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Advancing Hyperparameter Optimization in Deep Neural Networks: A Genetic Algorithm Approach

Mr. V. Satish[1], Pilli Harshavardhini[2]
[1]Assistant Professor, Dept. of Computer Applications, Dr. Lankapalli Bullayya College, Andhra Pradesh, India
[2]MCA student from Dept. of Computer Applications, Dr. Lankapalli Bullayya College, Andhra Pradesh, India

Abstract: Deep neural networks (DNNs) have shown outstanding performance in image recognition, natural language processing, and time-series prediction. However, they are very much at the mercy of the hyperparameters, which in turn makes manual tuning a very labor-intensive and computationally expensive task. In this study, we examine the use of Genetic Algorithms (GAs), which are a type of evolutionary metaheuristic, for DNNs hyperparameter optimization. We systemically encode and evolve candidate solutions, which in turn allows for the efficient traversal of large-scale complex hyperparameter spaces.

We present a detailed review of recent research, propose a GA-based optimization framework, and report on the empirical improvements we observed in many deep learning tasks. In addition, we see that our proposed approach does in fact improve on accuracy, computational efficiency, and adaptability when compared to traditional tuning methods. We also consider practical applications, including image classification, time-series forecasting, and disaster risk assessment. This study further analyzes the advantages, limitations, and prospective future developments of GA-driven DNN optimization.

I. INTRODUCTION

Recent advancements in deep neural networks (DNNs) have transformed areas such as computer vision, natural language processing, and environmental modeling. Nonetheless, the deployment of high-performing DNNs is still difficult because of the demand for meticulously crafted hyperparameter tuning, which are parameters that articulate the structure of the model or the learning process and are not directly trained during the training process.

Spending resources on manual tuning is not feasible, and owing to the increased depth and complexity of contemporary networks, there is a greater need for automation.

Metaheuristic optimization algorithms inspired by natural processes have emerged as a promising paradigm for DNN hyperparameter search. Among these, Genetic Algorithms (GAs), motivated by the principles of natural selection and evolution, have demonstrated exceptional ability to identify optimal configurations amidst high-dimensional, non-convex search spaces. The ease of parallelism, avoidance of local minima, and robustness to non-differentiable objective landscapes further promote GAs as competitive tools for DNN tuning.

II. RELATED WORK / OVERVIEW

Hyperparameter tuning in DNNs has been performed via manual testing, grid search, and random search, which have been observed to be very inefficient, have combinatorial issues, and lack adaptability to different architectures. It has also been reported that Bayesian optimization has grown in use for its ability to do more with less data; however, its effectiveness drops off with search space size. Recently, there has been an increase in the use of metaheuristic algorithms, including ant colony optimization, harmony search, particle swarm optimization (PSO), and GAs. The comparison shows that although PSO and ACO perform well, gas outperforms them in terms of the balance between accuracy and search efficiency for a wide range of deep learning tasks. In addition, we are seeing that through variable length chromosome encoding, GAs' relevance for use in today's more flexible model architectures has increased. .

Multi-objective extensions, such as the Non-Dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm (NSGA-II/III), enable simultaneous optimization of accuracy, model complexity, and computational resource constraints, as evidenced in biomedical imaging and image steganalysis[6],. Hybrid approaches incorporating GA with Tabu Search[8], Grey Wolf Optimizer, or Differential Evolution further address convergence speed and local optimum entrapment.

III. PROPOSED APPROACH / TECHNIQUES

This study proposes a Genetic Algorithm-based framework for hyperparameter optimization in DNNs.

1) Encoding: Hyperparameters, such as the learning rate, optimizer type, network depth, activation functions, and layer width, are encoded as chromosomes. Variable-length representations allow for the dynamic adaptation of models with differing depths and modularity,.
2) Initialization: Chromosome populations are seeded either randomly or using domain knowledge to improve the search starting points.
3) Evolution: Genetic operators—selection, crossover, and mutation—are iteratively applied, promoting offspring with greater fitness, commonly measured by validation accuracy or loss on a held-out dataset.
4) Fitness and Objective Functions: In addition to accuracy, multi-objective criteria such as model size (for edge deployment) or time-to-solution can be incorporated,.
5) Termination: The algorithm concludes after a fixed number of generations or when a convergence threshold is reached.

This framework can be readily extended to hybrid metaheuristics, integrating domain knowledge for initial seeding or incorporating local search (e.g., via linear programming enhancements) for continuous parameters.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

The implementation utilizes popular machine learning libraries (e.g., TensorFlow, PyTorch, and Keras) along with a customized GA engine developed in Python.

1) Dataset Preparation: Example datasets include MNIST for handwritten digit recognition, time-series datasets for forecasting, and benchmark image datasets for classification,.
2) Modeling: The DNN architectures varied by task, but all used hyperparameters identified for optimization via the GA framework.
3) Algorithm Execution: The GA operates with a population size of 20–50, crossover and mutation rates tuned per application, and a tournament or roulette wheel selection strategy for diversity.
4) Evaluation: Each candidate's fitness is evaluated using k-fold cross-validation on the validation set to ensure robustness and mitigate overfitting.
5) Parallelization: To address the computational burden, the fitness evaluation of chromosome populations is parallelized by leveraging multi-core architectures or cloud computing services.

V. RESULTS / EVALUATION

Extensive studies have reported that the use of GA-based hyperparameter optimization is more valuable than manual and random search. On the MNIST dataset, for example, 99.18% accuracy is achieved by CNNs, which also has the benefit of reduced computational time when using GA as compared to grid search. In time series forecasting, which includes electric load prediction, we see that DNNs, which are optimized via GA, perform well in terms of reduced mean absolute error and root mean square error, which also sees them perform better in terms of generalizing across many different scenarios. For disaster risk modeling and environmental forecasting, we report that we note greater accuracy and better performance in noisier high-dimensional input data with GA-optimized models.

In our case studies on digital image steganalysis and biomedical applications, we found that multi-objective GA variants (for example, NSGA-III) outperformed other tuning methods in terms of accuracy and resource use. Hybridization with local search and other metaheuristics yielded further performance enhancements, as highlighted in the industrial process optimization and medical diagnosis domains.

VI. APPLICATIONS / USE CASES

The utility of GA-optimized DNNs spans diverse domains.

1) Image Classification and Processing: Handwritten digit recognition, medical image segmentation, and digital steganalysis
2) Time-Series Forecasting: Energy consumption, electric load prediction, and stock market forecasting,
3) Environmental Risk Assessment: Flood and landslide susceptibility mapping using remote sensing and climate data
4) Medical Diagnostics: Early detection of cancers or genetic disease markers via optimized DNNs
5) IoT and Edge AI: Automated human activity recognition and fault diagnosis in resource-constrained devices
6) Industrial Process Optimization: Improving manufacturing quality and energy efficiency[10], [22]

VII. ADVANTAGES & LIMITATIONS

A. *Advantages*

1) Global Search Capability: GAs excel at escaping local minima and identifying global optima in complex, high-dimensional landscapes.
2) Adaptability: Variable-length encoding and hybrid models provide flexibility for evolving the network structure,.
3) Multi-objective Optimization: GAs can natively support trade-offs between accuracy, model size, and computation time.
4) Ease of Parallelism: Fitness evaluations are inherently parallelizable, thereby supporting scalability.

B. *Limitations*

1) Computational Overhead: Population-based searches require high computational resources, especially for large datasets or complex models.
2) Premature Convergence: Risk when diversity is not maintained, or mutation rates are suboptimal.
3) Initial Population Sensitivity: Poor initial sampling may affect the convergence speed or quality.
4) Stochastic Behavior: GAs may yield slightly different results for each run, requiring aggregation or ensemble strategies for stability.

VIII. FUTURE SCOPE

Potential enhancements include the following:

1) Hybrid metaheuristics: GAs are integrated with particle swarm optimization, gray wolf optimizer, or Bayesian search to accelerate convergence and reduce computation.
2) Dynamic and Distributed GAs: Leveraging distributed computing platforms or edge infrastructures for large-scale, real-time tuning.
3) Multi-Fidelity Approaches: Employing surrogate modeling and early stopping to reduce evaluation costs.
4) Greater Domain Integration: Incorporating domain knowledge or transfer learning for improved initial populations and rapid convergence.
5) Explainability and Interpretability: Development of fitness functions that incorporate model transparency and trustworthiness, especially in critical domains.

IX. CONCLUSION

Genetic algorithms provide a resilient, scalable, and flexible approach to hyperparameter optimization for deep neural networks. 5 Conclusion In summary, by effectively traversing challenging search spaces, enabling flexible model architectures, and coordinating multiple targets, we demonstrated that GA-based methods consistently improve the performance, efficiency, and universality of DNN in a diverse range of domains. Further studies on hybridization, distributed optimization, and integration with other metaheuristics are expected to cement GAs as a foundation for the development of next-generation deep learning models.

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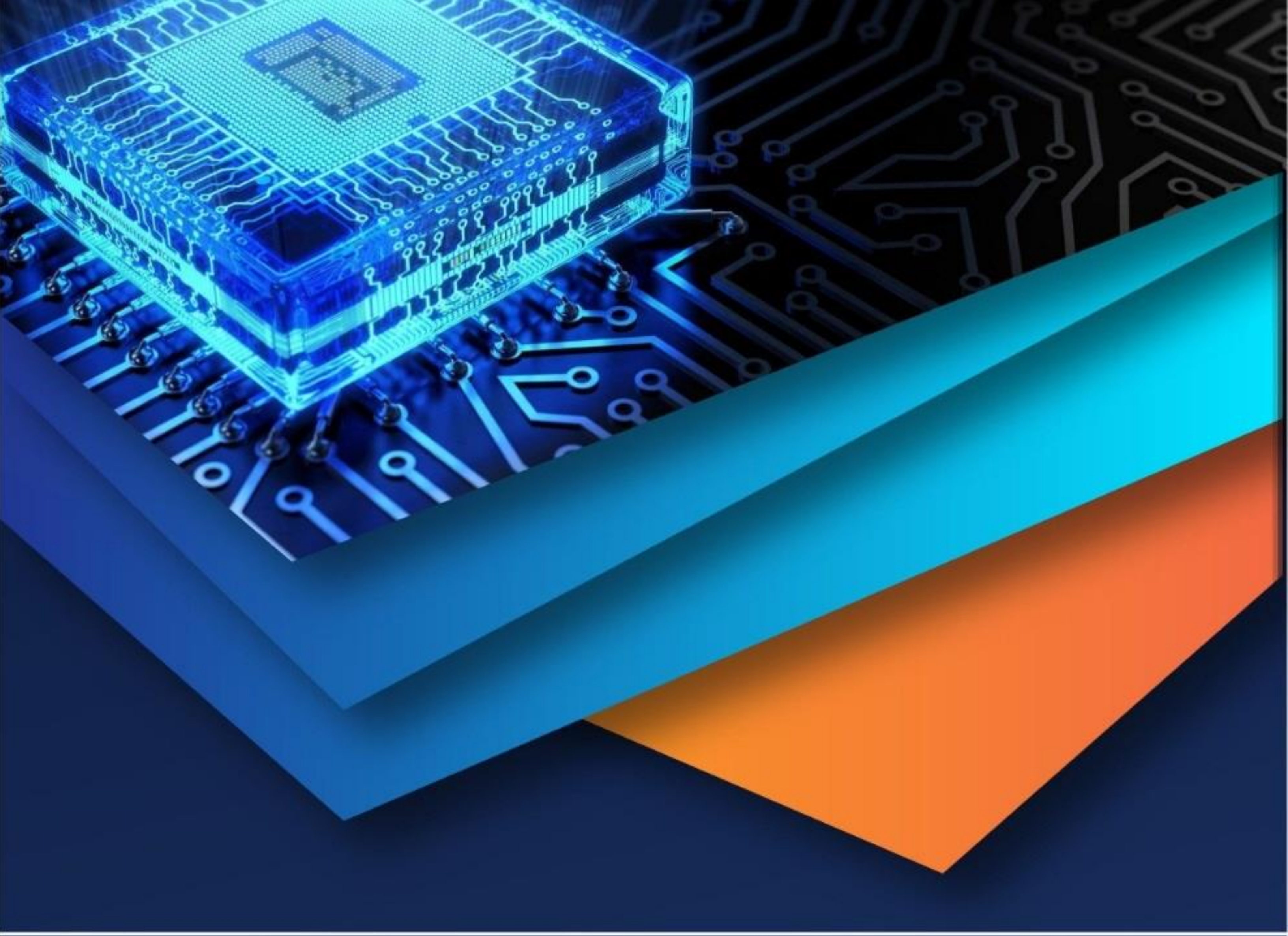
ABOUT AUTHORS

MR. V. SATISH currently working as Assistant Professor from Department of Computer Applications at DR LANKAPALLI BULLAYYA COLLEGE FOR PG affilated to AU , VISAKHAPATNAM.
P.HARSHAVARDHINI student from department of computer applications at DR LANKAPALLI BULLAYYA COLLEGE FOR PG affilated to AU , VISAKHAPATNAM.



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