

## Research Paper

## Elemental, Thermal and Physicochemical Investigation of Novel Biodiesel from *Wodyetia Bifurcata* and Its Properties Optimization using Artificial Neural Network (ANN)

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### Abstract

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In this study, an unexplored oil from the *wodyetia bifurcata* fruit was used for biodiesel production. The transesterification process was implemented to convert the raw oil into *wodyetia bifurcata* methyl ester (WBME) and the influence of process variables on WBME yield was examined with the response surface method (RSM) assisted Box-Behnken optimization. The results of RSM show that a maximum biodiesel yield of 94.67% was achieved and reaction time was identified as an influencing process variable. The fatty acid composition (FAC) from chromatography reveals the presence of highly unsaturated in WBME and the significant fuel properties of thermal and molecular meet the required fuel standards (ASTM). The obtained fuel properties of WBME are compared with other popularly used biodiesels and observed low kinematic viscosity (3.87mm<sup>2</sup>/sec) and moderated cetane number (53) for WBME. Furthermore, artificial neural network (ANN) tools are used for the prediction of WBME yield and show an improvement of 0.4% than RSM and low mean square error and a high coefficient of correlation was observed for ANN.

**Keywords:** *Wodyetia Bifurcata*, Biodiesel; Foxtail tree; Fuel properties; ANN; RSM

## 1. Introduction

In the last decade, the search for renewable and environmentally friendly fuels has become increasingly important due to reports of the crude oil crisis and the increase in global environmental air pollution. Therefore, renewable fuels, especially biodiesels, are considered feasible solutions to mitigate energy and air pollution crises [1]. Biodiesel is the strongest candidate to be widely implemented due to the availability of domestic raw materials and the maturity of technology readiness level for production that

meet key properties of biofuel [2], [3]. The improved fuel properties in biodiesel, like negligible sulfur content, lubricity, high cetane index, presence of inbuilt molecular oxygen and etc., made the biodiesel a promising alternative to conventional petro-diesel.

Biodiesel can be obtained from different oils of edible and non-edible categories. However, low cost and easily available oils are considered a better choice in biodiesel production. Therefore, the search for different oils that are less significant in food versus fuel conflict is considered as most



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significant for biodiesel production. All these potentials reinforce the motivation of some researchers to look for various oils for biodiesel production regardless of geographic location. For instance, Asia palm oil [4], Africa jatropha oil [5], America soybean oil [6], Europe rapeseed oil [7], Australia beauty leaf oil and castor oils [8] are widely used for biodiesel production. Apart from the mentioned oils, a wide variety of oils are identified for biodiesel production [9], [10]. Moreover, cooking waste oil is also a new potential in biodiesel production, with the addition of suitable catalysts and additives [11], [12].

In addition to equipment, additives, and catalyst [3], [9], [13], producing better-quality biodiesel with high yield can be possible with the advent of statistical optimization and artificial intelligence (AI) modeling tools. From the available literature, it was evident that the accurate prediction of biodiesel yield with limited usage of resource parameters can be achieved with the optimization tools of response surface method (RSM), Taguchi, screening and etc. [14], [15]. Similarly, maximum biodiesel yield can be predicted with AI modeling tools [16], [17]. From this fact, the search for unexplored oil for biodiesel production has an important meaning and at the same time, using modern tools such as AI results in high accuracy for quality optimization in biodiesel production.

One of the raw materials for biodiesel that has not been explored is *Wodyetia bifurcata* (WB). So far, *Wodyetia bifurcata* has only been recognized for methylene blue removal [18], [19], candidate for pharmaceuticals [20], [21], and activated carbon material [22]. *Wodyetia bifurcata* is also known as foxtail tree (in Figure 1a). It is a species of palm in the family of Arecaceae native to Queensland, Australia. It consists of white color flowers stalk, and its foliage resembles in deep green to light green color, which appears to be in

the shape of a fox's tail and hence it was called a foxtail tree [20]. It can be grown in a wide range of soils where the soil is well-draining and not highly acidic. The trunk of this tree is smooth and thin, and it can grow up to 2 to 3 feet per year under normal conditions and may reach a height of about 30 feet within 10 years. Its two-inch-long fruits appear to be in olive green to green color as shown in Figure 1b, and its color changed to orange as shown in Figure 1c when it is in the ripening stage. The germination may occur as quickly as one month to a three-month time frame, or it may take up to one year depends on the environmental conditions. WB prefers a humid environment which may be provided by fountains of pebble trays in the area where it can grow.

From the above discussions, it was evident that renewable and easily available fuels have a great demand as a petro-diesel replacement to combat the energy and environmental crisis. Therefore, the present study aims to produce biodiesel from *Wodyetia bifurcata* oil which is a novel feedstock. Then the significant fuel properties related to elemental, thermal and physicochemical are investigated. The effect of reaction parameters like catalyst, alcohol, temperature and time on *Wodyetia bifurcata* biodiesel is also investigated with the modern optimization tools of response surface method and artificial neural network using Minitab-18 and Matlab-R19 software.

## 2. Materials and Method

### 2.1. Chemicals used

Different analytical grade chemicals of methyl alcohol ( $\text{CH}_3\text{OH}$ ), sodium hydroxide ( $\text{NaOH}$ ), sulphuric acid ( $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ ), etc. were obtained from the Sigma Aldrich chemicals. Temperature-controlled magnetic stirrer, distilled water, filter papers, and different glassware of Borosil make are utilized from our fuel's laboratory.



**Figure 1.** Details of *Wodyetia Bifurcata* plant: a. Tree; b. Fruits; and c. Ripen fruits

### 2.2. Oil extraction process

The fully ripen fruits from the wodyetia bifurcata (WB) tree are collected (Figure 2a) and washed with distilled water to remove the mud and other attached impurities to the fruits (Figure 2b). Then they are dried under the sun for five days to remove the moisture content. The outer shells of dried fruits are removed (Figure 2c), and the seeds are kept in an electric dryer for 12 hours for further removal of any trace of moisture in it (Figure 2d). The finally dried seeds of measured quantity are sent to a local oil crushing unit (Figure 2e) where the WB oil was extracted to get WB oil as presented in Figure 2f.

### 2.3. Design of experiments

In order to achieve maximum biodiesel yield with the utilization of limited process parameters, a well-planned experiment is essential. For this purpose, response surface method (RSM) optimization was proposed in this current

research. RSM techniques are widely used for biodiesel production optimization and better biodiesel yield was achieved ( $\geq 90\%$ ) with this technique as per the investigation from different authors [23], [24]. Therefore, RSM-based Box-Behnken design in Minitab version 18 software was used to design the number of experiments as per the four process parameters. A total of 30 experiments are conducted by varying the four process parameters of methyl alcohol to oil ratio (A), catalyst percentage(B), temperature (C), and time (D), as shown in Table 1. The mathematical Eq (1) was used to predict the output response yield by varying the input process parameters. Where,  $A_0$  and  $A_i$  represents the intercept and regression of the first-order coefficient in RSM and  $A_{ii}$  and  $A_{ij}$  represents the regression quadratic coefficient for its factor and regression coefficient among the  $i$ th and  $j$ th input parameters.  $X_i$  and  $k$  denotes the input independent parameter and no of input parameters.

$$Yield = A_0 + \sum_{i=1}^k A_i X_i + \sum_{i=1}^k A_{ii} X_i^2 + \sum_{j=i+1}^k \sum_{i=1}^k A_{ij} X_{ij} \quad (1)$$



Figure 2. (a-f) Oil extraction process from wodyetia bifurcate

Table 1. Process parameters and their ranges

S.No	Process parameters	Units	Notations	Low	Medium	High
1	Methyl alcohol to oil ratio	-	A	30	45	60
2	Catalyst percentage (v/v)	%	B	0.5	1	1.5
3	Time	min	C	30	60	90
4	Temperature	°C	D	50	60	70

#### 2.4. Transesterification process

To reduce the high viscosity in raw oils, a popular method that was followed by several researchers is the transesterification process [25]–[27]. This process has the highest success rate in converting the different category raw oils into low viscous biodiesel. Therefore, it was employed in this current investigation to convert wodyetia bifurcata (WB) oil into wodyetia bifurcata methyl ester (WBME). Experiments are conducted based on the design of experiments by varying the four process parameters as shown in Table 1. Initially, the filter raw oil (WB) of measured quantity was placed on a temperature-controlled, hot plate magnetic stirrer as shown in Figure 3a, and homogeneous catalyst sodium hydroxide (NaOH) and methanol were used to initiate the transesterification reaction. The reaction duration has maintained a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 90 minutes. Similarly, the maximum reaction temperature was maintained up to 70°C, and

proper care was taken to control the escape of alcohol (CH<sub>3</sub>OH) from the reaction. After achieving the desired reaction period, the mixture was shifted into a separating funnel, as shown in Figure 3b and allowed to settle for the whole night. As the transesterification process was successful, a clear separation of glycerol at the bottom and methyl ester at the top layer with distinct color will appear as shown in Figure 3b. The heavy mass glycerol was separated, and methyl ester was washed with lukewarm distilled water to remove the unwanted chemicals, and the washing process was stopped when a clear separation of methyl ester and water appears as shown in Figure 3c. The final samples of WBME were stored in an airtight glass beaker to test significant fuel properties. The same procedure was followed by varying the process parameters, and the experiments are conducted randomly. The finally obtained WBME yield was calculated from Eq. (2) and presented in the Table 2.

$$\text{Biodiesel yield}(\%) = \frac{\text{Weight of the wodyetia bifurcata biodiesel}}{\text{Weight of the wodyetia bifurcata oil}} \times 100 \quad (2)$$

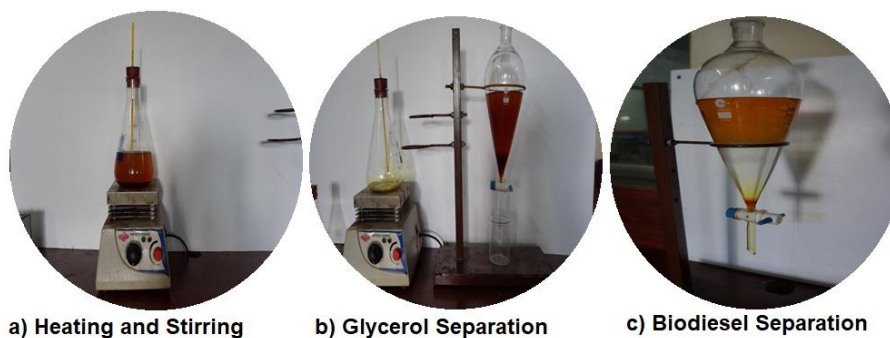


Figure 3. (a-c) Transesterification process of wodyetia bifurcata

Table 2. Design of experiments and biodiesel yield

Runs	A	B	C	D	Exp Yield (%)	RSM Yield (%)	Runs	A	B	C	D	Exp Yield (%)	RSM Yield (%)
1	45	0.5	90	60	92.47	92.77	16	60	1	90	60	93.54	93.61
2	45	0.5	30	60	88.05	87.88	17	45	1	60	60	93.63	93.68
3	60	1	60	50	94.74	94.67	18	30	1	90	60	92.35	92.13
4	30	1	30	60	89.94	89.85	19	30	0.5	60	60	87.37	87.25
5	45	1.5	90	60	90.74	90.91	20	30	1	60	50	89.47	89.63
6	45	1	60	60	93.41	93.68	21	45	1	60	60	93.52	93.68
7	60	1.5	60	60	89.42	89.53	22	60	1	30	60	91.18	91.37
8	45	1	30	70	91.14	91.32	23	45	1	60	60	93.58	93.68
9	45	0.5	60	70	90.17	90.26	24	45	1.5	60	70	91.38	91.33
10	60	1	60	70	90.97	90.81	25	45	1.5	30	60	91.58	91.28
11	45	1	90	70	94.19	94.03	26	30	1	60	70	92.78	92.85
12	45	1	60	60	93.98	93.68	27	60	0.5	60	60	91.86	91.70
13	45	1	30	50	91.95	92.10	28	45	1	60	60	93.98	93.68
14	30	1.5	60	60	90.82	90.97	29	45	1.5	60	50	91.48	91.36
15	45	0.5	60	50	90.85	90.88	30	45	1	90	50	94.09	93.90

## 2.5. AI modeling

Artificial Intelligence (AI) modeling is one of the popular techniques in the prediction of best output results. They are known for high prediction accuracy when compared to any other models. Available scientific literature reveals that [28]; Artificial Neural Network (ANN) models perform reasonably well when compared with statistical regression models. This was evident in our previous research when comparing the predictive ability of RSM and ANN in biodiesel production from low grade oils using heterogeneous catalysts [29]. Results show that ANN achieves the highest efficacy ( $R^2$ ) and low mean square error than the RSM model. Similar results are observed from different scientific groups [30]. ANN techniques are successfully applied in predicting the optimum diesel biodiesel blends [31], biodiesel fueled engine performance and emissions analysis [32], biodiesel fuel property analysis [33] and etc. Due to these benefits, an attempt was made in this endeavor to employ the ANN model for the prediction of biodiesel yield from wodyetia bifurcata.

In a nutshell, ANN models are inspired by the biology of the human brain consist of a large number of neurons called processing units connected to each other [30], [34]. These units are responsible for estimating the linear and non-linear problems from a large network. The

biodiesel yield results, as shown in table.3 are used for training the ANN network model. A popularly used feedforward backpropagation algorithm (Lavenberg) in MATLAB2019R software was used for this purpose. The network architecture consists of input, output and hidden layers as shown in Figure 4; the input layer was trained with the four process parameters and the output with biodiesel yield. The choice of the hidden layer was trial and error, and in this current investigation, the hidden layer was trained with 20 neurons. Similarly, the 100% experimental data was segregated as 70% for training, 15% for testing, and 15% for validation, and tan-sigmoid function (Eq.3) was used for input and hidden layers.

$$\text{tansig}(X) = \frac{e^X - e^{-X}}{e^X + e^{-X}} \quad (3)$$

## 2.6. Statistical correlation

The efficacy of chosen models (RSM and ANN) was estimated based on the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), mean square error (MSE), and root mean square error (RMSE) values. This highest  $R^2$  and lowest MSE represent the best model, and they are computed by Eq. (4) to (7). Where, the terms n represents the number of experimental data,  $X_{p,i}$ ,  $X_{a,i}$  represents the estimated and experimental values,  $X_{a,avg}$ ,  $X_{p,avg}$  represents the average experimental and estimated values respectively.

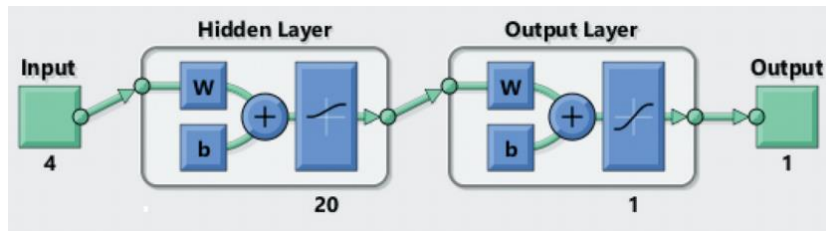


Figure 4. ANN network architecture

$$R = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_{p,i} - X_{p,avg})(X_{a,i} - X_{a,avg})}{\sqrt{[\sum_{i=1}^n (X_{p,i} - X_{p,avg})^2][\sum_{i=1}^n (X_{a,i} - X_{a,avg})^2]}} \quad (4)$$

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_{a,i} - X_{p,i})^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_{p,i} - X_{a,avg})^2} \quad (5)$$

$$MSE = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_{p,i} - X_{a,i})^2 \quad (6)$$

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_{p,i} - X_{a,i})^2} \quad (7)$$

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### 3.1. Fatty acid composition analysis

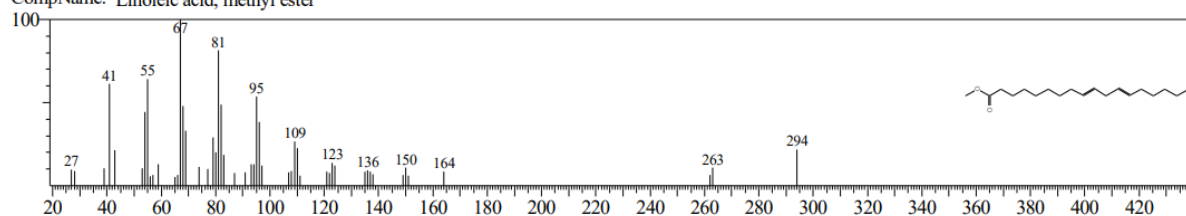
The presence of fatty acid compositions (FAC) in biodiesels like saturated, unsaturated play a significant role in altering the biodiesel fuel properties. Therefore, FAC levels are tested for wodyetia bifurcata methyl ester (WBME) using gas chromatography (Agilent-HP 6890 model). The results of fatty acid profiles are presented in the Table 3, that shows that WBME was identified with five major fatty acids, namely linoleic, oleic, arachidic, palmitic, and myristic acids. The two major unsaturated groups of mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated are observed as linoleic acid

(Figure 5) and oleic acids (Figure 6) with a contribution of 29.27% and 33.12%. Following this, the total saturated and unsaturated FAC are observed as 32.63% and 63.96%. Saturated FAC in biodiesels helps in improving the performance of the engine with regulated exhaust emissions [35]. Similarly, high saturated FAC in biodiesel has a significant contribution in improving the fuel properties and engine performance characteristics [36]. Therefore, the FAC compositions of WBME are compared with three popularly used biodiesels of palm (POME), jatropha (JOME) and soybean (SOME) as shown in table.3 reveal that the total saturated FAC of WBME are observed higher than POME, JOME and SOME.

**Table 3.** Wodyetia bifurcata methyl ester (WBME) fatty acid compositions

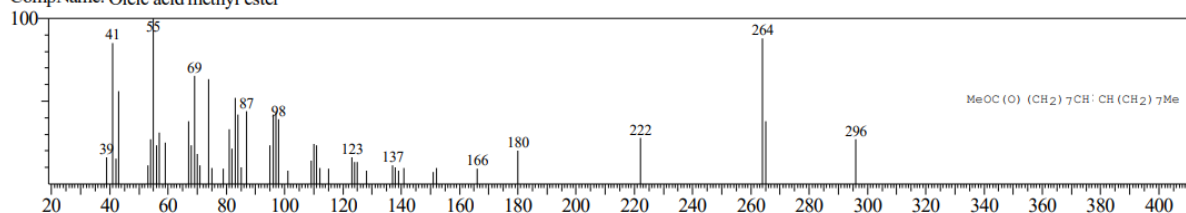
S.No	Fatty acid name	POME(Wt.%) [35]	JOME(Wt.) [39]	SOME(Wt.%) [40]	WBME(Wt.%)
1	Palmitic Acid	40.2	13.0	15.07	7.12
2	Stearic Acid	0.04	5.8	12.09	3.65
3	Lauric Acid	2.69	0.1	0.21	2.31
4	Arachidic Acid	6.07	0.2	0.40	6.15
5	Behenic Acid	1.52	-	0.60	3.14
6	Lignoceric Acid	1.55	-	0.28	3.14
7	Myristic Acid	6.06	0.1	0.71	7.12
8	Linoleic Acid	-	35.4	4.39	29.27
9	Linolenic Acid	44.69	0.3	40.93	1.57
10	Oleic Acid	27.28	44.5	19.78	33.12
11	Other	5.18	-	2.95	3.41
12	Total Saturated	22.65	19.1	29.39	32.63
13	Monounsaturated	27.48	45.2	45.32	33.12
14	Polyunsaturated	44.69	35.7	22.34	30.84

Hit#:4 Entry:69906 Library:NIST107.LIB  
SI:81 Formula:C19H34O2 CAS:112-63-0 MolWeight:294 RetIndex:0  
CompName: Linoleic acid, methyl ester



**Figure 5.** GCMS spectrum for linoleic acid

Hit#:1 Entry:142888 Library:WILEY229.LIB  
SI:88 Formula:C19H36O2 CAS:112-62-9 MolWeight:296 RetIndex:0  
CompName: Oleic acid methyl ester



**Figure 6.** GCMS spectrum for oleic acid

### 3.2. Specific fuel properties of WBME

Biodiesel fuel properties play a significant role in commercialization and, at the same time to compete with diesel fuel. Therefore, the fuel properties of WBME, especially physiochemical, thermal and elemental compositions, are tested as per the ASTM standards are presented in [Table 4](#). From the previous studies on biodiesel fuel properties showed that some thermal properties like flash point, fire point and cetane number have the edge over diesel fuel which can be considered as a good sign for storing the fuel and reduce the delay period during combustion. However, low calorific value, high density and viscosity have a negative impact on the engine performance. The variations in biodiesel fuel properties may also be related to the presence of saturated and unsaturated FAC. The fuel properties of WBME showed that density and kinematic viscosity was increased by 6.02% and 38.81% than mineral diesel fuel. This may acclaim for long-chain fatty acids, especially the presence of palmitic, stearic and myristic acids [37]. Due to high density and viscosity may results in higher fuel consumption, thereby results in low brake thermal efficiency.

High flash and fire points are observed for WBME, which helps in safe handling during transportation and storage. Increased carbon number from long-chain saturated fatty acids like palmitic acids may be responsible for high flash and fire points [35]. High saturated FAC helps in improving the cetane number (CN) and it was observed for WBME that 8.16% higher than diesel fuel. Higher CN is always recommended for diesel engines which restricts the ignition lag (delay period) during the combustion. In contrast, a low calorific value was observed for WBME than diesel fuel which may occur due to the low hydrocarbon and zero sulfur content [38]. In general, biodiesels are known as oxygenated fuels and the same can be witnessed in WBME with the presence of 12.14% molecular oxygen, which may help in achieving complete combustion, thereby achieving low tailpipe emissions. Finally, the fuel properties of WBME meet the minimum criteria set by the international biodiesel standards of ASTM D6751. The obtained fuel properties of WBME are compared with the available literature [35], [39]–[41] as shown in [Table 5](#) reveals that low kinematic viscosity was recorded for WBME compared to other biodiesels.

**Table 4.** Significant fuel properties of wodyetia bifurcata methyl ester

S.No	Properties	Units	ASTM Standard	WBME	Diesel	Limits
1	Density	kg/m <sup>3</sup>	D1298	880	830	-
2	Kinematic viscosity	mm <sup>2</sup> /sec	D445	3.87	2.86	1.90-6.01
3	Pour point	°C	D7346-15	3.12	-13	-15 to 10
4	Cloud point	°C	D2500	2.16	-	-3 to 12
5	Flash point	°C	D93-16	149	87	130 min
6	Fire point	°C	D93-16	164	98	-
7	Calorific value	MJ/kg	D240	38	42.7	35 to 45
8	Cetane number	-	D613	53	49	47 (min)
9	Oxygen content	wt.%	D5291	12.14	-	-
10	Sulfur content	wt.%	D5291	0.006	0.134	-

**Table 5.** Comparison of WBME with other biodiesels

S.No	Properties	Units	POME [35], [41]	JOME [39], [41]	SOME [40]	WBME (Present study)
1	Density	kg/m <sup>3</sup>	860.6	838.8	874	880
2	Kinematic viscosity	mm <sup>2</sup> /sec	4.545	3.91	5.19	3.87
3	Pour point	°C	9	2.0	-	3.12
4	Cloud point	°C	16	3.0	1	2.16
5	Flash point	°C	164	161	160	149
6	Fire point	°C	-	181	182	164
7	Calorific value	MJ/kg	38.50	40.42	38.81	38.76
8	Cetane number	-	65	58.2	49	53
9	Oxygen content	wt.%	-	11.45	-	12.14
10	Sulfur content	wt.%	0.003	0.004	0.014	0.006

### 3.3. Analysis of variance

The transesterification of wodyetia bifurcata methyl ester (WBME) was successfully completed based on the design of experiments (Table 1 and Table 2). Now the accuracy of the experiments and the influencing parameter on WBME was examined by ANOVA results, as shown in Table 6. The experimental WBME yield was analyzed with a second-order polynomial Eq. (1) which correlates the response variable to an independent variable. From table.6 significance of process parameters (A, B, C & D) can be identified with the F-test and probability of error P-vales. The significance of the individual coefficient was confirmed by the P-value (<0.05) at 95% confidence level and the lowest P-vale (<0.001) represents the highest significance and reliability of the chosen model in estimating the output

results (biodiesel yield). From the ANOVA results, molar ratio (A), catalyst used (B), time (C) are significant in WBME yield. However, reaction time was identified as the most influential parameter based on P (<0.0001) and F (254.63) values. Lack of fit of the model was identified as insignificant (0.609) compared to the pure error (0.291). The model accuracy was determined by the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) which is 99.11%. This shows that more than 99% of the data were consistent with the observed values and the same can be witnessed in the predicted versus actual yield plot (Figure 7). High R<sup>2</sup> was desirable to ensure the better estimation between the chosen model and the experimental data which was attained in this current research. Finally, the biodiesel yield for further experiments can be conducted based on the regression Eq. (8).

$$WBME\ Yield = 12.77 + 1.5127 A + 32.52 B + 0.1536 C + 0.795 D - 0.006187 A*A - 9.693 B*B - 0.000605 C*C - 0.002958 D*D - 0.1963 A*B - 0.000028 A*C - 0.011800 A*D - 0.08767 B*C + 0.0290 B*D + 0.000758 C*D \tag{8}$$

**Table 6.** ANOVA results for significant process parameters

Source	DOF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Model	14	100.744	7.1960	119.94	<0.0001
Linear	4	24.116	6.0291	100.49	<0.0001
A- Molar Ratio	1	6.720	6.7200	112.00	<0.0001
B- Catalyst Used	1	1.802	1.8019	30.03	<0.0001
C- Time	1	15.278	15.2776	254.63	<0.0001
D- D- Temperature	1	0.317	0.3169	5.28	0.036
Square	4	48.215	12.0537	200.90	<0.0001
A*A	1	13.288	13.2884	221.48	<0.0001
B*B	1	40.269	40.2689	671.17	<0.0001
C*C	1	2.034	2.0336	33.89	<0.0001
D*D	1	0.600	0.6001	10.00	0.006
2-Way Interaction	6	28.413	4.7355	78.93	<0.0001
A*B	1	8.673	8.6730	144.55	<0.0001
A*C	1	0.001	0.0006	0.01	0.920
A*D	1	12.532	12.5316	208.87	<0.0001
B*C	1	6.917	6.9169	115.28	<0.0001
B*D	1	0.084	0.0841	1.40	0.255
C*D	1	0.207	0.2070	3.45	0.083
Error	15	0.900	0.0600		
Lack-of-Fit	10	0.609	0.0609	1.05	0.512
Pure Error	5	0.291	0.0582		
Total	29	101.644			
R <sup>2</sup> = 99.11%		R <sup>2</sup> (Adj) = 98.29%		R <sup>2</sup> (Pred) = 96.14%	



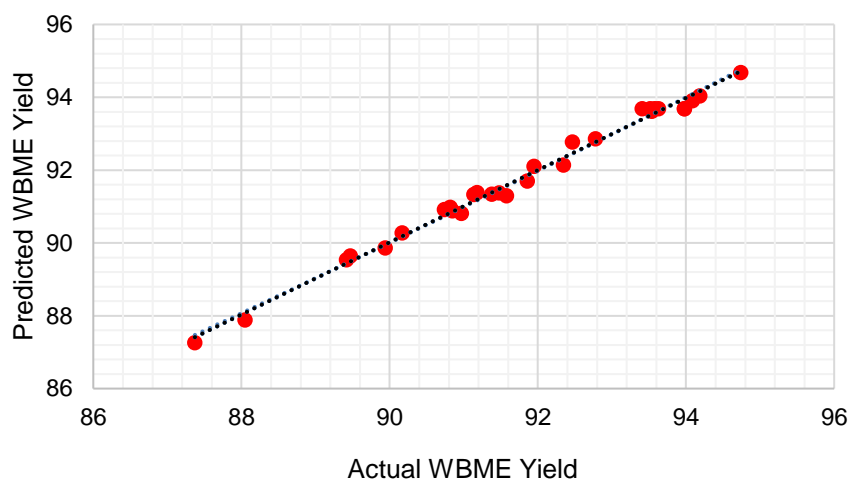


Figure 7. Comparison of actual and predicted WBME yield

### 3.4. 3.4 Process parameters influence

The effect of reaction parameters like temperature, time, catalyst usage and alcohol to oil ratio on wodyetia bifurcata methyl ester (WBME) yield was shown in Figure 8a and Figure 8b. These plots reveal the interaction effect of any two chosen parameters on WBME yield. For instance, the variation of molar ratio (v/v) versus catalyst usage (%) plot (Figure 8a) reveals that maximum biodiesel yield (>93%) was achieved at a molar ratio of 45 and catalyst usage of 1.25%. However, further increases in alcohol and catalyst reduce the WBME yield. This may due to a higher dosage of catalyst results in the formation of soap, thereby reduce the biodiesel yield. Soap formation not only decreases the yield but also consumes more time and water (distilled) for the purification process. Similarly, from time (min) versus temperature (min) plot, as shown in Figure 8b reveal that maximum WBME yield was achieved at 53°C and 80 minutes. High reaction temperatures may help the alcohol to escape from the reaction results in an incomplete transesterification process. From Figure 8b, it was evident that at high reaction temperatures (>60°C), there is a reduction in WBME yield (<90%).

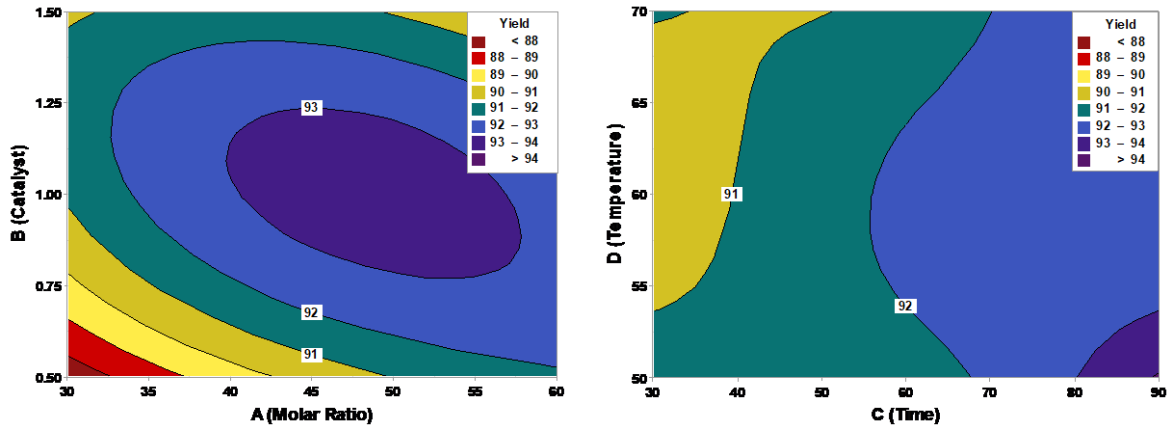
### 3.5 Neural network modeling

The experimental WBME yield results from Table 2 were used to train the artificial neural network (ANN) model and the training results are shown in Figure 9. Similar to the RSM model, the accuracy of the ANN model was determined by the coefficient of determination (R) and R<sup>2</sup> values.

The high R values in training, validation and testing represent how close the chosen model predicts the output result. From Figure 9, it was evident that the high R-value in testing (0.99484) represents the good prediction accuracy of the ANN model. Similarly, the prediction accuracy for RSM and ANN models, as shown in Figure 10, reveals that both RSM and ANN are successful in estimating the WBME yield. However, ANN shows an improvement of 0.38% in WBME yield compared to the RSM model. Likewise, low mean square error (MSR) and high R<sup>2</sup> were achieved for the ANN model compared to RSM. The obtained results are in convergence with the finds of prior finding [28], [29]. The model accuracy based on R, R<sup>2</sup>, MSE and RMSE (Eq.4-7) are shown in the Table 7. Comparison of RSM and ANN statistical results. reveal that ANN showed a better efficacy in achieving WBME yield.

## 2. Conclusions

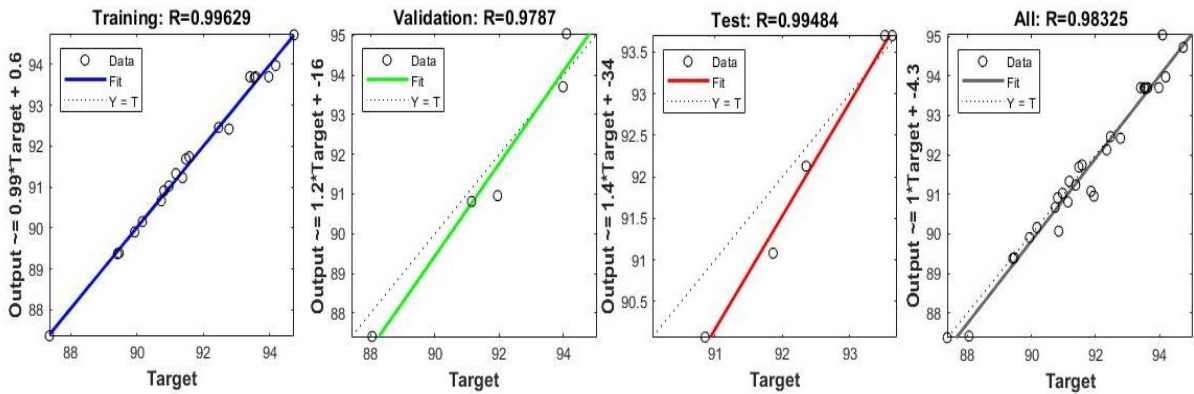
From this study, Wodyetia bifurcata oil was successfully converted into biodiesel. Based on the significant fuel properties of thermal, elemental and molecular analysis, wodyetia bifurcata methyl ester (WBME) meet the requirements of recommended fuel standards (ASTM). High cetane number, molecular oxygen and moderate kinematic viscosity in WBME may improve diesel combustion and performance. Furthermore, a better yield from the raw oil was achieved with the expeditions of the latest tools of RSM (94.67%) and ANN (95.03%). Therefore, this novel biodiesel was recommended as diesel fuel replacement to combat energy and environmental crises.



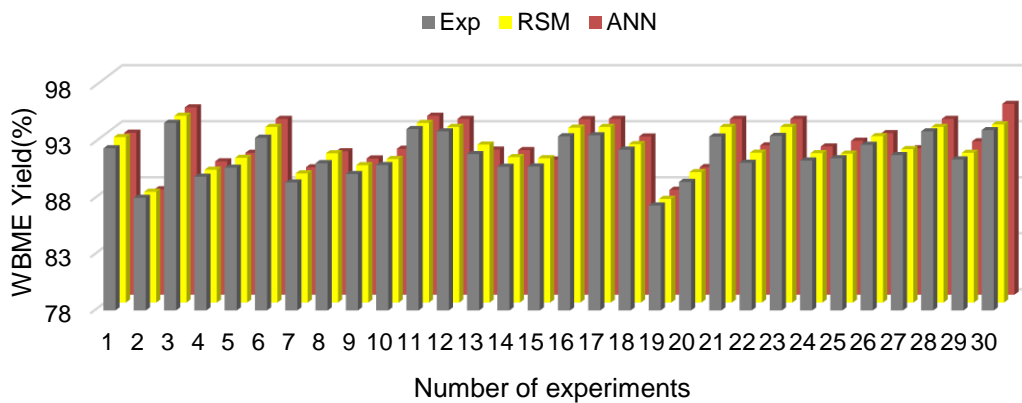
(a) Molar ratio vs catalyst (b) Time vs temperature  
**Figure 8.** Interaction effect of process parameters on WBME yield

**Table 7.** Comparison of RSM and ANN statistical results.

S.No	Parameter	RSM	ANN
1	R	99.55	99.48
2	R <sup>2</sup>	99.11	99.27
3	MSE	0.0301	0.0291
4	RMSE	0.1736	0.1705
5	WBME Yield	94.67	95.038



**Figure 9.** The coefficient of determination (R) for the ANN model



**Figure 10.** WBME yield for three methods

## Future Scope

Shelf life and significant fuel properties of wodyetia bifurcata biodiesel after blending with petro-diesel, especially B5 to B20, have to investigate. Likewise, performance and emission tests have to be carried out with various blend ratios.

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## Author's Declaration

### Authors' contributions and responsibilities

The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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### Availability of data and materials

All data are available from the authors.

### Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interest.

### Additional information

No additional information from the authors.

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