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AUTOMATED PNEUMONIA DIAGNOSIS SYSTEM USING DEEP LEARNING AND GRAD-CAM

Dr.J.Sudha*, Indra Devi B**, Abinayapriya V**, Aishwarya M** , Pooja S**

* Professor-Computer Science and Engineering, AVC College of Engineering, Mannampandal, Mayiladuthurai,

**UG Students Computer Science and Engineering, A.V. C. College of Engineering, Mannampandal, Mayiladuthurai, India

Abstract

Pneumonia is a serious respiratory disease that requires early and accurate diagnosis to reduce mortality and improve patient outcomes. Conventional diagnosis using chest X-ray images depends heavily on the expertise of radiologists and may be time-consuming and subjective. This paper proposes an automated pneumonia detection system based on deep learning using the VGG-16 convolutional neural network with transfer learning. The proposed model classifies chest X-ray images into two categories: normal and pneumonia. To improve model interpretability, Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM) is integrated to highlight the regions of the image that influence the model's predictions. Experimental results show that the proposed model achieves an accuracy of 94.2% and an F1-score of 93.2%, demonstrating reliable classification performance. The results indicate that combining deep learning with explainable AI techniques can support efficient and transparent pneumonia detection in medical imaging applications.

Keywords— Pneumonia Detection, Deep Learning, VGG-16, Grad-CAM, Transfer Learning, Medical Image Analysis.

1.INTRODUCTION

Pneumonia is a serious respiratory disease that affects millions of people worldwide every year. It occurs when the air sacs in the lungs become inflamed and filled with fluid, making breathing difficult. According to global health reports, pneumonia is one of the leading causes of death, especially among children and elderly people [1]. Therefore, early detection and accurate diagnosis are essential for effective treatment and reducing mortality rates. Chest X-ray imaging is commonly used by doctors to diagnose pneumonia. Radiologists examine chest X-ray images to identify abnormal patterns in the lungs. However, manual analysis of these images can be time-consuming and depends heavily on the expertise of the radiologist. In some cases, human errors or fatigue may lead to incorrect diagnosis [2]. These challenges highlight the need for automated systems that can assist healthcare professionals in detecting pneumonia more efficiently. With the advancement of artificial intelligence and deep learning, automated medical image analysis has become increasingly popular. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have shown excellent performance in image classification tasks, including disease detection from medical images [3]. Deep learning models can automatically extract important features from chest X-ray images and classify them into different disease categories. In this research, an automated pneumonia detection system is proposed using the VGG-16 convolutional neural network with transfer learning. The model classifies chest X-ray images into normal and pneumonia categories. To improve the interpretability of the model, Grad-CAM visualization is used to highlight the important regions of the lungs that influence the model's prediction [4]. The proposed system aims to provide accurate predictions and assist medical professionals in making faster and more reliable diagnostic decisions.

2.LITERATUREREVIEW

Several studies have explored the use of deep learning techniques for automated pneumonia detection from chest X-ray images. These approaches aim to improve diagnostic accuracy and reduce the workload of radiologists. Rajpurkar et al. [1] proposed CheXNet, a deep convolutional neural network based on the DenseNet-121 architecture for pneumonia detection. The model demonstrated performance comparable to expert radiologists in identifying pneumonia from chest X-ray images. Similarly, Kermany et al. [2] developed a convolutional neural network-based approach for medical image classification, demonstrating that deep learning methods can effectively detect pneumonia and other diseases from medical images.

Deep convolutional neural network architectures have significantly improved image classification performance. Simonyan and Zisserman [3] introduced the VGGNet architecture, which uses deep convolutional layers to learn hierarchical image features and has been widely applied in medical imaging tasks. He et al. [4] proposed the ResNet architecture, which introduced residual learning to address the vanishing gradient problem in deep neural networks. Huang et al. [5] later introduced DenseNet, which improves feature propagation by connecting each layer to every other layer in the network.

Explainability has also become an important aspect of deep learning in medical applications. Selvaraju et al. [6] proposed Grad-CAM, a visualization technique that highlights important regions of an image influencing the model's prediction. This method helps improve transparency and interpretability of deep learning models in medical diagnosis.

Large annotated datasets have also contributed significantly to the development of automated disease detection systems. Wang et al. [7] introduced the ChestX-ray dataset containing a large collection of labeled chest X-ray images for training deep learning models. Litjens et al. [8] provided a comprehensive survey on the application of deep learning in medical image analysis and highlighted its effectiveness in improving automated diagnostic systems. Furthermore, Esteva et al. [9] demonstrated that deep neural networks can achieve dermatologist-level classification accuracy in skin disease detection, illustrating the potential of deep learning in healthcare diagnostics.xplainable artificial intelligence techniques to enhance the performance and interpretability of pneumonia detection systems. These approaches help achieve high classification accuracy while also providing interpretable results that assist medical professionals in clinical decision-making [10].

Recent research has focused on integrating transfer learning and explainable artificial intelligence techniques to enhance the performance and interpretability of pneumonia detection systems. These approaches help achieve high classification accuracy while also providing interpretable results that assist medical professionals in clinical decision-making [10].

3.PROPOSEDSYSTEM

The proposed system aims to automatically detect pneumonia from chest X-ray images using deep learning techniques. The system utilizes a convolutional neural network based on the VGG-16 architecture combined with transfer learning to classify chest X-ray images into two categories: Normal and Pneumonia. In addition, the Grad-CAM visualization technique is used to highlight the infected regions of the lungs, providing interpretability to the model predictions. The overall system consists of several stages including data collection, image preprocessing, feature extraction, classification, and visualization. The dataset used for this research contains chest Xray images of both healthy and pneumonia-infected patients. These images are divided into training, validation, and testing sets to evaluate the performance of the model.

Initially, the chest X-ray images are preprocessed to improve image quality and ensure consistency in input size. The images are resized to a fixed resolution and normalized so that they can be effectively processed by the deep learning model. Data augmentation techniques such as rotation, flipping, and scaling are applied to increase the diversity of the dataset and reduce overfitting.

After preprocessing, the images are passed to the VGG-16 convolutional neural network, which acts as a feature extractor. VGG-16 contains multiple convolutional layers and pooling layers that automatically learn important features from the images such as textures, shapes, and patterns related to pneumonia infection.

The extracted features are then passed to fully connected layers for classification. The final output layer uses a softmax activation function to classify the image into either the Normal or Pneumonia category. To improve the interpretability of the model, the Grad-CAM (Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping) technique is applied. Grad-CAM generates a heatmap that highlights the regions in the chest X-ray image that influence the model's decision. This helps doctors and medical professionals understand which part of the lungs the model focuses on while making predictions.

The proposed system not only provides accurate pneumonia detection but also offers visual explanations that increase trust and reliability in AI-based medical diagnosis systems.

4.METHODOLOGY

The proposed pneumonia detection system is developed using a deep learning approach based on the VGG-16 convolutional neural network combined with Grad-CAM visualization. The methodology consists of several stages including data preprocessing, feature extraction, model training, classification, visualization, and performance evaluation.

4.1 DATA PREPROCESSING

Chest X-ray images are collected from a publicly available pneumonia dataset. Since images in the dataset may have different sizes and intensity values, preprocessing is necessary before feeding them into the deep learning model.

The preprocessing steps include:

- Image resizing
- Pixel normalization
- Data augmentation

All images are resized to 224 × 224 pixels, which is the required input size for the VGG-16 model.

Normalization: Pixel values in the image are normalized to improve model training performance. Normalization is performed using the following equation:

$$X_{norm}= X - X_{min}/X_{max}-X_{min}$$

Where:

- X = Original pixel value
- X_{min}= Minimum pixel value
- X_{max}= Maximum pixel value

This scales pixel values between 0 and 1.

Data Augmentation: To increase dataset diversity and reduce overfitting, data augmentation techniques such as rotation, flipping, zooming, and shifting are applied. This helps the model learn better features from limited training data.

4.2 FEATURE EXTRACTION USING VGG -16

The VGG-16 convolutional neural network is used for feature extraction. VGG-16 consists of 13 convolutional layers and 3 fully connected layers, making a total of 16 layers. Each convolutional layer applies filters to the input image to extract important features such as edges, shapes, and textures.

4.2.1 CONVOLUTION OPERATION

The convolution operation is mathematically defined as:

$$F(i,j) = \sum_m \sum_n I(m,n).K(i-m, j-n)$$

Where:

- I = Input image
- K = Kernel (filter)
- F = Output feature map

This operation allows the model to detect spatial patterns in the chest X-ray images.

4.3ACTIVATIONFUNCTION

After each convolution layer, the ReLU (Rectified Linear Unit) activation function is applied to introduce non-linearity into the model.

$$ReLU(x) = \max(0,x)$$

ReLU helps the model learn complex patterns and improves training efficiency.

4.4POOLINGLAYER

Pooling layers reduce the spatial dimensions of feature maps and help decrease computational complexity. The most commonly used pooling operation is Max Pooling, which selects the maximum value from each region.

$$P = \max(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4)$$

This helps preserve important features while reducing data size.

4.5CLASSIFICATIONLAYER

After feature extraction, the flattened feature vectors are passed to fully connected layers for classification. The final layer uses the Softmax function to classify the input image into two categories:

- Normal
- Pneumonia

The Softmax function is defined as:

$$P(y = i) = e^{z_i} / \sum_{j=1}^{k} e^{z_j}$$

Where:

- z_i = output score for class
- k = number of classes

The class with the highest probability is selected as the final prediction.

4.6GRAD–CAMVISUALIZATION

To improve interpretability, the Grad-CAM (Gradientweighted Class Activation Mapping) technique is used. GradCAM generates heatmaps that highlight the important regions in the chest X-ray image responsible for the classification decision. The importance weight for each feature map is calculated using the gradient of the target class score with respect to the feature maps.

$$\alpha_k = 1/Z \sum_i \sum_j \partial y / \partial A_{kij}$$

Where:

- A^k = feature map
- y = predicted class score
- Z = normalization factor

The final Grad-CAM heatmap is computed as:

$$L_{GradCAM} = ReLU(\sum_k \alpha_k A_k)$$

4.7PERFORMANCEEVALUATION

The performance of the proposed model is evaluated using several evaluation metrics.

Accuracy

$$Accuracy = TP + TN / TP + TN + FP + FN$$

Precision

$$Precision = TP / TP + FP$$

Recall

$$Recall = TP / TP + FN$$

F1 Score

F1 = 2 x Precision x Recall / Precision + Recall

Where:

- TP = True Positive
- TN =True Negative
- FP = False Positive
- FN = False Negative

These metrics help evaluate how accurately the system detects pneumonia from chest X-ray images.

5.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The proposed deep learning model was evaluated using chest X-ray images to classify cases into Normal and Pneumonia categories. The dataset was divided into training, validation, and testing sets to measure the performance of the model effectively. The VGG-16 convolutional neural network with transfer learning was used to extract features from the images, while Grad-CAM was used to visualize the regions influencing the prediction.

5.1 MODEL PERFORMANCE

The performance of the proposed system was evaluated using common classification metrics such as Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-Score. These metrics provide a comprehensive evaluation of the model's ability to correctly classify pneumonia cases.

The overall accuracy of the proposed model was found to be approximately 93–95%, demonstrating the effectiveness of deep learning techniques in medical image classification. The model achieved high precision and recall values, indicating that it can correctly identify pneumonia cases while minimizing false predictions.

The performance metrics are summarized as follows:

Metric	Value
Accuracy	94.2 %
Precision	93.6%
Recall	92.8%
F1 - Score	93.2%

A confusion matrix was used to evaluate the classification performance of the model. The confusion matrix compares the predicted labels with the actual labels of the test dataset.

5.3 TRAINING PERFORMANCE

During the training process, the model showed a gradual increase in accuracy and a decrease in loss across training epochs. This indicates that the model successfully learned meaningful features from the chest X-ray images.

The accuracy graph shows the improvement of model performance as training progresses, while the loss graph indicates the reduction in prediction errors. These trends confirm that the deep learning model effectively converges during the training phase.

5.4 GRAD – CAM VISUALIZATION

To improve the interpretability of the deep learning model, Grad-CAM visualization was applied to the chest X-ray images. Grad-CAM generates a heatmap that highlights the regions of the image that contribute most to the classification decision.

The generated heatmaps clearly highlight infected regions in the lungs for pneumonia cases. This visualization helps medical professionals understand how the model identifies abnormal patterns in the chest X-ray images.

The Grad-CAM results demonstrate that the proposed system focuses on clinically relevant regions of the lungs, making the predictions more reliable and interpretable.

5.5 DISCUSSION

The experimental results demonstrate that the proposed VGG16 based pneumonia detection system provides high classification accuracy and reliable performance. The use of transfer learning allows the model to effectively learn features from a relatively small dataset, while Grad-CAM visualization improves the transparency of the model.

Compared to traditional machine learning approaches, deep learning models can automatically extract complex features from medical images, resulting in improved diagnostic accuracy. Furthermore, the integration of explainable AI techniques such as Grad-CAM increases the trustworthiness of AI-based medical diagnosis systems.

Overall, the proposed system can assist radiologists and healthcare professionals in detecting pneumonia quickly and accurately, reducing diagnostic workload and improving patient care.

6. CONCLUSION

In this research, an automated pneumonia diagnosis system based on deep learning and Grad-CAM visualization was proposed for detecting pneumonia from chest X-ray images. The system utilizes the VGG-16 convolutional neural network with transfer learning to extract meaningful features and classify images into Normal and Pneumonia categories. Image preprocessing and data augmentation techniques were applied to improve the model's training performance and generalization ability.

The experimental results demonstrated that the proposed model achieved high classification accuracy and reliable performance in detecting pneumonia cases. The use of GradCAM visualization provided additional interpretability by highlighting the important lung regions responsible for the model's prediction. This helps medical professionals understand how the model makes decisions and increases trust in AI-based diagnostic systems.

Overall, the proposed system can serve as an effective computer-aided diagnosis tool for assisting radiologists in detecting pneumonia more efficiently and accurately. The integration of deep learning and explainable artificial intelligence techniques provides both high diagnostic performance and improved transparency.

7. FUTURE WORK

Although the proposed system achieved promising results, there are several opportunities for future improvements. First, the model can be trained on larger and more diverse medical imaging datasets to further improve its generalization capability and robustness.

Second, more advanced deep learning architectures such as ResNet, DenseNet, or EfficientNet can be explored to enhance feature extraction and classification performance. Ensemble learning techniques may also be applied to combine multiple models and improve prediction accuracy.

Additionally, integrating other medical imaging modalities such as CT scans could help improve the detection of pneumonia and other lung diseases. Future work can also focus on developing a real-time clinical application or web-based system that allows healthcare professionals to upload chest X-ray images and obtain automated diagnosis results.

Finally, further research can be conducted on improving explainable AI techniques to provide more detailed visual explanations that support clinical decision-making in medical imaging systems

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