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Condensate Characterization: An Approach to Evaluate the Performance of Condensate as a Feedstock in Oil Refinery

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ABSTRACT

During the distillation process, petroleum streams are created from crude oil, also known as petroleum fractions, which is a complex mixture of several hydrocarbon components. A refinery's technical design and process efficiency depend on the physical qualities of the feedstock, commonly known as assay information; however, a comprehensive compositional analysis of naturally occurring hydrocarbon mixtures is difficult and time-consuming. In order to produce assay data, based on both laboratory tests and computer-aided analysis, the goal of this work is to develop a method to a comprehensive and organized characterization of gas condensate as a refining feedstock. The study also focuses on a critical examination of the assay data from samples of gas condensate that were taken from Bangladesh's Rashidpur (RGF) and Kailashtila (KTL) gas fields. The study initially carried out laboratory tests to establish the boiling point and specific gravity. Empirical correlations are used to determine the necessary physical parameters for calculations involving the refining process. The actual boiling point (TBP) curve is constructed using the Riazi and Daubert model and Daubert's new approach, and the extrapolation of the Daubert curves results in the greatest recovery at the final distillation point. Then, utilizing Peng Robinson's thermodynamic model, DWSIM software helps create pseudo-components and their associated attributes using the generated TBP data. The results of this study demonstrated that combining lighter and heavier condensates efficiently can improve product quality and fuel performance of condensate, which can be used as a baseline to assess the performance of condensate as a refining feedstock.

Keywords: condensate; TBP distillation; physical parameter; pseudo-component; pseudo properties.

1. Introduction

The Petroleum stream constitutes a mixture of the complex hydrocarbon chain. Small petroleum cuts or pseudo-components generally characterize the streams, which are identified from the distillation curve [1,2]. Feedstock assay data are essential in the refining process because the assay provides an extensive and detailed analysis data of hydrocarbon [3].

As the rule of thumb, the high degree of fractionation gives detailed and accurate information on the component distribution. TBP curve (Figure 1), a graphical representation of the average boiling point of components against the volume percent of the distilled sample, has a smooth shape for a large number of components, and small distillation steps [4].

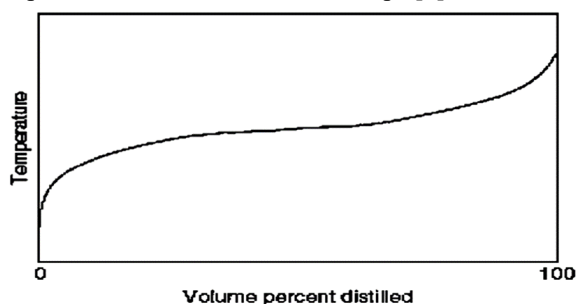


Fig.1 Typical TBP curve of a petroleum mixture.

ASTM or TBP distillation curves show the volatile characteristics of petroleum streams. Although both are batch distillations, ASTM distillation requires a simple setup, takes less time, and is successfully automated. So, it is preferable to use ASTM to determine the

distillation data, which are then converted into TBP data using empirical equations [5].

Natural-gas condensate is a mixture of low-boiling hydrocarbon liquid that is also referred to as condensate, gas condensate, or natural gasoline. Gas condensate at a refinery can be distinguished from distillate, a straw-colored liquid that is primarily made of naphtha [6]. Condensate is currently a major problem with both technical and financial repercussions [7]. Two condensate-rich gas fields in Bangladesh—the Rashidpur gas field (RGF) and the Kailashtila gas field—were used to acquire the condensate sample for this study (KTL). One of the oldest gas fields in Bangladesh is the gas condensate field known as Kailashtila [8]. With 5.2 TCF in reserve, the Rashidpur Gas Field is situated in Habiganj, Bangladesh [9]. Even though there have been numerous researchs on crude oil assay, this work is the first to attempt to produce condensate assay, compare two types of condensates from Bangladeshi gas fields, and assess the samples as a feedstock for refineries.

During the screening process, some research concluded that the current industrial standards for recognizing gas condensate reserves based on relative molecular weight are insufficient [10]. The API gravity thermodynamic property analysis can therefore be used to get over this limitation. This work generates the true boiling point curve, API curve, and specific gravity curve for the collected sample in order to characterize it. Second, DWSIM software is used to estimate the crucial properties. Additionally, it seeks to assess various prediction correlations in order to determine the final recovery at the final (100%) boiling point. In actuality, it is not possible to completely distillate an initial charge

since the volatile components in the charge may remain after distillation and cannot be condensed again [10]. Here an investigation is done to generate a polynomial equation that can predict recovery at a 100% point. The work approaches to predict the physical properties of feed that can assist in qualifying the fractions or cuts in a refinery.

Condensate can be used as an alternate fuel source as our nation doesn't have many oil reserves and imports are the main supply of oil. In this study, several physical and thermodynamic properties are determined in an effort to determine how well condensate performs as a fuel. It provides a straightforward yet methodical method for determining which kind of condensate mixture would be more effective and practical to employ as an alternative fuel source.

2. Characterization of Petroleum Fraction

2.1 Defining Pseudo-Components

Pseudo components are the basis for characterizing the petroleum fraction in a refining process. The actual components, for example, paraffin, naphthenes, and aromatic, remain undetermined in fractionation; however, the process can detect a discrete number of mixtures point. The mixture corresponds to several unknown actual components, is termed a pseudo component, and has a defined cut point or boiling point range. One can treat the pseudo component as defined one as soon as the normal boiling point and specific gravity is determined [11].

2.2 ASTM D86 Test Method

In this process, the collected sample (usually 100 ml in amount) is distilled in a flask under specific conditions [11]. The flask is connected to an inclined condenser that condenses the rising vapors. A graduated cylinder collects the distilled fractions, and the temperature of the rising vapors is recorded at a specific interval of collected distillate. The initial boiling point (IBP) refers to the temperature at which the first drop of condensate is collected. When almost the entire sample is distilled (above 95%), the corresponding maximum temperature is called the endpoint (EP).

2.3 Conversion between ASTM and TBP Distillation

The TBP data gives detailed information on the volatile characteristics of crude oil or petroleum fractions.

2.3.1 Riazi and Daubert/ API Method

Riazi and Daubert (1980) have developed a relation to performing the inter-conversion of the ASTM method and TBP distillation.

$$TBP = a(\text{ASTM D86})^b \quad (1)$$

Here a and b are constants. TBP is calculated at a defined distillate point (like 0, 10, 30, 50, 70, 90, and 95 percent point), where the temperature is expressed in °R.

2.3.2 Daubert Method

In 1994, Daubert proposed an updated method for inter-conversion based on the initial and final temperatures of distillation curves. The equations Eq. (2), suggested by Daubert are:

$$\begin{aligned} T'_{50} &= A_4(T_{50})^{B_4}, & T'_{30} &= T'_{50} - \Delta T'_3 & T'_{10} &= T'_{30} - \Delta T'_2 \\ T'_0 &= T'_{10} - \Delta T'_1, \\ T'_{70} &= T'_{50} + \Delta T'_5 & T'_{90} &= T'_{70} + \Delta T'_6 & T'_{95} &= T'_{90} + \Delta T'_7 \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Where, $\Delta T'_i = A_i(\Delta T_i)^{B_i}$, $\Delta T_1 = T_{10} - T_0$, $\Delta T_2 = T_{30} - T_{10}$, $\Delta T_3 = T_{50} - T_{30}$, $\Delta T_5 = T_{70} - T_{50}$, $\Delta T_6 = T_{90} - T_{70}$, $\Delta T_7 = T_f - T_{90}$

The symbols T and T' stand for ASTM D86, and TBP temperatures, respectively, and are in °F. The subscripts 0 and f stand to represent the initial and final temperatures. Ai and Bi express the constants.

2.4 Generating Pseudo-components

The cuts in petroleum fraction have a specific boiling point range and specific properties like viscosity, API gravity. The number of cut points in a TBP curve determines the number of pseudo components, where a higher number of cut points help to reproduce the TBP curve accurately [4]. Although more components are required to produce a smooth property curve, a large number of components can delay the computation time. A general guideline has been suggested by considering these two facts [13].

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Distillation Analysis

ASTM D86 distillation experiment in the laboratory gives the ASTM test data for both condensate samples (Table 1). Specific gravity is measured through ASTM D1298 test.

Table 1 Distillation data for RGF & KTL

Volume %	ASTM °C (KTL)	ASTM °C (RGF)
0	48	48
10	84	84
30	100	100
50	114	114
70	136	136
90	210	210
95	259	259
EP.	310	273
Density @32(kg/L)	0.844	0.765

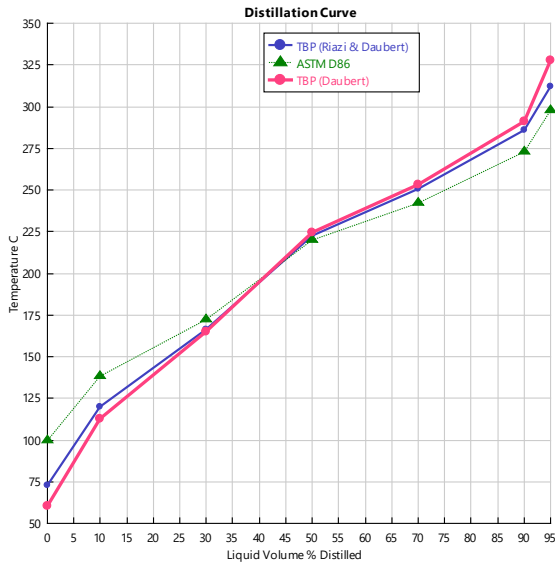


Fig 2. TBP curve for RGF condensate.

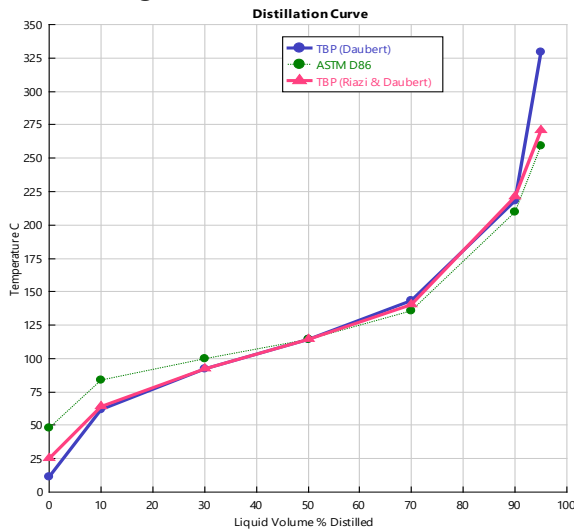


Fig 3. TBP curve for KTL condensate.

In this study, the ASTM data are transformed into TBP data using the Riazi/API method and Daubert correlation. The differences in the curves are seen in Figs. 2 and 3. The ultimate boiling point is greater than the real ASTM data in the figure, however the IBP is lower than the ASTM IBP point for both TBP procedures. Additionally, the final boiling point is substantially higher according to the Daubert estimate than it is according to the Riazi calculation. Because a TBP distillation test has a higher degree of separation than an ASTM distillation test, the findings are different. The EP for RGF ranges for a boiling range of 95% distillate. However, for KTL, the EP continues past the 95% point. Daubert's approach also has a substantially higher endpoint (EP) temperature for KTL condensate. This is due to the KTL's smaller weight and the presence of more volatile components at the curve's conclusion. The calculated findings of the physical characteristics of the condensate sample are tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2 Calculated result of VABP, MeABP, MW, K & API gravity for KTL & RGF

Field name	KTL	RGF
VABP	263.84	408.272
MeABP	244.827	389.259
K	11.43882	11.07594
SG	0.778	0.855
MW	23.25854	37.86626
API gravity	50.37661	33.99708

The KTL condensate is lighter than the RGF condensate, which is further supported by calculations of average boiling temperatures and molecular weight. Additionally, as seen in Table 2, the heavier one has a significantly higher volume average boiling point. The extrapolation of the curve to the final point (100%) is necessary to acquire the average boiling point of the last cut, which is needed to construct pseudo-components. This method bases the curve extrapolation on an Excel spreadsheet. The ASTM data are transformed into TBP data through relation. Fig 2

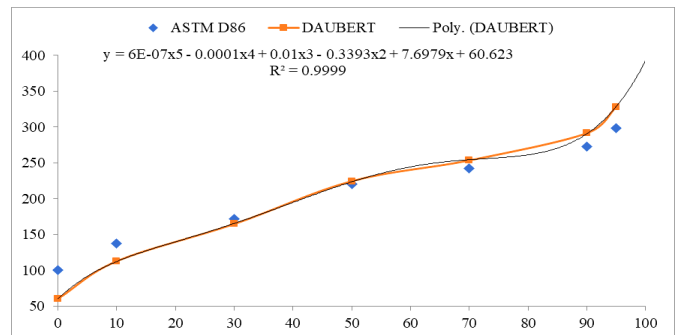


Fig 4. Extrapolation of Daubert TBP curve (RGF)

In order to determine the average boiling points of the final cuts, the Daubert's TBP curve is extrapolated in this article. According to Fig. 4, the curve fits a fifth-order polynomial function for the RGF sample. The correlation parameter's value is 0.99, indicating that the function and experimental findings have a fair degree of convergence.

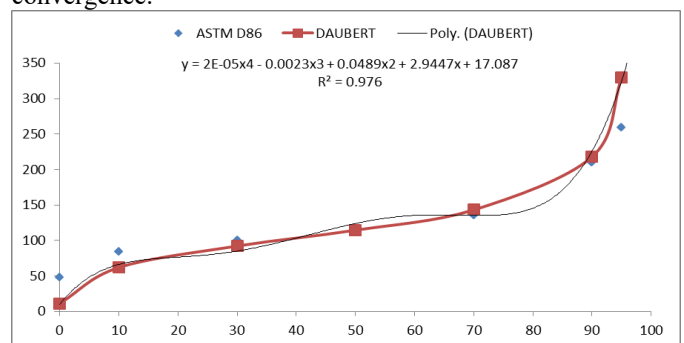


Fig 5. Extrapolation of Daubert TBP curve (KTL)

The extrapolation produces a fourth-order equation with a correlation parameter of 0.976 in the case of the KTL sample (Fig. 5). As a result, it displays a poor convergence with Daubert TBP data.

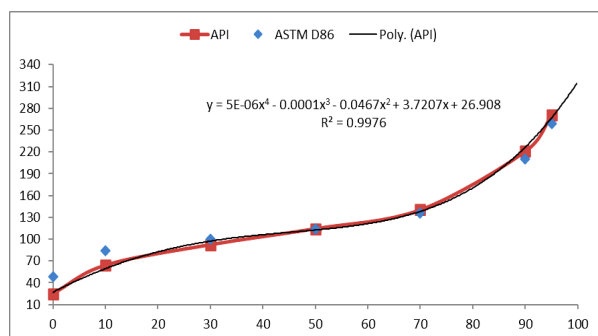


Fig 6. Extrapolation of API TBP curve (KTL)

On the other hand, when the API curve is extrapolated, the correlation parameter exhibits good convergence ($R^2 = 0.99$). (Fig 6). For lighter condensate samples, it can therefore be claimed that the API curve is a preferable option for obtaining pseudo components. In order to compare the computed findings of heavier and lighter condensate in this study, a following calculation uses Daubert's TBP data.

3.2 Pseudo-components calculation

The pseudo-components on the RGF's TBP curve are identified in Fig. 7. According to general guidelines, the TBP curve is divided into 19 slices, and Daubert's TBP data shows that the boiling point range of RGF is between 60 and 400 C.

The cut range for RGF has been set as 60.45-364.39 C with a 15.99 C temperature interval. The first cut's EBP is IBP+15.99. The whole calculation process for the cuts, including whether the NBP is the average of the previous two EBP values, is shown in Appendix.

A lighter feed is KTL condensate. Here, the temperature intervals between each cut are 16.33 degrees Celsius, with temperature ranges between 11 and 340 degrees Celsius. The curve's EP is 337 °C. Daubert's TBP data extrapolated curve deviates little from the true TBP curve. However, the pseudo-component breakdown-generated TBP curve exhibits high symmetry with an ideal TBP curve. As a result, it can be concluded that Daubert's TBP data is a better option for figuring out the pseudo-component attributes.

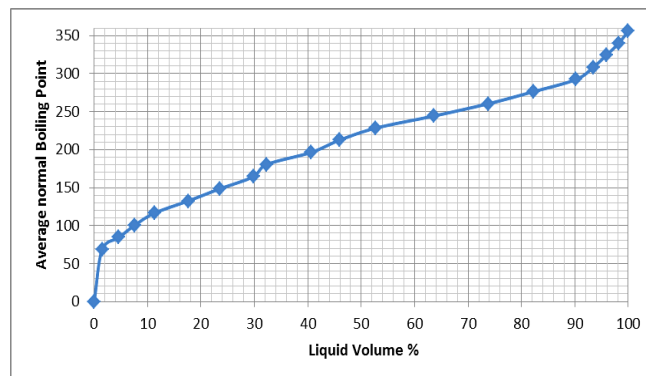


Fig 7. Representation of the TBP curve by pseudo-component (RGF)

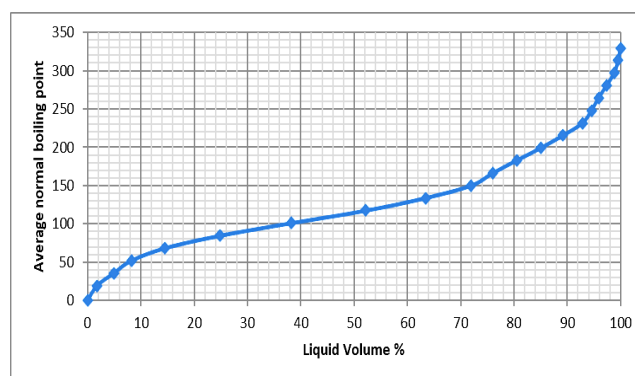


Fig 8. Representation of the TBP curve by pseudo-components (KTL)

3.2.1 Parameter Determination

The study used the DWSIM software to produce fictitious components or cut points for comparison and validation. Cut points are determined using the Daubert's TBP data, specific gravity (SG), and molecular weight (MW) as input data. The components are by default named according to their mean average boiling points. The Riazi technique is used to calculate the SG, API gravity, and MW of each component, whereas Lee and Kessler's method is chosen to calculate the crucial characteristics, which serve as the input for calculating the thermodynamic properties. The aforementioned strategy is typically used by oil refineries.

The Watson characterisation factor (K) makes it possible to calculate gravity. A characteristic curve for a pseudo-component is the gravity versus NBP curve. The comprehensive outcomes of the simulation of crucial properties computation are displayed in the Appendix.

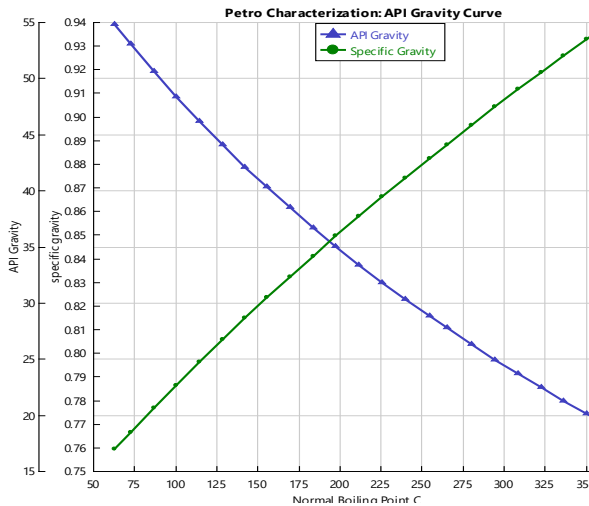


Fig 9: Specific Gravity & API versus NBP curve (RGF). The relationship between API gravity and specific gravity as a function of NBP is seen in Fig. 9. The specific gravity has a range of 0.75 to 0.94, and its value rises as the temperature rises. It implies that the pseudo-component gets heavier at the curve's terminus.

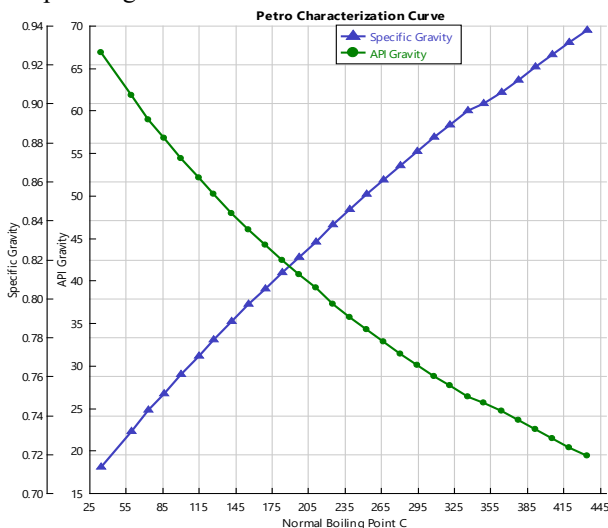


Fig 10. Specific gravity & API versus NBP curve (KTL).

The specific gravity ranges from 0.7 to 0.94 and the temperature from 32 to 434 degrees Celsius for the KTL condensate (Fig. 10). It unmistakably suggests that the KTL condensate, a lighter condensate sample, includes a higher proportion of distillate. In order to produce petroleum products, it is therefore a preferable idea to use it as feedstock in a refinery (Nelson, 2018).

4. Discussion

Compared to RGF condensate, KTL condensate has lower IBP and EP. As a result, this kind of condensate can swiftly create distillate products, but it also runs the risk of losing light products due to their low-temperature vaporization. However, since the price of residual fuel oil is based on its reference viscosity, the amount of residue is substantial for the heavier sample, which is for RGF condensate, which lowers product

value. More distillate fuel oil is needed to lower viscosity to a reference level where the value of more viscous fuel oil is degraded as viscosity increases [13]. According to the average boiling point temperature, KTL feed requires a larger temperature range in order to completely distill the sample, which is a major worry from an economic perspective because the cost and distillation time will be higher for this type of lighter feed. The study implies that an appropriate blend of the lighter and heavier sample can be used to achieve all the goals of a refinery in light of the aforementioned findings. In this way, the heavier one will postpone the IBP point and the lighter one will reduce the amount of residue at the endpoint while also improving the quality of the final product. This paper outlines a straightforward, yet methodical and ordered, approach to determining petroleum assay. Two polynomial equations are proposed by the study for the two chosen samples. For this kind of sample, these equations can be used to generate pseudo components and determine the ultimate distillation point (100%). In addition to an economic validity analysis of the condensate as refinery feed-stocks, the study suggests improving the modeling of the condensate with the chromatographic composition of the inputs, the feed flow rate, and the fractional information of light ends.

5. Conclusion

While compositional analysis is typically used to define condensates, this study approached it a little differently than it would for crude oil. The work may be useful to oil refineries that are considering substituting condensate for crude oil in terms of evaluating feed-stocks, estimating economic value, and developing and simulating the refining process.

5. References

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Appendix

Component breakdown results of RGF

Pseudo-component	Average NBP	API gravity	Specific gravity	UOPK	Molecular weight	Critical temperature	Critical pressure
C	C						bar
PC2	63.01765	54.82247	0.759436	11.13743	19.66325	256.5475	41.95792
PC3	72.59713	53.08554	0.766582	11.13743	20.73406	267.1957	40.18208
PC4	86.49667	50.6763	0.77672	11.13743	22.3339	282.4942	37.81694
PC5	100.3978	48.38785	0.786601	11.13743	23.98983	297.6229	35.67275
PC6	114.4324	46.18981	0.796332	11.13743	25.93169	312.7312	33.70411
PC7	128.4812	44.09336	0.805839	11.13743	27.6671	327.6957	31.90677
PC8	142.2294	42.13431	0.814931	11.13743	29.4505	342.193	30.29594
PC9	155.4988	40.32382	0.823518	11.13743	31.25357	356.0531	28.86457
PC10	169.5383	38.48784	0.832412	11.13743	33.25073	370.5822	27.46772
PC11	183.5686	36.72905	0.841115	11.13743	35.34034	384.968	26.17981
PC12	197.5552	35.046	0.849615	11.13743	37.51852	399.1813	24.99213
PC13	211.5846	33.4235	0.857974	11.13743	39.80033	413.3149	23.88755
PC14	225.843	31.83744	0.866305	11.13743	42.22034	427.5574	22.84511
PC15	239.5188	30.37195	0.874148	11.13743	44.6383	441.1068	21.91392
PC16	254.5006	28.82518	0.882581	11.13743	47.39709	455.8299	20.96362
PC17	264.9979	27.77588	0.888396	11.13743	49.39903	466.0731	20.33755
PC18	280.2897	26.2952	0.896732	11.13743	52.41753	480.8914	19.47912
PC19	294.4446	24.97242	0.904313	11.13743	55.31989	494.5019	18.73649
PC20	308.5436	23.69788	0.911739	11.13743	58.31422	507.9605	18.04211
PC21	322.5551	22.47142	0.919002	11.13743	61.39192	521.2417	17.39311
PC22	336.3812	21.29832	0.926057	11.13743	64.5279	534.258	16.7896
PC23	350.2924	20.15326	0.933049	11.13743	67.78151	547.268	16.21646
PC24	360.8137	19.30964	0.938269	11.13743	70.30697	557.0514	15.8041

Component breakdown results of KTL

Pseudo-component	Average NBP(°C)	API gravity	Specific gravity	UOPK	Molecular weight	Critical temperature(°C)	Critical pressure(bar)
PC33C	32.65927	68.01967	0.709203	11.5559	14.2105	215.6721	44.55695
PC39C	58.87474	62.62394	0.728916	11.5559	16.60807	244.9968	39.25888
PC73C	73.40256	59.87251	0.739396	11.5559	18.0075	260.9556	36.75463
PC87C	86.51895	57.51732	0.748609	11.5559	19.31572	275.197	34.71202
PC101C	100.5042	55.12908	0.758188	11.5559	20.75904	290.2159	32.73266
PC114C	114.2107	52.90133	0.767348	11.5559	22.56952	304.7773	30.96709
PC127C	127.313	50.86793	0.775904	11.5559	23.98045	318.5568	29.4215
PC141C	140.9602	48.84217	0.78462	11.5559	25.52228	332.7703	27.94249
PC156C	155.8333	46.73341	0.793903	11.5559	27.28885	348.1059	26.46541
PC170C	169.7222	44.8504	0.80238	11.5559	29.02182	362.2873	25.19881
PC184C	183.6111	43.04452	0.810681	11.5559	30.83372	376.3394	24.02919
PC198C	197.5	41.31041	0.818816	11.5559	32.73681	390.2675	22.94651
PC211C	211.1135	39.67566	0.826636	11.5559	34.6821	403.8035	21.96123
PC225C	224.6604	38.10863	0.834274	11.5559	36.70124	417.1636	21.04817
PC239C	239.2133	36.48735	0.842325	11.5559	38.96449	431.3982	20.13509
PC253C	253.0154	35.00547	0.849822	11.5559	41.20231	444.7898	19.32793
PC267C	266.8942	33.56671	0.857229	11.5559	43.54334	458.153	18.56874
PC281C	280.8177	32.17202	0.864534	11.5559	45.98423	471.4589	17.85529
PC295C	294.7258	30.82477	0.871709	11.5559	48.51538	484.653	17.18669
PC309C	308.6362	29.52061	0.87877	11.5559	51.14035	497.7554	16.5583
PC323C	322.5161	28.26009	0.885703	11.5559	53.85287	510.7383	15.9682
PC336C	336.4074	27.03715	0.892535	11.5559	56.66091	523.6439	15.41156
PC350C	350.2677	25.85343	0.89925	11.5559	59.55538	536.4353	14.88736
PC364C	364.1665	24.70114	0.905883	11.5559	62.55035	549.1794	14.3906
PC378C	378.0559	23.58263	0.912417	11.5559	65.63488	561.834	13.92091
PC392C	391.9503	22.49509	0.91886	11.5559	68.81103	574.4147	13.47583
PC406C	405.8391	21.43785	0.925212	11.5559	72.07488	586.914	13.03392
PC420C	419.7324	20.40874	0.93148	11.5559	75.42705	599.3428	12.65324
PC434C	433.8788	19.38876	0.937777	11.5559	78.92782	611.9237	12.26568