

# Energies of Cuprous Oxide Nanofilms and Annealing Temperature Effect on Structural and Dispersion Properties using Fuzzy Logic

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**Abstract:** Solar cell fabrications need films with nanostructure without defects, which can achieve at a quantum dot or fine grain size. The structural, optical characteristics, and energies of the films of as-grown and annealed Cuprous Oxide (Cu<sub>2</sub>O) were deposited onto glass substrates via the thermal evaporation technique were studied. The average crystal size of the nanofilms was increased from 12 nm to 16 nm after annealing at 200 °C, while the dislocation density was decreased. The consequence displays that the fabricated films had transmittance at UV- region of more than 98% and the shift of absorption edge was towards a longer wavelength after the annealing process. The value of the direct band gap of as-deposited Cu<sub>2</sub>O thin film was 2.57 eV and it decreased to be 2.15 eV for annealed films. Volume Loss Energy Function and Surface Loss Energy Function and dispersion parameters such as single oscillator energy (E<sub>o</sub>), Dispersion energy (E<sub>d</sub>), static refractive index (n (0)), and Moments (M<sub>-1</sub> and M<sub>-3</sub>) were studied to determine the suitable applications such as solar cell, optoelectronic and optical devices, or in communications using Fuzzy Logic.

**Keywords:** Nanofilm, Thermal Evaporation, Cuprous Oxide, Fuzzy Logic.

## 1. Introduction

Cuprous Oxide (Cu<sub>2</sub>O) has acquired renewed attention for numerous technological applications as a result of its optoelectronic characteristics [1,2]. The space group that Cu<sub>2</sub>O belongs to is Pn3m where the unit cell has four oxygen in addition to two copper ions. These are organized with oxygen atoms in a lattice of a body center cubic enclosed tetrahedrally by ions of copper [3]. Cu<sub>2</sub>O is a good photovoltaic material due to, its availability of Cu material on earth, theoretical energy conversion efficiency, which is nearly 20% in addition to nontoxicity, inexpensive to produce, and in the visible regions it has high absorption coefficient with a direct band gap of approximately 2.1 eV [4,5], while with very fine particles of nanofilms, the energy gap will increase widely to reach more than 3.5 eV (in the case of a quantum dot) [6]. The large-scale band gap of some metal oxides restricts the absorption of light in the ultraviolet range, lead to decrease in utilizing sunlight, which make it an important photocatalyst material for many applications especially solar energy conversion [7].

Cu<sub>2</sub>O had a considerable interest for decades, owing mostly to its possible uses in Lithium-ion batteries [8], nano-magnetic devices [9], photocatalysis [10], transistors [11], gas sensors [12], photodetector [13], and

in the solar cell [14,15]. In this work, the Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanostructure films were fabricated via thermal evaporation technique and annealed at 200 °C to prepare films with fine surfaces and small particle sizes to candidate them for solar cell, optoelectronic, and optical application.

## 2. Experimental

The deposition of Cuprous oxide (Cu<sub>2</sub>O) films was carried out by thermal evaporation method with a pressure of around  $1 \times 10^{-7}$  mbar and coated onto a pre-cleaned glass substrate. Before the evaporation process, ultrasonically the glass substrates have been cleaned by utilizing, acetone, ethanol, and distilled water. An Edwards (Edwards Auto 306) coating plant has been used. In the vacuum chamber, the distance that separate the substrate and source which is the Cu<sub>2</sub>O powder was kept at 15 cm and the rate of deposition is approximately 0.3 nm/s after that the Cu<sub>2</sub>O samples were annealed at 200 °C for 2h. An X-ray diffractometer utilized to studied the crystalline structure is (XRD, (Shimadzu-6000)) via Cu K $\alpha$  with ( $\lambda=1.5406 \text{ \AA}$ ). UV-Vis spectrophotometer (Model, MEGA-2100- SCINCO) has been used to examine the optical characteristics in the range of (300–1200) nm of wavelength.

## 3. Results and Methods using Fuzzy logic

Patterns of X-ray diffraction (XRD) of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms are presented in Fig. 1 (part (a) for as-deposited and (b) for annealed film at 200 °C). The average size of crystals could be calculated using Scherer's formula [16,17]:

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$$D = \frac{0.9 \lambda}{\beta \cos \theta} \quad (1)$$

where  $\lambda$  denoted to X-ray's wavelength used,  $\beta$  signified to (FWHM) which is abbreviation to (full-width at half-maximum) of the peak of diffraction and  $\theta^\circ$  denoted to Bragg's angle.

The dislocation density ( $\delta$ ), has been evaluated using the formula of Williamson and Smallman's and is represented as the number of lines of dislocation per unit volume [18].

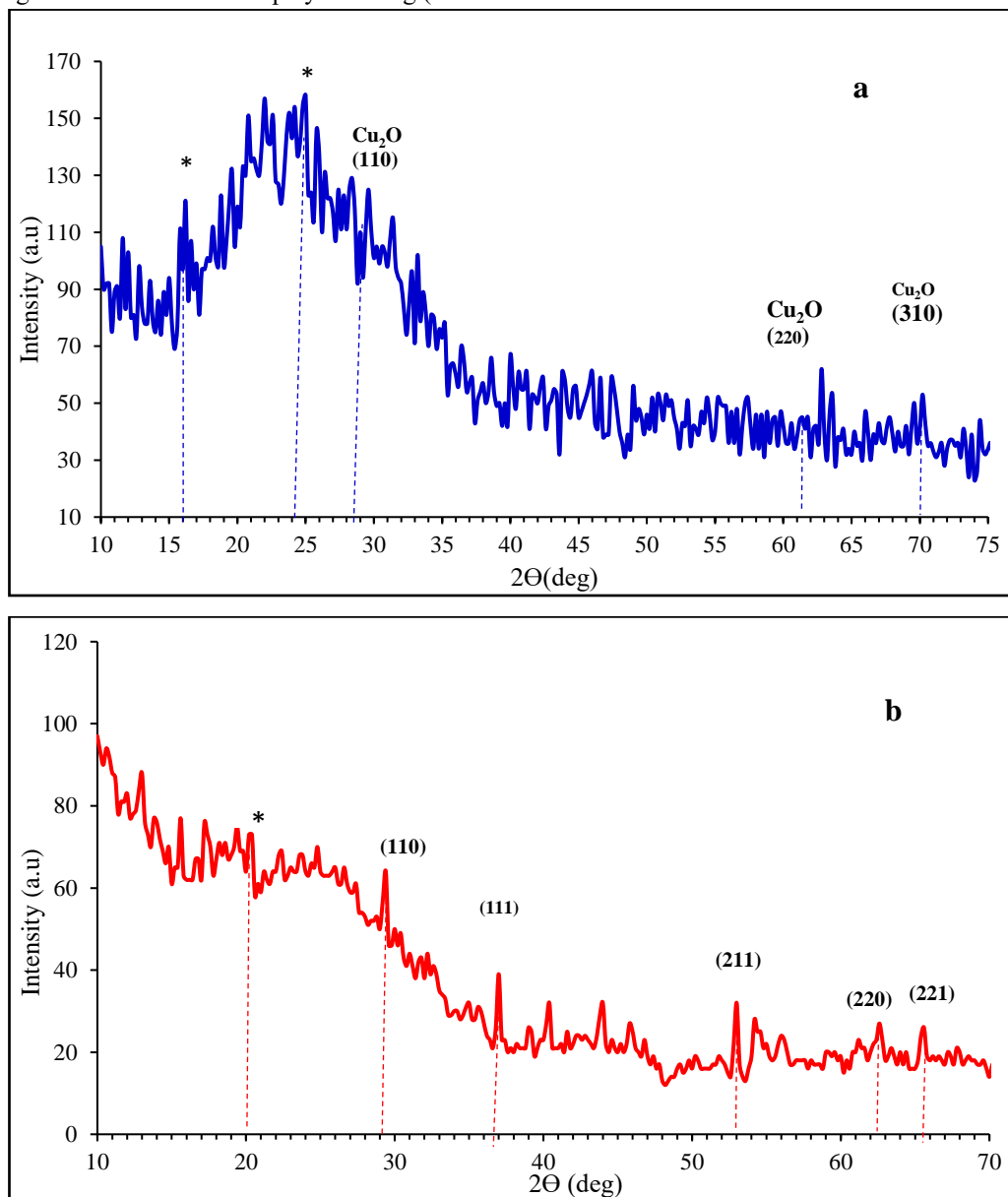
$$\delta = \frac{1}{D^2} \quad (2)$$

The micro-strain ( $\epsilon$ ) of  $\text{Cu}_2\text{O}$  NPs films has been determined by the following formula [19]:

$$\epsilon = \frac{\beta \cos \theta}{4} \quad (3)$$

The XRD patterns for as prepared and annealed ( $T=200^\circ\text{C}$ )  $\text{Cu}_2\text{O}$ /glass nano films are displayed in Fig.( 1a

and b). A poly-crystalline structure with an orthorombic phase was discernible in the produced films, All  $\text{Cu}_2\text{O}$  thin films have characteristic peaks that correspond well with standard crystallographic data (01-075-1531). The preferred peaks of diffraction are (110), (220) and (310) plane for deposited samples as shown in Fig.(1b), the annealing operation increased the crystallinity of the film, and the peak intensity enhanced dramatically and become a sharper and so more intense. As the average crystal size increased, the dislocation density and the micro-strain have been reduced when annealed at  $200^\circ\text{C}$  as listed in Table (1). This might be owing to the enhancement of the crystallinity of  $\text{Cu}_2\text{O}$  NPs films by the annealing process and the decrease in its crystal imperfections by offering the atoms enough energy to rearrange themselves in the lattice, thereby minimizing the random distribution of atoms inside the substance of the thin film using fuzzy logic also [20].



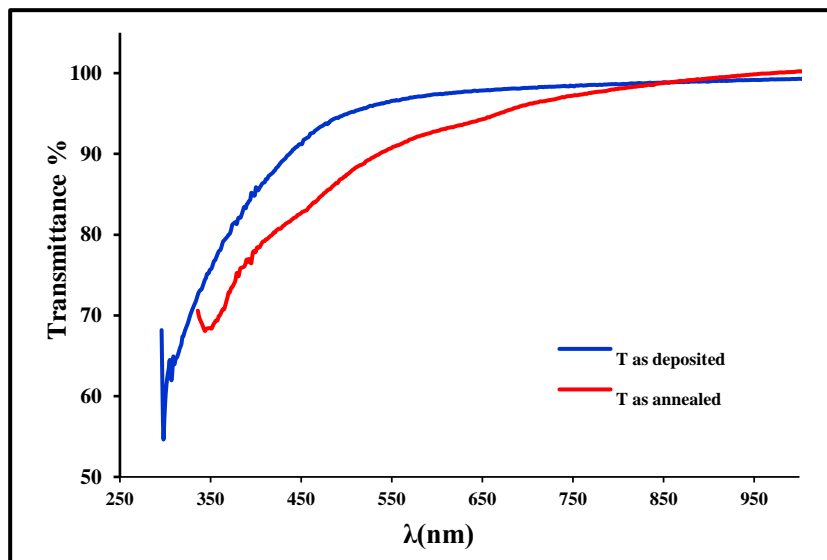
**Fig.1:** XRD pattern of  $\text{Cu}_2\text{O}$  nanofilms a) as-deposited and b) annealed at  $200^\circ\text{C}$ .

Samples	2 $\theta$ (deg)	FWHM	(hkl)	Average Crystal Size (nm)	$\delta=1/D^2$	Average micro-strain
Cu <sub>2</sub> O nanofilm as deposited	16.17	0.611	-----	12	0.006944	0.139242
	29.634	0.585	-110			
	62.738	0.516	-220			
	70.214	0.754	-310			
Cu <sub>2</sub> O nanofilm as annealed at 200°C	20.158	0.55	-----	16	0.003906	0.126596
	29.238	0.383	-110			
	36.974	0.397	-111			
	52.871	0.559	-211			
	62.648	0.652	-220			
	65.559	0.641	-221			

**Table (1):** The XRD data of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms.

Fig.2 demonstrated the transmittance spectra of Cu<sub>2</sub>O samples as a function of photon wavelength. The value of transmittance of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms is relatively high up to 98% and around 96% for fabricated and annealed samples

respectively, whereas noticeable the value of transmittance of Cu<sub>2</sub>O thin films is slightly reduced after the annealing process.



**Fig. 2.** Transmittance spectra of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms as deposited and annealed at 200 °C.

In the UV–Vis absorbance spectra, the absorption edge exhibit (red shifts) towards the higher wavelengths after the annealing process as shown in Fig. 3.

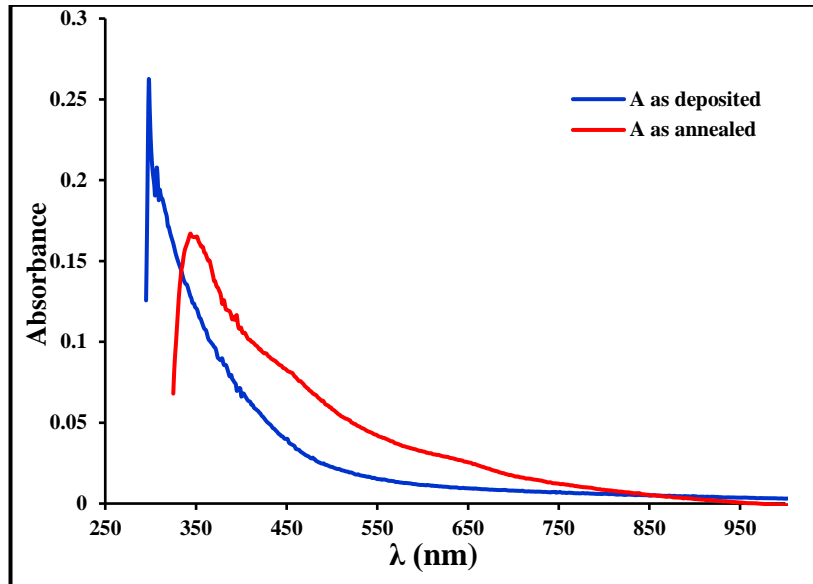


Fig. 3. Absorbance spectra of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms as deposited and annealed at 200 °C.

Optical properties of Cu<sub>2</sub>O NPs films grown on glass substrate by thermal evaporation and annealed at 200 °C. The linear relationship of the plot  $(\alpha h\nu)$  versus  $(\alpha h\nu)^2$  can be employed to evaluate the optical band gap based on the Tauc formula [21] and as displayed in Fig. 4 [32][33].

$$\alpha h\nu = B(h\nu - E_g)^n \quad (4)$$

where  $\alpha$  denoted to the coefficient of absorption, B is a constant and  $E_g$  is denoted by the optical band gap. From

the consequences, the value of  $E_g$  as-deposited films was 2.57 eV then decrease to be 2.15 eV for annealed samples. This result is approximately close to that evaluated by Wisz *et al.*, [22] and Oudah *et al.*, [23]. Whereas the standard energy gap of CdTe was 1.5 eV, the high variation in the values refers to the quantum confinement effect of the material. The confinement effect indicates of wide energy gap as a result of a semi-continuous recognized electronic state.

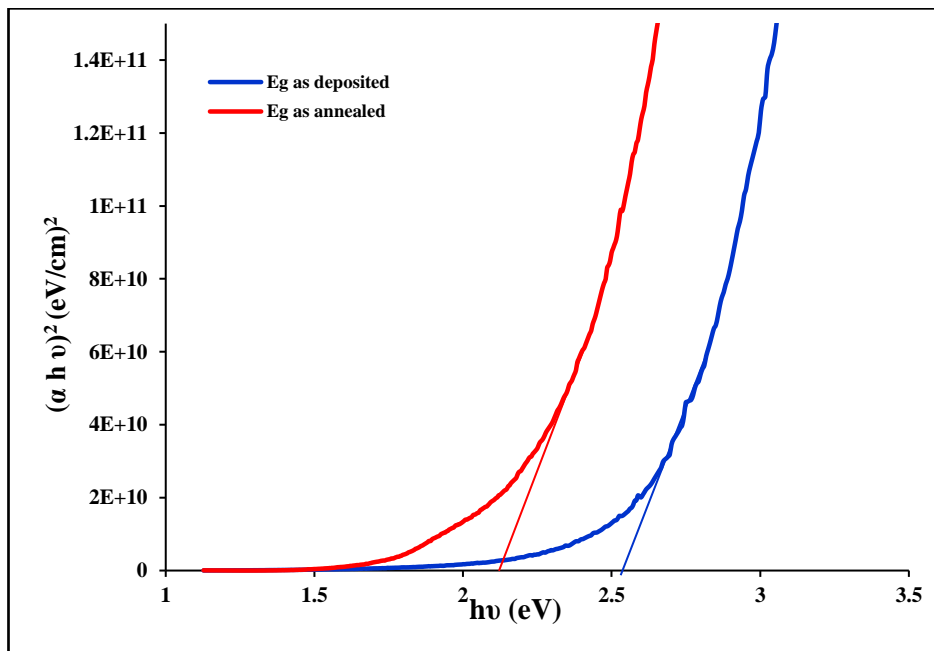


Fig. 4. Direct energy band gap of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms as- deposited and after annealed at 200 °C.

$(\alpha)$  is the absorption coefficient which could be computed from the spectrum of absorbance utilizing the equation [24]:

$$\alpha = 2.303 A/t \quad (5)$$

where A denoted the absorbance and t represent the thickness.

The index of refraction (n) of Cu<sub>2</sub>O NPs/glass thin film can be evaluated using the equation [25,26]:

$$n = \frac{1+\sqrt{R}}{1-\sqrt{R}} \quad (6)$$

where R denoted to the reflectance

From Fig.(5 and 6) can be seen that the absorption coefficient and refractive index decreased gradually and shifted toward lower energy after annealing the samples.

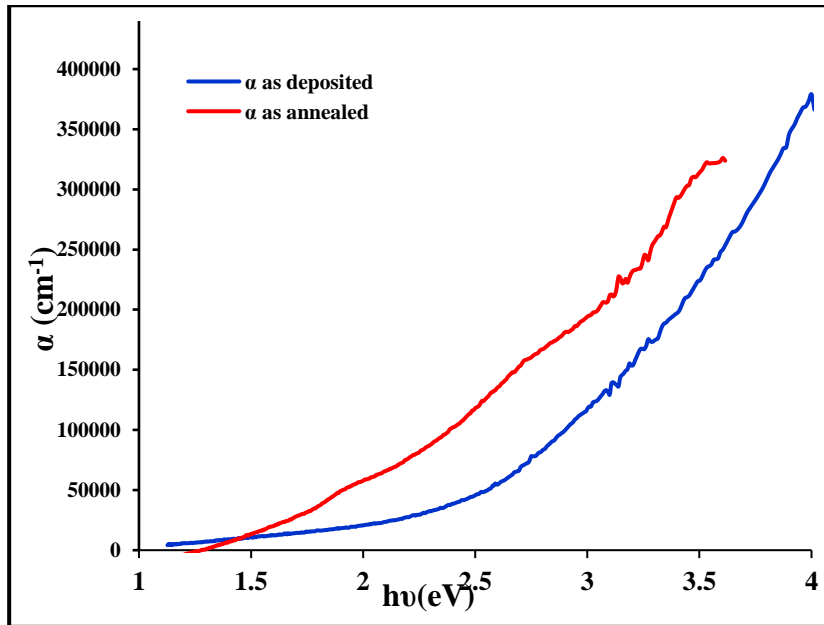


Fig. 5. Absorption coefficient of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms as deposited and annealed at 200 °C.

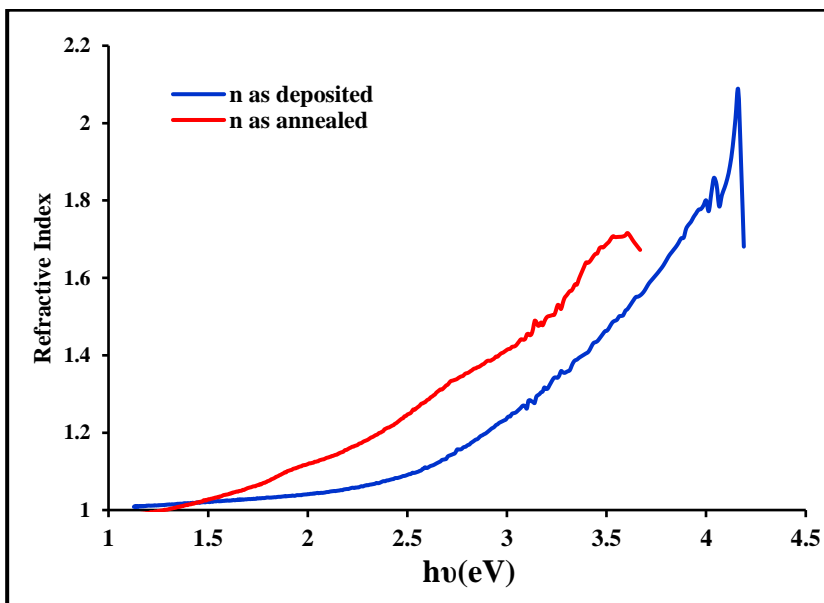


Fig. 6. Refractive index of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms as deposited and annealed at 200 °C.

The energy loss by electrons when traveling through the bulk and material's surface represented by the Volume Loss Energy Function (VLEF) and Surface Loss Energy Function (SELF) can be investigated from the following formulas [27]:

$$VLEF = \frac{\epsilon_i}{(\epsilon_r + 1)^2 + \epsilon_i^2} \quad (7)$$

$$SELF = \frac{\epsilon_i}{\epsilon_r^2 + \epsilon_i^2} \quad (8)$$

where  $\epsilon_r$  and  $\epsilon_i$  are represent the real and imaginary part of dielectric constant respectively.

Figures (7) and (8) show Volume Loss Energy Function (VLEF) and Surface Loss Energy of deposited and annealed samples [34][35].

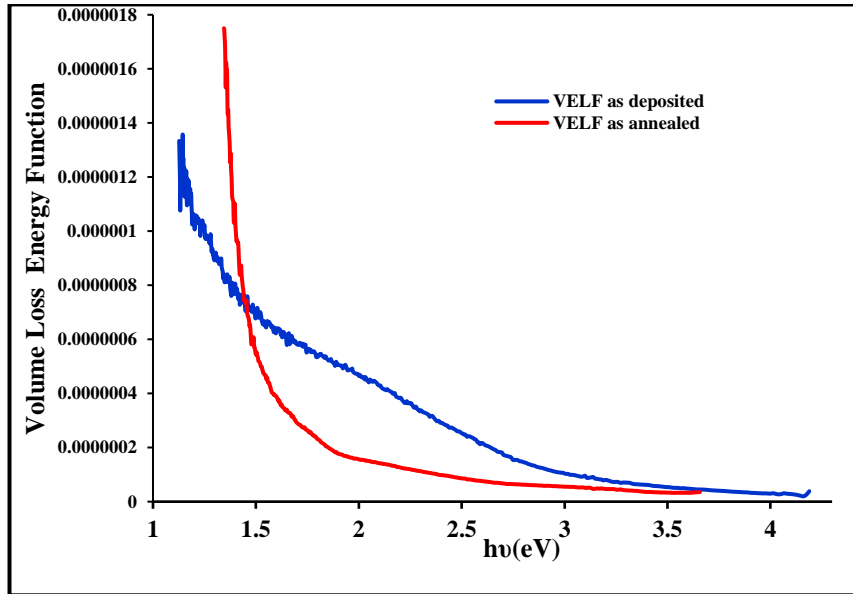


Fig. 7. Volume Loss Energy Function of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms as deposited and annealed at 200 °C.

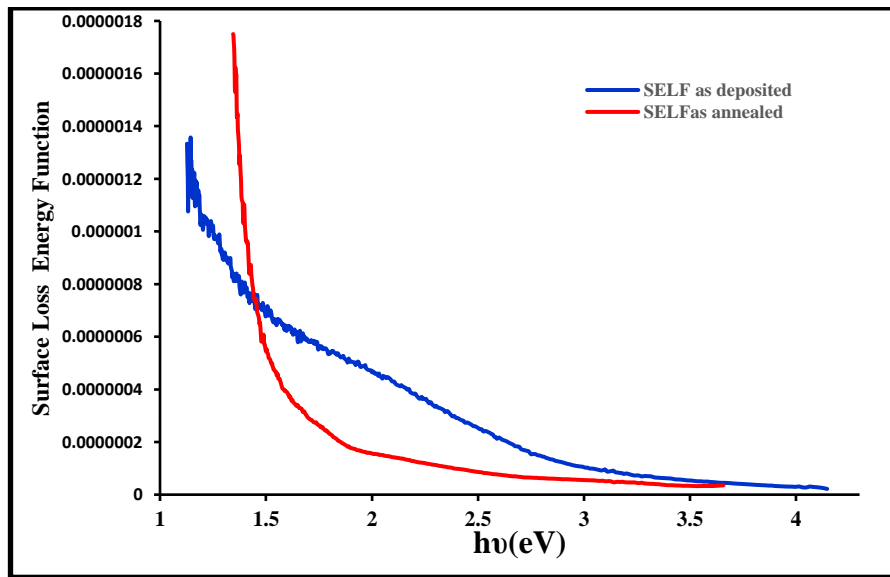


Fig. 8. Surface Loss Energy Function of Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms as deposited and annealed at 200 °C.

The Wemple-DiDomenico model was used to present the parameters of dispersion for Cu<sub>2</sub>O nanofilms using the relation [27,28].

$$(n - 1)^{-1} = \frac{E_o^2 - (hv)^2}{E_d E_o} \quad (9)$$

Where where  $n$ ,  $E_o$ ,  $E_d$  are refractive index, oscillator energy, and dispersion energy respectively [38][39].

This formula can be expressed graphically by drawing the refractive index factor  $(1/(n^2 - 1))$  versus squared of photon energy  $(hv)^2$  as illustrated in Fig. (11) and Fig. (12). The

straight line represents a slope that equal to  $(1/ E_o E_d)$ , while the value of  $(E_o/E_d)$  can be obtained from intercepts the y-axis and the values of  $E_o$  and  $E_d$  reduce after annealing at 200°C. The value of optical band gap could be gotten from the formula  $E_o \approx 2 E_g$  [29], which is reduced after annealing process, and this consequence can comparable with that obtained from Tauc model . The calculated  $E_o$ ,  $E_d$  and  $E_g$  values were tabulated in Table 3. Another parameter of the Cu<sub>2</sub>O NPs/glass films which are moments ( $M_{-1}$  and  $M_{-3}$ ) of the optical spectra could be calculated via the equations [30,31]:

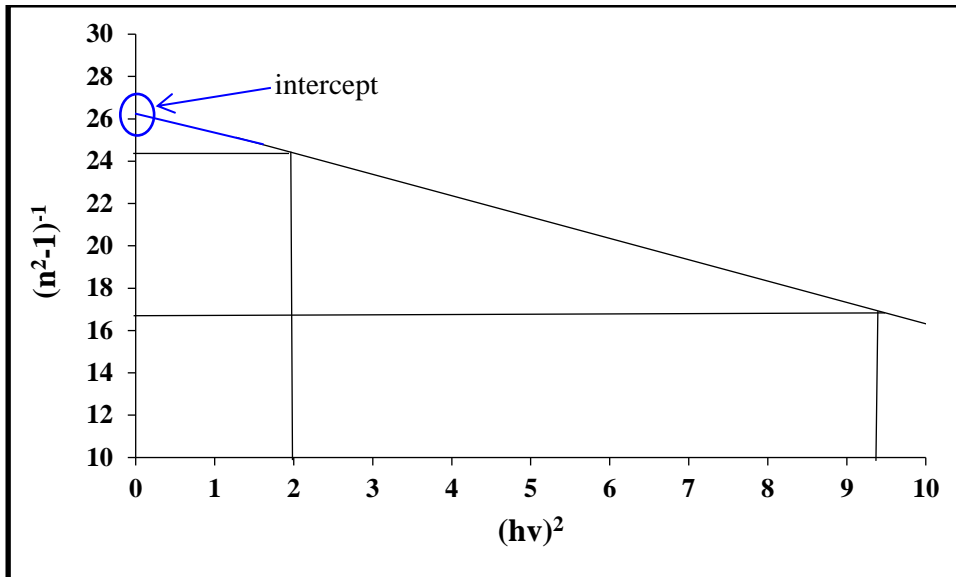


Fig.9. The  $1/(n^2 - 1)$  versus  $(hv)^2$  of  $Cu_2O$  nanofilm as deposited.

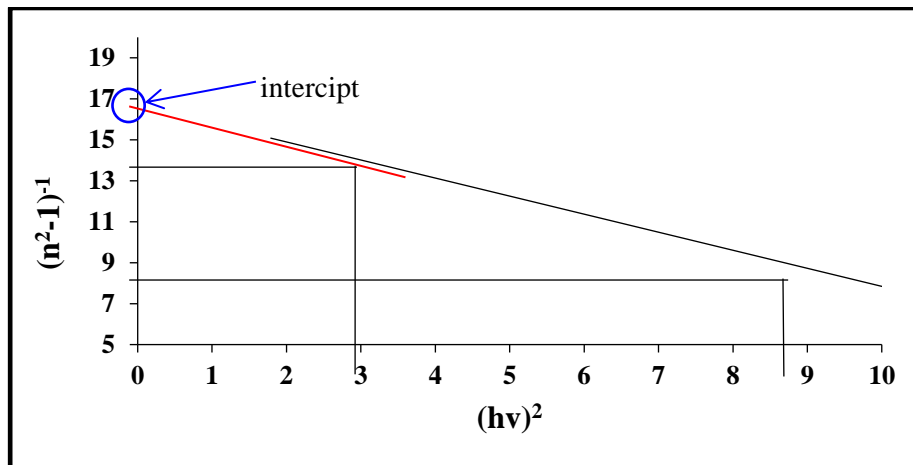


Fig.10. The  $1/(n^2 - 1)$  versus  $(hv)^2$  of  $Cu_2O$  nanofilm annealed at  $200\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ .

$$E_s^2 = \frac{M_{-1}}{M_{-3}} \quad (10)$$

$$E_d^2 = \frac{M_{-1}^3}{M_{-3}} \quad (11)$$

Table (2) show the increase of moments value ( $M_{-1}$  and  $M_{-3}$ ) of optical spectra as well as  $n_o(0)$  value after annealing process [36][37].

Table 2: The dispersion parameter of  $Cu_2O$  NPs/glass thin films.

Parameters	$Cu_2O$ NPs as deposited	$Cu_2O$ NPs annealed at $200\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$
$E_o$	5.177317393	4.38675693
$E_g$	2.588658696	2.193378465
$E_d$	0.197607534	0.261116484
$n^2(0)$	1.038167939	1.05952381
$n_o(0)$	1.018905265	1.02933173
$\epsilon$	1.038167939	1.05952381
$M_{-1}$	0.038167939	0.05952381
$M_{-3}$	0.001423932	0.003093168

## 4. Conclusions

In this study, Cu<sub>2</sub>O NPs thin films were successfully fabricated by way of the thermal evaporation technique. From XRD can be notice there is an increase in average crystal and the nanofilm have polycrystalline in nature. The direct energy gap of deposited Cu<sub>2</sub>O NPs films were found to be 2.57 eV and around 2.15 eV when annealed at 200 °C. Parameters of Dispersion like E<sub>o</sub>, E<sub>d</sub>, n(0), M<sub>-1</sub>, and M<sub>-3</sub> are evaluated by utilizing the Wemple-DiDomenico model and the values of these parameters increase after annealing process.

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