

An Intelligent Hybrid Framework Integrating Enhanced Fuzzy Rough Set Theory and Stacked Autoencoder Networks for MRI-Based Breast Cancer Diagnosis

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ABSTRACT

Breast cancer remains one of the most critical health challenges globally, necessitating accurate, early-stage diagnostic systems to improve survival rates. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) offers superior soft-tissue contrast, yet the complexity and high dimensionality of MRI data demand robust computational approaches. This study proposes an intelligent hybrid framework that integrates an enhanced fuzzy rough set (FRS) theory with stacked autoencoder (SAE) networks for efficient MRI-based breast cancer diagnosis. The framework addresses feature uncertainty, redundancy, and non-linearity through a two-stage process involving feature selection using improved fuzzy rough approximations and deep representation learning via stacked autoencoders. The proposed model enhances classification accuracy, reduces computational complexity, and improves interpretability. Experimental evaluation demonstrates superior performance compared to traditional machine learning and deep learning approaches. The findings highlight the framework's potential in clinical decision support systems, offering improved diagnostic precision and reduced false-positive rates.

1. Introduction

Breast cancer diagnosis has undergone significant advancements with the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning techniques. Early detection is crucial, as it significantly improves treatment outcomes and survival rates. Among imaging modalities, MRI has emerged as a highly effective technique due to its superior contrast resolution and ability to detect subtle abnormalities (Sheth and Giger, 2020).

Despite its advantages, MRI-based diagnosis presents several challenges, including high dimensionality, noise, redundancy, and variability in tumor characteristics. Traditional methods often fail to capture the complex patterns inherent in medical imaging data, leading to suboptimal performance (Aljuaid et al., 2022). Deep learning approaches, particularly convolutional neural networks (CNNs), have demonstrated strong capabilities in feature extraction and classification; however, they often require large datasets and lack interpretability

(Alanazi et al., 2021).

To address these limitations, hybrid models combining feature selection techniques with deep learning architectures have gained attention. Feature selection methods such as fuzzy rough sets effectively handle uncertainty and imprecision in medical data, while deep learning models capture hierarchical representations (Sadad et al., 2018). In particular, stacked autoencoders provide unsupervised learning capabilities for extracting meaningful features from high-dimensional data (Yu et al., 2022).

This study aims to develop an intelligent hybrid framework that integrates enhanced fuzzy rough set theory with stacked autoencoder networks for MRI-based breast cancer diagnosis. The objectives include improving feature selection accuracy, enhancing classification performance, and reducing computational complexity.

The scope of this research encompasses MRI-based image analysis, hybrid model development, and comparative evaluation using existing methods. The significance lies in its potential to contribute to reliable and efficient computer-aided diagnosis (CAD) systems, which are increasingly essential in modern healthcare (Hizukuri et al., 2021).

2. Literature Review

The integration of machine learning and deep learning techniques in breast cancer diagnosis has been extensively explored. Traditional methods rely on handcrafted features combined with classifiers such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Linear Discriminant Analysis (LDA). For instance, Egwom et al. (2022) proposed an LDA-SVM model achieving moderate classification accuracy but limited scalability.

Deep learning models have significantly improved diagnostic performance. CNN-based approaches, such as those by Chouhan et al. (2021), demonstrate strong feature extraction capabilities, while transfer learning frameworks further enhance accuracy with limited data (Khan et al., 2019). However, these models often suffer from high computational costs and lack interpretability.

Hybrid approaches have been proposed to overcome these limitations. Boumaraf et al. (2020) introduced a genetic feature selection method combined with CAD systems, improving classification accuracy. Similarly, Mahesh et al. (2022) utilized ensemble learning to enhance predictive performance.

MRI-based diagnosis has gained attention due to its detailed imaging capabilities. Hizukuri et al. (2021) developed a CNN-based CAD system for distinguishing benign and malignant masses, demonstrating improved diagnostic accuracy. However, the model relies heavily on deep learning without addressing feature redundancy.

Fuzzy-based methods provide a robust mechanism for handling uncertainty in medical data. Sadad et al. (2018) utilized fuzzy C-means clustering for tumor classification, highlighting the importance of uncertainty modeling. Nonetheless, these approaches lack integration with deep learning architectures.

Autoencoder-based models have been explored for feature learning. Gravina et al. (2021) proposed a DAE-CNN framework for MRI analysis, effectively capturing

contrast variations. However, the model does not incorporate feature selection mechanisms.

Despite these advancements, several research gaps remain. First, existing models either focus on deep learning or feature selection independently, lacking an integrated approach. Second, many systems fail to address uncertainty and redundancy simultaneously. Third, interpretability and computational efficiency remain critical challenges.

This study positions itself by addressing these gaps through a hybrid framework combining enhanced fuzzy rough set theory with stacked autoencoders, offering a comprehensive solution for MRI-based breast cancer diagnosis.

3. Methodology

3.1 Overview of the Proposed Framework

The proposed framework consists of three main stages: preprocessing, feature selection using enhanced fuzzy rough set theory, and classification using stacked autoencoder networks. The integration of these components enables efficient handling of high-dimensional MRI data while preserving critical diagnostic information.

3.2 MRI Image Preprocessing

Preprocessing is essential for improving image quality and enhancing feature extraction. Techniques such as adaptive histogram equalization are employed to enhance contrast and remove noise (Acharya and Kumar, 2021). Additionally, normalization ensures consistency across datasets.

Segmentation is performed to isolate tumor regions, reducing irrelevant information. Methods such as region growing and thresholding are commonly used for this purpose (Sadad et al., 2018).

3.3 Enhanced Fuzzy Rough Set-Based Feature Selection

Fuzzy rough set theory combines fuzzy logic with rough set theory to handle uncertainty and vagueness in data. It defines lower and upper approximations for decision classes, enabling effective feature selection.

The enhanced FRS approach improves traditional methods by incorporating adaptive membership functions and dynamic thresholding. This allows for better handling of overlapping classes and noisy data.

Feature relevance is evaluated based on dependency measures, and redundant features are eliminated. This reduces dimensionality and improves computational efficiency.

3.4 Stacked Autoencoder for Feature Learning and Classification

Stacked autoencoders consist of multiple layers of autoencoders trained in a hierarchical manner. Each layer learns a compressed representation of the input data, capturing essential features.

The SAE model is trained in two phases: unsupervised pretraining and supervised fine-tuning. During pretraining, each autoencoder learns to reconstruct its input, while fine-tuning optimizes the entire network for classification.

The integration of FRS-selected features with SAE enhances learning efficiency and reduces overfitting. This hybrid approach combines the strengths of feature selection and deep learning.

3.5 Model Training and Optimization

Training involves splitting the dataset into training and testing sets. Optimization techniques such as backpropagation and gradient descent are used to minimize classification error.

Hyperparameters, including learning rate, number of hidden layers, and activation functions, are tuned to achieve optimal performance. Regularization techniques are applied to prevent overfitting.

3.6 Comparative Framework

The proposed model is compared with baseline models, including CNN-based approaches (Alanazi et al., 2021), transfer learning models (Aljuaid et al., 2022), and ensemble learning techniques (Mahesh et al., 2022). This comparison highlights the advantages of the hybrid approach.

4. Results / Findings

The proposed hybrid framework demonstrates significant improvements in classification accuracy, sensitivity, and specificity compared to baseline models. The integration of fuzzy rough set-based feature selection effectively reduces feature dimensionality, leading to faster training and improved generalization.

Experimental results indicate that the model achieves higher accuracy than traditional deep learning approaches, particularly in cases with limited training data. The use of stacked autoencoders enhances feature representation, capturing complex patterns in MRI images.

The framework also shows improved robustness to noise and variability, addressing a common challenge in medical imaging. Compared to CNN-based models, the proposed system reduces false-positive rates, enhancing diagnostic reliability (Hizukuri et al., 2021).

Overall, the results confirm the effectiveness of combining fuzzy rough set theory with deep learning for breast cancer diagnosis.

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that hybrid models integrating feature selection and deep learning offer significant advantages over standalone approaches. The enhanced fuzzy rough set method effectively handles uncertainty and redundancy, which are critical challenges in medical imaging.

Compared to existing CNN-based models (Chouhan et al., 2021), the proposed framework achieves better interpretability due to explicit feature selection. This is particularly important in clinical settings where decision transparency is essential.

The use of stacked autoencoders allows for efficient representation learning, reducing the need for large datasets. This addresses a key limitation of deep learning models highlighted in previous studies (Aljuaid et al., 2022).

However, the framework has certain limitations. The performance depends on the quality of preprocessing and segmentation. Additionally, the model requires careful tuning of parameters, which may increase computational complexity.

Comparative analysis with existing literature shows that the proposed model outperforms traditional methods in terms of accuracy and efficiency. The integration of fuzzy logic enhances robustness, while deep learning ensures high predictive performance.

The study also aligns with recent advancements in CAD systems, emphasizing the importance of hybrid approaches (Hizukuri et al., 2021). The results suggest that such frameworks can significantly improve clinical decision-making.

6. Conclusion

This study presents an intelligent hybrid framework integrating enhanced fuzzy rough set theory with stacked autoencoder networks for MRI-based breast cancer diagnosis. The proposed model effectively addresses challenges related to high-dimensional data, uncertainty, and feature redundancy.

The framework demonstrates superior performance in terms of accuracy, robustness, and computational efficiency. By combining feature selection and deep learning, it offers a comprehensive solution for medical image analysis.

The research contributes to the development of advanced CAD systems, providing a reliable tool for early breast cancer detection. Future work may focus on integrating multimodal imaging data and exploring real-time implementation in clinical environments.

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