

RESEARCH PAPER

Synthesis, Characterization, and Comparative Study of Novel Ternary PANI/rGO-Cr₂O₃, PANI/rGO-NiO, PANI/NiO-Cr₂O₃ Nanocomposites for Dielectric and Thermal Application

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ABSTRACT

This study involved the preparation of novel ternary PANI/rGO-Cr₂O₃, PANI/rGO-NiO, PANI/NiO-Cr₂O₃ nanocomposites using in-situ polymerization method. The resulting nanocomposites were identified using FT-IR, XRD, and FESEM measurements. The electrical properties of single PVA polymer films and PVA hybrids were studied by LCR techniques at frequency range of 1kHz -5kHz and a temperature of 25 °C. The measurements of electrical conductivity exhibited an augmentation in the magnitudes of the dielectric constant (ϵ') and the dielectric loss factor (ϵ''). The value decreases as the frequency increases. The thermal measurements showed that the thermal conductivity coefficient decreases with increasing the frequencies.

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INTRODUCTION

Advancements in materials science have greatly influenced the electrical and industrial properties of materials used in energy storage [1]. Due to superior electrochemical properties, low cost, environmentally friendly nature, high stability and simplicity of synthesis, polyaniline and its derivatives are crucial materials developed for energy storage applications [2, 3]. Nevertheless, this particular polymer exhibits subpar mechanical qualities and limited process ability [1, 4]. However, it is possible to overcome these limitations and enhance the electrical, mechanical, and thermal properties of conductive polymers by employing carbon nanostructures like graphene, graphene

oxide (GO), carbon nanotubes, and metal oxides [5-8]. Recently, graphene has attracted a lot of attention because of its extraordinary mechanical, thermal, and electrical capabilities, which allow it to significantly improve the properties of polymer-based nanocomposites. The attributes stem from its honeycomb-like configuration, which enhances its distinctive properties. The properties arise from its honeycomb-like structure, characterized by the thickness of a single carbon atom and a high density of structural components [9, 10]. Graphene oxide is a complex hydrocarbon network with a multicyclic layer that is partially aromatic. Furthermore, it lies in the production of nano-electronic devices and sensors. Metal oxides

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nanoparticles demonstrate characteristics of semiconductors. The NiO, and Cr₂O₃ nanoparticle are solid powders that are insoluble in water (H₂O) but can slowly dissolve in NH₄Cl, dilute acid, and ammonia solution [11]. The current investigation involved the preparation of a ternary polymeric nanocomposite consisting of PANI/rGO-Cr₂O₃, PANI/rGO-NiO, and PANI/NiO-Cr₂O₃. The products were characterized using techniques such as FTIR, XRD, FESEM. Finally, the electrical characteristics and thermal conductivity of these materials were examined.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Synthesis of graphene oxide

GO was produced by the modified Hummer technique. The graphite (Alpha, 95%) was mixed with concentrated H₂SO₄ (MERCK, 95%) and KMnO₄ (Alpha, 95.5%) in a beaker. The mixture was stirred continuously for 20 min, and then heated to 98 °C. Non-ionic water was added, followed by H₂O₂ (HIMEDIA, 30%). The mixture turned yellow, washed with HCl (THOMAS BAKER, 35%) and non-ionic water, and dried at 70 °C for 4 h [12, 13].

Synthesis of reduced graphene oxide (rGO)

rGO was prepared by chemical reduction of an aqueous solution of GO in 250mL of deionized water using an ultrasonic device for 30 min. After that, 5mL of hydrazine hydrate was added to the flask and left for the sublimation process reverse reflux for 24 h at 90 °C. The mixture was filtered and the precipitate was washed with deionized water several times. Finally, it was dried for 24 h at 90 °C [13, 14].

Synthesis of PANI

1.5 mL of purified aniline (LOBALA Chemie/India, 99%) was placed in a beaker with a capacity of 50 mL. The beaker was then placed in an ice bath at a temperature of 0°C for a duration of 10 min. Next, 20 mL of HCl 1 M was slowly added into above solution while continuously stirring for 20 min. This was followed by the addition of ammonium persulphate APS (MERCK, 99.5%) at 0°C. The solution was thereafter agitated for duration of 2 h in an ice bath, and subsequently stored overnight in the refrigerator. The precipitate underwent filtration and was thereafter washed 4 times with distilled water and ammonium hydroxide NH₄OH (LOBALA Chemie/India, 25%). This was followed by further washing with distilled water until the pH reached neutrality. Ultimately,

the solid residue was subjected to a drying process at a temperature of 80°C for a duration of 2 h [15-17].

Synthesis of extract

1 g of both extracts (ground ginger and ground cumin) were taken and each of them was placed in 50 mL of water on the thermal heater while continuously stirring for 15 min. Then, the temperature was raised for 1 h. The sediment was then separated from the solution.

Synthesis of NiO and Cr₂O₃

1 g of aqueous nickel nitrate and chromium (III) nitrate were separately dissolved in 25 mL of water. Then, 10 mL of extracts were added in a burette, followed by the addition of NH₄OH until PH reached 10 for NiO and PH reached 8 for Cr₂O₃. Then the precipitate was washed 4 times, dried and then placed in an oven at 500°C for 3 h.

Synthesis of rGO-NiO, rGO-Cr₂O₃, Cr₂O₃-NiO

The rGO-NiO was synthesized by dispersing 1 g of rGO in 200 mL of water using an ultrasonic water bath at 25°C for 1 h, resulting in a solution of rGO. Subsequently, 0.7g of NiO was added into the rGO solution and stirred for 1 h at 25°C. The precipitate was separated using centrifugation. Finally, the precipitate was dried at 90°C for 4 h [18]. The similar conditions were employed for fabrication of rGO-Cr₂O₃ and Cr₂O₃-NiO.

Synthesis of PANI/rGO-Cr₂O₃, PANI/rGO-NiO, and PANI/NiO-Cr₂O₃

The ternary nanocomposite was synthesized by dispersing 0.5 g of the binary composite rGO-NiO, rGO-Cr₂O₃ and Cr₂O₃-NiO in 50 mL of non-ionic water using an ultrasonic bath at a temperature of 25°C for 1 h. Subsequently, the resulting mixture was combined with 1 g of PANI dissolved in 100 mL of 0.1M HCL. Then, a solution of an oxidizing agent by dissolving 6 g of APS in 100 mL of 0.1M HCl was fabricated. This solution was introduced into the main mixture while vigorously stirring for 12 h at 25°C. Next, the sediment was washed and then dried in the oven at 80°C for 4 h.

Synthesis of PANI/rGO-Cr₂O₃, PANI/rGO-NiO, and PANI/NiO-Cr₂O₃ nanocomposite membranes

The nanocomposite membranes were fabricated by incorporating diverse weight percentages of the PANI/rGO-Cr₂O₃, PANI/rGO-NiO,

and PANI/NiO-Cr₂O₃ nanocomposite. A solution containing a specified amount of PVA in 20 mL of distilled water was combined with (2-10%) of ternary nanocomposite in 3 mL of distilled water. The combination was agitated at a temperature of 60 °C until a noticeable alteration occurred in the mixture. The sample was subjected to sonication (405 Power China) for 15 min at a temperature of 25 °C, followed by the process of casting onto a glass mold.

Dielectric constant measurement

In order to determine the dielectric properties of the produced films, a circular piece with a diameter of 3 cm was cut from the film. This was done to match the diameter of the electrodes in the LCR meter (Impedance Analyze Agilent 50Hz-5mHz). Dielectric investigations were conducted at several frequencies ranging from 1 to 5 KHz at a temperature of 25 °C. the dielectric constant (ϵ'), dielectric loss factor (ϵ'') were calculated according to the Eq. 1 [13, 19]:

$$\epsilon' = \frac{Cd}{\epsilon_0 A} \quad (1)$$

Where, ϵ_0 is permittivity of the vacuum (F/m), which is equal to 8.85×10^{-12} . d (m) denotes the distance between the two conducting plates. A (m²) is conductive plate's surface area. C (F) denotes the capacity in the presence of a vacuum (Eq. 2).

$$\tan \delta = \frac{\epsilon''}{\epsilon'} \quad (2)$$

Where $\tan \delta$ is dissipation factor. The K value can be computed using the Eq. 3

$$K \left\{ \frac{T_B - T_A}{d_s} \right\} = e \left\{ T_A + \frac{r}{2} \left(d_A + \frac{d_s}{4} \right) T_A + d_s \frac{T_B}{2r} \right\}$$

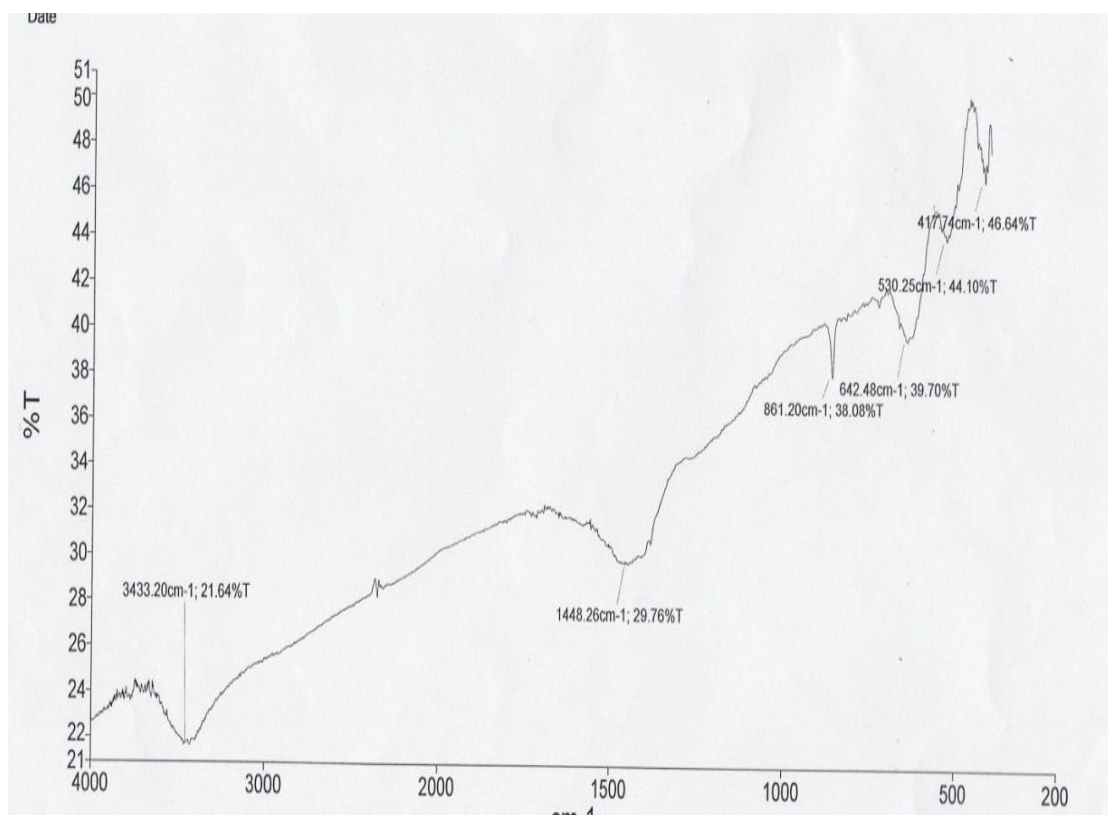


Fig. 1. FTIR spectrum of rGO.

Where, T_A , T_B , T_C indicates the temperature of disk A, B, and C, correspondingly. d (m) is disc's thickness. r (m) is disk's radius. I (A) show the current passed via heating coils. V (v) is the heating coil's potential difference on both ends.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

FTIR analysis

Fig. 1 presents the FTIR spectrum of rGO. The distinct bands observed at 3433.95, 1641.1, and 1115.19 cm^{-1} are associated with vibrational frequencies of the O–H, C=C, and C–O groups in the carbon-hydroxyl groups [20].

Fig. 2 shows the FTIR spectrum of PANI. The peak at 3434.13 cm^{-1} is attributed to N–H stretching vibrations. The peaks at 1558.40 cm^{-1} and 1475.47 cm^{-1} are attributed to the stretching vibrations of quinoid and benzenoid ring of PANI, respectively. Moreover, the characteristic of N=Q=N and the stretching vibration of C=C were appeared at 1104.55 cm^{-1} and 1293.88 cm^{-1} . Band

at 797.17 cm^{-1} is attributed to C–H aromatic ring [21].

To understand the dominant functional group present in the catalyst, FTIR spectrum was recorded at room temperature. The FTIR spectrum of NiO is shown in Fig. 3. Peak around the 418.80 cm^{-1} is because of the Ni–O bond stretching vibrations. The absorption band at 1637.87 cm^{-1} is due to the symmetric and the asymmetric stretching mode of vibrations of the CO_2 molecule absorbed from the air [22]. Also, the broad peak at 3437.01 cm^{-1} may be because of stretching and bending vibrations of –OH group absorbed on catalyst surface from the atmosphere when FTIR analysis was carried out [23].

FTIR spectrum of rGO–NiO nanocomposite is shown in Fig. 4. The main peaks detected at 3434.25, 1629.04, 1125.26, 423.02, and 630.89 cm^{-1} are recognized to the O–H, C–C, C–OH, C–C, and C–O, respectively. Because of the partially reduction of oxygenated functional

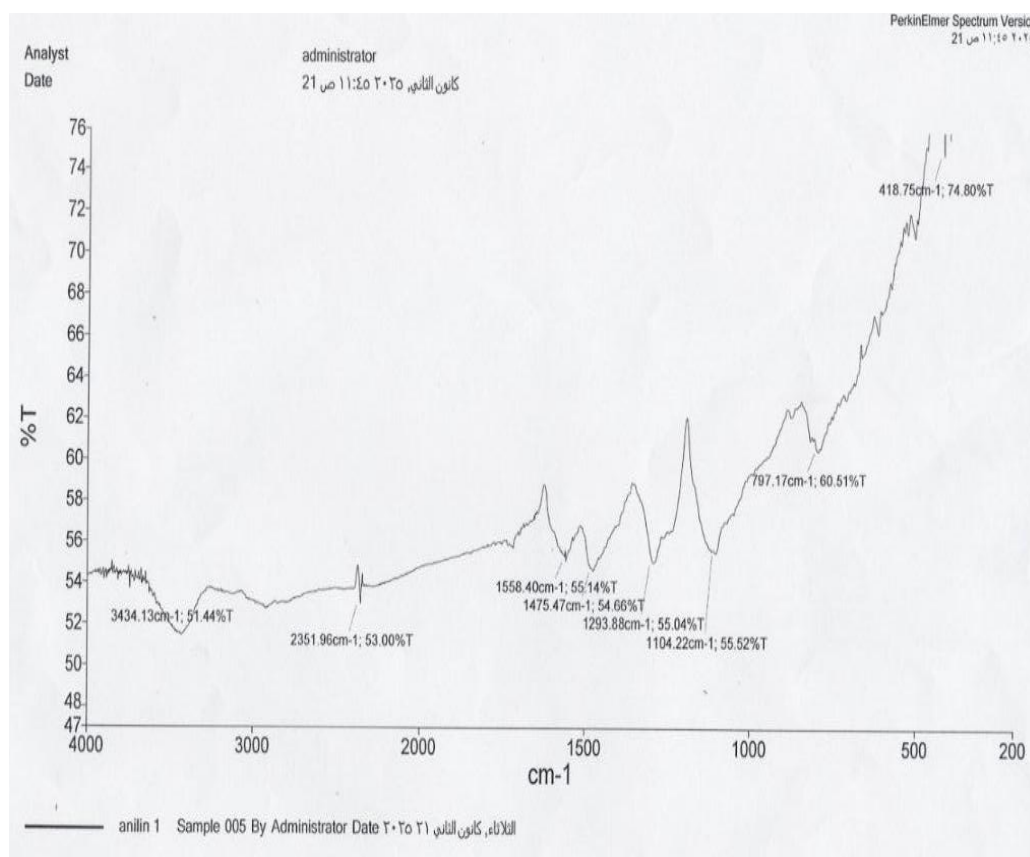


Fig. 2. FTIR spectrum of PANI.

groups during the reaction, the intensities of these peaks reduced dramatically following the formation of NiO nanoparticles on rGO sheets.

Indeed, after reducing GO with NH_4OH , the peaks caused by O–H, C–O, and C=O stretching reduced considerably.

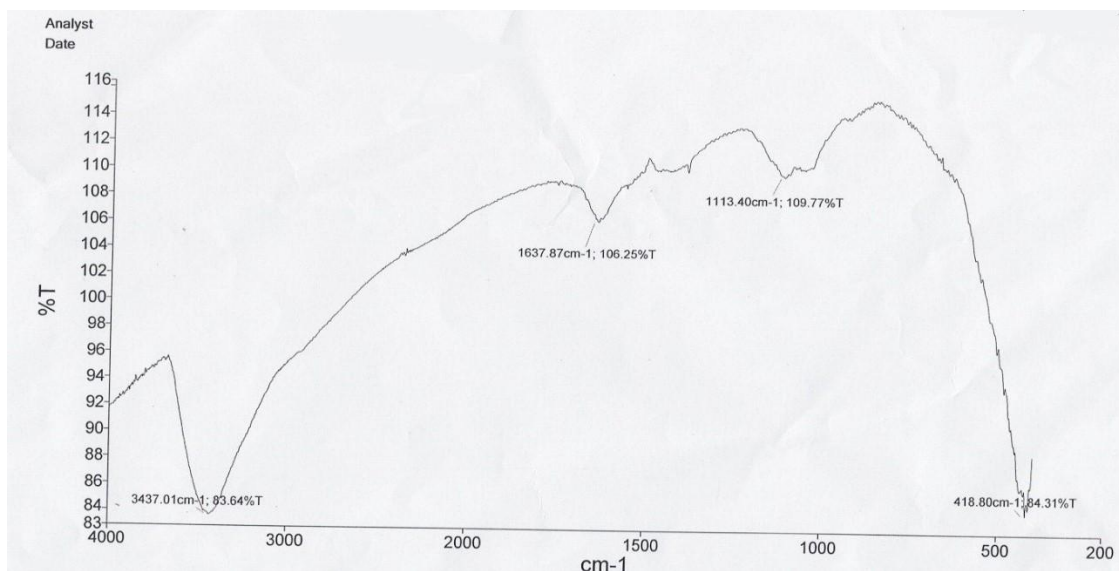


Fig. 3. FTIR spectrum of NiO.

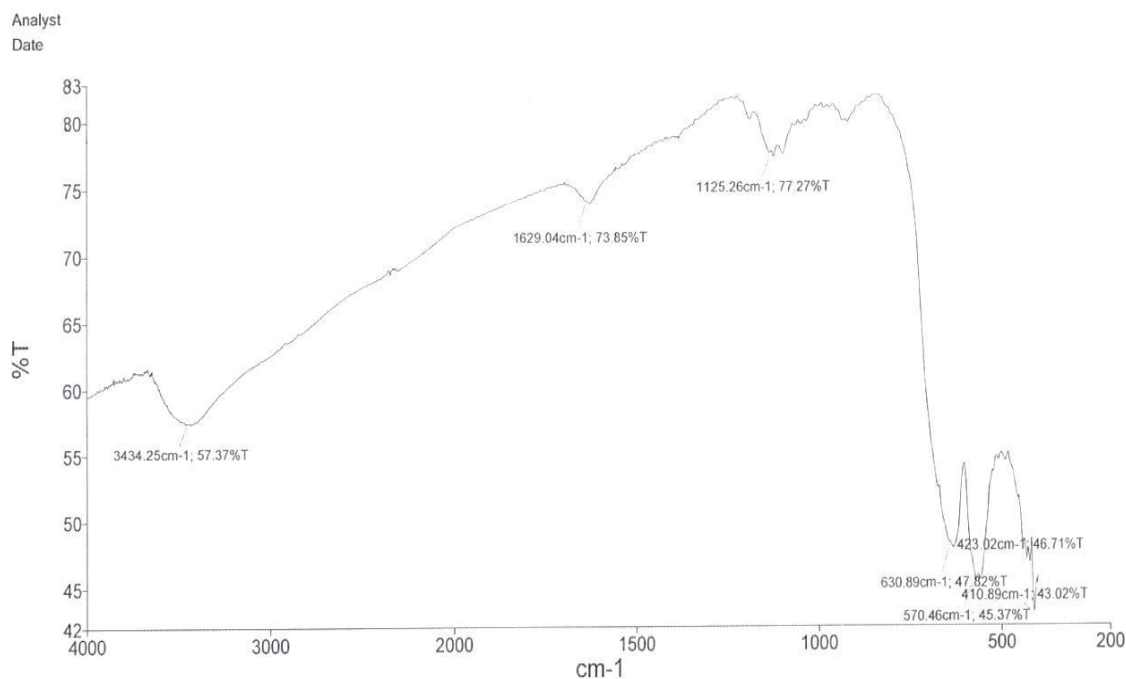


Fig. 4. FTIR spectrum of rGO-NiO nanocomposite.

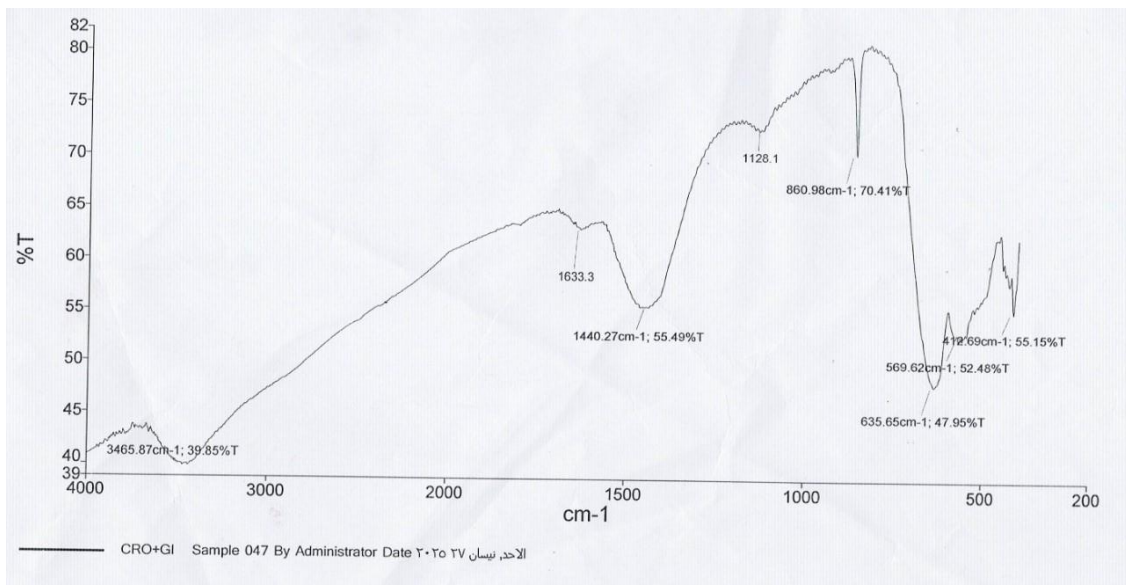


Fig. 5. FTIR spectrum of rGO-Cr₂O₃ nanocomposite.

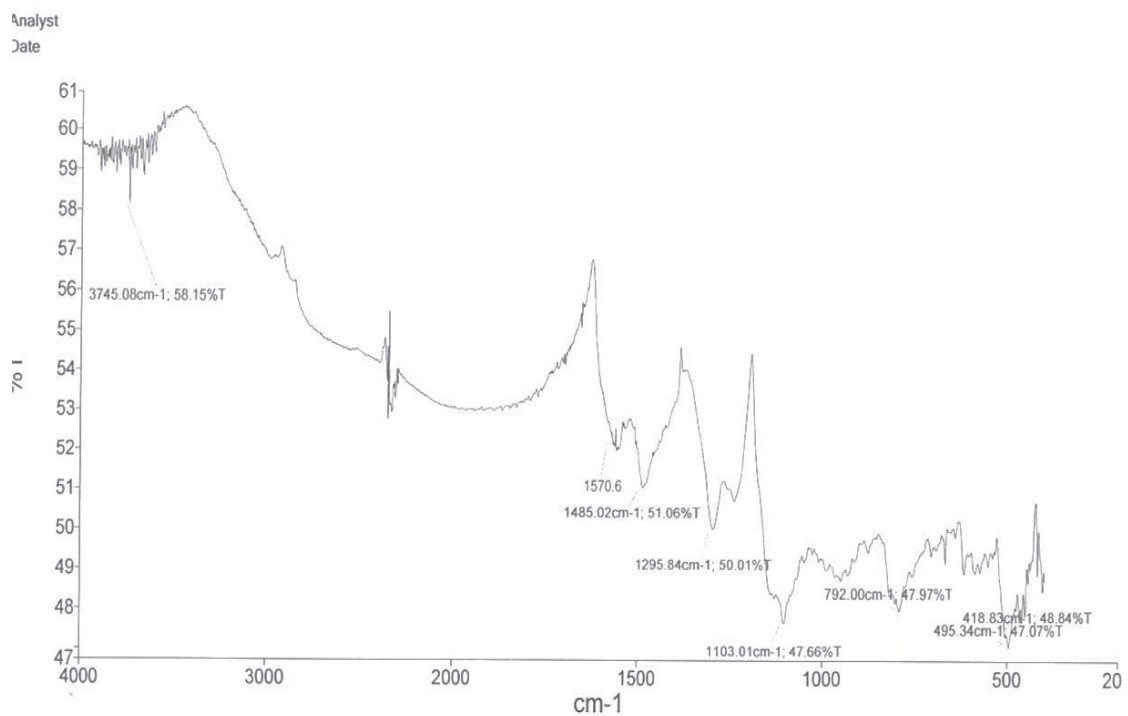


Fig. 6. FTIR spectrum of NiO-Cr₂O₃ nanocomposite.

Fig. 5 illustrates the existence of numerous distinct bands for the hybrid composite, with absorption bands in the range of 3364.25cm^{-1} attributed to the NH_2 group, and prominent bands in the range of $1508.15\text{--}1582.05\text{cm}^{-1}$ corresponding to the $\text{C}=\text{C}$ group, associated with the extension of cyclic compounds and selective vibrations. The absorption band at 1218.89cm^{-1} corresponds to

the $\text{C}-\text{N}$ in the quinoid and benzoid groups, while the band at 1046.57cm^{-1} is associated with the alkoxy and epoxy groups. Furthermore, the band located at 422.12cm^{-1} corresponds to the $\text{Cr}-\text{O}$ group.

The FTIR spectrum of $\text{NiO}-\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_3$ nanocomposites is shown in Fig. 6. A broad band at 3420 cm^{-1} corresponds to the stretching modes of surface

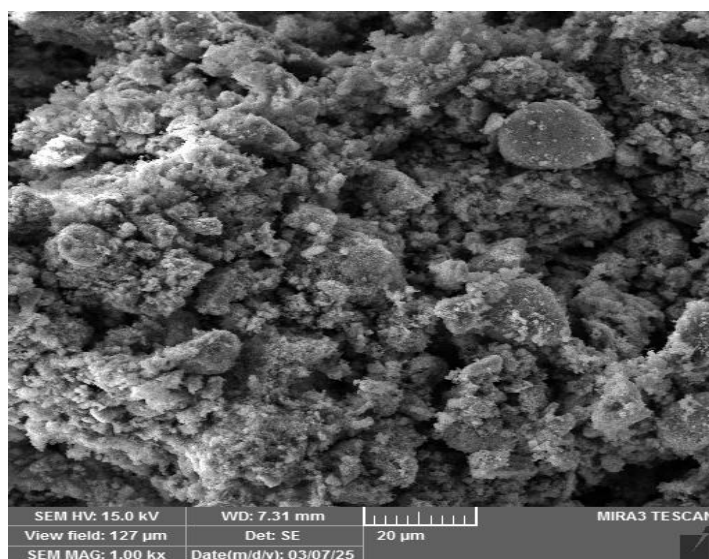


Fig. 7. FESEM image of rGO.

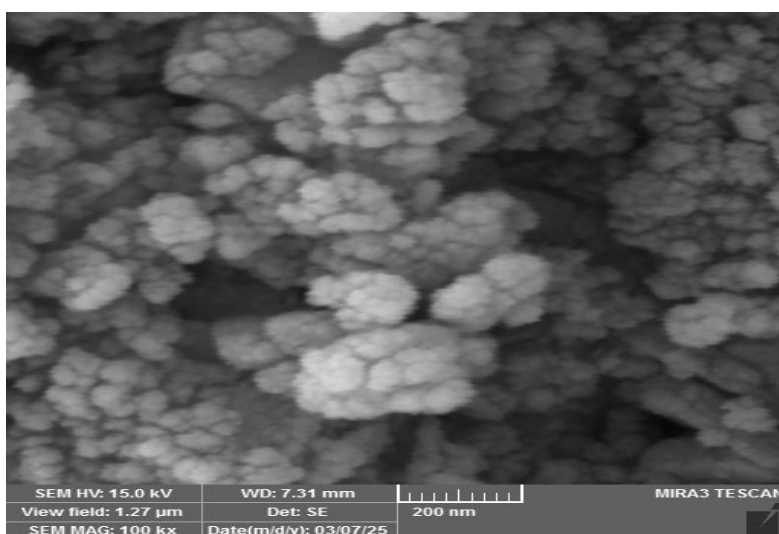


Fig.8. FESEM image of Cr_2O_3 .

OH groups. Metal oxide generally reveals absorption bands below 1000 cm^{-1} due to inter-atomic vibrations. Two sharp peaks displayed at

652 and 562 cm^{-1} attributed to Cr-O stretching modes, which are clear evidence for the presence of the crystalline Cr_2O_3 [24]. Interestingly, it was

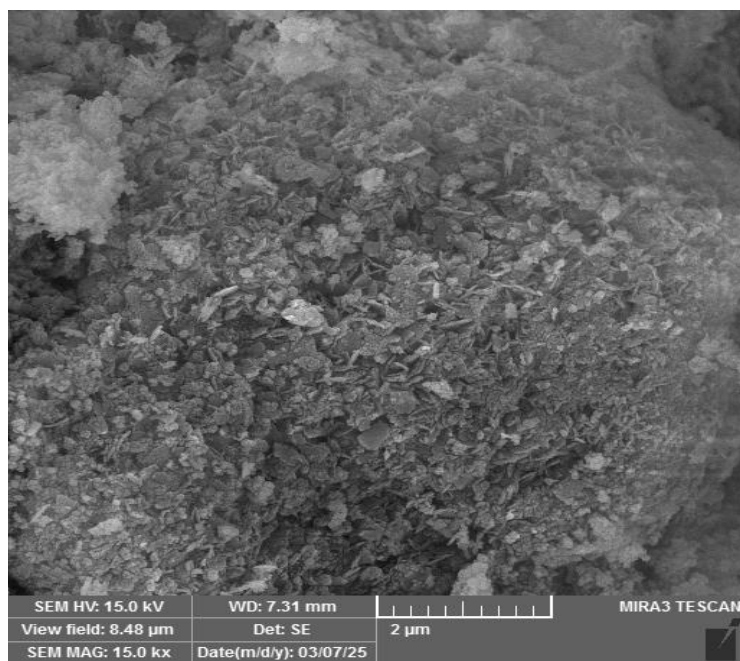


Fig. 9. FESEM image of PANI.

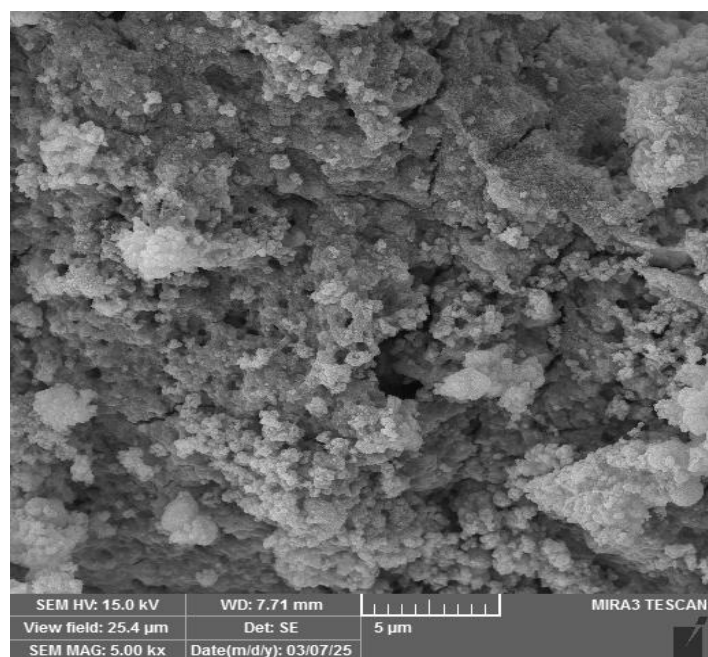


Fig. 10. FESEM image of rGO-NiO.

observed that intensity of the higher frequency decrease with enhancement in NiO concentration.

FESEM analysis

The FESEM image of rGO in Fig. 7 displayed

some distortions on the layer's surface. This is due to the reduction by hydrazine hydrate.

SEM micrograph of Cr_2O_3 is shown in Fig. 8. It can be seen that the sample is spherical and particles are agglomerated at the surface.

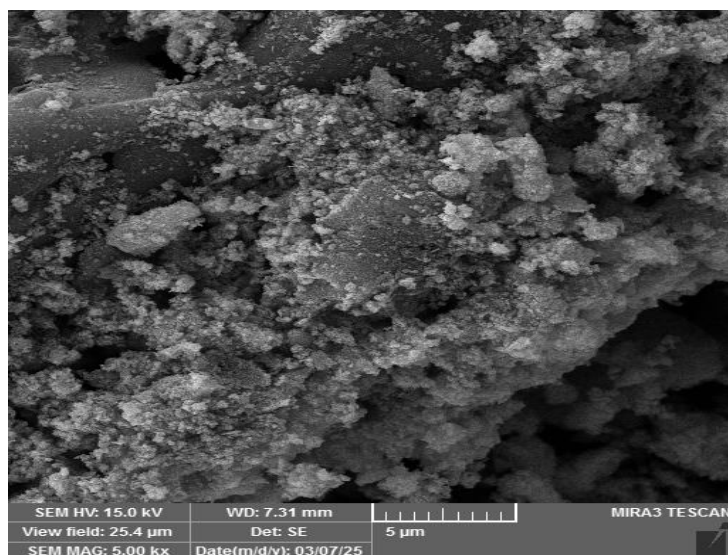


Fig. 11. FESEM image of Cr_2O_3 -NiO.

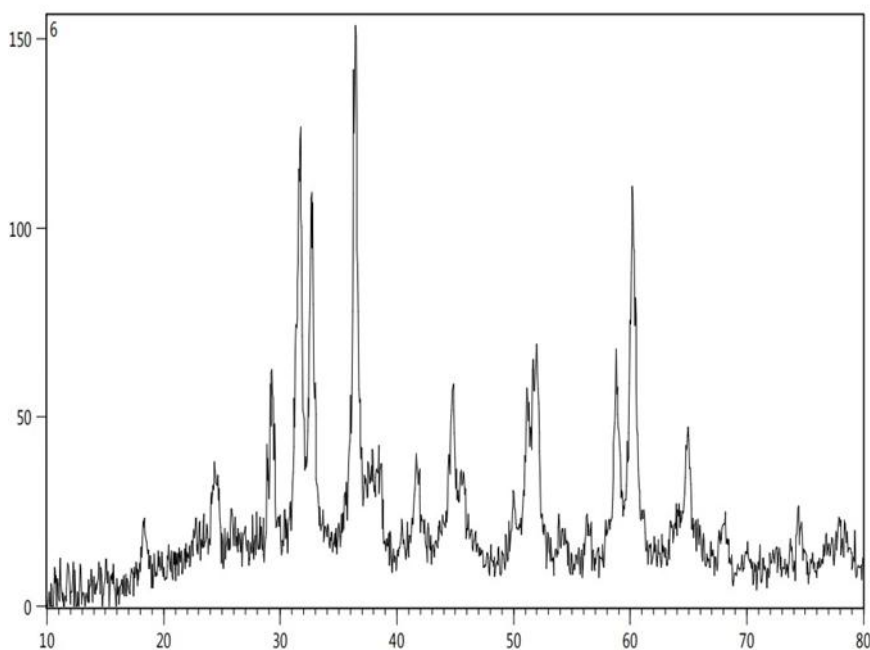


Fig. 12. XRD pattern of rGO.

Spherical shaped formations were aggregated in the form of clusters.

SEM investigation of PANI in Fig. 9 identified plate-like structures in the composition. The generated material displayed a porous structure [25].

According to the Fig. 10, NiO particles were distributed randomly throughout rGO sheet. On the curled morphology of the reduced graphene oxide, NiO particles are dispersed. SEM image show the NiO particles have nanosheet-based irregular structures.

The FESEM micrograph of Cr_2O_3 -NiO nanocomposites is shown in Fig. 11. FESEM analysis provides the information about the shape and size. The results of FESEM showed that the average diameter 30-50nm. It can also be seen that the shape of synthesized Cr_2O_3 nanoparticles

were homogenous and spherical.

XRD analysis

XRD analysis of rGO is depicted in Fig. 12. The distance between the interlayers was determined to be relatively small compared to graphene oxide, which can be attributed to the removal of a majority of the functional oxygen groups through the process of reduction [26].

Fig. 13 illustrates XRD pattern of synthesized Cr_2O_3 nanoparticles. The diffraction peaks obtained at $2\theta = 24.5, 33.6, 36.2, 39.7, 41.5, 44.2, 50.2, 54.8, 58.3, 63.4, 65, 72.9, 76.7$, and 79.1 degrees, can be related to the Cr_2O_3 standard JCPDS card No. 201103. The standard JCPDS card shows that the alignment of the diffraction peaks perfectly matches the rhombohedral structure of Cr_2O_3 nanoparticles. The results showed that the

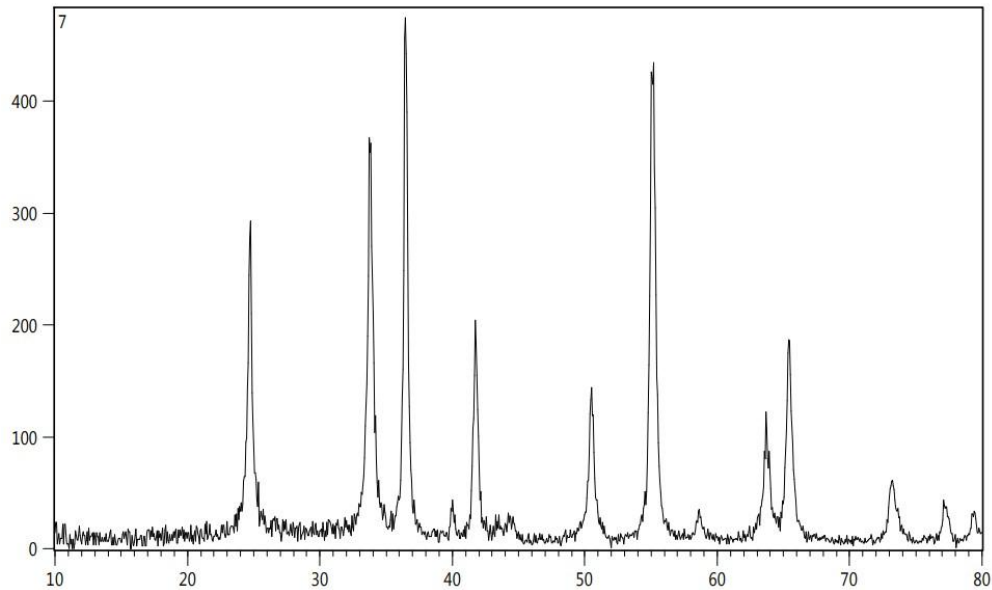


Fig. 13. XRD pattern of Cr_2O_3 .

Table 1. The value of ϵ' for the synthesized films.

Frequency (MHz)	Dielectric Constant (ϵ')			
	PVA	PANI/NiO- Cr_2O_3	PANI/rGO-NiO	PANI/rGO- Cr_2O_3
1	3.58787	3.13797	1.69776	1.98913
2	3.52516	2.22089	1.41772	1.72400
3	3.44068	1.84363	1.39226	1.67368
4	3.43068	1.48140	1.35799	1.42774
5	3.4032	1.31134	1.01784	1.26222

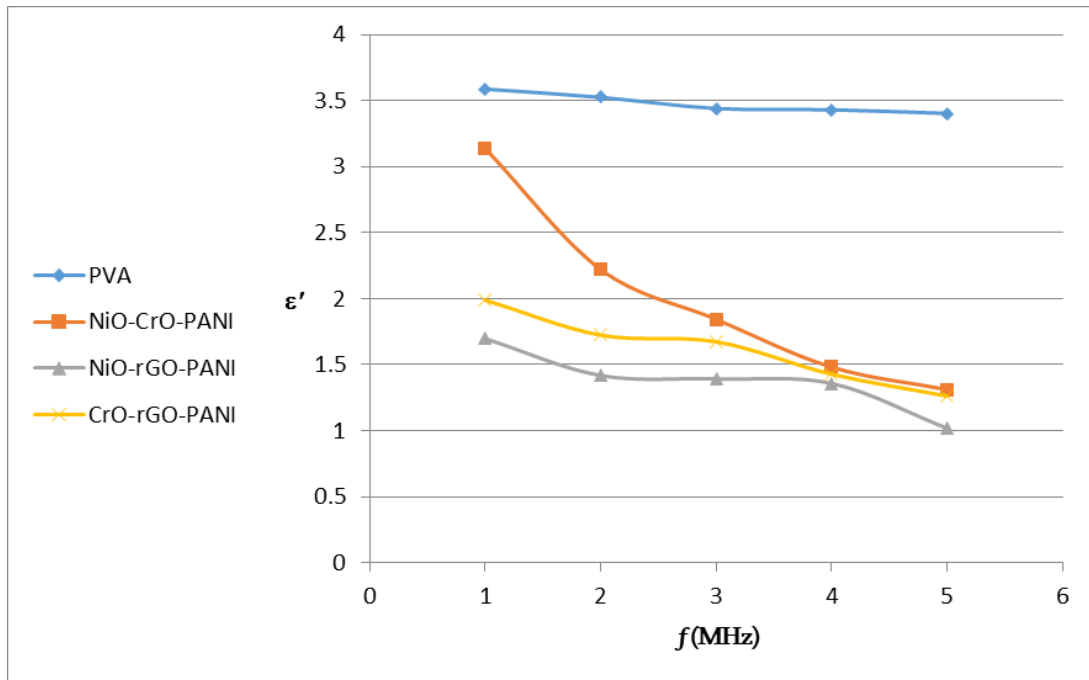


Fig. 14. Real (ϵ') dielectric constant of the synthesized hybrid films.

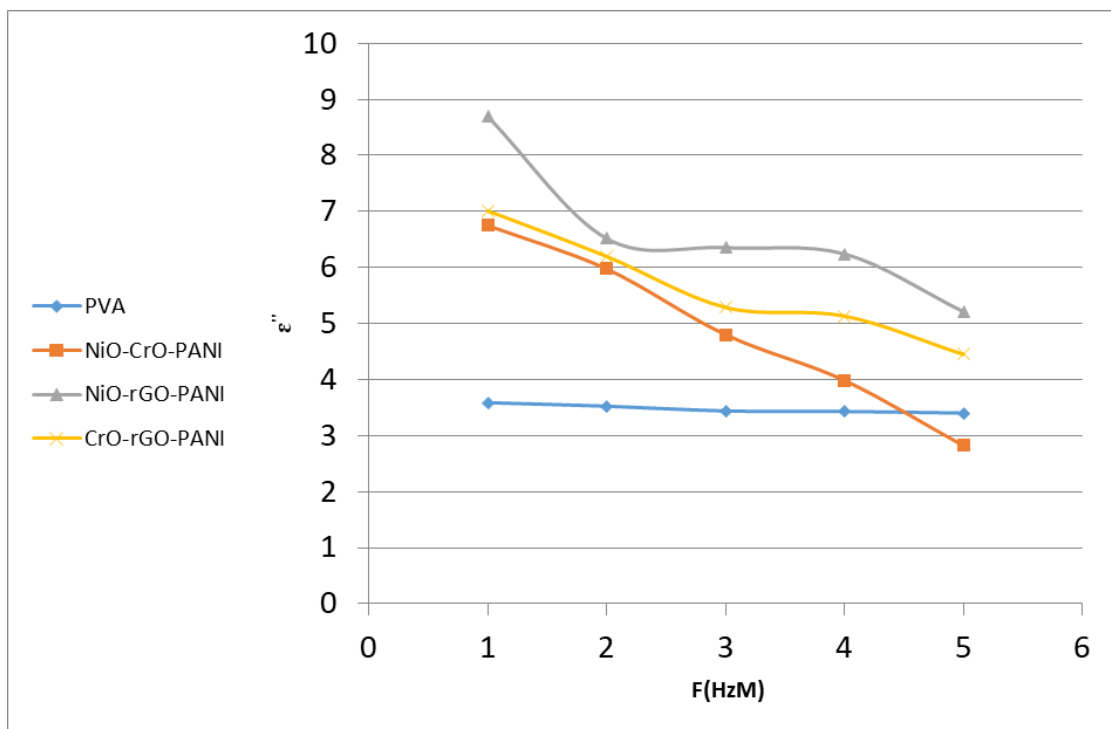


Fig. 15. ϵ'' dielectric constant of the synthesized hybrid films.

synthesized material is completely crystalline [27, 28]. The crystallite size of the Cr_2O_3 was calculated from the Debye-Scherrer formula, and the value is 28 nm.

Dielectric properties

The dielectric properties of the pure PVA polymer film and its hybrid nanocomposite films were determined at room temperature. The results in Figs. 14-16 illustrates that the real permittivity (ϵ'), imaginary permittivity (ϵ''), and

loss factor ($\tan\delta=\epsilon''/\epsilon'$) are used as the amount of energy lost or dissipated for any dielectric material and alternating conductivity ($\sigma_{a.c}$). From Table 1, it can be notice both ϵ' and ϵ'' for all synthesized films were gradually decreased as the frequency increases [29]. Electronic polarization exhibits a brief duration, yet it surpasses ionic polarization in terms of length. On the other hand, dipolar polarization necessitates a comparatively longer time when compared to the other forms of polarization. Thus, the dielectric constant of

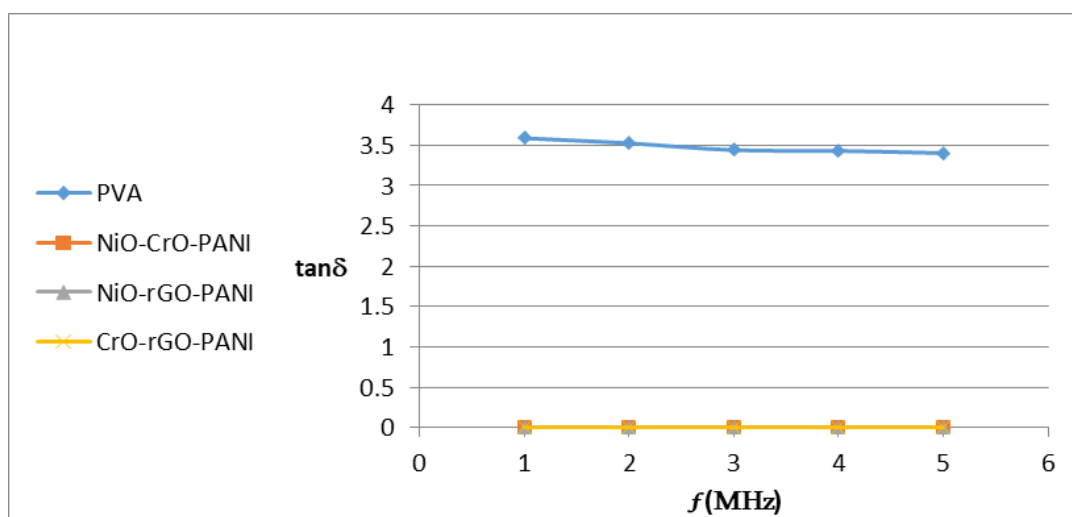


Fig. 16. Dielectric loss factor for the synthesized hybrid films.

Table 2. The value of ϵ'' for the synthesized films.

Frequency (MHz)	PVA	PANI/NiO-Cr ₂ O ₃	PANI/rGO-NiO	PANI/rGO-Cr ₂ O ₃
1	3.58787	6.74882	8.69488	7.01145
2	3.52516	5.97407	6.51698	6.19860
3	3.44068	4.80031	6.35474	5.28774
4	3.43068	3.98488	6.24242	5.1334
5	3.4032	2.82029	5.21275	4.44913

nonpolar polymers remains rather stable at high frequencies. Consequently, the values of ϵ' exhibit a substantial and rapid decline as the frequency increases in the low-frequency areas [30]. While frequency ratio of PVA (1MHz) was found to be the dielectric constant's greatest value, while PANI/rGO-NiO was low (5MHz). All of these dielectric constant values exceed the ϵ' value for pure PVA. Typically, the rise in the dielectric constant is ascribed to the augmentation in polarity and the growth in charge carriers. Fig. 14 demonstrates a clear inverse relationship between the dielectric loss factor (ϵ'') and frequency for all samples. Additionally, we see that the dielectric loss is

elevated at lower frequencies and then diminishes as the applied frequency increases, owing to the reduction in space charge polarization. Fig. 15 illustrates that the dielectric loss factor diminishes as frequency increases for synthesized hybrid compounds. This drop is commonly attributed to increasing the concentration of conductive fillers (nanoparticles) which leads to the development of more conductive routes and hence leads to increased current leakage and loss of electrical insulation [21]. Calculations were made to determine the AC electrical conductivity of the pure PVA polymer sheet and all generated hybrid composites. We can see from Fig. 16

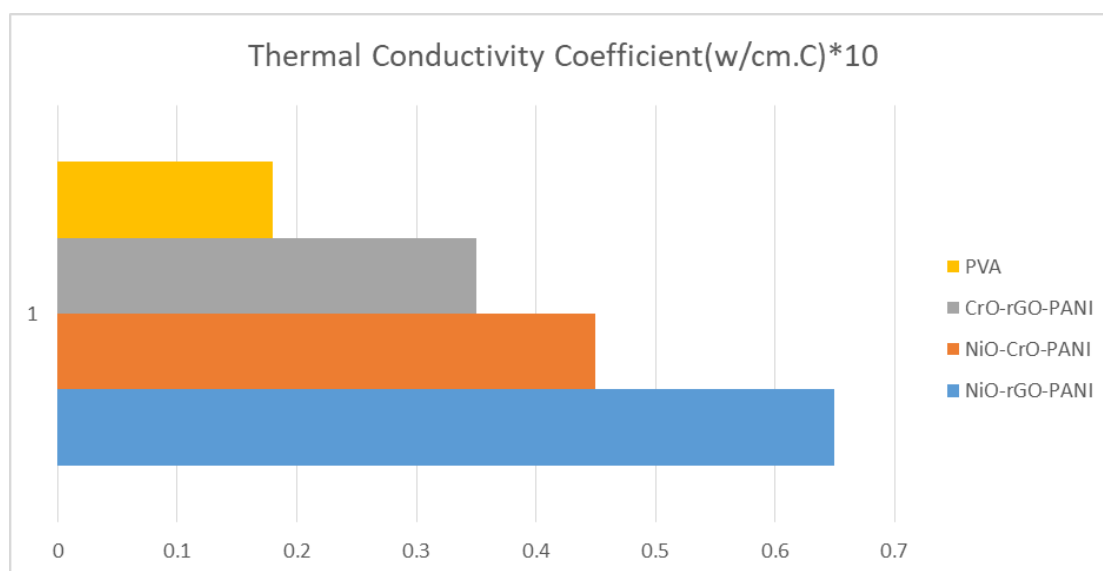


Fig. 17. Thermal conductivity coefficient K for the synthesized films.

Table 3. The value of $\tan\delta$ for the synthesized films.

f(MHz)	PVA	PANI/NiO-Cr ₂ O ₃	PANI/rGO-NiO	PANI/rGO-Cr ₂ O ₃
1	3.5879	6.7488	8.6949	7.0115
2	3.5252	5.9741	6.517	6.1986
3	3.4407	4.8003	6.3547	5.2877
4	3.4307	3.9849	6.2424	5.1334
5	3.4032	2.8203	5.2128	4.4491

Table 4. The thermal conductivity coefficient K for the synthesized films.

Sample	$K(w/cm.c)*10^{-3}$	$e(w/m^2.k)*10^{-3}$
PANI/rGO-NiO	0.65	1.36014
PANI/NiO-Cr ₂ O ₃	0.47	0.28670
PANI/rGO-Cr ₂ O ₃	0.36	0.25441
PVA	0.18	0.02015

that all prepared hybrid composites have an enhancement in isotropic electrical conductivity when nanoparticle is added. This shows that the structure contains various conduction mechanisms, which is the (π - π^*) interaction between the nanoparticle surface and the quinoid ring of the polymer chain (PANI). This interaction involves electrons passing through the (SP^2 -bond), which leads to coupling and electrical conduction. Tables 1-3 lists the values of the real (ϵ'), imaginary (ϵ'') dielectric constant, and loss factor ($\tan\delta$) for the nano hybrid composite.

Thermal conductivity coefficient

Fig. 17 displays the heat conductivity coefficient of the pure PVA polymer membrane and the nano hybrid composite membranes. By employing nano metal oxides, the thermal conductivity coefficient (k) increases as the reinforcement ratio increases (Table 4). The heat absorption affects the material's ability to conduct heat, thereby increasing its thermal conductivity over time. The elevated temperature of these granules induces their vibration as the temperature increases. The vibration facilitates heat flow across the composite material, enhancing its thermal conductivity. As the proportions of metal oxide, GO, and rGO in the composite material increase, their thermal absorption also escalates, thereby enhancing conductivity. The incorporation of nano oxides may enhance the polymer's crystallization rate, leading to a superior thermal conductivity coefficient compared to a pure PVA polymer film [31].

CONCLUSION

In this work, a ternary polymeric nanocomposite consisting of PANI/rGO-Cr₂O₃, PANI/rGO-NiO, and PANI/NiO-Cr₂O₃ were prepared. The products were characterized using techniques such as FTIR,

XRD, FESEM. Finally, the electrical characteristics and thermal conductivity of these materials were examined.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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