FRONTIERS IN THERMAL SCIENCE DRIVEN BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Xian-He LEI[a], Ji-Huan HE* [b,c,d]
a Department of Mathematics, Zhumadian Preschool Education College, Zhumadian 463000, China 58207051@qq.com
b School of Jia Yang; Zhejiang Shuren University, Hangzhou; Zhejiang, China
c. School of Mathematics and Big Data, Hohhot Minzu College, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia 010051, China
d Yango University, Fuzhou 350015, Fujian Province, China
*corresponding author. Email: Hejihuan@suda.edu.cn

This paper systematically compiles a series of high-quality research papers, delving into the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and thermal science, while thoroughly analyzing related research on micro/nanofluids and fractal thermal science. In the context of AI applications in thermal science, it elaborates on how deep learning revolutionizes intelligent thermal management systems, optimizes heat exchanger performance, and constructs more accurate predictive models for thermal processes. In the domain of micro/nanofluids, it encompasses pivotal subjects such as the enhancement mechanisms of thermal conductivity in nanofluids, the design and implementation of microfluidic devices in precise temperature regulation, and the impact of nanoparticle dispersion and aggregation on the thermal properties of fluids. In the domain of fractal thermal science, the text delves into a range of subjects, including the fractal geometry of heat transfer in porous media, fractal analysis of thermal diffusion in complex materials, and the modeling and performance evaluation of fractal heat exchangers. This review serves as a valuable resource, offering researchers, engineers, and students in thermal science and related fields a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. It is anticipated that this review will stimulate further research and innovation in this area, playing a pivotal role in guiding and inspiring advancements in thermal science.

Keywords: AI in thermal science; Deep learning; Heat exchangers; Nanofluids; Microfluidics; Fractal thermal science; Thermal management, two-scale fractal, Physics-informed neural networks

1. Introduction

The field of thermal science is undergoing a transformative evolution, propelled by rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) [1-4], the emergence of micro/nanofluids [5,6], and the application of two-scale fractal geometry [7-9].Fractal-based mathematical models have been extensively utilized for analyzing porous media [10-12]. As technological systems become more intricate, the demand for effective thermal management, precise prediction of thermal processes, and optimization of heat transfer components has become paramount. Conventional approaches to thermal science, though effective in many scenarios, often fall short in addressing challenges posed by complex geometries, dynamic boundary conditions, and multi-physics interactions. This has spurred an urgent need for innovative solutions that can bridge the gap between theoretical models and real-world applications. In this context, artificial intelligence (AI)-powered problem-solving technologies and AI-driven control methods have emerged as pivotal topics in engineering applications [13].

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the field of thermal science signifies a paradigm shift, empowering researchers and engineers to address previously intractable problems[14].AI, particularly through deep learning or machine learning[15], provides sophisticated tools for analyzing voluminous datasets, identifying intricate patterns, and optimizing thermal systems. From predicting temperature distributions in complex geometries to real-time control of industrial furnaces, AI is transforming the landscape of thermal science. Furthermore, the integration of physical laws into AI models, exemplified by Physics-Informed Neural Networks

(PINNs), has enhanced the accuracy and generalizability of these approaches, fostering a synergy between data-driven methods and traditional physics-based modeling[16].Conventional thermal science places significant reliance on analytical and numerical methods, which, while highly reliable, frequently encounter constraints when confronted with highly intricate systems. For instance, solving the heat equation for irregular geometries or time-dependent scenarios can be computationally expensive and time-consuming[17]. Additionally, the design and optimization of thermal systems, such as heat exchangers or cooling systems, often require iterative processes that are both resource-intensive and prone to human error. These challenges underscore the necessity for more efficient and scalable solutions, which AI and other emerging technologies are well-positioned to provide.

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has profoundly impacted the field of thermal science, providing novel methodologies for the modeling, prediction, and optimization of thermal processes. Specifically, deep learning models have demonstrated an ability to directly learn the mapping between input parameters (e.g., boundary conditions, material properties) and output variables (e.g., temperature distribution) from data, thereby circumventing the necessity for complex analytical solutions. Moreover, AI-driven approaches are being used to optimize the design of thermal systems, estimate unknown parameters (e.g., thermal conductivity), and even enable real-time control of thermal processes in applications ranging from HVAC systems to industrial manufacturing. Concurrent with the rise of AI, the study of micro and nanofluids has opened new frontiers in thermal science[18]. These fluids, which consist of base fluids infused with micro- or nanoparticles, exhibit unique thermal properties that make them highly effective for heat transfer applications. For example, nanofluids have been shown to significantly enhance thermal conductivity, making them ideal for use in cooling systems and energy applications. Additionally, the design of microfluidic devices has enabled precise temperature control in fields such as biomedical engineering and chemical processing. However, the behavior of nanoparticles within these fluids—such as their dispersion, aggregation, and interaction with the base fluid—remains a complex area of study, requiring advanced modeling and experimental techniques.

In the realm of thermal science, a notable advancement has emerged with the integration of two-scale fractal geometry[20]. This novel approach employs two distinct scales to delineate a porous medium, an uneven boundary, or an irregular porous medium. It offers a robust framework for comprehending heat transfer within porous media, thermal diffusion in heterogeneous materials, and the design of advanced heat exchangers[21-23]. The use of fractal-based models has become increasingly prevalent in analyzing heat transfer in materials with intricate microstructures, including foams, composites, biological tissues, and MEMS systems. This approach has led to the development of fractal heat exchangers, which hold great promise in enhancing the efficiency and compactness of designs. The integration of fractal concepts into the field of thermal science has led to significant advancements in our understanding of heat transfer processes. In addition, it has opened new avenues for innovative applications in energy systems, materials science, and related fields.

This preface aspires to furnish a thorough investigation of the convergence of artificial intelligence (AI), micro/nanofluids, and fractal thermal science.It will explore the manner in which AI is revolutionizing thermal science, encompassing predictive modeling and system optimization, and will examine the most recent advancements in micro/nanofluids and fractal geometry. By synthesizing insights from these interconnected fields, we aspire to provide a valuable resource for researchers, engineers, and students, while concurrently identifying future directions for innovation and discovery in thermal science. The integration of these technologies possesses immense potential for addressing some of the most pressing challenges in thermal science, from improving energy efficiency to enabling next-generation thermal systems.

2. An illustrative example

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into thermal science has led to new opportunities for addressing complex thermal problems that were previously challenging or computationally infeasible using traditional methods. AI, particularly through machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL), has exhibited significant capabilities in predicting thermal behavior, optimizing thermal systems, and enabling real-time control. This section explores the transformative role of AI in thermal science, covering its applications, methodologies, theoretical foundations, and challenges[27-29].AI has become a cornerstone in modern thermal science, offering data-driven solutions to problems that require high computational power or involve complex, nonlinear relationships. Machine learning algorithms, such as neural networks, support vector machines, and decision trees, have been widely adopted to analyze thermal data, predict system behavior, and optimize performance. A particularly salient example of this is deep learning, a subset of machine learning that has gained significant traction due to its capacity to discern intricate patterns from voluminous datasets. This property renders it well-suited for applications such as temperature prediction, heat flux estimation, and thermal system design.

The implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of thermal science is propelled by two major factors. Firstly, the increasing availability of data from experiments, simulations, and sensors has led to a proliferation of information, necessitating the development of sophisticated models for analysis. Secondly, advancements in computational hardware, such as graphics processing units (GPUs) and tensor processing units (TPUs), have enabled the training of complex models, thereby enhancing the capabilities of AI.The value of AI becomes particularly evident in scenarios where traditional analytical or numerical methods are limited, such as in systems with complex geometries, time-dependent boundary conditions, or multi-physics interactions.

Deep learning has emerged as a powerful tool for predicting and optimizing thermal processes. The training of neural networks on voluminous datasets enables researchers to model the relationship between input parameters (e.g., boundary conditions, material properties, heat sources) and output variables (e.g., temperature distribution, heat flux) with a high degree of accuracy. For instance, convolutional neural networks (CNNs) have been employed to predict temperature fields in complex geometries, while recurrent neural networks (RNNs) have been demonstrated to be effective for modeling time-dependent thermal processes.

A deep learning model, such as a neural network, can be trained to approximate the solution to the heat equation or other thermal problems. Let $\mathbf{u}$ represent the input parameters (e.g., boundary conditions, material properties, heat sources, and fractal dimensions), and y represent the output (e.g., temperature distribution). The goal is to learn a function f such that:

$$y = f(\mathbf{u};\theta) \tag{1}$$

where θ represents the parameters (weights and biases) of the neural network.

The neural network can be trained using a dataset $\{(\mathbf{u}_i, y_i\}_{i=1}^{N}$, where N is the number of data points. The training process involves minimizing a loss function L, which measures the difference between the predicted output $\overline{y}_i = f(\mathbf{u}_i;\theta)$ and the true output y_i. A common choice for the loss function is the mean squared error (MSE):

$$L = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}\left\|y_i - \overline{y}_i\right\|^2 \tag{2}$$

where N is the number of data points. This approach allows the neural network to learn the underlying relationships in the data, enabling accurate predictions of thermal behavior.

While data-driven models are powerful, they often lack interpretability and may struggle to generalize to unseen scenarios. To address these limitations, Physics-Informed Neural Networks (PINNs) have been developed, which integrate physical laws, such as the heat equation, directly into the neural network's loss function. This approach ensures that the model's predictions are consistent with the underlying physics, improving both accuracy and generalizability.

For example, consider the heat equation in its general form:

$$m\frac{\partial^\alpha T}{\partial t^\alpha} + (1-m)\frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = n\frac{\partial^\alpha}{\partial x^\alpha}(k_\alpha \frac{\partial^\alpha T}{\partial x^\alpha}) + (1-n)\frac{\partial}{\partial x}(k\frac{\partial T}{\partial x}) + Q \tag{3}$$

where T is the temperature distribution, k and k_α - the thermal diffusivity of the continuous and porous materials, respectively, Q-heat sources or sinks, α -two-scale fractal dimensions, m and n are weighting factors.

$$\frac{\partial^\alpha T}{\partial x^\alpha}(x_0,t) = \Gamma(1+\alpha)\lim_{x-x_0\to\Delta x}\frac{T(x,t)-T(x_0,t)}{(x-x_0)^\alpha} \tag{4}$$

$$\frac{\partial^{\alpha} T}{\partial t^{\alpha}}(x,t_0) = \Gamma(1+\alpha) \lim_{t-t_0 \to \Delta t} \frac{T(x,t) - T(x,t_0)}{(t-t_0)^{\alpha}} \tag{5}$$

Solving this equation analytically or numerically can be challenging, especially for complex geometries, boundary conditions, or time-dependent scenarios. Deep learning offers an alternative approach by learning the mapping between inputs (e.g., boundary conditions, material properties) and outputs (e.g., temperature distribution) directly from data.

$$L = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \left\| Y_i - \overline{Y}_i \right\|^2 \tag{6}$$

In many thermal science applications, incorporating physical laws into the deep learning model can improve accuracy and generalization. Physics-informed neural networks (PINNs) are a class of models that integrate the governing PDEs directly into the loss function. For the heat equation, the loss function can be modified to include the residual of the PDE:

$$L_{PED}(\theta) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \left\| \frac{\Delta \overline{T}}{\Delta t}(x_i,t_i) - \frac{\Delta}{\Delta x}\left(k \frac{\Delta \overline{T}}{\Delta x}(x_i,t_i)\right) - Q(x_i,t_i) \right\|^2 \tag{7}$$

where $\frac{\Delta \overline{T}}{\Delta t}$ and $\frac{\Delta \overline{T}}{\Delta x}$ are defined respectively as

$$\frac{\Delta \overline{T}}{\Delta t}(x_i,t_i) = m \frac{\partial^{\alpha} \overline{T}}{\partial t^{\alpha}}(x_i,t_i) + (1-m) \frac{\partial \overline{T}}{\partial t}(x_i,t_i) \tag{8}$$

$$\frac{\Delta \overline{T}}{\Delta x}(x_i,t_i) = n \frac{\partial^{\alpha}}{\partial x^{\alpha}}\left(k_{\alpha} \frac{\partial^{\alpha} \overline{T}}{\partial x^{\alpha}}(x_i,t_i)\right) + (1-n) \frac{\partial}{\partial x}\left(k \frac{\partial \overline{T}}{\partial x}(x_i,t_i)\right) \tag{9}$$

where $\overline{T}$ is the temperature predicted by the neural network. The total loss function for a PINN is then a weighted combination of the data-driven loss and the physics-based loss:

$$L_{total}(\theta) = L_{data}(\theta) + \lambda L_{PED}(\theta) \tag{9}$$

where λ is a hyperparameter that controls the relative importance of the physics-based loss.

Deep learning has been applied to a variety of thermal science problems. These problems include the following: 1)Predicting temperature distributions in complex geometries or under varying boundary conditions; 2)Optimizing the design of heat exchangers, cooling systems, or thermal insulation materials; 3)Estimating unknown parameters (e.g., thermal conductivity, heat source locations) from temperature measurements; 4)Using deep learning models for real-time control of thermal systems, such as HVAC systems or industrial furnaces.

The integration of mathematical frameworks, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning has led to significant advancements in the analysis, prediction, and optimization of thermal systems. These advancements have been demonstrated to achieve unprecedented levels of accuracy and efficiency, particularly in complex scenarios where traditional methods are ineffective, such as in systems with nonlinear dynamics, transient behavior, or multi-physics coupling.

3. Conclusion

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI), micro/nanofluids, and fractal thermal science heralds a revolutionary and transformative shift within the vast and dynamic domain of thermal science. This comprehensive review has meticulously investigated the intricate synergies among these state-of-the-art and cutting-edge technologies. It places a significant emphasis on their remarkable capacity to completely revolutionize thermal management, optimize heat transfer processes in ways previously thought unattainable, and reshape the very landscape of system design. In the context of thermal management, AI brings its powerful data - driven capabilities to the table. It can analyze large volumes of thermal data in real - time, predicting temperature variations, hotspots, and potential thermal failures. By leveraging machine learning algorithms, AI can adaptively control cooling systems, adjusting parameters such as flow rates and heat exchanger settings. For instance, in high - performance computing centers where overheating is a constant threat, AI - enabled thermal management systems can ensure optimal cooling, reducing energy consumption while maintaining equipment reliability.

Micro/nanofluids, on the other hand, possess enhanced thermal properties. Their unique composition, with nanoparticles suspended in a base fluid, leads to improved heat transfer coefficients. This is due to mechanisms such as Brownian motion of nanoparticles, which increases the fluid's ability to carry and transfer heat. In applications like automotive engines, the use of micro/nanofluids can enhance the efficiency of cooling systems, leading to better engine performance and reduced emissions. The small size of the particles also allows for more efficient heat transfer in miniaturized devices, opening up new possibilities for compact and high - power electronics.

Fractal thermal science offers geometric insights that are crucial for understanding heat transfer in complex structures. Fractal geometries, with their self - similar patterns at different scales, can be found in natural systems such as biological tissues and engineered systems like heat exchangers. By applying fractal concepts, researchers can design more efficient heat transfer surfaces. For example, fractal - shaped fins on heat sinks can increase the surface area available for heat transfer, while minimizing the overall size and weight of the device.

Through the seamless integration of data - driven AI capabilities, the enhanced thermal properties of micro/nanofluids, and the geometric insights from fractal science, researchers are making significant headway in developing innovative solutions to some of the most complex and long - standing challenges in thermal science. This convergence of technologies is not only advancing our fundamental understanding of heat transfer and thermal management but also enabling the creation of next - generation thermal systems that are more efficient, reliable, and sustainable.

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