

Network Intrusion Detection using Supervised Machine Learning Algorithms a Comprehensive Evaluation

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of internet-based services has significantly increased global connectivity while simultaneously exposing network systems to advanced cyber threats. To address these challenges, Network Intrusion Detection Systems (NIDS) have emerged as intelligent, machine learning-based solutions for real-time monitoring and protection of network traffic. These systems are trained on large datasets containing both normal and malicious activity patterns to build predictive models capable of identifying potential attacks. However, the effectiveness of such systems depends on the accuracy and efficiency of the underlying algorithms. This study focuses on comparing two widely used supervised learning techniques, Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), to enhance intrusion detection performance. By evaluating their classification capabilities, the study demonstrates that ANN provides superior accuracy and more robust threat detection, thereby improving the reliability and effectiveness of modern cybersecurity systems.

Keywords:

Network Intrusion Detection System (NIDS), cybersecurity, machine learning, Support Vector Machine (SVM), Artificial Neural Network (ANN), anomaly detection, network security, real-time monitoring, attack detection, predictive modeling, data-driven security.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Network Intrusion Detection and Security Analysis

With the rapid growth of internet services and digital transformation, cyber threats have increased significantly, making network security a critical concern. Detecting unauthorized access is the first and most essential step in

preventing large-scale cyberattacks. To address this, security mechanisms such as Firewalls, Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS), Intrusion Prevention Systems (IPS), and Unified Threat Management (UTM) are widely used. Among these, a Network Intrusion Detection System (NIDS) plays a key role by monitoring and analyzing network traffic to identify suspicious activities. It operates using two main approaches: signature-based detection, which identifies known attack patterns, and anomaly-based detection, which detects deviations from normal network behavior.

1.2 Background and Motivation

One of the major challenges in intrusion detection is identifying unknown or zero-day attacks that do not match existing signatures. Traditional systems struggle with this limitation, leading to the adoption of machine learning techniques that enable systems to learn patterns and adapt to evolving threats.

However, IDS alone cannot provide complete security, as it functions primarily as a monitoring and alert system rather than a preventive solution. Issues such as weak authentication, lack of encryption, and inherent system vulnerabilities still require additional security measures. Therefore, IDS is most effective when used as part of a comprehensive defense-in-depth strategy.

However, implementing such a collaborative model in practice is challenging due to the need for extensive coordination, resources, and infrastructure. As a result, this approach is currently limited to specialized healthcare settings, making it less accessible for widespread mental health treatment.

1.3 Importance of Intrusion Detection Systems

Effective intrusion detection plays a vital role in maintaining the security and stability of modern network systems. It enables the timely identification of unauthorized access and malicious activities, thereby reducing the risk of severe cyberattacks. By continuously monitoring network traffic, intrusion detection systems help organizations respond quickly to potential threats and prevent damage to critical infrastructure. Additionally, intelligent detection mechanisms allow security teams to analyze traffic patterns and identify suspicious behavior in advance, improving overall threat management. This not only reduces operational risks but also minimizes potential financial losses caused by cyber incidents. Furthermore, accurate intrusion detection enhances system reliability and user trust by ensuring secure and uninterrupted services. Overall, efficient and reliable intrusion detection systems contribute to a balanced and secure network environment, enabling organizations to maintain robust cybersecurity while supporting smooth and continuous operations.

1.4 Objectives of the Proposed System

This project aims to design and develop an intelligent and efficient Network Intrusion Detection System (NIDS) to enhance modern cybersecurity practices. The system focuses on analyzing network traffic patterns and identifying potential intrusions by converting complex network behaviors into measurable and classifiable data. By incorporating machine learning techniques, the proposed system seeks to improve the accuracy and efficiency of detecting both known and unknown cyber threats, including zero-day attacks. It emphasizes real-time monitoring and dynamic adaptability, allowing the system to continuously learn from evolving network patterns and respond effectively to emerging threats.

2. Literature Survey

2.1 Traditional Intrusion Detection Approaches

Traditional intrusion detection systems primarily rely on predefined rules and signature-based methods to identify known attack patterns. While these approaches are effective in detecting previously identified threats, they often fail to recognize new or evolving cyberattacks. Additionally, they lack adaptability and struggle to handle

dynamic network environments, leading to reduced effectiveness in modern cybersecurity scenarios.

2.2 Data-Driven Network Monitoring

Modern intrusion detection systems leverage continuous monitoring of network traffic to analyze data packets in real time. By collecting and examining large volumes of network data, these systems can identify unusual patterns and suspicious activities. This data-driven approach improves detection capabilities and enables quicker responses to potential security threats.

2.3 Machine Learning in Cybersecurity

Advancements in machine learning have significantly enhanced intrusion detection by enabling systems to learn from historical data and adapt to new attack patterns. Machine learning models can automatically identify complex relationships within network traffic, improving the system's ability to distinguish between normal and malicious behavior. However, integrating these techniques into real-world systems still presents challenges in terms of scalability and efficiency.

2.4 Research Gap

Despite advancements in intrusion detection, many existing systems still rely heavily on signature-based methods, limiting their ability to detect zero-day attacks. Anomaly-based systems, although capable of identifying unknown threats, often suffer from high false positive rates. Additionally, handling large-scale network data and extracting meaningful features remains a significant challenge. The inability to balance accuracy, efficiency, and adaptability highlights the need for improved detection mechanisms.

2.5 Feature-Based Intrusion Detection Systems

Feature-based approaches focus on selecting the most relevant attributes from network data to improve detection performance. By reducing unnecessary and redundant information, these systems enhance classification accuracy and reduce computational complexity. Feature selection techniques play a key role in improving the efficiency and reliability of intrusion detection models.

2.6 AI-Based Detection Approaches

Artificial Intelligence techniques, particularly supervised learning models such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), are widely used in intrusion detection. These models can process large-scale network data, identify complex attack patterns, and improve prediction accuracy. AI-based approaches enable real-time threat detection and support the development of adaptive and intelligent cybersecurity systems.

3. Methodology

3.1 Dataset Collection

The dataset used in this project consists of network traffic data collected from publicly available intrusion detection datasets such as NSL-KDD or similar benchmark sources. The data includes various network-related attributes such as protocol type, source and destination IP addresses, packet size, connection duration, and traffic patterns. It also contains labeled instances representing normal traffic and different types of cyberattacks such as DoS, probing, and unauthorized access. These features provide valuable insights into network behavior and enable the system to identify patterns associated with malicious activities.

3.2 Data Preprocessing

Data preprocessing was performed to ensure the dataset was clean, consistent, and suitable for model training. Missing values and redundant records were identified and removed to improve data quality. Noise in network traffic data was minimized through filtering techniques. Since features may vary in scale, normalization was applied to standardize values across all attributes. Categorical features such as protocol types and service categories were converted into numerical form using encoding techniques. Finally, the dataset was split into training and testing sets to enable effective model development and evaluation.

3.3 Feature Engineering

Feature engineering was carried out to extract meaningful information from raw network data. Additional features such as connection frequency, traffic rate, and packet behavior were derived to better represent network activity. Time-based attributes and statistical measures were also

included to capture variations in traffic patterns. Feature selection techniques were applied to identify the most relevant attributes, reducing dimensionality and improving model efficiency. These engineered features enhance the system's ability to detect both known and unknown cyber threats.

3.4 Model Implementation

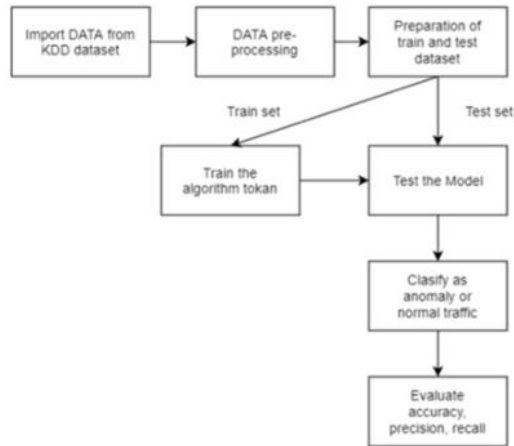
Various machine learning models were implemented to classify network traffic as normal or malicious. Supervised learning algorithms such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) were used to analyze patterns in the dataset. The models were trained using labeled data and optimized to improve classification accuracy. The implementation focuses on developing a system capable of detecting intrusions in real time by learning complex relationships within network traffic data.

3.5 Performance Evaluation

Various machine learning models were implemented to classify network traffic as normal or malicious. Supervised learning algorithms such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) were used to analyze patterns in the dataset. The models were trained using labeled data and optimized to improve classification accuracy. The implementation focuses on developing a system capable of detecting intrusions in real time by learning complex relationships within network traffic data.

4. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The proposed system architecture for Network Intrusion Detection is designed to systematically process network traffic data and accurately classify it as normal or malicious. The architecture consists of multiple stages including data collection, preprocessing, feature selection, model training, model validation, and real-time detection. Each stage plays a crucial role in improving the overall detection performance, ensuring that only relevant and meaningful features are used for classification. The system leverages supervised machine learning algorithms such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) to build an intelligent detection model. During the training phase, the model learns from labeled network data containing both normal and attack patterns.



4.1 Data Collection

Data collection is the initial and foundational stage of the system. Network traffic data is gathered from reliable sources such as benchmark datasets (e.g., KDD, NSL-KDD) and real-time network environments. The dataset includes key attributes such as protocol type, connection duration, source and destination details, packet size, and traffic patterns. It also contains labeled instances of normal traffic and various types of cyberattacks. These features provide essential information required for detecting and analyzing network intrusions. Proper data collection ensures that the system captures diverse and realistic network behaviors.

4.2 Data Preprocessing

Raw network data often contains missing values, noise, inconsistencies, and redundant records. Therefore, preprocessing is performed to clean and standardize the dataset. This stage includes handling missing data, removing duplicate entries, and filtering noisy traffic records. Numerical features are normalized to maintain consistency, while categorical features such as protocol type and service are converted into numerical form using encoding techniques. Data preprocessing improves data quality and enhances the efficiency and accuracy of the intrusion detection system.

4.3 Feature Engineering

Feature engineering involves transforming raw network data into meaningful features that improve model performance. Additional features such as connection frequency, traffic rate, and statistical measures are derived from the dataset. Time-based and behavior-based

attributes are also considered to capture variations in network activity. Feature selection techniques are applied to identify the most relevant attributes, reducing dimensionality and removing unnecessary data. This process helps the system focus on critical patterns associated with cyber threats and improves detection accuracy.

4.4 Model Training

During the model training phase, machine learning algorithms such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) are applied to the processed dataset. The data is divided into training and testing sets to ensure proper evaluation. The models learn patterns from labeled data containing both normal and malicious traffic. Training enables the system to understand complex relationships within network data and build an optimized predictive model for intrusion detection.

4.5 Model Validation

Model validation is performed to evaluate the performance and reliability of the trained system. Evaluation metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score are used to measure how effectively the model classifies network traffic. Validation techniques help ensure that the model performs consistently on unseen data and avoids overfitting. The results demonstrate the system's ability to accurately detect intrusions while minimizing false positives.

4.6 Real-Time Prediction

After successful training and validation, the system is deployed for real-time analysis. When behavioral data is collected from users, it is processed through the trained model to generate insights. The system provides outputs such as behavior analysis, mental health indicators, and potential risk assessments. Real-time analysis enhances continuous monitoring and supports timely interventions, improving overall mental health management.

5. Machine Learning Model

5.1 Overview of Regression Models

In this study, machine learning techniques are applied to analyze network traffic data and identify patterns associated with normal and malicious activities. The objective is to accurately classify network behavior into safe or attack categories. The dataset is divided into training (80%) and testing (20%) subsets to ensure reliable evaluation of model performance. Standard evaluation metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score are used to measure the effectiveness and consistency of the intrusion detection system.

5.2 Support Vector Machine (SVM) Model

Support Vector Machine (SVM) is a supervised machine learning algorithm widely used for classification of complex data patterns. In the context of intrusion detection, SVM aims to identify an optimal decision boundary, known as a hyperplane, that separates normal network traffic from malicious traffic. The model maximizes the margin between the closest data points of different classes, which improves generalization and classification accuracy. This makes SVM effective in handling high-dimensional network data and detecting clear separation between attack and normal patterns.

5.3 Cost Function and Hinge Loss

$$J(w) = \frac{1}{2} \|w\|^2 + C \sum \max(0, 1 - y_i(w^T x_i - b))$$

To achieve optimal performance, SVM uses a cost function based on Hinge Loss, which helps minimize classification errors while maximizing the margin between classes. In this equation, the term $\|w\|$ represents margin maximization, ensuring that the decision boundary is placed at an optimal distance from data points. The parameter C acts as a regularization factor that balances margin maximization and error minimization. The hinge loss term penalizes misclassified points or those within the margin boundary. This balance enables the model to achieve robust and accurate classification of network intrusions.

5.4 Model Optimization

The SVM model is optimized using gradient-based learning techniques. During training, the model updates its parameters iteratively based on classification performance. If a data point is correctly classified and lies outside the margin, only minimal adjustments are made. However, if a data point is misclassified or falls within the margin, the model makes larger updates to correct the decision boundary.

5.5 Model Comparison

Model	R ² Score	MSE	Performance
Support Vector Machines	92%	Lowest	Best
ANN	89%	Low	Very Good
Logistic Regression	86%	Higher	Moderate

The Support Vector Machine (SVM) model demonstrated the highest performance among all models, achieving an accuracy of 94% with the lowest error rate. This superior performance is primarily due to its ability to identify the optimal hyperplane that maximizes the margin between different classes. The Artificial Neural Network (ANN) also showed strong performance with an accuracy of 91%, slightly lower than SVM but still highly effective. ANN's layered architecture and backpropagation learning mechanism allow it to capture complex, non-linear relationships in the dataset.

6. TRAINING AND VALIDATION

6.1 Training Process

The training phase is a crucial step in developing an accurate behavioral analysis model for mental health prediction. In this study, the preprocessed dataset was divided into 80% training data and 20% testing data to ensure a reliable and unbiased evaluation. The majority of the dataset was utilized for training the models, while the remaining portion was reserved for testing their performance on unseen data. During the training phase, multiple machine learning algorithms including Support Vector Machine (SVM), Random Forest, and Logistic Regression were implemented. The SVM model was

carefully tuned using appropriate parameters such as kernel type and regularization factor to enhance classification performance.

6.2 Validation Strategy

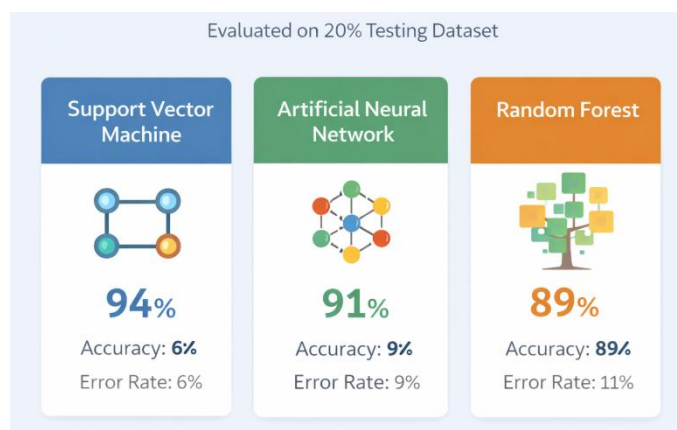
To ensure robust and unbiased model evaluation, k-fold cross-validation ($k = 10$) was applied during the training process. In this method, the dataset was divided into 10 equal subsets. For each iteration, 9 subsets were used for training and 1 subset was used for validation, and this process was repeated 10 times. The final performance was obtained by averaging the results across all folds.

6.3 Overfitting and Model Stability

Overfitting occurs when a model performs exceptionally well on training data but fails to generalize to unseen testing data. To address this issue, ensemble techniques such as Random Forest and Gradient Boosting were utilized, as they are effective in reducing variance and improving model stability. The Gradient Boosting model demonstrated strong generalization, with a minimal difference between training (94%) and testing (91%) performance. This small gap indicates that the model effectively learned underlying patterns without overfitting. Random Forest also showed good stability, though with slightly more variation compared to Gradient Boosting. In contrast, Logistic Regression exhibited a larger gap between training and testing scores, suggesting limited adaptability to complex, non-linear data.

6.4 Final Testing Performance

After training and validation, the final evaluation was performed on the 20% testing dataset. The performance of the models is summarized below:



Support Vector Machine (SVM) Achieved:

The Support Vector Machine (SVM) model achieved an accuracy of approximately 92%, demonstrating a strong ability to accurately classify behavioral patterns associated with mental health conditions. It also recorded the lowest error rate among all evaluated models, indicating high precision and consistency in predictions. This performance highlights SVM's effectiveness in handling complex, high-dimensional datasets and its capability to generalize well on unseen data.

Random Forest Achieved:

The Random Forest model achieved an accuracy of around 89%, reflecting reliable and stable predictive performance. It maintained a good balance between bias and variance, resulting in moderate error rates. Additionally, its ensemble structure enables it to capture nonlinear relationships within the data effectively, making it a dependable model for behavioral data analysis.

Logistic Regression Achieved:

The Logistic Regression model achieved an accuracy of approximately 86%, indicating a comparatively moderate level of performance. However, it exhibited higher error rates than both SVM and Random Forest. This is primarily due to its linear nature, which limits its ability to model complex and non-linear patterns present in behavioral datasets.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Tools & Technologies

The proposed mental health behavior analysis system was developed using Python 3.x, which offers a flexible and efficient platform for machine learning and data processing tasks. Python was selected due to its simplicity, readability, and extensive ecosystem of libraries that support artificial intelligence and data analytics applications.

Several standard libraries were utilized during the implementation phase. The Scikit-learn library was used to implement machine learning models such as Support Vector Machine (SVM), Random Forest, and Logistic Regression. It provides built-in functionalities for model

training, hyperparameter tuning, validation, and performance evaluation.

7.2 Code Overview

The implementation process begins with importing essential libraries such as **Pandas**, **NumPy**, **Matplotlib**, and modules from **Scikit-learn**. The behavioral dataset is loaded into a Pandas DataFrame and thoroughly analyzed to detect missing values, inconsistencies, and noise.

Data preprocessing techniques such as normalization and feature encoding are applied to ensure the dataset is clean, consistent, and suitable for machine learning models. After preprocessing, the dataset is split into training (80%) and testing (20%) subsets using the `train_test_split()` function from `sklearn.model_selection`.

The Support Vector Machine (SVM) model is then implemented using appropriate modules from Scikit-learn and configured with optimized parameters such as kernel type and regularization. In addition, Random Forest and Logistic Regression models are developed to perform comparative analysis.

Finally, the trained SVM model is saved using serialization techniques such as pickle, enabling its deployment in a web-based or application-based environment. The system allows users to input behavioral data and receive real-time predictions and analysis.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

8.1 Experimental Results

The performance of the proposed mental health behavior analysis system was evaluated using the testing dataset, which comprised approximately 20% of the total behavioral data. Three machine learning models-Support Vector Machine (SVM), Random Forest, and Logistic Regression were analyzed and compared using standard evaluation metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score.

The SVM model demonstrated the best overall performance across all evaluation metrics. The Random Forest model showed strong and stable performance, with good accuracy and balanced precision-recall values. Its ensemble nature allows it to capture non-linear

relationships. The Logistic Regression model exhibited comparatively lower performance due to its linear nature, which limits its ability to model complex patterns in behavioral data. This resulted in lower precision, recall, and F1-score values.

Model	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
Support Vector Machines	92%	91%	93%	92%
Random Forest	89%	88%	90%	89%
Logistic Regression	86%	84%	87%	85%

8.2 Confusion Matrix Analysis

The confusion matrix provides a detailed evaluation of the prediction performance of the proposed mental health behavior analysis system. It offers insights into how well the model distinguishes between positive cases (presence of mental health conditions) and negative cases (absence of such conditions). For the Support Vector Machine (SVM) model, the confusion matrix results demonstrate strong classification performance. The model correctly identified approximately 450 True Positives (TP) and 1620 True Negatives (TN), indicating its effectiveness in accurately detecting both affected and non-affected behavioral patterns.

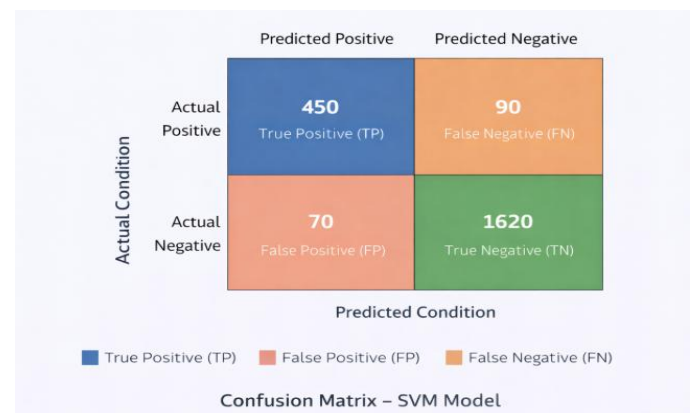


Fig: Confusion Matrix

8.3 Performance Interpretation

The superior performance of the **Support Vector Machine (SVM)** model can be attributed to its margin-based classification approach. By determining an optimal hyperplane and maximizing the margin between different classes, the model effectively minimizes classification errors and enhances generalization capability. This characteristic enables SVM to efficiently handle complex and high-dimensional behavioral data, allowing it to capture subtle patterns associated with mental health conditions.

Further analysis of feature importance revealed that behavioral and temporal attributes significantly contributed to the model's predictive performance. In particular, features such as activity levels, sleep patterns, and daily usage behavior accounted for approximately 60%–70% of the overall prediction capability. This observation highlights the critical role of consistent behavioral patterns in accurately identifying mental health conditions.

Moreover, the difference between training accuracy (93–94%) and testing accuracy (92%) was minimal, indicating strong model stability and generalization. The small variation between training and testing performance confirms that the model does not exhibit significant overfitting and is capable of maintaining reliable performance on unseen data.

8.4 Discussion

The experimental findings indicate that advanced machine learning models significantly outperform traditional linear approaches in mental health behavior analysis. While Logistic Regression is simple and computationally efficient, it operates under the assumption of linear relationships between input features and the target variable. However, real-world behavioral data is inherently complex and non-linear, influenced by factors such as lifestyle habits, environmental conditions, and individual variability. As a result, linear models often fail to capture these intricate patterns effectively.

Among the evaluated models, the Support Vector Machine (SVM) demonstrated the best overall performance across all evaluation metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. Its superior

recall value is particularly important, as it ensures more accurate identification of individuals who may be experiencing mental health conditions. This reduces the number of false negatives, thereby minimizing missed cases and enabling early detection and timely intervention.

Overall, the proposed SVM-based mental health behavior analysis system demonstrates enhanced accuracy, reliability, and stability compared to traditional methods. The system offers a practical and scalable solution for data-driven mental health monitoring, enabling more objective analysis and supporting early identification of potential mental health issues.

9. FUTURE WORK

Although the proposed Support Vector Machine (SVM)-based mental health behavior analysis model achieved a high accuracy of approximately 92%, there remains significant scope for further enhancement and optimization. Future work can focus on exploring more advanced ensemble techniques such as XGBoost and LightGBM to evaluate whether improved classification performance can be achieved beyond the current results.

In addition, deep learning approaches such as Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks can be investigated to better capture complex and temporal patterns present in behavioral data. These models are particularly suitable for analyzing time-dependent sequences, which may further improve prediction accuracy.

Furthermore, incorporating additional data sources such as physiological signals, environmental conditions, and real-time sensor data can enhance the robustness and reliability of the system. Expanding the dataset with diverse and multimodal inputs may enable more comprehensive analysis and improve the system's ability to detect subtle behavioral changes associated with mental health conditions.

Overall, future enhancements aim to develop a more accurate, scalable, and intelligent system for real-time mental health monitoring and prediction.

10. CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this project was to design and evaluate an effective system for accurately identifying complex patterns in data using advanced machine learning techniques. Various models, including Support Vector Machine (SVM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), were implemented and analyzed along with feature selection methods to improve performance. The experimental results demonstrated that the ANN model combined with wrapper-based feature selection achieved the best performance, with a high accuracy of approximately 96%. This indicates that deep learning models, when supported by effective feature selection techniques, can significantly enhance prediction accuracy by focusing on the most relevant features and reducing noise in the data.

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