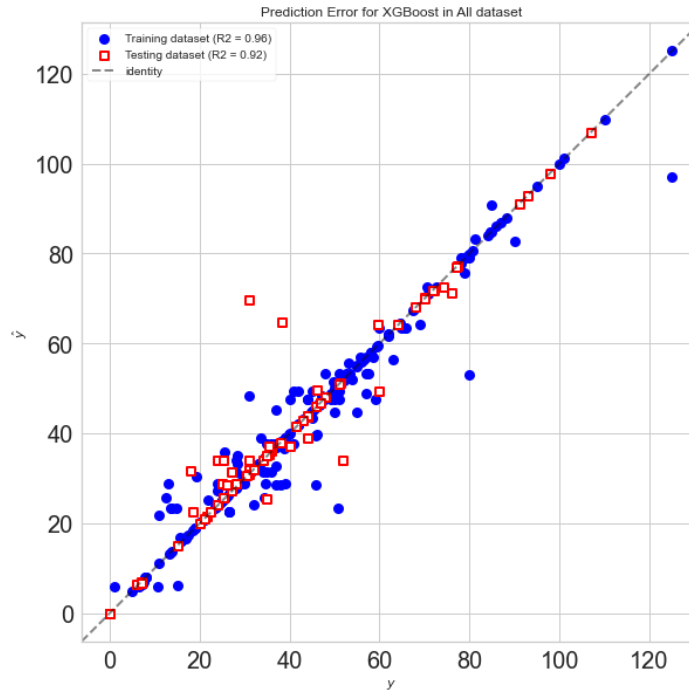
251 The metrics for the XGBoost model are listed in Table 3. As noted here, this model substantially
252 outperforms the multilinear model. For instance, the coefficient of discrimination (R^2)
253 experienced a sharp increase from 0.233 in multilinear regression to 0.981 in XGBoost in training
254 and from 0.422 to 0.831 in testing. A similar observation can be seen in Fig. 9.

255 Table 3 Performance of model

Metrics	Training dataset	Testing dataset
MSE	7.30	213.33
R^2	0.981	0.831
MAE	1.05	8.37
RMSE	2.71	14.60

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Fig. 9 Comparison of model performance

258 *5.3 Random forest regression metric*

259 Table 4 lists the result of the random forest model on two different datasets (i.e., the training dataset
260 and the testing dataset). As one can see, this model performs well across the training and testing
261 datasets. In addition, the results of this analysis also show that this model outperforms all other
262 models examined herein. Figure 10 also confirms this observation.

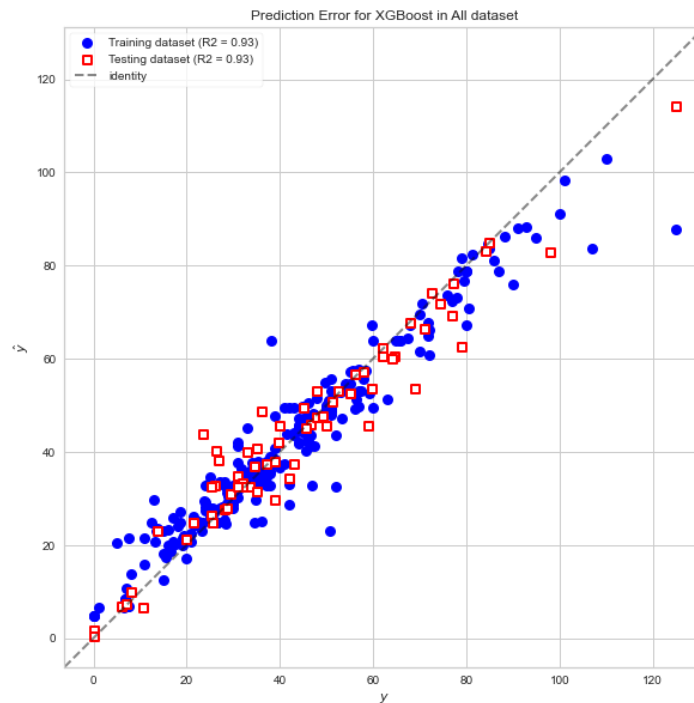
263 Table 4 Performance of model

Metrics	Training dataset	Testing dataset
MSE	23.72	75.60
R^2	0.956	0.846
MAE	3.30	6.00
RMSE	4.87	8.70

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Fig. 10 Comparison of model performance

267 5.4. Explainability analysis

268 As mentioned above, the random forest is the best performing model in this study. Thus, we will
269 apply explainability measures to this model to gain valuable insights into its performance and the
270 influence of each of the features on the accurate predictions of compressive strength. Each
271 explainability measure is explained and demonstrated herein.

272 5.4.1 SHAP summary and feature importance plots

273 The SHAP (SHaply Additive explanation) is a game theory-based method that allows users to peek
274 into the reasoning of ML algorithms. When applied to a specific ML model, SHAP can generate a
275 series of visualizations. Two such representations include the summary plot and the feature
276 importance plot.

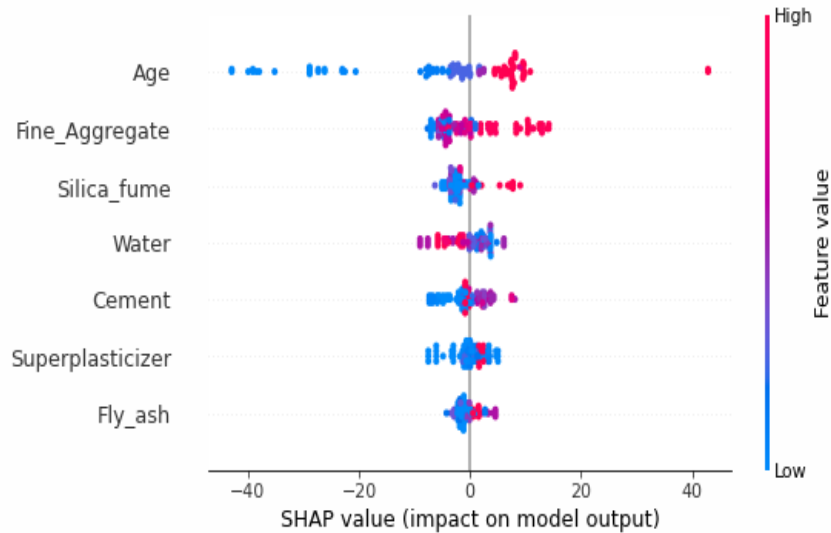
277 The summary plot describes each feature's importance by showing its range's influence on accurate
278 predictions (see Fig. 11a). The summary plot's color illustrates each feature's value from low to
279 high. Low values are associated with soft (blue) color, while bright (red) color defines high values.
280 Each point in the summary plot represents one observation from the compiled database. The
281 positivity and negativity of each point on model predictions can be observed in the horizontal axis
282 of this plot. Positivity means the selected sample increases the prediction accuracy and vice versa.

283 Looking at Fig. 11 shows that age has the broadest distribution in comparison to other features and
284 hence can significantly affect the predictions. On the other hand, fly ash is associated with the
285 narrowest distribution, hence its small influence on model predictions. The same figure shows that
286 the age, fine aggregate, and silica fume with high value (i. e. red color) positively impact the
287 model's predictions of accurately capturing the compressive strength. In other words, the
288 aforementioned features are identified to be the best features that have led to accurately predicting the

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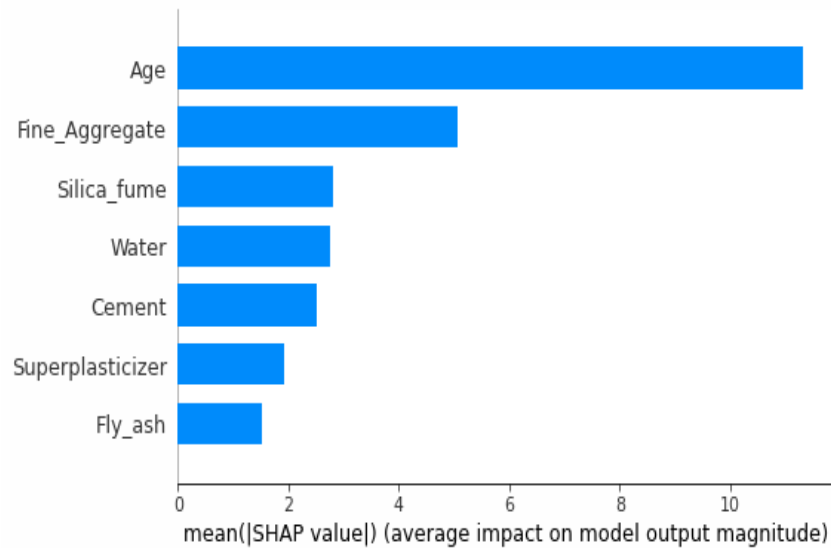
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289 compressive strength. On the contrary, a large quantity of water negatively affects the predictions,
290 possibly as it affects the flowability and strength of concrete (which was also noted by [81,82]).



291
292

(a) Summary plot of SHAP values



293
294
295

(b) Factor importance plot

Fig. 11 Results of SHAP analysis

296 Figure 11b builds on Fig. 11a and ranks the features in terms of their importance. As one can see,
297 the summary plot of SHAP value does not articulate how each feature influences the model's
298 prediction capability. For instance, this figure shows that age is the most influential feature but
299 does not state if the influence is positive or negative. In other words, this particular figure indicates
300 that the model heavily relied on age to arrive at accurate predictions of the compressive strength
301 (as opposed to its reliance on fly ash or superplasticizers).

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302 5.4.2 Partial dependence plots

303 The partial dependence plot (PDP) is the third explainability measure that will be employed herein.
304 This plot explains the relation of each feature on predictions by plotting how varying the value of
305 a feature while keeping all other features constant alter the final output of a model – see Fig. 12
306 [83]. Figure 12 shows that the strength increases with age – more so significantly after the first
307 few days. Similarly, increasing the amount of cement also increases the compressive strength of
308 3D concrete. But, at around 700 kg of cement, the increase in strength seems to stabilize. On the
309 other hand, the compressive strength is seen to fluctuate at some distinct proportions of some
310 features. For example, the strength starts to drop slightly beyond 250 kg of water. This same is
311 also seen in fly ash between 50 and 200 kg. For some features, namely, fly ash or superplasticizers,
312 their values do not seem to affect model predictions by much.

313 5.4.3 Accumulated local effect (ALE)

314 It is worth noting that PDPs are designed to maintain the assumption of **independence** of features,
315 and hence these plots do not distinguish for correlation. Thus, to remedy this limitation, the
316 accumulated local effects (ALE) plot is applied. The ALE plots are unbiased alternatives because
317 they address the bias that arises in PDP when a feature is highly correlated with other features [84].
318 Comparing the vertical axis of PDPs and ALEs shows these axes differ. For example, this in a
319 PDP represents the marginal impact of features on the response. In other words, it does not
320 represent this variable's predicted value or relative impactn other variables [85]. On the other hand,
321 the effect of each feature on the response, as given by the value of the feature, is presented in the
322 vertical axis in ALEs.

323 Further, an ALE averages over the features using the conditional distribution $p(x_2|x_1)$ rather than
324 the marginal distribution $p(x_2)$ as in PDP. This avoids extrapolating the data to unrealistic
325 combinations of feature values, as in PDP. Instead of averaging model predictions, ALE averages
326 over the change in model predictions, which represents the local effect of x_1 on $f(x_1, x_2)$. This
327 effectively blocks and offsets possible correlations that might exist between a feature x_1 and other
328 features [86].

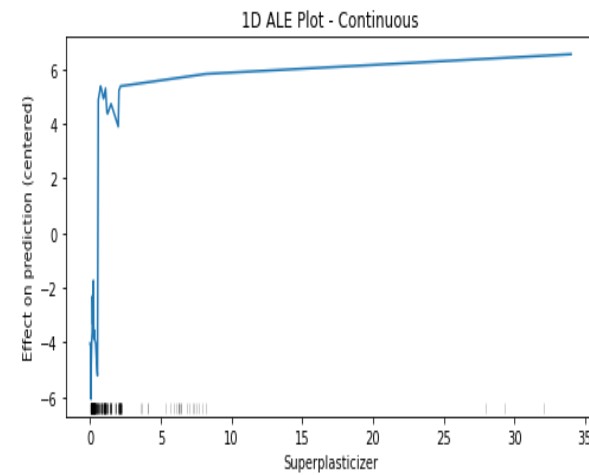
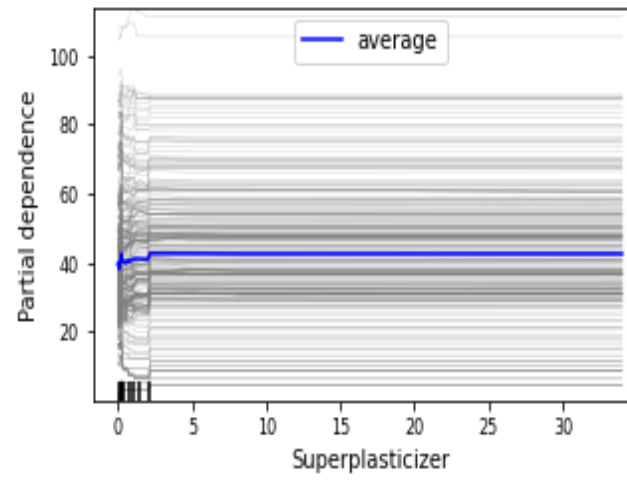
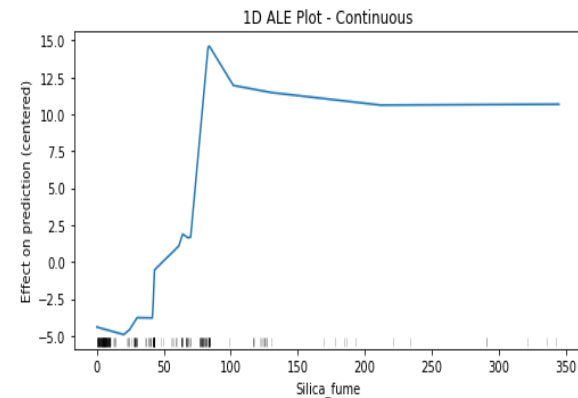
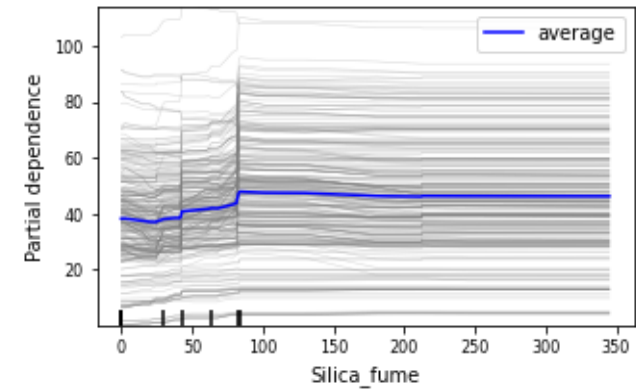
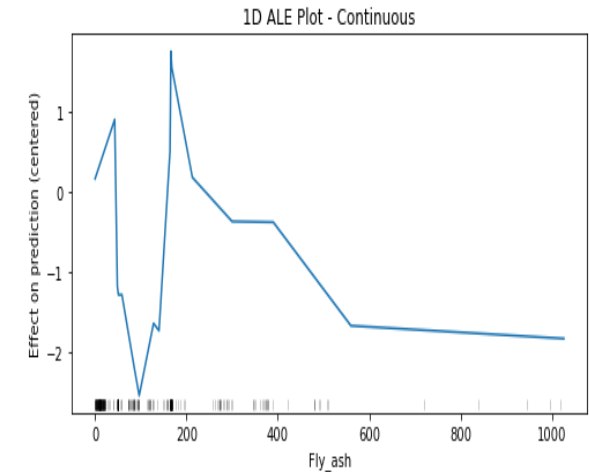
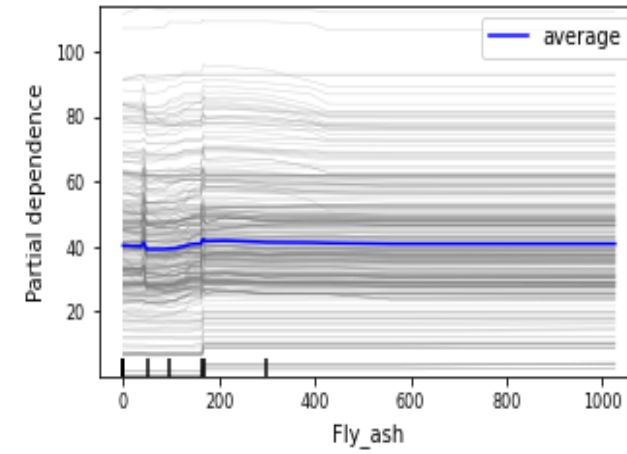
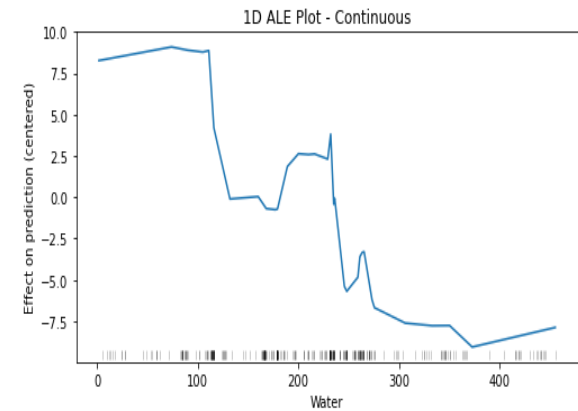
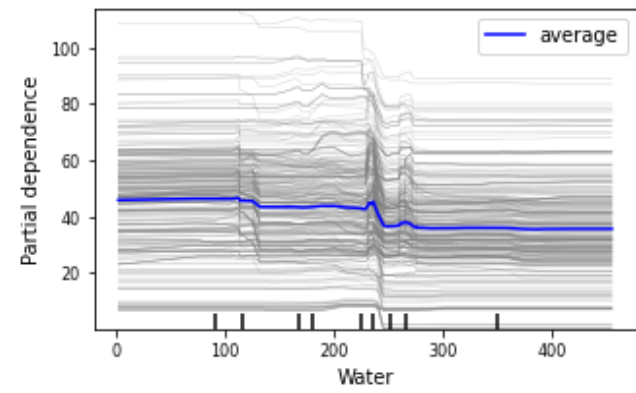
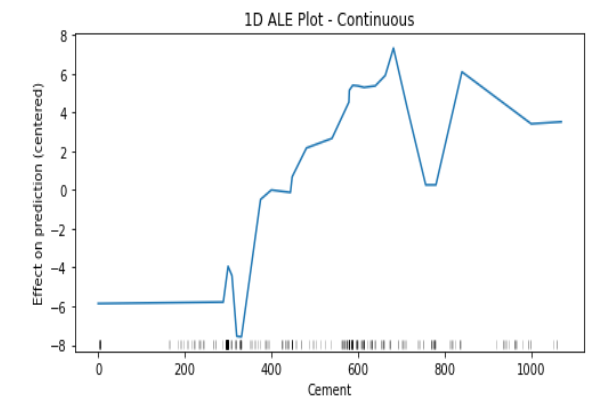
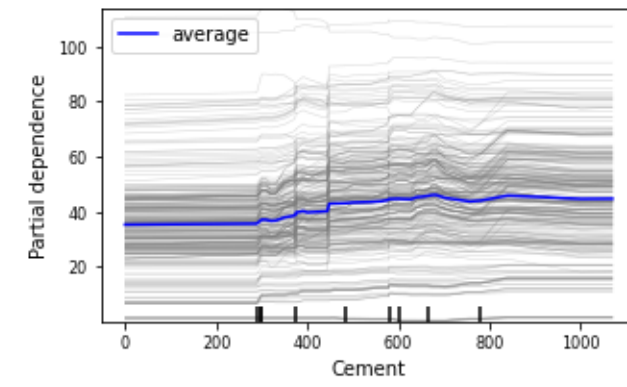
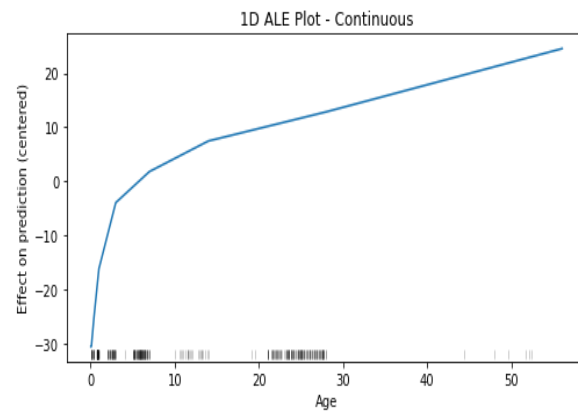
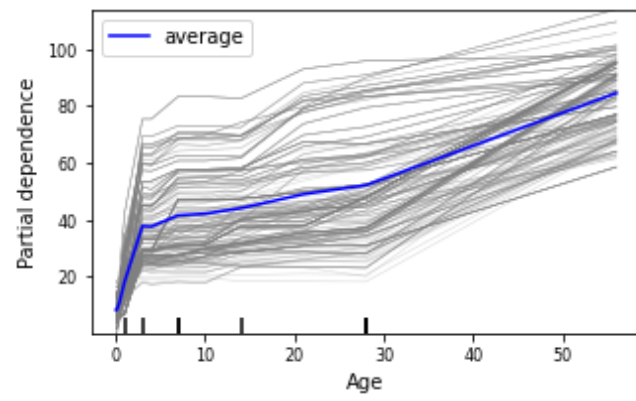
329 Figure 12 shows ALEs for all involved features. It is clear that there is a convergence between the
330 PDPs and ALEs. For example, having a mixture be 20 and 50 days old is seen to increase the
331 compressive strength by 10 and 20 MPa, on average, respectively.

332 5.4.4 Tailoring the strength of 3D concrete via XAI

333 The same figure can be used to tailor concrete mixtures for specific strengths. For example, to
334 maximize the compressive strength, a mixture is expected to have the following proportions:

- 335 • Cement 600-700 kg. → leads to an increase of 4-7 MPa.
- 336 • Water: less than 100 kg. → leads to an increase of about 7.5 MPa.
- 337 • Fine aggregates > 1200 kg. → leads to an increase of about 0.5 MPa.
- 338 • Silica fume > 70 kg. → leads to an increase of about 12.5 MPa.

339 In a way, this figure can help designers tailor 3D mixtures for a given strength.



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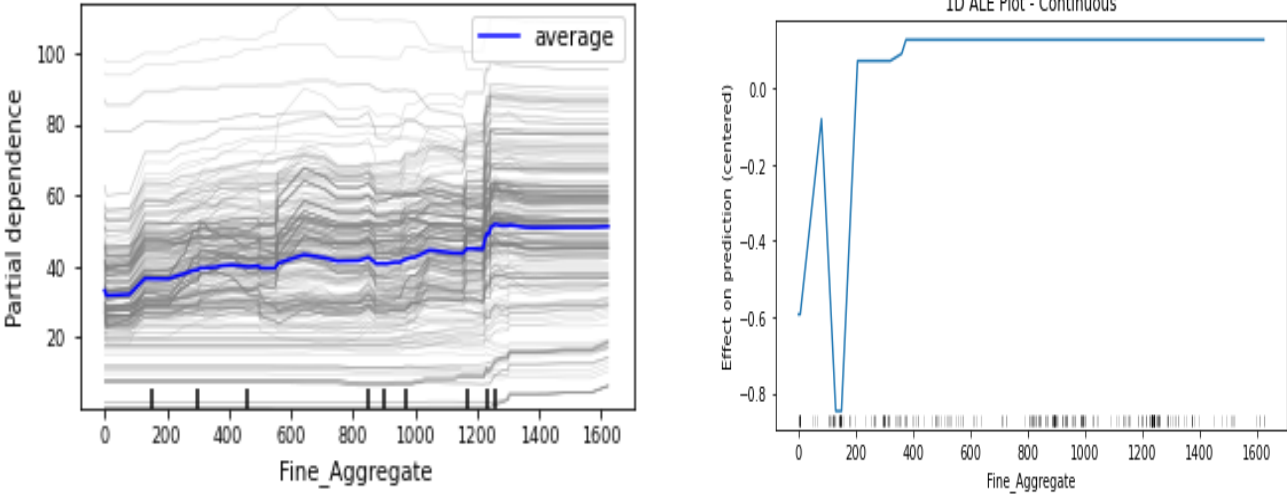


Fig. 12 Partial dependence plot (PDP) and accumulated local effects (ALE)

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341 **6. Conclusions**

342 This paper examines the predictability of 3D printed concrete through machine learning. Based on
343 the 307 analyzed and compiled samples from previous literature and also seven feature variables,
344 the compressive strength of 3D printing concrete has been anticipated and validated by 5-fold
345 cross-validation with two repetitions. Three different algorithms, namely, random forest regressor,
346 XGBoost regressor, and multilinear regression, are implemented in this study. In addition, the
347 performance of our model was assessed by metrics, namely, R^2 , MAE, MSE, and RMSE. For each
348 algorithm, the prediction error plot and residual plot are included.

349 The main results are listed herein:

- 350 • The random forest model has reached an average 90.6% accuracy and thus performed the
351 best compared to XGBoost.
- 352 • The age of 3D printing concrete is the most influential factor for predicting compressive
353 strength, followed by the fine aggregate, cement, water, and silica fume. On the contrary,
354 the superplasticizer and fly ash have the least effect on the target.
- 355 • XAI methods successfully quantified the highly nonlinear relations between features and
356 compressive strength. This can allow us to tailor functional concrete mixtures.
- 357 • Future works should continue and extend this research. We encourage researchers to
358 expand and collect more data on 3D concrete such that this research grows at a faster rate
359 with the integration of XAI methods.
- 360 • To further amplify the positive use of AI in this area, we suggest exploring the use of
361 physics-informed AI, together with XAI.

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719 **Appendix A**

720 Table A1. Database used in this study. This database will be provided upon the publication of
721 this paper.

Ref.	Cement (Kg)	Water (Kg)	Silica fume	SP (%)	Fine Agg.	Fly ash	Age	CS
Khalil, et al.[87]	683	236	0	0.25	850	0	7	70
	675	236	0	0.26	850	0	7	78
	682	236	0	0.25	850	0	28	87
	675	236	0	0.26	850	0	28	86
	683	236	0	0.25	850	0	56	85
	675	236	0	0.26	850	0	56	91
Shakor, et al. [88]	375	125	0	0.66	375	0	7	56.42
	375	125	0	0.66	375	0	7	63.12
	375	125	0	0.66	375	0	28	59.7
	375	125	0	0.66	375	0	28	68.95
Nerella, et al. [89]	430	180	180	1.2	1240	170	3	49.7
	430	180	180	1.2	1240	170	21	80.6
Rahul, et al. [6]	573.6	262.2	81.9	0.17	491.7	164	28	70.9
	663	265.2	2.47	0.13	497.2	165.7	28	71.7
	663	265.2	0.82	0.18	497.2	165.7	28	67.4
Alvarez-Fernandez, et al. [90]	12	29	0	0	0	0	28	0.9
	13	20	0	0	0	0	28	3.3
	24	18	0	0	0	0	28	9.3
	24	17	0	0	36	0	28	13.4
	24	15	0	0	48	0	28	23.5
Ding, et al. [91]	1000	350	0	0.071	1000	0	28	42.03
	1000	420	0	0.086	1000	0	28	43.04
	1000	350	0	0.09	1000	0	28	46.74
	1000	420	0	0.095	1000	0	28	34.01
Rahul, et al. [92]	574	262	82	34	1230	164	7	55
	663	265	0	34	1243	166	7	54
	663	265	0	34	1486	166	7	52
Shakor, et al. [93]	5.06	1.89	0	0.5	6.075	0	28	14.91
	5.06	1.89	0	0.5	6.075	0	28	23.34
	5.06	1.89	0	0.5	6.075	0	28	13.83
	5.06	1.89	0	0.5	6.075	0	28	13.43
	5.06	1.89	0	0.5	6.075	0	28	50.82
	5.06	1.89	0	0.59	6.075	0	28	31.09
	5.06	1.89	0	0.59	6.075	0	28	28.25

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	5.06	1.89	0	0.59	6.075	0	28	25.37
	5.06	1.89	0	0.59	6.075	0	28	25.33
	5.06	1.89	0	0.59	6.075	0	28	51.92
Annareddy, et al. [94]	138	120	12	0	243	122.4	7	19
	138	120	12	0	243	122.4	7	19
	138	906.9	12	0	221.7	122.4	7	22
Kazemian, et al. [95]	600	259	0	0.05	1379	0	7	32.9
	540	259	60	0.16	1357	0	7	35.2
	600	259	0	0.06	1379	0	7	31
	600	259	0	0.15	1379	0	7	31.8
	600	259	0	0.05	1379	0	28	44.7
	540	259	60	0.16	1357	0	28	49.9
	600	259	0	0.06	1379	0	28	45.1
	600	259	0	0.15	1379	0	28	45.9
Heever, et al. [96]	562	256	81.4	0.6	1144	162	28	38.2
Bos, et al. [97]	37.5	144	0	0	48	0	0	40.6
	37.5	126	0	0	48	0	0	41.5
	37.5	117	0	0	48	0	0	42.3
	37.5	114	0	0	48	0	0	43.5
	37.5	108	0	0	48	0	0	55.4
Hack, et al. [98]	595.1	342.8	27.1	0	1064	0	2	59.3
Rushing, et al. [99]	300	141	0	0	690	0	0	40.5
Panda, et al. [100]	300	350	250	0	1220	675	28	31.3
Van Der Putten, et al. [101]	620.5	226.5	0	0	1241	0	0	62
Lee, et al. [102]	289	168	0	1.1	899	51	1	6
	289	168	0	1	899	51	1	6.8
	289	168	0	0.95	899	51	1	6.9
	289	168	0	1.1	899	51	1	6.1
	289	168	0	1.1	899	51	1	6
	289	168	0	1.05	899	51	1	7
	289	168	0	1.25	899	51	1	7.5
	289	168	0	1.1	899	51	1	7.3
	289	168	0	1.1	899	51	7	28.5
	289	168	0	1	899	51	7	28
	289	168	0	0.95	899	51	7	28.1
	289	168	0	1.1	899	51	7	25.1
	289	168	0	1.1	899	51	7	28.1
	289	168	0	1.05	899	51	7	25.3
	289	168	0	1.25	899	51	7	28.1

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289	168	0	1.1	899	51	7	30	
289	168	0	1.1	899	51	28	37	
289	168	0	1	899	51	28	37	
289	168	0	0.95	899	51	28	36.9	
289	168	0	1.1	899	51	28	35.5	
289	168	0	1.1	899	51	28	36	
289	168	0	1.05	899	51	28	35.5	
289	168	0	1.25	899	51	28	36.9	
289	168	0	1.1	899	51	28	40	
588	235	84	2	936	168	1	17	
588	235	84	2.1	936	168	1	20.5	
588	235	84	2.05	936	168	1	21	
588	235	84	2	936	168	7	31	
588	235	84	2.1	936	168	7	50	
588	235	84	2.05	936	168	7	51	
588	235	84	2	936	168	28	64	
588	235	84	2.1	936	168	28	70	
588	235	84	2.05	936	168	28	72	
Dressler, et al. [103]	600	270	0	0.3	1258	0	28	59.9
	600	270	0	0.3	1258	0	28	64.8
	600	270	0	0.3	1258	0	28	66
	600	270	0	0.3	1258	0	28	65.7
Assaad, et al. [104]	506	247.5	44	2.1	0	0	28	42.5
	506	247.5	44	1.9	0	0	28	30.6
	506	247.5	44	1.8	0	0	28	37.9
	598	292.5	52	0.95	0	0	28	51.3
	598	292.5	52	0.9	0	0	28	39.8
	598	292.5	52	0.8	0	0	28	47.7
	690	262.5	60	1.25	0	0	28	66.7
	690	262.5	60	1.15	0	0	28	46.2
	690	262.5	60	1.0	0	0	28	62.6
Le, et al. [105]	579	216	83	1	1241	165	1	20
	579	216	83	1	1241	165	7	80
	579	216	83	1	1241	165	28	110
	579	216	83	1	1241	165	56	125
Weng, et al. [9]	300	90	30	8.19	150	300	7	31
	300	90	30	8.19	150	300	7	27
	300	90	30	8.19	150	300	7	36
	300	90	30	8.19	150	300	7	28
	300	90	30	8.19	150	300	7	35

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300	90	30	8.19	150	300	7	34	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	14	37	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	14	35	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	14	39	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	14	36	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	14	41	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	14	38	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	28	50	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	28	42	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	28	51	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	28	41	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	28	45	
300	90	30	8.19	150	300	28	60	
Joh, et al. [106]	576	240	79	1	1154	172	28	23.5
Meurer, et al. [107]	550	280	0	0	1172	250	22	65.8
Nerella, et al. [108]	627	263.34	0	0.75	1391	0	1.00	41.9
	627	263.34	0	0.75	1391	0	28.00	64.5
	391	164.22	213	2	1260	213	1.00	28.3
	391	164.22	213	2	1260	213	28.00	97.9
Panda, et al. [109]	0	144.09	101.86	1.40	1220.00	572.34	28.00	36.00
Baz, et al. [110]	614	273	68	0.26	850	0	3	30.00
	614	273	68	0.36	850	0	3	27.1
	614	273	68	0.4	850	0	3	29.6
	614	306	68	0.4	850	0	3	25.1
	614	273	68	0.26	850	0	28	49.1
	614	273	68	0.36	850	0	28	46.6
	614	273	68	0.4	850	0	28	46.5
	614	306	68	0.4	850	0	28	46.7
Singh, et al. [111]	1000.0	350.00	0	0.08	1000.00	0	28.00	30.0
	1000.0	350.00	0	0.087	1000.00	0	28.00	26.3
	1000.0	350.00	0	0.115	1000.00	0	28.00	29.5
	1000.0	350.00	0	0.132	1000.00	0	28.00	33.5
	1000.0	350.00	0	0.152	1000.00	0	28.00	30.5
Ding, et al. [112]	1000.00	350.00	0	0.083	1000.00	0	28.0	21.5
	1000.00	361.25	0	0.103	875.00	0	28.0	28.5
	1000.00	372.50	0	0.125	750.00	0	7.0	11.0
	1000.00	372.50	0	0.125	750.00	0	14.0	15.6
	1000.00	372.50	0	0.125	750.00	0	28.0	19.3
	1000.00	395.00	0	0.185	500.00	0	28.0	18.0
Ding, et al. [113]	1000.0	350.0	0	0.071	1000.0	0	0.104	0.030

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	1000.0	385.0	0	0.074	750.0	0	0.104	0.042
	1000.0	420.0	0	0.086	500.0	0	0.104	0.045
Kloft, et al. [114]	500.00	160.00	25.00	0.77	1180.00	0	14.0	56.9
	500.00	160.00	25.00	0.77	1180.00	0	28.0	59.3
Rahul, et al. [115]	660.00	264.00	0	0.08	1237.00	165.00	0.041	0.0050
	660.00	264.00	0	0.08	1237.00	165.00	0.083	0.0064
	660.00	264.00	0	0.08	1237.00	165.00	0.125	0.0079
	612.00	245.00	0	0.08	938.00	153.00	0.041	0.0078
	612.00	245.00	0	0.08	938.00	153.00	0.083	0.0100
	612.00	245.00	0	0.08	938.00	153.00	0.125	0.0137
Mechtcherine, et al. [116]	350.00	179.00	0	1.02	1179.00	140.00	10.00	46.9
Overmeir, et al. [117]	483.00	347.00	70.00	0.26	284.00	0	7.00	32.00
	483.00	347.00	70.00	0.26	284.00	0	14.00	46.5
	483.00	347.00	70.00	0.26	284.00	0	28.00	51.0
	458.00	355.00	51.00	0.24	549.00	0	7.00	32.00
	458.00	355.00	51.00	0.24	549.00	0	14.00	44.0
	458.00	355.00	51.00	0.24	549.00	0	28.00	56.0
Cho, et al. [118]	579.00	261.00	83.00	1.48	1167.00	165.00	1.00	7.9
	579.00	261.00	83.00	1.48	1167.00	165.00	7.00	55.6
	579.00	261.00	83.00	1.48	1167.00	165.00	28.00	70.6
	579.00	261.00	83.00	1.48	1167.00	165.00	56.00	80.0
Kruger, et al. [119]	579.00	261.00	83.0	1.48	1167.00	165.0	1.0	8.1
	579.00	261.00	83.0	1.48	1167.00	165.0	7.0	58.5
	579.00	261.00	83.0	1.48	1167.00	165.0	28.0	74.3
	579.00	261.00	83.0	1.48	1167.00	165.0	56.0	78.2
Liu, et al. [120]	756.40	226.92	24.40	0.35	1220.00	48.80	1.00	13.28
	756.40	226.92	24.40	0.35	1220.00	48.80	4.00	21.54
	756.40	226.92	24.40	0.35	1220.00	48.80	7.00	23.62
	756.40	226.92	24.40	0.35	1220.00	48.80	14.00	24.44
	756.40	226.92	24.40	0.35	1220.00	48.80	28.00	26.87
Tao, et al. [121]	1069.41	300.90	0	0.53	969.60	0	3.0	19.0
	0	396.31	0	0	912.57	0	3.0	18.5
	712.94	332.71	0	0.79	950.59	0	3.0	19.0
	1069.41	300.90	0	0.53	969.60	0	7.0	25.5
	0.0	396.31	0	0	912.57	0	7.0	24.5
	712.94	332.71	0	0.79	950.59	0	7.0	25.7
	1069.41	300.90	0	0.53	969.60	0	28.0	35.5
	0.0	396.31	0	0	912.57	0	28.0	35.0
	712.94	332.71	0	0.79	950.59	0	28.0	35.7

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Xiao, et al. [121]	320.00	112.00	0	0.075	320.00	0	28.00	24.00
	320.00	134.00	0	0.084	160.00	0	28.00	17.00
	320.00	112.00	0	0.131	320.00	0	28.00	34.00
	320.00	134.00	0	0.153	160.00	0	28.00	28.50
	320.00	112.00	0	0.075	320.00	0	28.00	32.00
Ye, et al. [122]	656.00	275.4	246.00	0.294	246.00	118.00	28.00	39.80
Ma, et al. [123]	702.7	229.1	61.1	0.17	1222.0	0	3.0	41.5
	702.7	229.1	61.1	0.17	1222.0	0	7.0	51.3
	702.7	229.1	61.1	0.17	1222.0	0	28.0	57.0
Baz, et al. [124]	614.00	245.60	68.00	0.26	850.00	0	3.0	24.00
	614.00	245.60	68.00	0.26	850.00	0	7.0	30.00
	614.00	245.60	68.00	0.26	850.00	0	28.0	46.00
Rahul, et al. [125]	376.3	263.4	0	1.4	1279.3	0	28.00	35.00
	374.2	261.9	0	0.99	900.8	0	28.00	32.00
	370.8	259.6	0	0.90	909.4	0	28.00	31.00
Ji, et al. [126]	444.00	210.00	41.4	0.09	870.00	96.6	28.00	34.5
Chen, et al. [127]	331.00	248.00	0	2.05	1242.00	0	1.00	1.0
	331.00	248.00	0	2.05	1242.00	0	1.00	6.5
	331.00	248.00	0	2.05	1242.00	0	1.00	10.7
	331.00	248.00	0	2.27	1242.00	0	1.00	15.00
	331.00	248.00	0	2.05	1242.00	0	7.00	12.5
	331.00	248.00	0	2.05	1242.00	0	7.00	25.7
	331.00	248.00	0	2.05	1242.00	0	7.00	34.5
	331.00	248.00	0	2.27	1242.00	0	7.00	35.00
	331.00	248.00	0	2.05	1242.00	0	28.00	13.00
	331.00	248.00	0	2.05	1242.00	0	28.00	34.7
	331.00	248.00	0	2.05	1242.00	0	28.00	39.00
	331.00	248.00	0	2.27	1242.00	0	28.00	45.7
	Jo, et al. [128]	300.00	92.25	0	0	525.00	0	0
300.00		84.55	0	0	477.27	0	0	62.00
Wang, et al. [129]	481.00	171.00	0	2.0	408.00	157.00	28.00	31.00
Long, et al. [130]	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	3.00	25.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	3.00	26.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	3.00	28.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	3.00	26.0
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	3.00	37.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	7.0	40.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	7.0	44.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	7.0	59.00

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	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	7.0	44.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	7.0	50.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	28.0	48.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	28.0	51.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	28.0	57.00
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	28.0	52.5
	780.00	455.00	130.00	0.35	130.00	390.00	28.0	57.5
Xiao, et al. [131]	444.00	210.00	41.4	0.15	870.00	96.6	7.00	31.00
	444.00	231.37	41.4	0.20	870.00	96.6	7.00	22.5
	444.00	254.09	41.4	0.22	818.00	96.6	7.00	21.00
	444.00	275.46	41.4	0.30	818.00	96.6	7.00	17.50
	444.00	210.00	41.4	0.15	870.00	96.6	28.00	47.50
	444.00	231.37	41.4	0.20	870.00	96.6	28.00	32.50
	444.00	254.09	41.4	0.22	818.00	96.6	28.00	30.00
	444.00	275.46	41.4	0.30	818.00	96.6	28.00	24.00
Kaszynska, et al. [132]	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.23	989.00	168.00	0.41	17.00
	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.19	1233.00	168.00	0.41	16.00
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.21	1047.00	0.00	0.41	16.5
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.05	1304.00	0.00	0.41	16.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.34	1258.00	128.00	0.41	8.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.40	1568.00	128.00	0.41	5.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.32	1302.00	0.00	0.41	7.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.28	1623.00	0.00	0.41	7.5
	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.23	989.00	168.00	1.00	42.00
	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.19	1233.00	168.00	1.00	52.00
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.21	1047.00	0.00	1.00	38.00
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.05	1304.00	0.00	1.00	37.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.34	1258.00	128.00	1.00	36.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.40	1568.00	128.00	1.00	30.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.32	1302.00	0.00	1.00	28.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.28	1623.00	0.00	1.00	38.00
	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.23	989.00	168.00	3.00	62.00
	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.19	1233.00	168.00	3.00	76.00
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.21	1047.00	0.00	3.00	51.00
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.05	1304.00	0.00	3.00	62.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.34	1258.00	128.00	3.00	47.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.40	1568.00	128.00	3.00	43.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.32	1302.00	0.00	3.00	43.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.28	1623.00	0.00	3.00	44.00
	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.23	989.00	168.00	7.00	77.00

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	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.19	1233.00	168.00	7.00	90.00
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.21	1047.00	0.00	7.00	68.00
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.05	1304.00	0.00	7.00	77.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.34	1258.00	128.00	7.00	58.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.40	1568.00	128.00	7.00	56.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.32	1302.00	0.00	7.00	55.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.28	1623.00	0.00	7.00	53.00
	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.23	989.00	168.00	28.00	100.00
	588.00	232.00	84.00	0.19	1233.00	168.00	28.00	101.00
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.21	1047.00	0.00	28.00	95.00
	840.00	232.00	0.00	0.05	1304.00	0.00	28.00	93.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.34	1258.00	128.00	28.00	79.00
	448.00	179.2	64.00	0.40	1568.00	128.00	28.00	72.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.32	1302.00	0.00	28.00	62.00
	640.00	179.2	0.00	0.28	1623.00	0.00	28.00	58.00
Yu, et al. [133]	309.00	321.00	345.00	0.17	345.00	1026.00	1.00	15.00
	309.00	321.00	345.00	0.17	345.00	1026.00	3.00	22.00
	309.00	321.00	345.00	0.17	345.00	1026.00	7.00	28.00
	309.00	321.00	345.00	0.17	345.00	1026.00	28.00	31.00
Pham, et al. [134]	483.00	182.00	268.00	0	1074.00	0	28.00	88.00
Federowicz, et al. [135]	580.00	200.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	1.00	35.14
	580.00	189.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	1.00	27.70
	580.00	177.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	1.00	23.59
	580.00	200.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	7.00	71.81
	580.00	189.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	7.00	68.02
	580.00	177.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	7.00	59.64
	580.00	200.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	14.00	79.47
	580.00	189.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	14.00	77.29
	580.00	177.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	14.00	72.60
	580.00	200.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	221.00	81.36
	580.00	189.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	21.00	84.06
	580.00	177.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	21.00	79.06
	580.00	200.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	28.00	84.61
	580.00	189.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	28.00	88.23
	580.00	177.00	83.00	2.17	1234.00	166.00	28.00	84.90
Chi, et al. [136]	400.00	168.00	212.00	0.16	80.00	58.80	28.00	18.50

722 Appendix B

723 The coding script will be provided upon the publication of this paper.