

Machine learning predictions for bending capacity of ECC-concrete composite beams hybrid reinforced with steel and FRP bars

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Abstract: This paper explores the development of the most suitable machine learning models for predicting the bending capacity of steel and FRP (Fiber Reinforced Polymer) bars hybrid reinforced ECC (Engineered Cementitious Composites)-concrete composite beams. Five different machine learning models, namely Support Vector Regression (SVR), Extreme Gradient Boosting (XGBoost), Multilayer Perceptron (MLP), Random Forest (RF), and Extremely Randomized Trees (ERT), were employed. To train and evaluate these predictive models, the study utilized a database comprising 150 experimental data points from the literature on steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams. Additionally, Shapley Additive Explanations (SHAP) analysis was employed to assess the impact of input features on the prediction outcomes. Furthermore, based on the optimal model identified in the research, a graphical user interface (GUI) was designed to facilitate the analysis of the bending capacity of hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams in practical applications. The results indicate that the XGBoost algorithm exhibits high accuracy in predicting bending capacity, demonstrating the lowest root mean square error, mean absolute error, and mean absolute percentage error, as well as the highest coefficient of determination on the testing dataset among all models. SHAP analysis indicates that the equivalent reinforcement ratio, design strength of FRP bars, and height of beam cross-section are significant feature parameters, while the influence of the compressive strength of concrete is minimal. The predictive models and graphical user interface (GUI) developed can offer engineers and researchers with a reliable predictive method for the bending capacity of steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams.

Keywords: machine learning; bending capacity; ECC-concrete composite beams; hybrid reinforcement

1.Introduction

With the continuous advancement of construction engineering, there has been an increasing demand for the structural performance, challenging the traditional reinforced concrete (RC) structures to meet the requirements of bearing capacity, durability, and ductility [1]. Consequently, innovative materials and structural systems are being explored to enhance the performance and longevity of these structures.

Concrete, as the most widely used building material in modern times, holds particular significance in the construction industry worldwide [2]. However, with advancements in modern

39 structural engineering, traditional RC structures are required to not only meet high-performance
40 criteria such as compressive and tensile strength but also exhibit qualities like durability and
41 ductility. Thus, there is a necessity to seek a construction material with high ductility and durability.

42 In recent years, Engineered Cementitious Composites (ECC), proposed by Victor C Li of the
43 University of Michigan, USA, have offered an effective solution to address the issues of excessive
44 brittleness and wide cracks in RC structures [3]. ECC does not contain coarse aggregates like
45 gravel, instead, it incorporates a suitable amount of short fibers as reinforcement material,
46 constituting a composite material comprising an ultra-high ductile cementitious matrix and fibers
47 [4]. Compared with concrete, ECC exhibits greater ductility and has the ability to deform and
48 control crack widths effectively, demonstrating characteristics of multiple micro-cracking and strain
49 hardening.

50 Fiber Reinforced Polymer (FRP) rebar is a composite material composed of continuous and
51 binding fibers, offering advantages such as lightweight, high corrosion resistance, durability, and
52 high tensile strength. It finds wide application in fields like bridge engineering and marine
53 engineering [5-6]. However, the inherent drawbacks of FRP material include low elastic modulus,
54 linear stress-strain relationship without yielding stage, and brittle failure mode, resulting in large
55 deflections and crack widths in FRP RC structures during service, significantly affecting their
56 normal functionality. This also limits the widespread application of FRP RC structures in civil
57 engineering [7]. Qu et al. proposed combining fiber-reinforced polymer and steel reinforcement in
58 reinforced concrete beams, concluding that this system provides higher strength, with FRP
59 enhancing durability, while steel improving ductility [8-9]. Placing FRP rebar at corners and steel
60 reinforcement internally, while using Engineered Cementitious Composites (ECC) to replace
61 concrete in the tension zone of beams, improves the cracking, yielding, bearing capacity, and
62 stiffness of flexural beams [10].

63 In recent years, the application of machine learning-based predictive models in civil
64 engineering has garnered significant attention [11-12]. Particularly, establishing intelligent models
65 to predict the mechanical and durability properties of construction materials is one of the most
66 important innovative approaches in this field. This method offers the possibility of more detailed
67 studies on structural behavior. Through predictive modeling, researchers can better correlate

68 structural performance with various parameters and gain a better understanding of their future
69 performance.

70 Ahmet et al. [13] conducted machine learning predictions of the load capacity of 217 ECC
71 reinforced concrete beams. The research findings indicate that the model developed using the
72 Extreme Gradient Boosting (XGBoost) algorithm achieved an accuracy of over 80%. The most
73 influential parameters include the compressive strength of the concrete substrate, beam height,
74 longitudinal reinforcement ratio, and ECC thickness. Wakjira et al. [14] performed machine
75 learning predictions of the load capacity of 132 FRP bars RC beams. They utilized six parameter
76 indices and four machine learning algorithms. The results demonstrated that ensemble models based
77 on boosting and tree-based methods (AdaBoost, GBDT, and XGBoost) exhibited higher prediction
78 accuracy. Additionally, the predictive model's accuracy surpassed the load capacity calculation
79 formulas provided in the US and Canadian standards for FRP bars RC structures. Xiong et al. [15]
80 employed machine learning-based methods to predict the flexural capacity of a novel prefabricated
81 MVFT steel-concrete composite girder. The impact of input parameters such as the distance
82 between steel girder's Tensile Centroid (TC) and slab's Compressive Centroid (CC), the distance
83 between steel girder's TC and its CC, the compressive area of steel girder was analyzed. Two
84 machine learning models, BP neural network and Squares Support Vector (SVR) were used. The
85 results showed that the ultimate strength predictions of 30 meters MVFT girder by BP model have
86 the best accuracy.

87 Steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams represent a novel
88 composite system, characterized by high bearing capacity, ductility, good resistance to deformation
89 and cracks. However, there is no research on machine learning predictions for these steel and FRP
90 bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the
91 prediction of bending capacity through machine learning using data extracted from relevant
92 literature on 150 steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams. Eight
93 parameter indices are selected as input variables for the prediction. Five different machine learning
94 models are chosen to evaluate the bending capacity prediction and their capabilities are compared.
95 A major significance of this study is the development of a Graphical User Interface (GUI) module
96 for the model with the optimal prediction accuracy and performance, which facilitates the solution

of complex problems and expanding the interfaces for human interaction.

2. Data acquisition

After reviewing relevant articles [16-23] on steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams and conducting screening, 150 experimental data were obtained. Due to their better tensile strength, ECC replaced concrete from the bottom to the top, locating the ECC layer at the bottom of all beams. All beams were subjected to two-point bending test. The loading diagram and reinforcement details are shown in Fig. 1. The beams exhibited different parameters in terms of section dimensions, strength of concrete and ECC, strength of steel and FRP reinforcements, reinforcement ratio, and height ratio of ECC, with specific parameters as shown in Table 1.

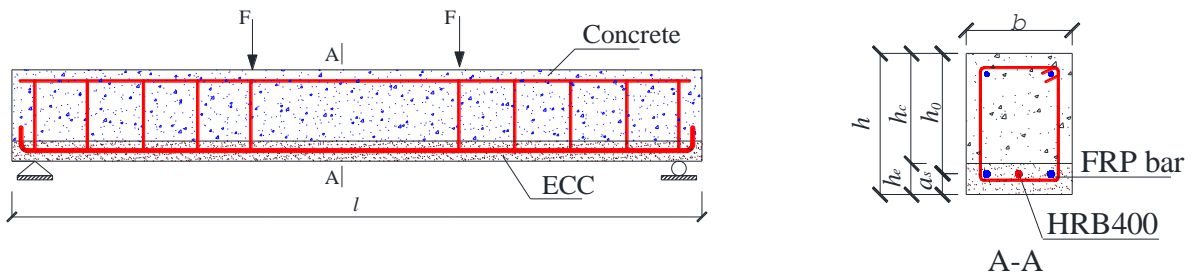


Fig.1. Loading diagram and reinforcement details

Table 1 The cross-section dimensions and material properties for beams

Category	Designation	Details	Unit
Beam	b	Width of beam cross section	mm
	h	Height of beam cross section	mm
	h_0	Effective height of beam cross section	mm
	l	Length of beam	mm
Concrete	f_c	Compressive strength of concrete	MPa
	h_c	Concrete layer height of beam	Mm
ECC	f_{ec}	Compressive strength of ECC	MPa
	f_{et}	Tensile strength of ECC	MPa
	h_e	ECC layer height of beam	mm
	r	ECC height ratio of beam height	--
Reinforcement	f_y	Yield strength of steel bars	MPa
	A_s	Area of tensile reinforcing steel bars	mm ²
	f_{fd}	Design strength of FRP bars	MPa
	A_f	Area of tensile reinforcing FRP bars	mm ²
	ρ	Equivalent ratio of reinforcements	--

The equivalent reinforcement ratio of steel and FRP bars in Table 1, denoted by ρ [24], is

109 calculated by formula (1). The ECC height ratio of beam height in Table 1, denoted by r , is
 110 calculated by formula (2).

$$\rho = \frac{A_s}{bh_0} + \frac{f_{fd}}{f_y} \cdot \frac{A_f}{bh_0} \quad (1)$$

$$r = \frac{h_e}{h} \quad (2)$$

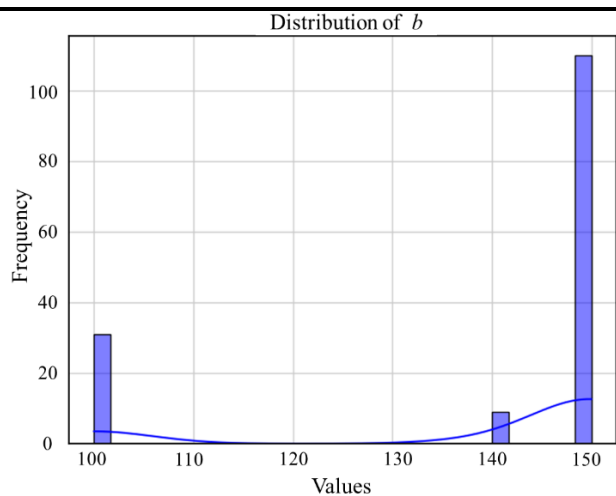
111 Based on many research papers about machine learning prediction for flexural capacity of
 112 concrete beams [25-33], a total of 8 input parameters are selected to develop the prediction model.
 113 These parameters are the width of beam cross section (b), effective height of beam cross section
 114 (h_0), compressive strength of concrete (f_c), compressive strength of ECC (f_{ec}), tensile strength of
 115 ECC (f_{et}), ECC height ratio of beam height (r), yield strength of steel bars (f_y), design strength of
 116 FRP bars (f_{fd}), and equivalent ratio of reinforcements (ρ). The statistical information and
 117 distribution of input and output features in the established database are shown in Table 2 and Fig. 2,
 118 respectively. Kernel density curves were used to demonstrate the trend of data changes as shown in
 119 Fig. 2.

120 In Table 2, when f_c is 0, f_{ec} and f_{et} is non-zero, it indicates that the beam is fully cast from ECC
 121 without any concrete layer. Conversely, when f_{ec} and f_{et} are 0, f_c is non-zero, it indicates that the
 122 beam is entirely cast from concrete, without an ECC layer. When f_c , f_{ec} and f_{et} are non-zero, it
 123 indicates that the beam is an ECC-concrete composite beam. And when f_y is 0 and f_{fd} is non-zero, it
 124 indicates that the beam is FRP bars RC beam. When f_{fd} is 0 and f_y is non-zero, it indicates that the
 125 beam is steel RC beam. When both f_y and f_{fd} are non-zero, it indicates that the beam is steel and FRP
 126 bars hybrid RC beam. V_{min} and V_{max} represent the minimum and maximum values, respectively, Avg
 127 represents the average value, σ represents the standard deviation, Cv represents the coefficient of
 128 variation. Detailed data are provided in the Appendix.

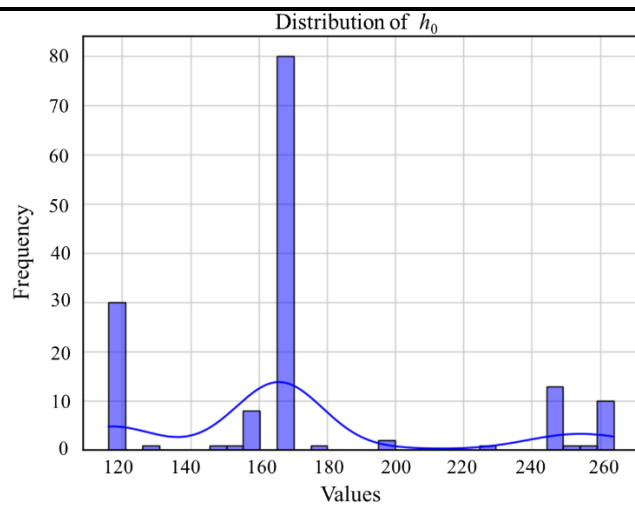
Table 2 The statistical information of parameters in the database

Feature	Type	V_{min}	V_{max}	Avg	σ	Cv
b (mm)	Input	100	150	139.2	21.3	0.15
h_0 (mm)	Input	116	264	172.3	42.1	0.24
f_c (MPa)	Input	0	80	37.1	19.2	0.51
f_{ec} (MPa)	Input	0	45.2	33.3	15.5	0.46
f_{et} (MPa)	Input	0	4	2.4	1.3	0.54
f_y (MPa)	Input	0	503	321.3	187.7	0.58
f_{fd} (MPa)	Input	0	2437	853	740	0.86
ρ (%)	Input	0.105	9.45	1.4	1.78	1.27

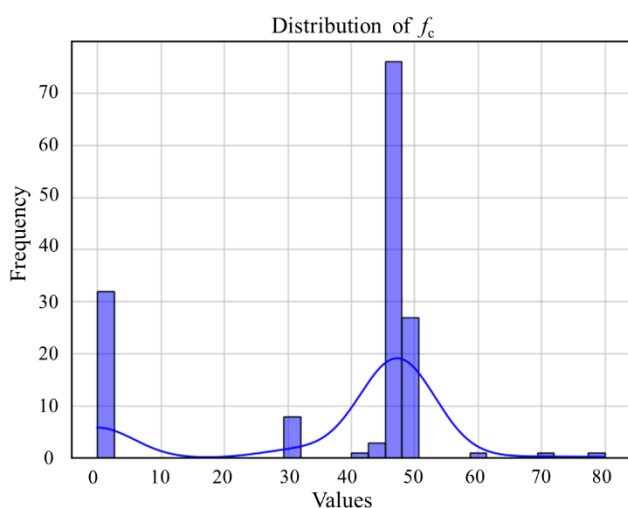
r (%)	Input	0	100	50	35	0.7
M_u (kN·m)	Output	4.42	133.1	29.12	28.48	0.98



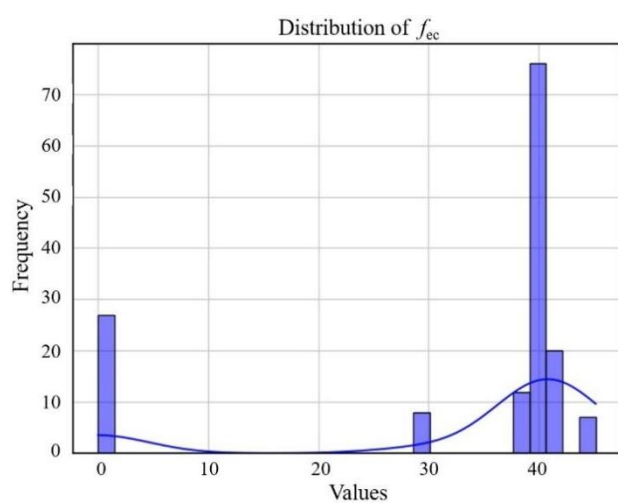
(a) b (mm)



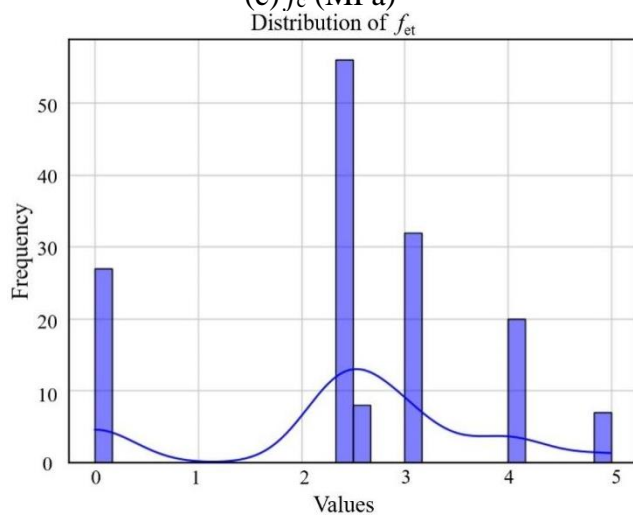
(b) h_0 (mm)



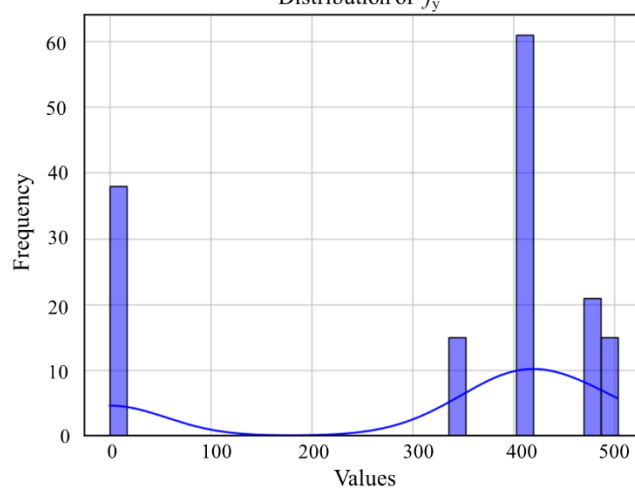
(c) f_c (MPa)



(d) f_{ec} (MPa)



(e) f_{et} (MPa)



(f) f_y (MPa)

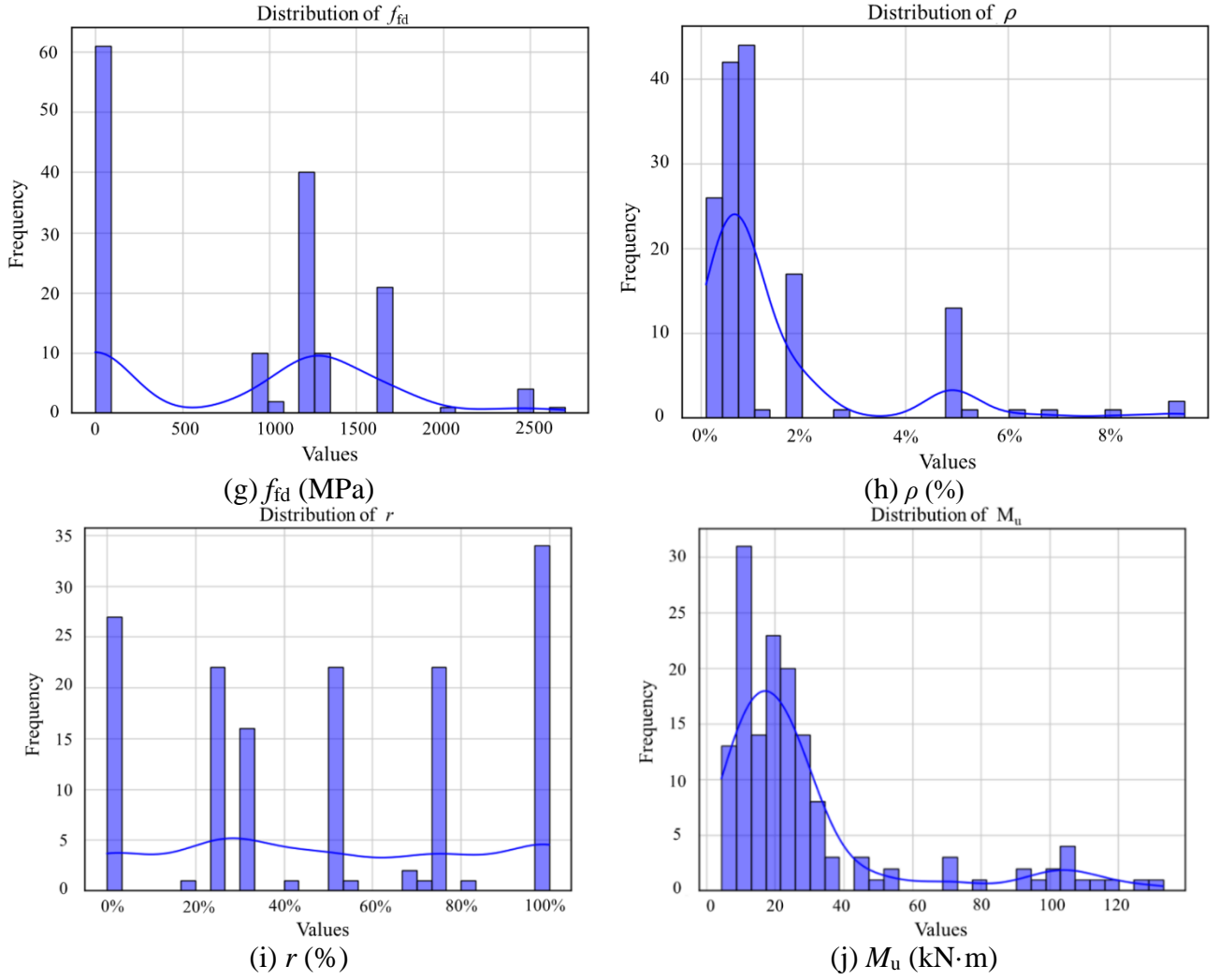


Fig.2. Statistical Distribution of Machine Learning Parameters

From Fig.2 , the input parameter b for beam width varies between 100 and 150 mm, while the input parameter h_0 varies between 120 and 260 mm, centered around 160 to 180 mm. The input parameter f_c is distributed between 0 and 80 MPa, the input parameter f_{ec} is distributed between 0 and 45 MPa and the input parameter f_{et} is distributed between 0 and 5 MPa. The input parameter f_y is centered around 350 to 500 MPa, while the input parameter f_{id} is centered around 900 to 2000 MPa. The input parameter ρ ranges from 0.5% to 7%, with the majority distributed between 0.5% and 2%. The input parameter r is uniformly distributed between 0% and 100%. It can be observed that the input parameters exhibit a wide range of variation, indicating that the machine learning prediction model established based on this database has broad applicability and versatility.

3. Prediction Algorithms and Evaluation Metrics

3.1 Overview of Machine Learning Algorithms

3.1.1 Support Vector Regression

Support Vector Regression (SVR) [34-37] is a supervised learning algorithm model for binary classification. Its basic idea is to find a hyperplane in the feature space that separates samples of different classes, such that the samples of each class are farthest from the hyperplane, thus achieving the optimal solution. It demonstrates excellent performance for both linear and non-linear problems. This paper analyzes the influence of feature parameters such as width of beams, effective height, strength of concrete and ECC, strength of steel and FRP bars, which exhibit a non-linear distribution. In SVR, the original model is transformed into a dual equation, where the objective function involves only the inner product between instances, replaced by a kernel function. The final decision function is represented as Equation (3), where x is the input feature vector, $K(x, x_i)$ is the kernel function replacing the inner product, α_i is the Lagrange multiplier, and a penalty factor C is introduced, where $0 \leq \alpha_i \leq C$, and b is the distance parameter.

$$f(x) = \text{sign}(\sum_{i=1}^N \alpha_i y_i K(x, x_i) + b) \quad (3)$$

3.1.2 Extreme Gradient Boosting

Extreme Gradient Boosting (XGBoost) [38-40] is a supervised learning algorithm used for analyzing classification and regression problems. It is an improved version of the Gradient Boosting Decision Tree (GBDT) algorithm, both of which are regression decision tree models. XGBoost introduces parallelization into the boosting process, allowing for faster computation by training on serial data. Additionally, XGBoost introduces second-order partial derivatives of the loss function, resulting in better learning performance. To prevent overfitting, XGBoost adds a regularization term to its objective function, as shown in Equation (4). Here, y_i represents the true output of the i^{th} data point, $\hat{y}_i^{(k-1)}$ denotes the ensemble output of the first $k-1$ learners for the i^{th} data point, $f_k(\cdot)$ is the k^{th} learner being trained, and $\Omega(f)$ is the regularization term introduced.

$$\min_{f_k(x), \Omega(f_j)} (\sum_{i=1}^n l(y_i, \hat{y}_i^{(k-1)} + f_k(x_i)) + \sum_{j=1}^k \Omega(f_j)) \quad (4)$$

3.1.3 Multilayer Perceptron

Multilayer Perceptron (MLP) [41-43], also known as Artificial Neural Network (ANN), is a three-layer perceptron. Between the layers of the multi-layer perceptron, there are fully connected connections. The lowest layer is the input layer, followed by one or more hidden layers, and the top layer is the output layer. In the working environment of MLP, information is transmitted through the neurons in each layer, and the connection between the hidden layer and the output layer represents a

168 multi-class logistic regression. All parameters of MLP include the connection weights and
169 configurations between each layer, involving loss functions, regularization terms, and more.

170 3.1.4 Random Forest

171 Random Forest (RF) [44-46] is an ensemble learning method capable of effectively handling
172 classification and regression problems. It is also a type of decision tree model. The decision-making
173 process of a decision tree moves from the top node to the leaf nodes. By combining multiple
174 decision trees together, each time selecting the dataset randomly with replacement, and then
175 randomly selecting a subset of features as input, the Random Forest algorithm is formed. In the RF
176 framework model, a regression function is constructed to predict the output value Y . This function
177 requires training on input variables similar to decision trees, and then prediction is made using the
178 applicable equation. The regression function is represented as Equation (5), where h_K is the K^{th}
179 decision tree, and x is the input value.

$$Y = \frac{1}{K} \sum_{k=1}^K h_K(x) \quad (5)$$

180 3.1.5 ExtRa Trees

181 ExtRa Trees (ERT) is a variant of the Random Forest algorithm [47]. Unlike RF, which uses
182 random sampling with replacement (bootstrap) to select sampling datasets for training each decision
183 tree, ERT does not use random sampling. Instead, each decision tree in ERT utilizes the original
184 training dataset. After selecting the input features for partitioning, the decision trees in RF choose
185 the optimal feature values for partitioning based on criteria such as coefficients and variances.
186 However, ERT randomly selects a feature value for partitioning decision trees. Therefore,
187 sometimes ERT exhibits better generalization performance than RF.

188 3.2 Evaluation Metrics

189 In statistical measurement methods, to evaluate the effectiveness of a machine learning
190 algorithm, commonly used metrics include Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), Mean Absolute Error
191 (MAE), Coefficient of Determination (R^2), and Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE). These
192 evaluation metrics objectively assess the degree of proximity between the model's predictions and
193 the actual values. In a well-performing model, lower values of RMSE, MAE, and MAPE indicate
194 better performance, while R^2 values closer to 1.00 indicate better fit [48]. The evaluation formulas
195 are shown as Equation (6)~(9). Where y , \hat{y} , \bar{y} , and n represent the actual values, predicted values,
196 mean value, and number of data points, respectively.

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (\hat{y} - y_i)^2} \quad (6)$$

$$MAE = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n |\hat{y} - y_i| \quad (7)$$

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (\hat{y} - y_i)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (\bar{y} - y_i)^2} \quad (8)$$

$$MAPE = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{n} \left| \frac{y_i - \hat{y}}{y_i} \right| \quad (9)$$

197 4. Model development and discussion

198 This section presents the development process of interpretable machine learning models (SVR,
 199 XGBoost, MLP, RF, and ERT) and discusses the related model performance. The overall structure
 200 of the developed models is illustrated in Fig. 3. The methodology for constructing the prediction
 201 models includes database establishment, data preprocessing, model training, optimal
 202 hyperparameter tuning, model validation, and model interpretation.

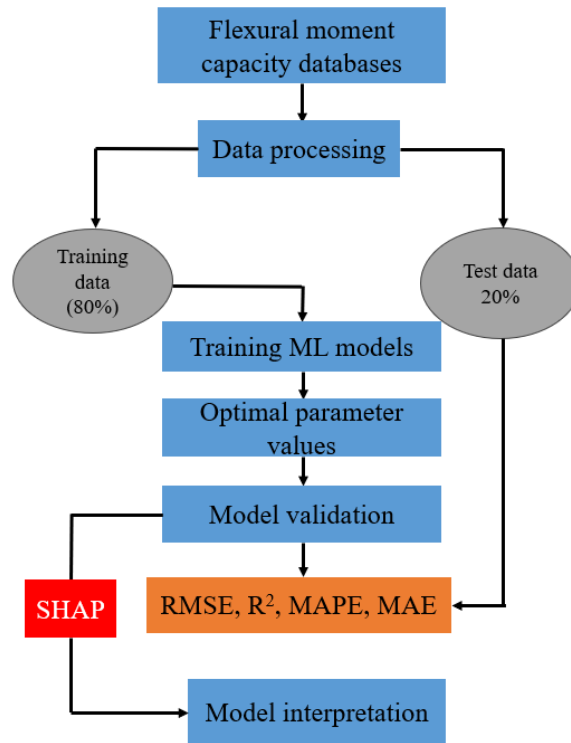


Fig.3 Overall structure of the developed ML models

203 Firstly, experimental research data on the flexural capacity of ECC-concrete composite beams
 204 hybrid reinforced with steel and FRP bars were extracted from the literature and compiled into a
 205 database table. Eight parameters were selected as input features, while the flexural capacity served
 206 as the output feature. This database was used to train machine learning models, and all machine

learning algorithm models were built using the sklearn module in Python. The 150 experimental data points in the database were divided, with 80% of the data used for training the machine learning algorithm models and the remaining 20% used as a test dataset to evaluate the performance of each algorithm's model. The performance of each model algorithm's predictive ability was evaluated using RMSE, MAE, R^2 , and MAPE. Finally, for the best-performing model, the Shapely weighted explanation (SHAP) value analysis method was employed to visualize and interpret the predictive model, providing a better understanding of the importance of the relationship between bending capacity and input variables.

4.1 Optimization of the model parameters

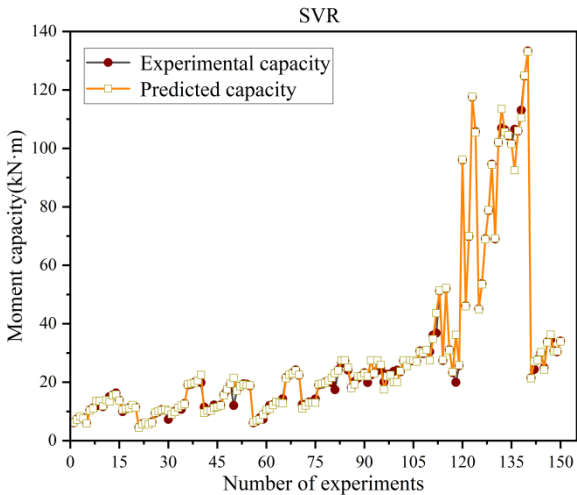
To optimize the performance of each machine learning algorithm, a 6-fold cross-validation grid search technique was employed to optimize the parameters of the five machine learning algorithms. The grid search technique performs CV iterations for each parameter combination in the parameter grid list and selects the combination with the highest average score as the optimal choice. The GridSearchCV function in the sklearn module was utilized to perform 6-fold cross-validation grid search learning and extracted the optimal combination values of the parameters. The main parameter selections for the five machine learning algorithms are shown in Table 3. Other parameters of the models are set by default using the sklearn module. The parameter selections for each model are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Optimal parameter values for ML models

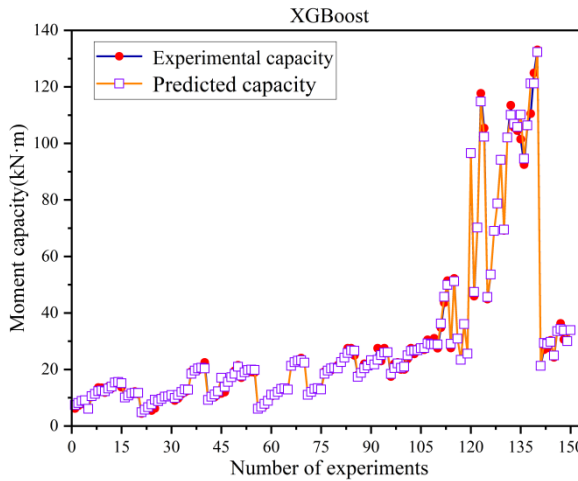
ML Models	Parameters	Values	Best values
SVR	kernel	linear, poly, rbf, sigmoid	rbf
	C	1000, 2000, 3000	2000
	gamma	0.1, 0.2, 0.3	0.2
XGBoost	learning_rate	0.03, 0.3, 3	0.03
	n_estimators	300, 400, 500, 600	400
	max_depth	2, 3, 4	3
MLP	activation	logistic, tanh, relu	relu
	max_iter	6000, 8000, 10000	8000
	learning_rate	0.001, 0.01, 0.1	0.01
RF	n_estimators	800, 1000, 1200	1000
	max_depth	5, 10, 15	10
ERT	n_estimators	800, 1000, 1200	1000
	max_depth	5, 10, 15	10

4.2 Analysis of ML model performance

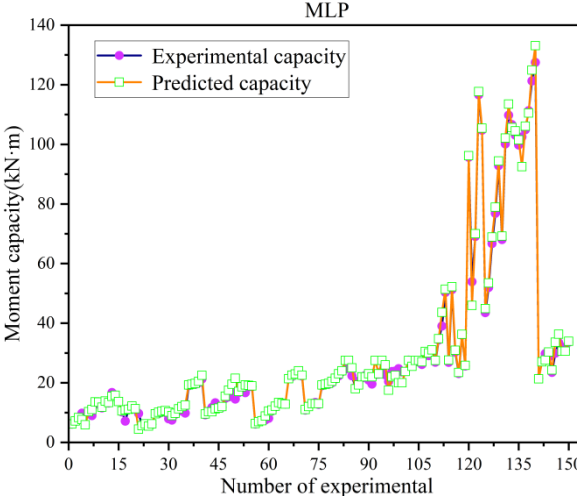
226 Once the optimal parameters for each machine learning algorithm are determined, these
 227 parameters are input into each algorithm. Utilizing the training dataset from the database, five
 228 different machine learning models are constructed. The performance of these models is evaluated
 229 by comparing the predicted results with the experimental values. The comparison between the
 230 results obtained from the SVR, XGBoost, MLP, RF, and ERT machine learning models and the
 231 experimental moment capacity is illustrated in Fig. 4.



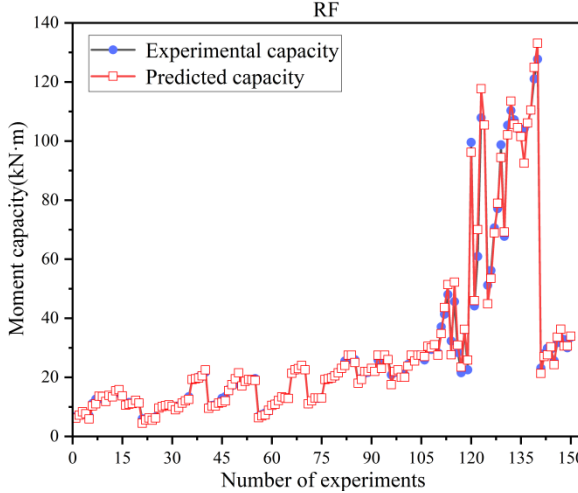
(a) SVR



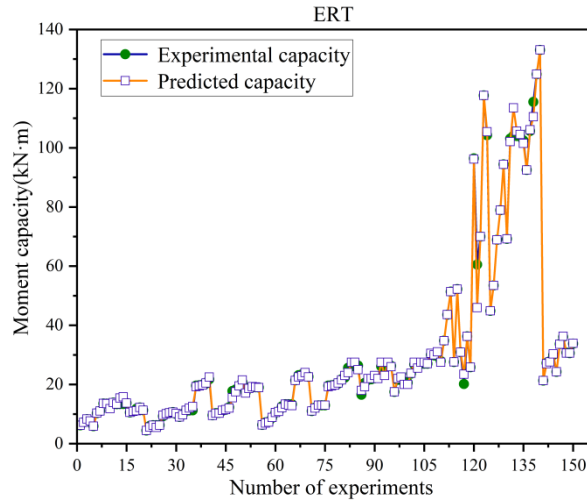
(b) XGBoost



(c) MLP



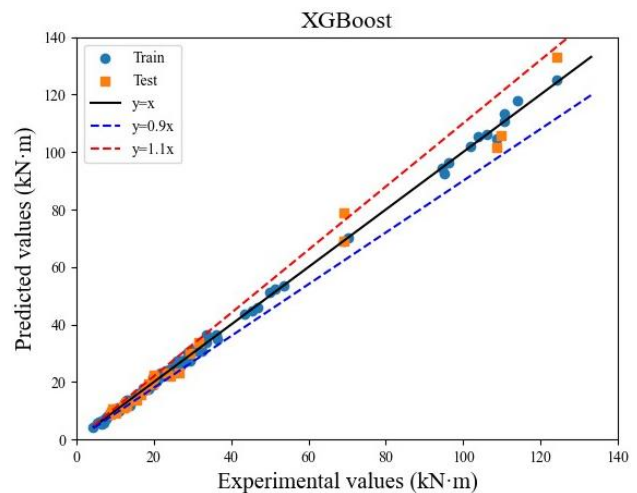
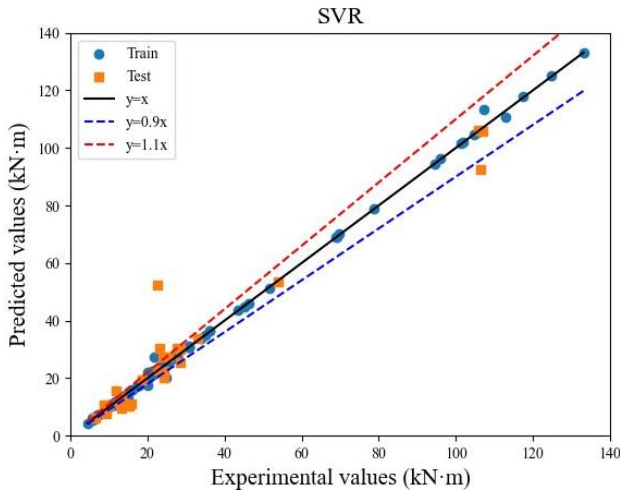
(d) RF



(e) ERT

Fig.4. Comparison of experimental and predicted values of ML models

Fig.4 shows that all the five machine learning algorithms demonstrate good predictive capabilities for the bending capacity of steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams. Among them, the conformity of XGBoost, MLP, and ERT algorithm models is significantly higher than those of the other two algorithms. Furthermore, to accurately assess the predictive performance of each algorithm and better understand the comparison between predicted and experimental values, linear fitting plots of the predicted and experimental moment capacities for the five algorithm models are shown in Fig.5. In this figure, the experimental values are plotted on the x -axis, and the predicted values are plotted on the y -axis. The diagonal line ($y=x$) indicates equivalence between predicted and experimental values, with more points accumulating along this line suggesting more accurate model predictions. Additionally, the training and testing datasets were marked on the plot to provide clearer insight into the response of both datasets. Moreover, dashed lines representing -10% ($y=0.9x$) and +10% ($y=1.1x$) error ranges are plotted above and below the diagonal line ($y=x$), considering data points within this error range as reasonably accurate.



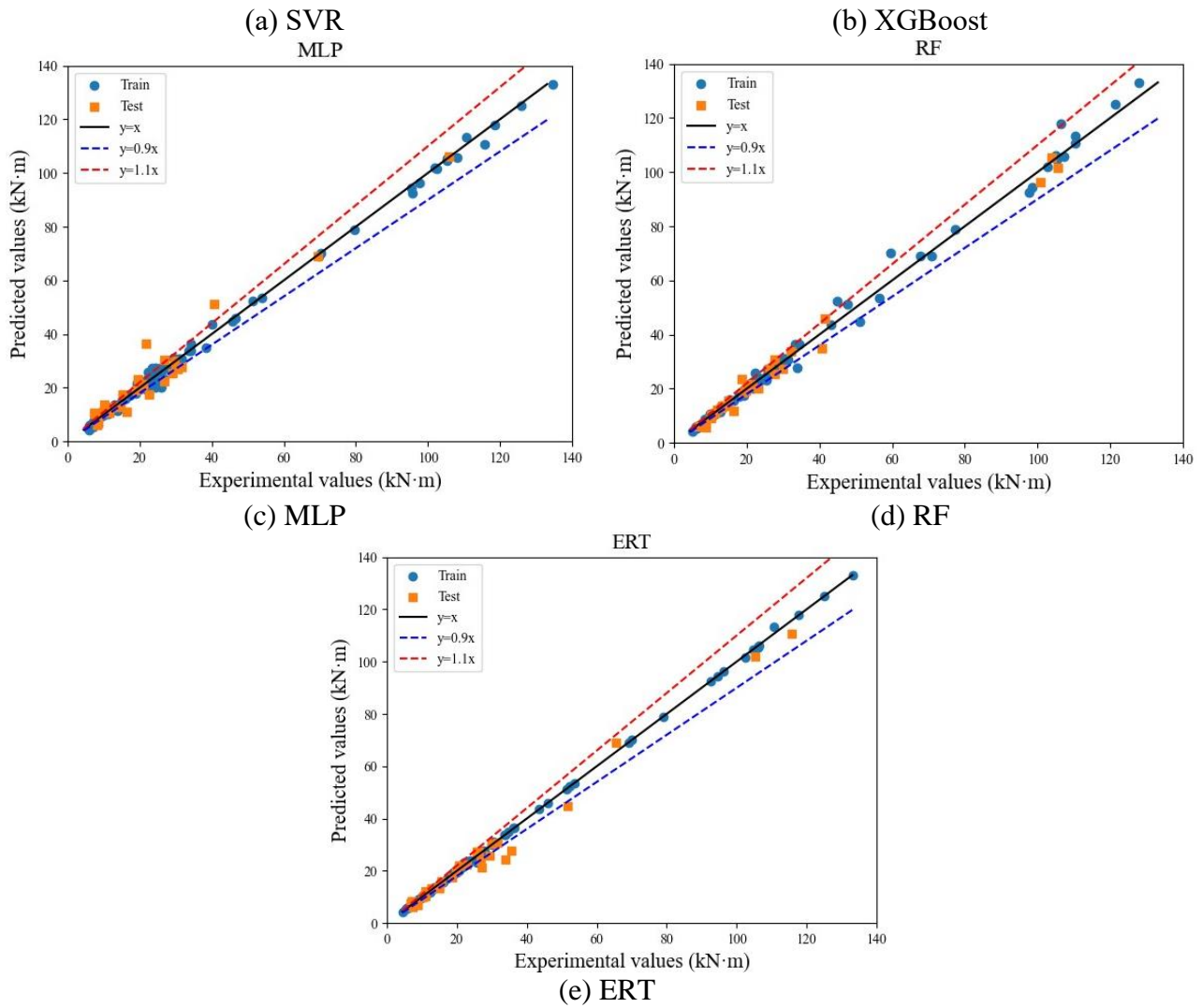


Fig.5 The linear fitting plot between the experimental capacity and the predicted capacity of ML models

From Fig.5, it is evident that the five different ML algorithm models exhibit their learning and predictive capabilities on both training and testing values. Among them, the performance of XGBoost model is significantly better than other models. The MLP and ERT models show instances where data points lie outside the permissible error range. Therefore, XGBoost demonstrates superior performance in predicting the moment capacity of steel and FRP hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams.

Additionally, the performance metrics, including RMSE, MAE, MAPE, and MAE, for the training and testing datasets under the five models was summarized, as shown in Table 4. Furthermore, the radar charts for the performance indicators of the training and testing datasets for each model were plotted as shown in Fig.6, aiming to compare the machine learning models used in this study.

Table 4 Performance metrics of ML model

ML model	Dataset	RMSE	MAE	R ²	MAPE
SVR	Training	1.463	0.612	0.965	0.031
	Test	5.541	2.923	0.956	0.166
XGBoost	Training	1.402	1.082	0.984	0.046
	Test	2.481	1.536	0.965	0.071
MLP	Training	1.697	0.834	0.978	0.030
	Test	4.792	3.205	0.934	0.239
RF	Training	2.253	1.116	0.944	0.169
	Test	4.654	2.849	0.925	0.215
ERT	Training	1.196	1.299	0.973	0.027
	Test	3.901	2.675	0.958	0.103

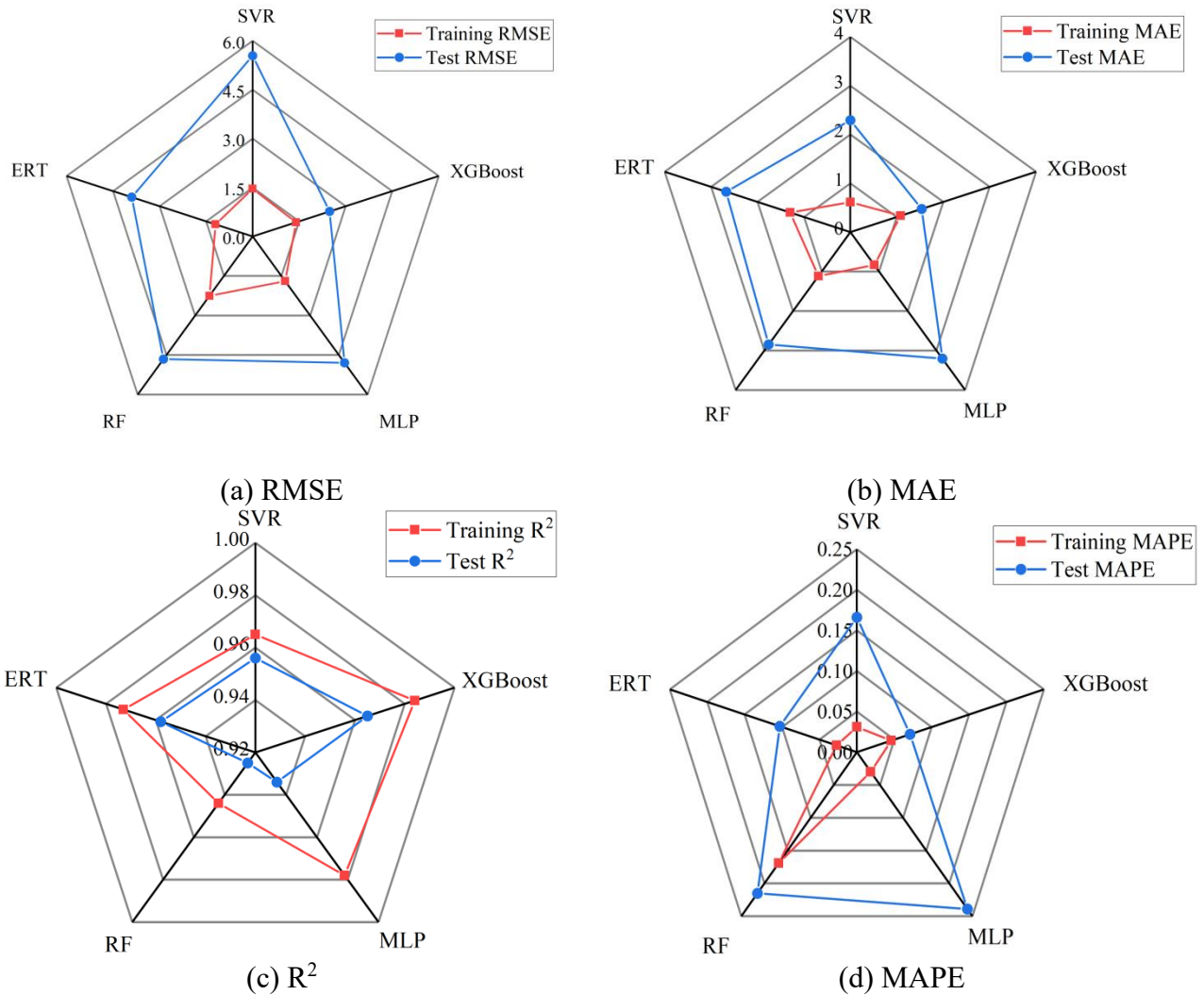


Fig.6 Radar chart of performance metrics for machine learning models

256 From Table 4 and Fig.6, it can be observed that all developed ML models have achieved a high
 257 level of learning and prediction capability. There are minor differences among the models, which
 258 can be attributed to the different learning methods and limitations of each model. The data shows

259 that the ERT model exhibits excellent learning and training performance, with the lowest values of
260 RMSE=1.196 and MAPE=0.027 among the five machine learning models on the training dataset.
261 However, the XGBoost model shows comparable performance to the ERT model in terms of
262 learning and training, with the highest $R^2=0.984$ among the five models on the training dataset.
263 Moreover, the XGBoost model outperforms other models significantly in terms of prediction
264 performance, with the lowest values of RMSE=2.481, MAE=1.536, and MAPE=0.071 on the
265 testing dataset, as well as the highest $R^2=0.965$ on the testing dataset among all models. Therefore,
266 the evaluation metrics indicate that all developed machine learning models can accurately predict
267 the moment capacity of ECC-concrete composite beams reinforced with steel and FRP bars.
268 Although the ERT model demonstrates good learning and training performance, the XGBoost
269 model exhibits better balance and prediction accuracy.

270 To better assess the performance of each model, Taylor diagrams were plotted to evaluate the
271 learning, training, and prediction capabilities of each model. Taylor diagrams essentially integrate
272 three evaluation metrics of the model: correlation coefficient, center root-mean-square error, and
273 standard deviation, onto a single coordinate graph, based on the cosine relationship among them
274 [25]. By comparing the distances between the model-simulated and the tested data points, the model
275 that is closest to the experimental data points demonstrates the best simulation performance.
276 Currently, Taylor diagrams have been widely used to assess the performance of fiber reinforced
277 composite materials. Fig.7 depicts the Taylor diagrams of the five machine learning models for the
278 moment capacity of ECC-composite beams hybrid reinforced with steel and FRP bars in the
279 training and testing datasets. In the figure, the purple dashed line represents the scale of the center
280 root-mean-square error, the radial axes represent the normalized standard deviation, and the circular
281 arcs represent the correlation coefficients. From both plots, it can be observed that XGBoost
282 exhibits higher correlation coefficients and lower standard deviation and center root-mean-square
283 error in both learning and prediction phases. Its model data points are closer to the true data points,
284 demonstrating the best learning and training performance, and its prediction performance is closest
285 to the experimental data.

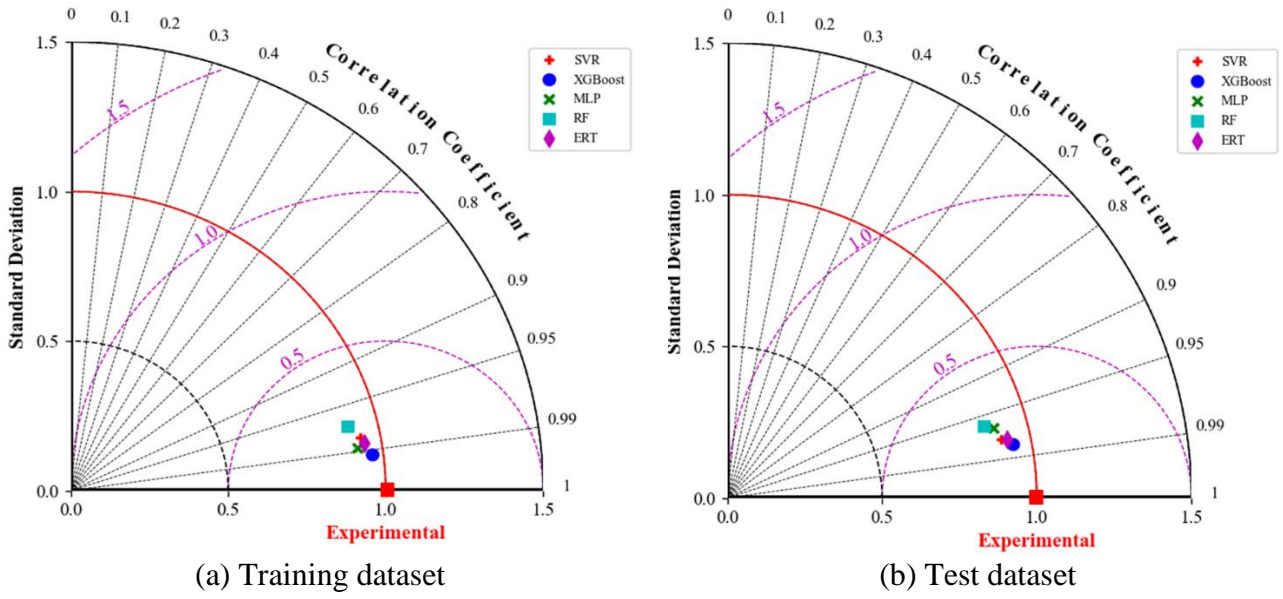


Fig.7 Taylor diagram presentation of ML models

5. Assessment of Input Parameter Variable Importance and Correlation

In recent years, given the impact of machine learning models on scientific research, efforts have been made to develop a method capable of explaining these models, namely Shapley Additive Explanations (SHAP) [49]. SHAP additive explanations are popular in machine learning models as they help individuals understand the importance of each input variable on the output variable [50]. This explanatory method can address the issue of multicollinearity by not only considering the influence of individual variables but also taking into account the impact of variable groups and potential synergistic effects between variables. It calculates the average marginal effect of each input parameter by evaluating the magnitude of feature variable attributes, including all possible combinations. The absolute value of the resulting SHAP values is used to determine the contribution of each input parameter to the output parameter; the higher the SHAP value, the greater the impact of the input parameter on the output parameter [51]. Therefore, in this study, SHAP additive explanations were applied to the XGBoost model with the best predictive performance, as shown in Fig.8.

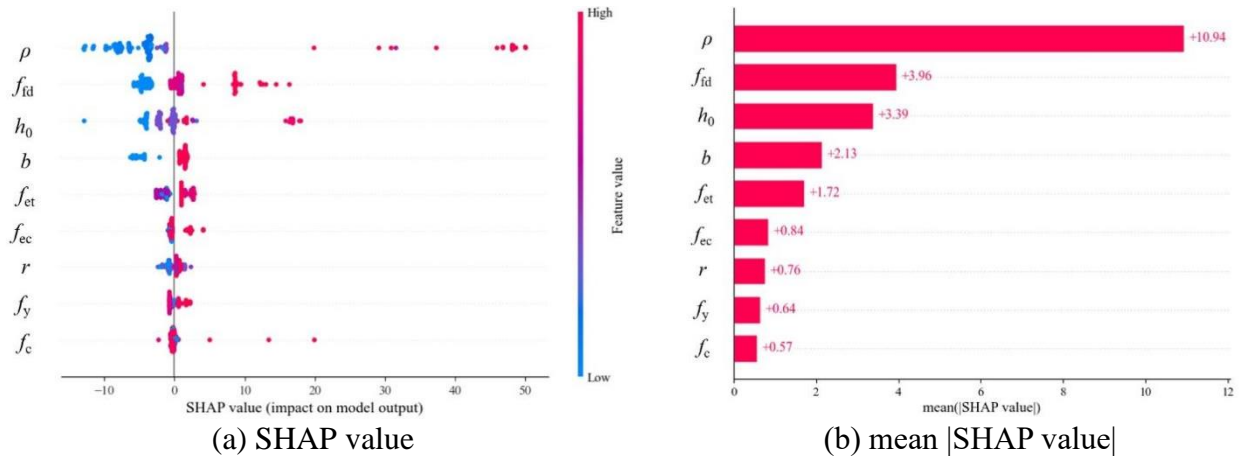


Fig.8 SHAP summary plot for input features

In Fig. 8 (a), each data sample is represented by a point, where the horizontal position of these points indicates the SHAP value calculated for the given input feature. Positive SHAP values indicate increasing influence of the input feature on the model output, while negative SHAP values represent decreasing influence of the input variable. Additionally, coloring is applied to the input feature values within each data sample, with blue shading for low values, red shading for high values, and purple shading near the mean to provide visualization. Moreover, the width of the color region for each feature variable indicates the magnitude of its influence. In Fig.8 (b), passing the SHAP value matrix to the bar plot function will create a global feature importance plot, where the global importance of each feature is considered as the average absolute value of that feature across all given samples. The x-axis represents the mean absolute SHAP value, while the y-axis sorts the input variables based on their importance, with the input variable having the highest contribution positioned at the top. As shown in Fig. 8, when examining the factors affecting the bending capacity of steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams, it is found that the equivalent reinforcement ratio (ρ), design strength of FRP bars (f_{fd}) and effective beam depth (h_0) have significantly influence. However, from the SHAP analysis plot, it is less obvious that the compressive strength of concrete (f_c) has a significant impact on the bending capacity.

From reviewing the literature and relevant documents, there are three methods to measure the correlation density between variables: the Pearson correlation coefficient, the Spearman rank correlation coefficient, and the Kendall rank correlation coefficient. The Pearson correlation coefficient is used for continuous variables and requires the assumption of a normal distribution. The Kendall rank correlation coefficient is suitable for ordered categorical variables. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient has a broader scope of application and fewer prerequisites. It is used for ordinal variables and interval data that do not meet the assumption of a normal distribution. The specific formulas are shown below.

Fig. 9 presents the Spearman rank correlation matrix for input features. It can be observed from the figure that among the beam dimension parameters, there is a notable correlation between beam width and effective height. Despite this correlation, these two parameters were independent variables as reported in the data collected. In the ECC-related parameters, a significant correlation is evident between f_{ec} and f_{et} , as anticipated. Additionally, r shows correlation with both f_{ec} and f_{et} , though the correlation is not significant.

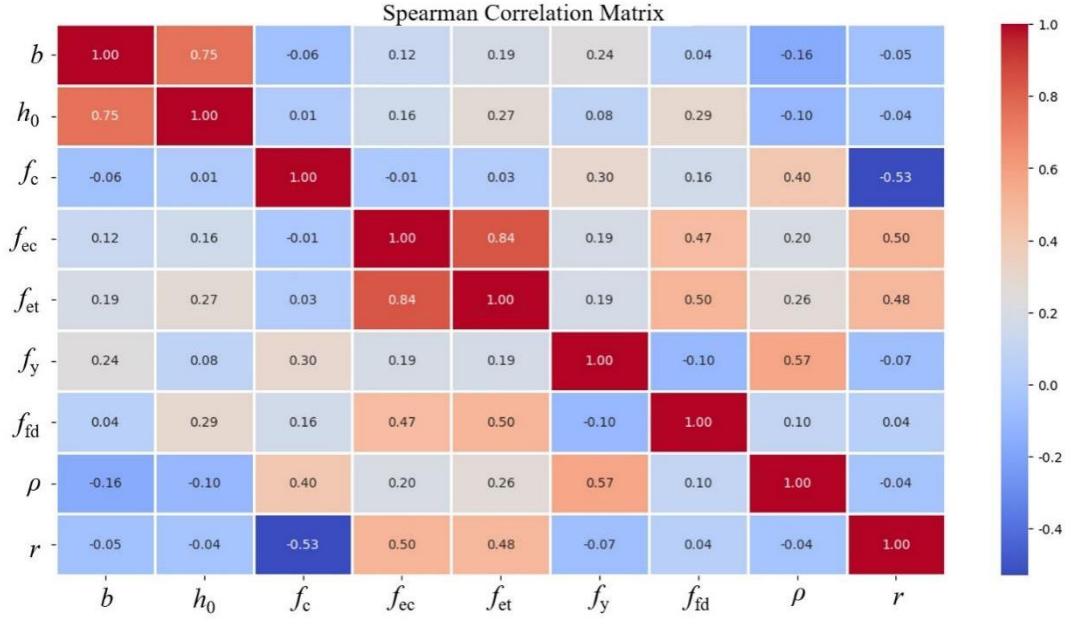


Fig.9 Spearman Correlation Matrix for input features

Passing the SHAP value matrix to a heatmap for visualization, where instances are on the x -axis and model outputs are on the y -axis, SHAP values are encoded according to a color scale. The samples are sorted based on hierarchical clustering according to explanatory similarity, grouping samples with similar reasons for model output together. The SHAP heatmap is depicted in Fig.10, with the model's outputs displayed above the heatmap matrix, and the global importance of each input parameter shown as a bar plot on the right-hand side in black. The $f(x)$ value above the image represents the model's output, with the gray dashed line indicating the baseline. The $f(x)$ curve demonstrates different SHAP values detected for similar $f(x)$ values. From Fig.10, it's evident that the most effective input feature for the bending capacity of steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams is the equivalent reinforcement ratio (ρ), while the least effective input feature is the compressive strength of concrete (f_c). By exporting the SHAP additive explanation plots and SHAP heatmap obtained from the XGBoost model, our understanding about how input features affect the bending capacity of steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams is greatly enhanced.

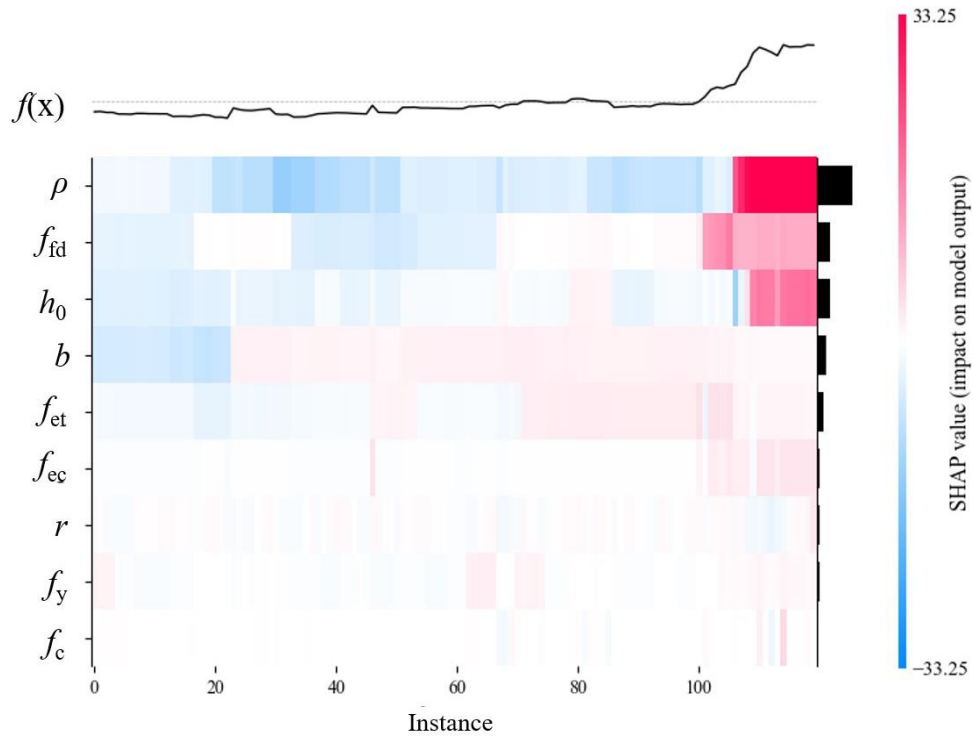


Fig.10 SHAP heat maps for input features

6. Graphical user interface development

In the development of machine learning models, it is particularly important to create a user interface application that allows direct interaction by researchers and engineers, aiming to popularize the widespread use of these models in engineering applications. A Graphical User Interface (GUI) facilitates users' understanding of complex data analysis and model outcomes, enabling them to better comprehend and optimize the behavior of the model by adjusting parameters and input values. This interface opens up the use of machine learning models to a wider audience, making the complex analysis process more understandable and facilitating communication between developers and users to improve the reliability of model results [52]. The GUI application is developed based on the tkinter module in the Python programming language, where developers can utilize simple components such as text boxes, buttons, and labels to implement GUI development.

Therefore, this paper developed a GUI application based on the XGBoost model, which, as demonstrated in the comparison of five machine learning models in the previous section, exhibits higher accuracy. As shown in Fig.11, the GUI application developed can easily allow the users to input their own calculated data to predict the moment capacity of ECC-concrete composite beams hybrid reinforced with steel and FRP bars. For example, when the width of the beam cross-section is 150 mm, the yield strength of steel bar is 340 MPa, the effective height of beam is 166 mm, the

362 design strength of FRP bar is 1260 MPa, the compressive strength of concrete is 47 MPa, the
 363 compressive strength of ECC is 41 MPa, the equivalent reinforcement ratio is 0.5%, the tensile
 364 strength of ECC is 3 MPa, and the ECC height ratio of beam height is 50%, the output flexural
 365 moment capacity is 26.97 kN·m. By creating a GUI module in the Python programming language,
 366 such development contributes to solving complex problems and expanding interfaces for interaction
 367 with humans.

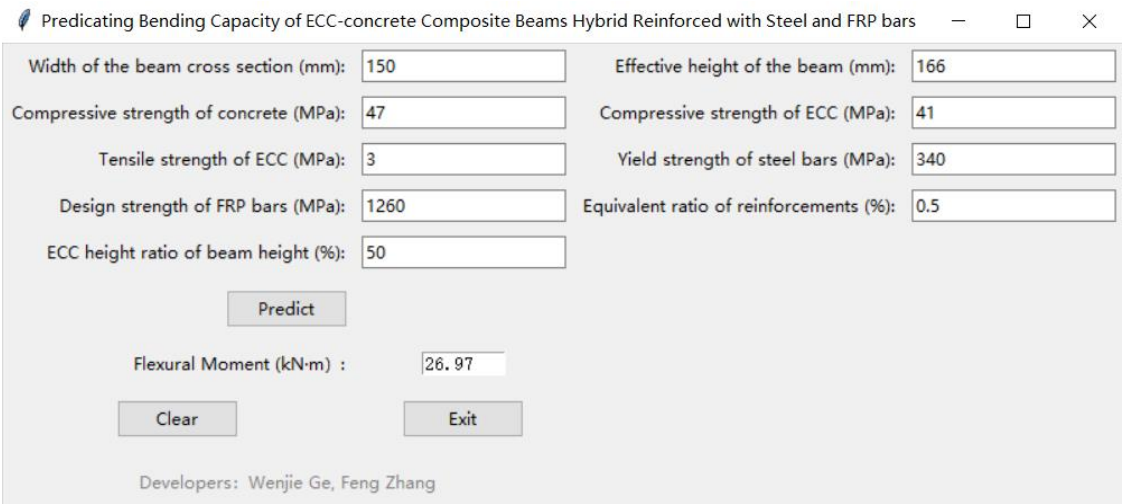


Fig.11 GUI for predicting bending capacity of ECC-concrete composite beams hybrid reinforced with steel and FRP bars

368 **7. Conclusion**

369 This study comprehensively investigates the bending capacity of steel and FRP bars hybrid
 370 reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams by using five different machine learning algorithm
 371 models (SVR, XGBoost, MLP, RF, and ERT). Utilizing 150 datasets from literature, analysis and
 372 organization of eight feature parameters were conducted, leading to the development of the most
 373 accurate model. Furthermore, employing the SHAP method, the impact of each input parameter on
 374 the bending capacity of steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams was
 375 evaluated, obtaining the following conclusions.

- 376 1) All five machine learning algorithm models used in the study demonstrate good predictive
 377 performance. Among them, ERT exhibits superior training performance, with the lowest values of
 378 RMSE=1.196 and MAPE=0.027 among all models on the training dataset. However, XGBoost
 379 achieves the best predictive performance, with the lowest values of RMSE=2.481, MAE=1.536, and
 380 MAPE=0.071 among all models on the testing dataset. Additionally, XGBoost attains the highest R²
 381 value of 0.965 on the testing dataset, surpassing all other models.

382 2) From the radar chart depicting the performance of the five machine learning algorithm
383 models, it is evident that XGBoost exhibits superior balance and predictive accuracy. Analysis via
384 Taylor diagrams reveals that, both in training and prediction scenarios, the data points of the
385 XGBoost model are closest to the actual values, illustrating its optimal learning performance.
386 Moreover, the predicted values are closest to the actual experimental values.

387 3) According to the Spearman correlation matrix plot of the 150 experimental data points
388 collected, a significant correlation exists between width and effective height within beam dimension
389 parameters. Among ECC input parameters, there is a clear correlation between compressive and
390 tensile strength. Additionally, there is a weak correlation between ECC height ratio of beam height
391 and compressive/tensile strength.

392 4) According to the analysis results of the SHAP additive explanation plot and the SHAP heat
393 map, the equivalent reinforcement ratio (ρ), design strength of FRP bars (f_{fd}) and effective height of
394 the beam (h_0) have significant impacts on the bending capacity. These are important input
395 parameters. In comparison with other features, the influence of the compressive strength of concrete
396 (f_c) on flexural capacity is less pronounced.

397 5) A graphical user interface (GUI) application was developed to accurately predict the
398 bending capacity of steel and FRP bars hybrid reinforced ECC-concrete composite beams. The GUI
399 can assist design engineers and researchers in estimating the bending capacity while significantly
400 reducing the need for expensive test materials and complex experimental testing.

401 This study provides a theoretical basis for predicting the bending capacity of ECC-concrete
402 composite beams hybrid reinforced with steel and FRP bars. As the results of this study are limited
403 to the selected parameters, future work will focus on developing prediction expressions applicable
404 to a wider range of variable parameters using machine learning methods with more extensive
405 parameter data.

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Appendix

	$b(\text{mm})$	$h_0(\text{mm})$	$f_c(\text{MPa})$	$f_{cc}(\text{MPa})$	$f_{ct}(\text{MPa})$	$f_y(\text{MPa})$	$f_{td}(\text{MPa})$	$\rho(\%)$	$r(\%)$	$M_u(\text{kN}\cdot\text{m})$
Tan Chen	100	116	48.2	0	0	408	0	0.97	0	6.18
	100	116	48.2	38.8	2.4	408	0	0.97	25	7.17
	100	116	48.2	38.8	2.4	408	0	0.97	50	8.31
	100	116	48.2	38.8	2.4	408	0	0.97	75	7.63
	100	116	0	38.8	2.4	408	0	0.97	100	5.91
	100	116	48.2	0	0	408	0	1.95	0	10.31
	100	116	48.2	38.8	2.4	408	0	1.95	25	11.02
	100	116	48.2	38.8	2.4	408	0	1.95	50	13.6
	100	116	48.2	38.8	2.4	408	0	1.95	75	13.51
	100	116	0	38.8	2.4	408	0	1.95	100	11.82
	100	116	48.2	0	0	503	0	1.95	0	13.86
	100	116	48.2	38.8	2.4	503	0	1.95	25	13.37
	100	116	48.2	38.8	2.4	503	0	1.95	50	15.42
	100	116	48.2	38.8	2.4	503	0	1.95	75	15.81
	100	116	0	38.8	2.4	503	0	1.95	100	13.71
Xiao Feng	100	116	47	0	0	344	0	1.95	0	10.53
	100	116	47	40.6	2.4	344	0	1.95	25	10.9
	100	116	47	40.6	2.4	344	0	1.95	50	11.1
	100	116	47	40.6	2.4	344	0	1.95	75	12.2
	100	116	0	40.6	2.4	344	0	1.95	100	11.3
	100	118	47	0	0	0	1310	0.43	0	4.42
	100	118	47	40.6	2.4	0	1310	0.43	25	5.59
	100	118	47	40.6	2.4	0	1310	0.43	50	6.21
	100	118	47	40.6	2.4	0	1310	0.43	75	5.46
	100	118	0	40.6	2.4	0	1310	0.43	100	6.22
	100	118	47	0	0	0	1310	0.85	0	9.6
	100	118	47	40.6	2.4	0	1310	0.85	25	10.1
	100	118	47	40.6	2.4	0	1310	0.85	50	10.4
	100	118	47	40.6	2.4	0	1310	0.85	75	10.65
	100	118	0	40.6	2.4	0	1310	0.85	100	10.2
Biyuan Wang	150	166	47	0	0	408	0	0.45	0	9
	150	166	47	40.6	2.4	408	0	0.45	25	9.75
	150	166	47	40.6	2.4	408	0	0.45	50	11.25
	150	166	47	40.6	2.4	408	0	0.45	75	12
	150	166	0	40.6	2.4	408	0	0.45	100	12.5
	150	166	47	0	0	408	0	0.91	0	19.25
	150	166	47	40.6	2.4	408	0	0.91	25	19.5
	150	166	47	40.6	2.4	408	0	0.91	50	19.75
	150	166	47	40.6	2.4	408	0	0.91	75	20.5
	150	166	0	40.6	2.4	408	0	0.91	100	22.5
	150	168	47	0	0	0	1260	0.2	0	9.5
	150	168	47	40.6	2.4	0	1260	0.2	25	10.25
	150	168	47	40.6	2.4	0	1260	0.2	5	10.25
	150	168	47	40.6	2.4	0	1260	0.2	75	11.25
	150	168	0	40.6	2.4	0	1260	0.2	100	11.5
	150	168	47	0	0	0	1260	0.4	0	12
	150	168	47	40.6	2.4	0	1260	0.4	25	15.5
	150	168	47	40.6	2.4	0	1260	0.4	50	17.5
	150	168	47	40.6	2.4	0	1260	0.4	75	19.5

	150	168	0	40.6	2.4	0	1260	0.4	100	21.5
Linglo ng Pan	150	166	46.5	0	0	345	0	0.91	0	17.08
	150	166	46.5	40.6	2.4	345	0	0.91	25	18.63
	150	166	46.5	40.6	2.4	345	0	0.91	50	19.25
	150	166	46.5	40.6	2.4	345	0	0.91	75	19.12
	150	166	0	40.6	2.4	345	0	0.91	100	18.93
	150	167	46.5	0	0	410	0	0.31	0	6.31
	150	167	46.5	40.6	2.4	410	0	0.31	25	6.95
	150	167	46.5	40.6	2.4	410	0	0.31	50	7.23
	150	167	46.5	40.6	2.4	410	0	0.31	75	8.83
	150	167	0	40.6	2.4	410	0	0.31	100	10.51
	150	167	46.5	0	0	410	0	0.63	0	10.85
	150	167	46.5	40.6	2.4	410	0	0.63	25	12.11
	150	167	46.5	40.6	2.4	410	0	0.63	50	13.34
	150	167	46.5	40.6	2.4	410	0	0.63	75	13.02
	150	167	0	40.6	2.4	410	0	0.63	100	12.83
	150	166	46.5	0	0	503	0	0.91	0	21.34
	150	166	46.5	40.6	2.4	503	0	0.91	25	22.56
	150	166	46.5	40.6	2.4	503	0	0.91	50	22.95
	150	166	46.5	40.6	2.4	503	0	0.91	75	24.02
	150	166	0	40.6	2.4	503	0	0.91	100	22.56
Junyu Chen	150	167	47	0	0	408	0	0.63	0	11
	150	167	47	40.6	3	408	0	0.63	25	12
	150	167	47	40.6	3	408	0	0.63	50	13
	150	167	47	40.6	3	408	0	0.63	75	13
	150	167	0	40.6	3	408	0	0.63	100	13
	150	166	47	0	0	408	0	0.91	0	19.25
	150	166	47	40.6	3	408	0	0.91	25	19.5
	150	166	47	40.6	3	408	0	0.91	50	19.75
	150	166	47	40.6	3	408	0	0.91	75	20.5
	150	166	0	40.6	3	408	0	0.91	100	21.5
	150	166	47	0	0	340	1260	0.5	0	23
	150	166	47	40.6	3	340	1260	0.5	25	24
	150	166	47	40.6	3	340	1260	0.5	50	27.5
	150	166	47	40.6	3	340	1260	0.5	75	27.5
	150	166	0	40.6	3	340	1260	0.5	100	25
	150	167	47	0	0	408	1260	0.41	0	18
	150	167	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.41	25	19.25
	150	167	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.41	50	22
	150	167	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.41	75	22
	150	167	0	40.6	3	408	1260	0.41	100	23
	150	166	47	0	0	408	1260	0.55	0	22
	150	166	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.55	25	27.5
	150	166	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.55	50	23
	150	166	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.55	75	27.5
	150	166	0	40.6	3	408	1260	0.55	100	26
	150	167	47	0	0	408	1260	0.67	0	17.5
	150	167	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.67	25	22
	150	167	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.67	50	22.5
	150	167	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.67	75	20
	150	167	0	40.6	3	408	1260	0.67	100	20
	150	166	47	0	0	408	1260	0.96	0	23.75

	150	166	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.96	25	27.5
	150	166	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.96	50	25.5
	150	166	47	40.6	3	408	1260	0.96	75	27.5
	150	166	0	40.6	3	408	1260	0.96	100	27.5
	150	166	47	0	0	503	1260	0.96	0	27
	150	166	47	40.6	3	503	1260	0.96	25	30.5
	150	166	47	40.6	3	503	1260	0.96	50	30
	150	166	47	40.6	3	503	1260	0.96	75	31
	150	166	0	40.6	3	503	1260	0.96	100	27.5
Zufa Jiang	140	160	0	45.2	5	0	2437	0.7	100	34.8
	140	160	0	45.2	5	0	2437	1.05	100	43.6
	140	153	0	45.2	5	0	2437	1.76	100	51.4
	140	160	0	45.2	5	0	2701	0.38	100	27.6
	140	160	0	45.2	5	0	2001	0.178	100	52.2
	140	160	0	45.2	5	0	1000	0.105	100	30.9
	140	160	0	45.2	5	406	0	0.105	100	23.46
	140	160	45.2	0	0	0	2437	0.105	0	36.26
	140	160	45.2	0	0	0	1000	0.105	0	25.83
Ren Hu	150	248	49.4	0	0	470	1660	4.89	0	96.2
	150	257	0	42.1	4	470	1660	1.84	100	45.96
	150	254	0	42.1	4	470	1660	2.69	100	70
	150	248	0	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	100	117.7
	150	248	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	30	105.4
	150	128	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	9.45	30	44.9
	150	148	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	8.19	30	53.5
	150	178	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	6.81	30	68.9
	150	198	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	6.12	30	78.9
	150	228	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	5.32	30	94.4
	100	198	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	9.187	30	69.2
	150	248	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	16.7	102.1
	150	248	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	43.3	113.5
	150	248	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	56	105.6
	150	248	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	70	104.5
	150	248	49.4	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	83	101.5
	150	248	40	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	30	92.5
	150	248	50	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	30	106.1
	150	248	60	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	30	110.5
	150	248	70	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	30	124.9
	150	248	80	42.1	4	470	1660	4.89	30	133.1
Shuo Wang	150	264	31.25	0	0	0	910	0.571	0	21.3
	150	264	31.25	29.76	2.5	0	910	0.571	33	27
	150	264	31.25	29.76	2.5	0	910	0.571	67	27.6
	150	264	31.25	29.76	2.5	0	910	0.571	100	30.3
	150	264	31.25	0	0	0	910	0.85	0	24.3
	150	264	31.25	29.76	2.5	0	910	0.85	33	33.6
	150	264	31.25	29.76	2.5	0	910	0.85	67	36.3
	150	264	31.25	29.76	2.5	0	910	0.85	100	30.6
	150	264	43.5	29.76	2.5	0	910	0.57	33	30.6
	150	264	50.34	29.76	2.5	0	910	0.57	33	33.9