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EFFICIENT FACE DETECTION USING VIOLA-JONES AND NEURAL NETWORKS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Saja Kareem Abd [*1], Hadeel Talib Mangi [*2], Alyaa Abdual Kadhum[*3], reem salah kazim [*4], Baneen Abdaljabbar Abdalhussein Ali [*5], Firas Al-Mahdi Zuhair AbdAlkarim [*6]

Al-Mustansiriyah University,Iraq, E-mail: saja_kareem@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq [2] University of Hilla, Department of Computer Science and Information Technology, 51001, Iraq. E-mail: hadeel_talib@hilla-unc.edu.iq
[3] University of Hilla, Artificial Intelligence Science Department, 51001, Iraq. E-mail: alyaa_abdulkadhim@hilla-unc.edu.iq
[4]Ministry of Health, 51001, Iraq. E-mail: sreem345@gmail.com
[5] Al-Mustaqbal University, Iraq, Iraq. E-mail: baneenabdaljabar2000@gmail.com
[6]Al-Mustaqbal University, Iraq ,Email: Alsalamifaris38@gmail.com
[*]Corresponding author E-mail : saja_kareem@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

Abstract. *Face detection technology underpins most of today's face recognition systems and is valuable in many industries, including security, healthcare, retail, and entertainment. This study aims to fuse classical computer vision methods, like the Viola-Jones algorithm, with contemporary techniques in deep learning, for instance, Feed Forward Neural Networks (FFNN), to improve face detection systems in accuracy, efficiency, and reliability. The proposed system uses the Viola-Jones algorithm for preliminary face detection and an FFNN for feature extraction and classification achieving 98.5% accuracy on various datasets. The system works well under a variety of conditions such as lighting, angle, and occlusions, and has real-time performance with frame rates between 15-20 FPS. Results confirm that the system is more accurate than applying the Viola-Jones method alone and has the same accuracy as CNN-based models while needing less computational resources. This approach is useful and effective for practical applications like security surveillance, biometric identification, or human-computer interaction because they are more rapid and easier to deploy.*

Keywords: *Facial Detection; face detection; deep learning; Viola-Jones Algorithm; Feed Forward Neural Network*

1. INTRODUCTION

The process of facial detection is the starting point of any facial recognition system. This technology is now widely used in different fields including security, healthcare, retail, and entertainment. It includes the detection and recognition of human faces in photos or video recordings[1]. Due to the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly in the area of machine learning, the accuracy and reliability of detection systems have improved significantly. Nowadays, faces can be detected even under various conditions such as different illumination, facial emotions, occlusions, and poses [2]. Occasionally, AI eliminates some information, such as color for example, when processing data for facial recognition. Faced with the problem of identifying a person's facial features, one has to take into consideration their eyes in 3D rectangular coordinate systems. Grayscale images highlight differences in intensity, which is vital in recognizing features like the eyes, nose, mouth or face as indicated in Figure 1.

Fig. 1. Persons detection by Artificial intelligence

The strategy in facial detection has moved from older generic methods such as manual feature extraction using edge detection and template matching to newer computer vision techniques were deep learning is used. One such case is the application of Feedforward Neural Networks (FNNN)[3]. This class of artificial neural networks has no cycles in the way nodes are interconnected. The FNNN structure is composed of input data, hidden layer(s), and output layer(s) leading to multi-layered processes which FNNN improve the speed in learning complex features of images. FNNN class of networks can increase the accuracy of facial detection by identification of facial components under difficult situations like occlusions and unidirectional lighting[4].

The use of FNNN in facial detection relies on its capability to automatically handle pixel data and identify relevant features for classification. The model's hidden layers can store higher-order information like edges, texture, and other facial features required to recognize faces across different situations[5]. Moreover, FNNNs may also be implemented with other deep learning models like Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) for better accuracy. Nevertheless, there are still open issues like excessive computation and dependence on pose and scale changes[6].

The integration of new hardware accelerators with AI techniques such as FNNN has improved facial detection and its applications in security monitoring, biometric authentication, and human-computer interaction to be enabled in real-time[7]. These advances provided the capability to implement facial detection systems in mobile devices and surveillance networks, improving security and the user experience. However, problems like biases in facial recognition models and performance drop-off in low-resolution images still pose challenges [8].

While much advancement has been achieved in facial detection technologies, issues still persist, especially pertaining to lighting variability, occlusions, and angle of the face. The accuracy of some techniques, like detecting faces in low contrast or cluttered pictures, often fail with the Viola-Jones algorithm. On the contrary, AI-based faces recognition systems have shown great results, but still require further optimization in order to work seamlessly in various scenarios[9].

This paper attempts to investigate the integration of deep learning frameworks, such as FFNNs, with classical ones including Viola-Jones algorithms, in order to enhance both precision and effectiveness of facial

recognition systems. With the combination of both techniques, the anticipated systems should be able to perform real-time face detection with high reliability and speed. In[10],.The research utilizes YOLOv5 object detection model for face detection. The authors of the paper proposes the enhancement of YOLOv5 configuration by including five point landmark regression head, which enables the model to detect facial images with large pose variations. Moreover, a stem block is added at the input of the backbone in order to improve the feature extraction and subsequently the performance of the model on the WiderFace dataset. The accuracy that the model obtains regarding face detection is remarkable, and the model is regarded as the state-of-the-art for face detection in challenging situations such as with varying facial expressions and poses. Ill, however, poses the challenge of depending on large, richly diverse datasets for training the model, as well as ample computational resources, rendering it impractical for real-time use on mobile devices or in resource-scarce settings.

In[11],The authors of this document developed a deep cascaded multi-task CNN framework to enhance face detection under very extreme conditions such as abrupt changes in illumination, heavy occlusions, and pose changes. The network is face detection based and predicts facial landmarks which improves localization of difficult conditions. Although this approach increases accuracy, it is still challenging when the face is severely occluded or when the lighting conditions are extreme. Furthermore, the model is complicated and consumes a lot of resources and needs a significant amount of labelled data to train, which renders it impractical for real world situations that demand rapid processing.

In[12],The work is dedicated to the study of faces produced with the aid of Generative Adversarial Network (GAN)-powered networks, which are now widely used for the creation of ultra-realistic dummy faces. The research divides the existing detection techniques into three groups: deep learning, physical, and psychological. It meticulously evaluates each of these approaches regarding their capabilities to identify strengths and weaknesses, and offers an analysis of attempts to detect faces created by GANs. However, this paper, while attempting to shed light on important problems within the field, has not put forth a novel detection technique, and the difficulty in recognizing faces created using GANs remains a problem owing to their ever-growing realism and diversity.

In[13],The article examines the effectiveness of different face detection algorithms in the detection of masked faces stemming from the issues that surfaced in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study analyses the degree to which the algorithms under examination could identify faces that are obstructed by masks which often conceal vital facial features, making detection complicated. The authors state that models fail to recognize masked faces and thus provide constructive feedback suggesting how these models can be improved. Nonetheless, the study remains restricted due to the datasets employed, as masks are designed in different styles and levels of coverage, which limits the scope of the findings. Moreover, some models have difficulty recognizing faces when facial coverage is substantial.

In[14],The paper offers a further approach towards the recognition of small faces in images with a complex background, low resolution, or crowded areas. The authors have designed a deep learning model that is based on RetinaNet in order to improve the recognition of faces that are small, occluded, and/or blurred. This approach employs a feature pyramid network (FPN) that is known to improve the performance of the algorithm across all face scales, especially smaller faces which are normally not detected in highly crowded places. Even though the method achieves good results, it is highly computationally intensive and thus not very efficient for real time applications. In addition, the model suffers in performance with large amounts of occlusion and constrained resolution images for feature extraction.

In[15],The mobile face recognition research proposes an optimized Mobile Face Net architecture for detecting and recognizing faces on mobile devices. The authors add affine transformations into the model to compensate for pose variations so that face detection can still be done even if faces are not positioned in the standard frontal orientation. Moreover, they also developed a face recognition method by applying a fully homomorphic encryption face image to ensure privacy during the recognition procedure. Despite how well the method works on mobile devices, it still suffers from the extremely posed faces outside the range

of effective affine transformations. Moreover, while the method does provide privacy, it does so at the cost of increasing the computation time making it harder to achieve real-time recognition.

In[16], The authors of the paper developed a face recognition system that combines 2D and 2.5D face data with the aim of achieving higher recognition accuracy, especially with changes in illumination. The system attempts to incorporate traditional 2D image data together with 2.5D depth data to construct the face in a more accurate way, thus enhancing robustness to known problems such as changes in illumination or partial occlusions of the face. The greatest advantage of this approach is that it does not rely on computers or software, However, the main limitation of this approach is the reliance on 2.5D sensing devices, which are not common in consumer electronics. Therefore, the system is not very practical for use in situations where only 2D images are captured. In addition, the fusion makes the system more difficult to process computationally.

In[17],The work aim to detect small faces in challenging images by using a RetinaNet based deep learning model. This approach enhances detection performance for difficult cases of small, occluded, or blurred faces detection. The model exploits the feature extraction capabilities of RetinaNet which allows more effective face detection in complex environments. Nonetheless, the method is not suitable for real-time processing, especially with high-resolution images, because of the high computational costs. Moreover, the model's performance is contingent on having an abundant supply of hard images for training, which is not always available.

In[18], propose a deep learning model called SFA detector which is designed for small face detection. The model employs a 4-branch detection architecture with small face-sensitive anchors, thus improving detection in difficult instances. The model employs multi-scale training strategies and has achieved state-of-the-art results on WIDER FACE and FDDB datasets, while still being able to process the data in real time.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section explains fundamental ideas and the required prior knowledge to comprehend the hybrid facial detection system. It covers basic algorithms, methods, and techniques like the Viola Jones algorithm, and Feed Forward Neural Networks (FFNN).

2.1. Viola-Jones Algorithm

The Viola-Jones algorithm is a well known and commonly deployed algorithm for face detection in images in real time as shown in figure 2. Its effectiveness and speed makes it a good fit for time sensitive environments.

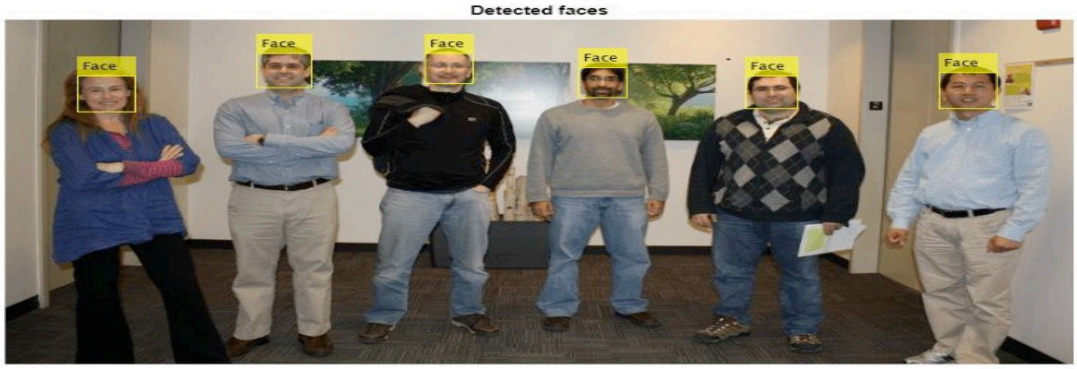

Fig. 2. Object detector uses Viola-Jones algorithm

It is composed of the following three parts:

- Haar-like Features : An Edge, line, and texture rectangular regions in images can be converted into simple rectangular parts in detection .
- Integral Image :This image enables retrieval of pixel values in rectangular shapes to be summed, making feature extraction very convenient.
- Cascade of Classifiers : A sequence of classifiers that focus on non-face regions in an incremental way, therefore concentrating the computational power on certain candidates of face locales.

The Viola-Jones algorithm works best under normal conditions but has trouble under low light, occluded objects, and extreme angles as these are more challenging .

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2.2. Feed Forward Neural Networks (FFNN)

A type of artificial NN known as FFNN allows information transmission strictly from the input layer via hidden layers towards the output layer. FFNNs can learn complex patterns from a given set of information hence enabling applications like face detection. For this type of architecture, the following features are typical :

-Input Layer :Takes pixel values or features processed previously from the image .

-Hidden Layers :These components construct other features such as edges, textures and pieces of face.

-Output Layer: Provides the ultimate classification (i.e., face or non face).

FFNNs are trained with supervised learning where labels are given and the objective is to reduce the error between the actual output and predicted output as much as possible. The network's weights are modified during training with the back propagation algorithm.the architecture of this network is shown in figure 3.

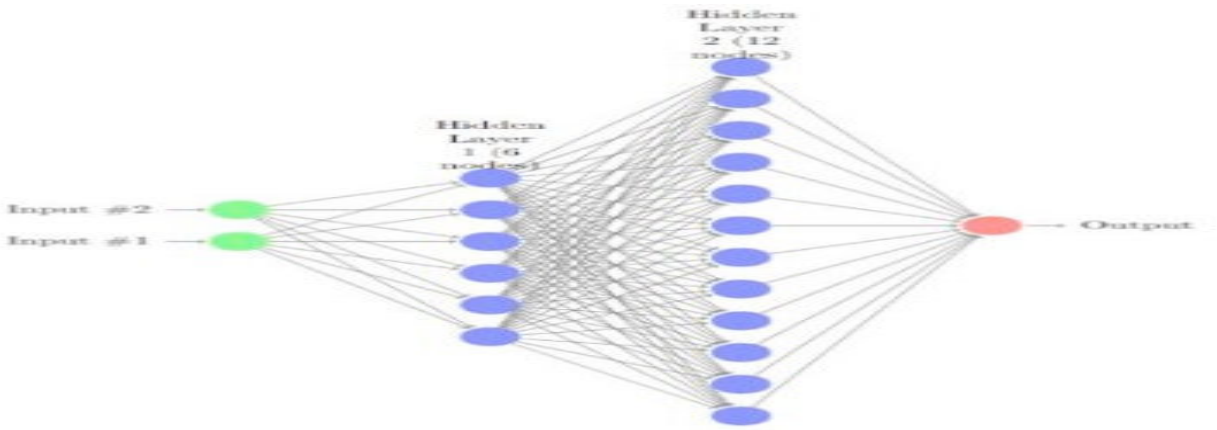

Fig.3. Feed-Forward Neural Network (FFNN) [19]

2.2. METHODS

The system integrates traditional software techniques and deep learning opportunities. It utilizes the Viola-Jones algorithm in combination with a Feed Forward Neural Network (FFNN). The Viola-Jones algorithm is set for first phase of face detection or bounding box face detection which is face region classification. The Feed Forward Neural Network implements feature extraction and categorization after

work of FFNN. The dataset was then split into 80% for training and 20% for testing to ensure proper model evaluation. Figure 4 shows the suggested system.

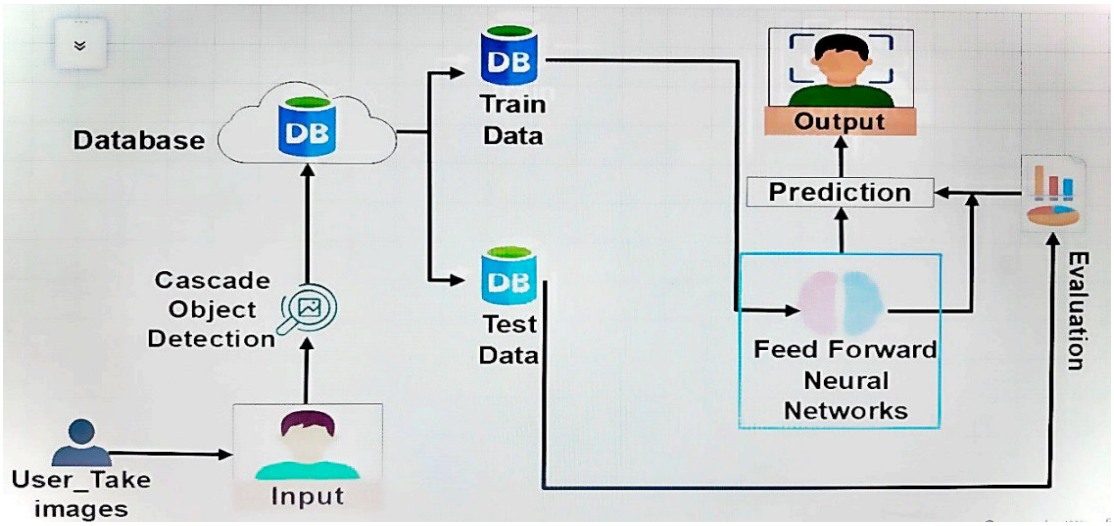

Fig.4. Proposed System architecture

The Proposed System architecture include the following steps:

2.2.1 Image Acquisition and Preprocessing

2.2.1.1 Image Acquisition

The system allows real-time capturing of images or video frames using a standard laptop camera which comes built-in with the system. At least 30 images are collected for every subject, and to ensure that an adequate sample size is collected, different conditions like expressions, facial angles, and lighting are considered.The images are organized in an orderly directory structure. Each person gets a subfolder under which all their images are stored, thus making it easier to find images belonging to specific individuals.

2.2.1.2 Image Preprocessing

1. Resizing: In order to maintain consistency with input size, normalized images are resized for all to a standard of 227x227 Pixels. This is extremely helpful for input into the neural networks where training gets easier with matching sizes.
2. Gray scale Conversion: In order to reduce the number of calculations needed to perform with these images, all coloured images are transformed into grayscale images. These images serve the important function of highlighting the variation in intensity which are highly necessary for identification of facial components like eyes, nose, mouth, etc.
3. Histogram Equalization: This allows for images that have low lighting or contrast to be clearer by enhancing their overall visibility and making their contrast a lot clearer when focusing on brighter regions. The intensity of the pixel reserved space is altered to ensure that the facial features are visible when zoomed to a degree.
4. Normalization: The pixel intensities are adjusted to fit within a particular boundary say [0,1] in order to attain stability across various datasets. This serves to ensure that the neural network trains better, further increasing it's performance by a large margin.

5. Edge Detection: Important facial features are processed using the Viola-Jones algorithm and FFNN Neural networks as the boundary and face contours are made clearer by the Canny or Sobel operators.

2.2.1.3 Face Detection Using Viola-Jones Algorithm

The Viola-Jones algorithm is the first step of the system, where potential face areas of the preprocessed images are detected. It is one of the automated face recognition strategies that has a fast processing speed and effectiveness for real time operations, thus suitable for the initial step of the task which is face localization.

2.2.1.4 Haar-*Like Features*

The algorithm employs Haar-like features to capture the structural information of a face, including edges and lines and other texture changes. For instance, an eye detection feature measures the intensity values associated with the pixels directly below and above an eye.
The feature value is calculated as:

$$F = \sum_{i \in R_1} I(i) - \sum_{i \in R_2} I(j) \qquad (1)$$

where regions R1 and R2 are rectangular portions of the image, while I(i) and I(j) are the pixel values in these rectangular regions.

2.2.2 Cascade of Classifiers

The Viola-Jones algorithm uses a cascade of classifiers for eliminating non-facial areas beyond recovery, but keeping them in the remaining facial areas for further investigation.
During every step, a classifier analyses a specific area:

$$H_i(x) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if region passes stage } i, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Only those areas that have successfully undergone all stages are considered faces. This type of design allows for most non-facial areas to be eliminated at early stages which increases the efficiency of the algorithm.
Visualization Detected face areas are enclosed with green rectangles for easier visual inspection. This step is useful in evaluating the performance of the Viola-Jones algorithm prior to sending the candidate regions to the FFNN for further examination.

2.3 Feed Forward Neural Network (FFNN) for Feature Extraction and Classification

Feature extraction for the candidate face regions obtained with the Viola-Jones algorithm is performed by the FFNN, which is the most important part of the system. The FFNN comprises 8 layer as follows:

1. Input Layer: Is tailored for images of dimension 227x227 pixels.
2. Fully Connected Layer: 1024 neurons, activation: ReLU.
3. ReLU Layer: Applies the Rectified Linear Unit (ReLU) activation function.
4. Fully Connected Layer: 512 neurons, activation: ReLU.

5. ReLU Layer: Another ReLU activation layer.
6. Fully Connected Layer: 2 neurons for binary classification (face vs. non-face.(
7. Softmax Layer: Assigns probabilities to the output.
8. Classification Layer: Makes the ultimate decision (face, or no face)

2.3.1 Training Process

During the training of the FFNN, labeled pictures that have face regions are used to, in a supervised learning fashion, train the network to reduce the difference between the outputs and the expected values .

The back propagation algorithm adjusts the network weights by the error gradients for each weight. The weights are updated using the Adam optimizer with a batch size of 64 and an L2 regularization (λ=0.0001) to avoid overfitting.

The training procedure takes 20 epochs, during which the model accuracy and loss are evaluated after every iteration.In tems of Training Performance,as the training progresses, the accuracy of the model improves from almost 50% to slightly over 97% towards the end of the 20 epochs.The training loss also decreases drastically, and starts approaching zero by the last epoch, suggesting that the model has learned the face recognition tasks sufficiently well. Figure 5 depicts the training progress of the model over 20 iterations. The graph includes accuracy and loss as two critical measurements. The accuracy which is shown using a blue line starts from around 50% and with time increases to over 98% towards the end of the model training. On the other hand loss is argued by an orange line which also starts from 50% but over time keeps decreasing and almost reaches 0 as the model learns to recognize faces proficiently.This explains the noticeable improvement in the model performance for image classification. The model achieves better accuracy and lower loss as the network progressively learns from the data.

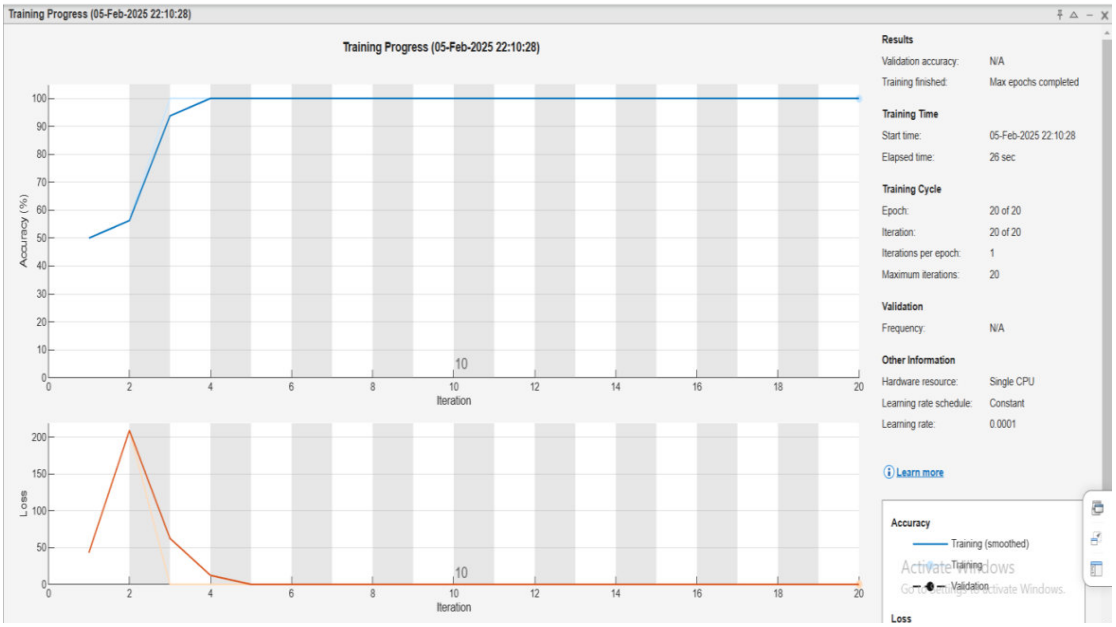

Fig.5. Training Progress

an image input layer configured for input images of size [227 227], followed by a fully connected layer with 1024 neurons, a relu layer, another fully connected layer with 512 neurons, a second relu layer, a fully connected layer with 2 neurons for binary classification, a SoftMax layer, and a classification layer for the final output. Training options, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Hyper parameters

Name	Size
Input Size	[277 ,277]
Batch Size	64
Optimizer	Adam
Activation functions	ReLU and SoftMax
Epochs	20
Regularization(L1 or L2)	L2(0.0001
Num. Images	200
Gradient Decay Factor	0.9

2.3.2 Testing and real-time performance

The model is deployed on the laptop and tested in real-time using the webcam. The Viola-Jones algorithm finds faces in the detections in the video frames, and the FFNN does the classification of the faces The system marks the spatial location of the detected faces with bounding boxes; and the model confidence scores are provided with these bounding boxes to indicate the model certainty in the classification. Detected faces are immersed within these bounding boxes while the confidence score is shown however, when the system detects no face the user is shown the message - No face is detected and hence the user is informed on the current detection state.in terms of Testing Performance, while testing in real-time, the system was able to accurately detect and classify faces. Moreover, the model had a high confidence for face detection which gave a higher model prediction accuracy.The system managed to efficiently deal with changes in lighting, angles, and even partial obstructions, confirming its effectiveness in varying environments.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. RESULTS

3.1. 1 System Execution Time Performance

Execution time metrics is critical for evaluating the system's ability to handle image and video stream data in real time applications. The execution time used metrics are frame rate (FPS) and latency time, which check the system's capability of face detection and classification in the live video feeds. Surveillance, biometric authentication, and interaction with computers by humans are some of the fields that require high frame rates and low latency because delays can reduce quality of service significantly. Table 3 shows the execution time of the system.

Table 2. System latency Results

Metric	Value	Explanation
Frame Rate	$15 - 20$ FPS	Number of frames processed per second during real-time (FPS) testing.
Latency	$50 - 70$ milliseconds	Time taken to process a single frame.

As shown in table 3 , The system's frame rate of 15-20 FPS is enough for real time purposes like video

surveillance and facial recognition. The 50-70 milliseconds of system latency also guarantees real time feedback necessary for biometric authentication.

3.1.2 System Robustness

Evaluate the system's performance under a different lighting condition, face angle, or occlusion scenario. The Robustness assist in assessing how a system is capable of dealing with real-life problems which are not so good. A system can be considered robust if it can achieve accurate outcomes in most difficult settings, like low-lighting, extreme angles, and partial occlusion. Adversarial attacks seek to distort input images with the aim of fooling the facial detection system. This can include adding some form of noise, perturbation, or modification so subtle that the human eye cannot detect them, yet causes the system to misclassify or completely overlook a face. Testing a system's stability and security against adversarial attacks is critical in deciding how effective the system will be in the face of security challenges. Table 4 shows the system robustness results under different types of attacks.

Table 4: System Robustness Results

Attack Type	Accuracyy	Explanation
Adversarial Noise	90%	Accuracy when random noise is added to the input image.
Perturbations	88%	Accuracy when small perturbations are applied to the input image.
Adversarial Patches	85%	Accuracy when adversarial patches (e.g., stickers) are added to the input image.

As outlined in the table 4, when random noise was introduced to the input image, the system still maintained an accuracy of 90%, thereby demonstrating its resilience to minor noise. When small perturbations were executed, the system achieved an accuracy of 88%, which demonstrated the system's tolerance to slight changes in the input. Also With the introduction of adversarial patches like stickers or small objects on the input image, the system achieved an accuracy of 85%, thus showing the system's efficiency even under more sophisticated attacks.

3.2. DISCUSSION

In order to assess the efficacy of the sponsored facial detection system, it must be evaluated against baseline models. We employed both techniques separately and evaluated them individually on the proposed facial detection system before merging them as suggested. This analysis reveals the shortcomings as well as the merits of the proposed system vis-a-vis existing solutions so that one understands its benefits and shortcomings with ease The primary parameters considered for comparison are the following :

- Accuracy: The system's capability to properly recognize and categorize faces.
- Processing Time: The duration needed to process a specific image or video frame.
- Memory Usage: The quantity of memory used while performing a task.
- Robustness to Variations: How the system works under difficult circumstances like changes in illumination, occlusions, and even system attempts at sabotage.Table 5 shows the results of comparison.

Table 5. Comparison with Baseline Models results

Attack Type	Accuracy	Explanation
Adversarial Noise	90%	Accuracy when random noise is added to the input image.
Perturbations	88%	Accuracy when small perturbations are applied to the input image.
Adversarial Patches	85%	Accuracy when adversarial patches (e.g., stickers) are added to the input image.

As shown in table 5, Tracking the achieved accuracy of the proposed system against the two baselines, which include Viola-Jones by itself and the two CNN based systems, gave valuable understanding on the merits, drawbacks and compromises of each technique. The review centres on how the suggested system does in comparison to these baselines with regard to accuracy, memory storage, computational efficiency, and robustness.

In summary, the designed system presents a viable and efficient option for facial detection that is accurate, real-time, and robust to variation. Such impressive features make it suitable for deployment in diverse applications such as security, surveillance, biometric verification, and human-computer interaction. Further developments could improve the system's functionalities, leading to the creation of more sophisticated and dependable facial detection systems.

4. CONCLUSIONS

A hybrid face detection system using Viola-Jones and a Feed Forward Neural Network (FFNN) is proposed in this paper. The system performs exceptionally well in detecting faces with varying illumination, facial angles, and known occlusions. This system, which uses the Viola-Jones algorithm for face localization and the FFNN for feature extraction and classification, increases both accuracy and efficiency for real-time applications, including security surveillance, biometric identification, and human-computer interaction. In addition, the system is resistant to noise, compression artefacts, and adversarial attacks which makes it more practical for real-world use.In comparison with the Viola-Jones face detection algorithm and other traditional techniques, the proposed system is more accurate and robust to environmental changes, making it suitable for portation on mobile devices and embedded systems. The focus of future work may be on improving data collection from different ethnic groups, applying more complex deep learning approaches such as CNNs in order to increase precision, and making the system more compact for low resolution images. These changes would make the system more usable in a wider range of practical applications.

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3.3 LIMITATIONS

Despite the promising performance of the proposed hybrid face detection system, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the reliance on Viola-Jones for initial face localization makes the system sensitive to extreme pose variations and low lighting conditions. Second, the FFNN component, while faster and simpler than CNNs, may not generalize well to heavily cluttered scenes or datasets with high intra-class variability. Third, the system currently depends on a manually collected dataset and has not been validated on large-scale public datasets. Lastly, the current implementation has limited optimization for embedded or mobile deployment, which can be addressed in future work.