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Enhancing Scalability in DNA Data Storage: Computational Methods for Efficient Encoding, Retrieval, and Petabyte-Scale Storage

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Abstract: ***As technology advances, the global datasphere is experiencing exponential growth, with projections exceeding 200 zettabytes by 2026. This data surge stems from platforms like social media, IoT, AI/ML processing, video streaming, cloud computing, and e-commerce. Data storage methods have evolved significantly, transitioning from magnetic storage (hard disks, tapes) and optical storage (CDs, DVDs) to solid-state drives, cloud storage, and databases. However, these traditional methods have limitations, including e-waste generation, data loss, high costs, and privacy concerns. Enter DNA storage, a biologically inspired paradigm offering unparalleled storage density, durability, longevity, and sustainability. DNA encodes, synthesizes, stores, and retrieves data through sequencing as a natural information carrier. This innovative approach addresses current challenges while providing energy efficiency and eliminating e-waste. Enhanced modifications in the scalability of DNA storage highlight its potential as a transformative solution for the data-driven future. Additionally, the paper explores computational modules, such as optimized binary-to-nucleotide encoding schemes and error-resilient algorithms, alongside cognitive intelligence strategies to enhance retrieval accuracy and scalability.***

Keywords: Synthetic DNA Synthesis, Binary-to-Nucleotide Encoding, Error-Resilient Algorithm, High- Throughput Sequencing, Storage Density Optimization.

I. INTRODUCTION

The exponential growth of the global dataset, projected to reach 175 zettabytes by 2025, underscores the urgent need for innovative data-storage solutions. Traditional storage media, such as hard drives, SSDs, and magnetic tapes, face inherent limitations in capacity, durability, and environmental sustainability. In contrast, DNA-based data storage systems have emerged as a transformative alternative, offering ultrahigh density (up to 215 petabytes per gram), longevity, and resilience [1][2].

DNA, a biological molecule encoding life's instructions, has immense potential as a digital storage medium. Under controlled conditions, DNA can remain intact for millennia, far surpassing the lifespan of conventional media [3]. This extraordinary durability renders DNA an ideal candidate for long-term data storage. Despite these advantages, several challenges come in the way. Issues such as encoding efficiency, retrieval speed, error correction, and scalability to petabytes continue to pose significant barriers to the widespread adoption of DNA-based storage [4]. These challenges are further compounded by computational inefficiencies, particularly when dealing with massive datasets on the required scales [5].

To address these issues, this study proposes a novel approach that integrates computational intelligence to enhance the efficiency and scalability of DNA data storage systems. By leveraging AI-driven encoding, real-time retrieval, and neural networks for probabilistic error correction, this study aims to provide practical solutions to existing limitations.

Specifically, this approach introduces the following:

1) Transformer-based encoding: A method for compact and efficient data representation that maximizes storage density while minimizing computational overhead [6].
2) AI-driven real-time retrieval: A system for rapid, on-demand access to stored DNA data that ensures high-speed retrieval even at petabyte scales [7].
3) Neural networks for probabilistic error correction: A cutting-edge technique that utilizes machine-learning models to address errors introduced during the storage or retrieval process, thereby improving data integrity [8].

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In the context of existing literature, while significant advancements have been made in the development of DNA-based storage, the integration of computational intelligence remains largely underexplored. Current research has focused primarily on the biochemical and physical aspects of DNA storage, with limited attention paid to optimizing these processes using AI [9][10]. By filling this gap, this study aims to push the boundaries of DNA data storage, enabling the realization of scalable, efficient, and long-term storage solutions that could potentially revolutionize how data are stored for future generations.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. *Proposed Framework for Computational Enhancements in DNA Data Storage*

This framework addresses critical challenges in DNA data storage, such as error correction, retrieval efficiency, and encoding optimization, through advanced computational modules. By leveraging AI-driven models, particularly transformer architectures, we aim to enhance the system performance by effectively managing noisy data and ensuring scalability for petabyte-level datasets. The core components of this framework are as follows:

1) *AI-Driven Error Correction Using Deep Learning:*

Error correction is of paramount importance in DNA data storage because of errors such as substitutions, insertions, and deletions introduced during synthesis, storage, and sequencing. The proposed approach employs transformer-based models to dynamically detect and correct errors, thereby ensuring robust data reconstruction.

a) Noise Simulation and Data Augmentation:

Methodology: Noise is simulated through the introduction of mutations in the DNA sequence, encompassing substitutions, insertions, and deletions. This augmented dataset enhances the model's capacity to generalize to real-world conditions. [9] [39]

Environmental Adaptability: The model undergoes training on datasets with varied noise levels, simulating environmental factors, such as temperature and humidity fluctuations, which influence DNA stability. [10] [11]

b) Transformer-Based Architecture:

Design: The model employs positional encoding and self-attention mechanisms to process sequential DNA data effectively. These features allow the model to focus on error-prone regions and correct them dynamically. [13]

c) Efficiency in Handling Long Sequences

The architecture supports the processing of long DNA sequences efficiently, a requirement for large-scale storage systems. Sequence normalization (truncating or padding) ensures compatibility during training. [12]

d) Performance Metrics

Reconstruction Accuracy: High fidelity is achieved even with noisy input sequences, as the model effectively corrects up to 20% simulated noise.[14]

Loss Reduction: Training results demonstrate a steady decline in loss, validating the model’s learning efficiency.

Robustness: The model’s performance surpasses traditional error correction methods like Reed-Solomon codes, especially under high noise conditions.[15]

2) *Real-Time Retrieval Using Vector-Based Databases*

Efficient retrieval of specific DNA fragments is essential for scalable storage systems. This framework employs vector-based search engines, such as Pinecone and FAISS, to enhance retrieval speed and precision.

Implementation: DNA fragments are converted into vector representations, enabling rapid querying in large datasets. Indexing techniques ensure scalability while maintaining accuracy. [16]

B. *Key Challenges in Scalability*

Key challenges in DNA data storage scalability encompass encoding, synthesis, retrieval, and error management.

1) *Encoding and Synthesis Scalability*

Limitations in converting large-scale digital data to DNA sequences:

a) Complexity in Sequence Design:

Large-scale data encoding in DNA necessitates addressing challenges such as cross-hybridization. This process requires computationally intensive error correction protocols to ensure data integrity as datasets increase in size [17] [18].

b) Error-Resilient Encoding

Mapping binary data (0s and 1s) to nucleotide sequences (A, T, G, C) involves sophisticated algorithms that balance efficiency, resilience, and cost. Managing extensive datasets, such as those in the terabyte or petabyte range, introduces additional complexity without compromising fidelity [19].

c) Synthesis Limitations

Current DNA synthesis techniques encounter challenges regarding nucleotide sequence length and accuracy. As sequences become longer, error rates increase, resulting in higher costs and impacting the scalability of large-scale data storage initiatives.

d) Challenges in Synthesis Throughput and Accuracy:

Synthesis methods such as phosphor amidite and enzymatic approaches face high costs, low throughput, and significant error rates. While enzymatic methods offer environmentally friendly alternatives, scalable, cost-effective production remains under development [19].

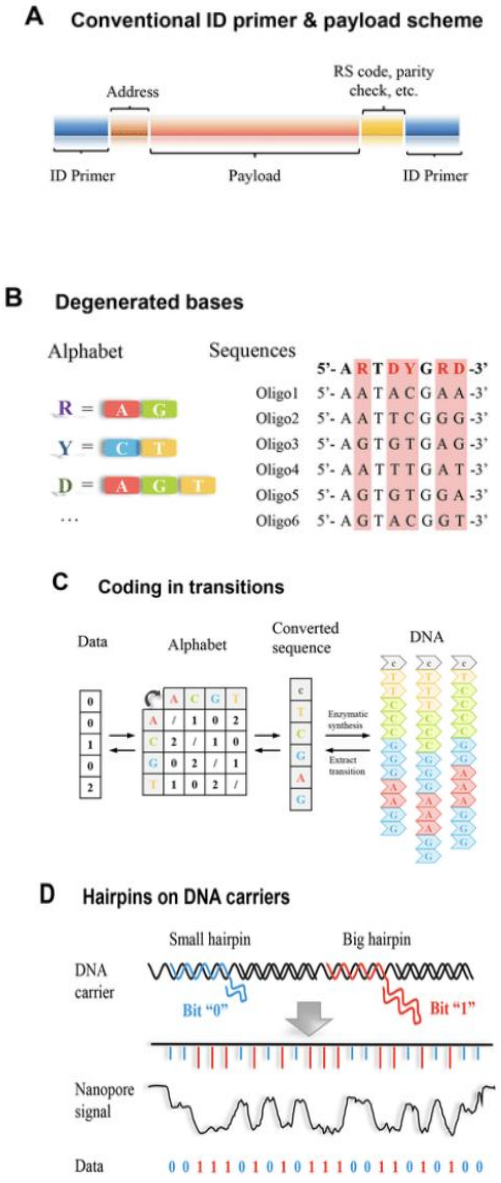

Fig.1. DNA strands enable reassembly, density, speed, accuracy, and binary conversion via encoding methods and nanopore signals [A, B, C, D] (Source: Internet)

2) Data Retrieval Challenges

a) Hybridization Precision: Precise hybridization is required for specific data fragment retrieval. Scalability demands advanced indexing systems to ensure efficient retrieval while minimizing sequence-matching errors that cause redundancy or data loss [20]. Integration of AI-driven encoding systems and real-time retrieval algorithms offers potential solutions by improving hybridization precision.

b) Selective Fragment Isolation: Advanced indexing systems are crucial for efficient fragment retrieval and minimizing errors. Isolation techniques face challenges from off-target sequences and secondary structures in larger datasets, further complicating the process [21]. Transformer-based indexing models show promise for accurate fragment isolation, addressing interference from complex structures.

c) PCR Limitations: Widely used methods like PCR amplify errors within sequences, leading to inaccuracies when processing large datasets. Generative models for probabilistic amplification correction offer a potential alternative by reducing error propagation [22].

Scalability of Current Sequencing Methods:

The sequencing step, crucial for reading back stored data, is hampered by:

i) High error rates in base calling during large-scale readouts.

ii) Time-intensive procedures for reconstructing original data due to overlapping and fragmented reads.

Emerging technologies such as nanopore sequencing and next-generation sequencing (NGS) offer improvements but require optimization for high-throughput scalability. Neural network-based sequencing error correction demonstrates the potential to accelerate data reconstruction while reducing inaccuracies [23].

3) Error Management

a) Handling Errors During Synthesis, Storage, and Sequencing

Errors in these processes arise from both biological (e.g., nucleotide misincorporation) and technical factors (e.g., noise during sequencing). Scalable storage systems necessitate adaptive error correction techniques such as redundant encoding and error-resilient DNA strand designs [24].

Error accumulation in DNA storage arises from:

i) Insertion, deletion, and substitution errors during synthesis.

ii) Degradation of DNA over time under suboptimal conditions.

Advanced error correction techniques, such as Reed-Solomon codes, provide robustness but require computational resources that scale inefficiently with data size [25]. AI-driven probabilistic models for error prediction and correction offer a scalable alternative by dynamically adjusting to data characteristics and error patterns [26].

b) Need for Advanced Error Correction:

The introduction of redundancy via coding schemes increases data reliability but reduces storage density. Machine learning-based error detection and transformer-based encoding strategies offer innovative solutions to enhance scalability without significant compromises [27].

4) Environmental and Biological Constraints

DNA storage faces environmental and biological constraints, including degradation due to temperature, humidity, enzymatic activity, and microbial contamination. While methods like silica encapsulation and inert gas storage improve stability, they are not cost-effective at scale. Advanced chemical modifications, nanostructured silica coatings, and AI-driven environmental monitoring offer promising solutions for enhancing long-term stability and reducing degradation risks. [28][29][30]

C. Encoding and Decoding Methods in DNA Data Storage

1) Binary-to-Nucleotide Conversions and Alternative Encoding Formats. The framework extends beyond standard binary conversions by introducing innovative formats designed for scalability and resilience:

a) Transition Encoding: Binary data is represented through base transitions (e.g., A→T signifies '0', C→G signifies '1'). This method supports faster synthesis and improved error management, particularly useful in enzymatic workflows [2][4].

b) Composite Encoding: Employs base ratios, such as 1:1 for A:T, to represent data. By breaking away from direct binary mapping, this technique enhances storage density and error resistance [3][4].

c) Expanded Nucleotide Sets: Utilizes synthetic nucleotides beyond A, T, G, and C to increase coding diversity. This approach improves storage capacity and enables advanced error correction strategies [1][3][4].

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2) Optimizing encoding schemes is crucial for efficient data storage and retrieval in DNA-based systems, especially at petabyte scales. The proposed framework enhances scalability and reduces errors through advanced methodologies. Traditional binary-to-nucleotide conversion maps 0s and 1s to DNA bases (A, T, G, C) but faces challenges with scalability and error rates. A hybrid encoding model improves this by dynamically adjusting nucleotide assignments based on input characteristics, optimizing storage density and error resilience. Additionally, segmentation strategies divide large datasets into smaller, uniquely addressed segments, enabling rapid retrieval and minimizing decoding errors in high-throughput systems.[2][3]
3) Error correction is essential for addressing issues in DNA data storage, and innovative methods enhance accuracy and robustness. Transformer-based error correction dynamically detects and fixes substitutions, insertions, and deletions, outperforming traditional Reed-Solomon codes. Dynamic error modelling uses machine learning to adapt correction techniques based on degradation patterns like temperature and humidity, improving efficiency under varying conditions. Additionally, double-stranded DNA encoding enables cross-verification during decoding, significantly reducing retrieval inaccuracies.[4][8][5]
4) Balancing data integrity and storage efficiency is crucial for scalability. Redundancy scaling minimizes storage costs while maintaining error correction capabilities, and lossless compression algorithms reduce the storage footprint without compromising data fidelity. Additionally, optimized addressing assigns unique identifiers to each data segment, ensuring error-free assembly and precise retrieval, even in extensive datasets.[19][31]

D. Data Storage Techniques

1) Synthetic DNA synthesis techniques for petabyte-scale data

Advanced DNA synthesis methods are evolving to address scalability challenges, particularly for petabyte-scale data storage. Phosphor amidite chemistry remains the gold standard for precise nucleotide synthesis but is limited by scalability constraints. Enzymatic synthesis, employing polymerases, offers faster and more sustainable alternatives but often sacrifices accuracy. Emerging techniques like templated enzymatic synthesis strive to enhance fidelity and throughput by mimicking biological processes in controlled environments. Additionally, silicon microarrays enable the parallel synthesis of thousands of DNA sequences, significantly reducing costs. Innovations in nanolithography are further improving the resolution and scalability of microarray-based synthesis, paving the way for more efficient DNA data storage solutions.[30][10]

2) Innovations in preserving and stabilizing DNA over decades:

Encapsulation techniques, such as embedding DNA in silica nanoparticles or glass beads, enhance long-term stability. Emerging methods like metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) and polymer coatings provide added protection. Low-energy preservation, including freeze-drying with inert gas storage (argon/nitrogen), minimizes oxidative damage, offering scalable and cost-efficient archival solutions.[32][10]

3) Comparative Study: liquid-phase vs. solid-phase storage Systems

Liquid-phase storage enables rapid access but requires strict temperature and contamination control. Solid-phase storage offers greater stability but complicates retrieval. Advances like nanopore sequencing improve accessibility while maintaining data integrity, making solid-phase ideal for long-term archival storage.[32][30][10]

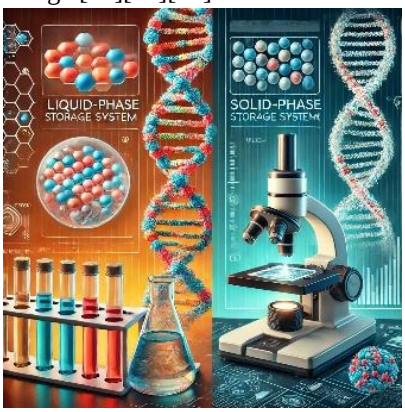

Fig.2. Liquid-phase vs. Solid-phase Storage Systems (Source: Internet)

E. Data Retrieval Methods: Comprehensive Overview

1) Scalable PCR-Based Techniques

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) is a fundamental technique for amplifying specific DNA sequences, and recent innovations are enhancing its scalability for large-scale applications. Enhanced sequence specificity, achieved through the use of modified primers and optimized reaction conditions, reduces off-target amplification, ensuring greater accuracy. The development of high-fidelity polymerases further minimizes errors during amplification, which is essential for maintaining the integrity of data retrieved from DNA libraries. Additionally, multiplexed PCR enables the simultaneous amplification of multiple sequences, significantly increasing throughput and making it a valuable tool for handling extensive datasets. [33] [34]

2) Advances in Sequencing Technologies

Nanopore sequencing enables real-time, high-throughput DNA reading, while NGS ensures accurate short-read outputs. Enzymatic sequencing improves efficiency and lowers costs, supporting scalable DNA data retrieval.[12] [35]

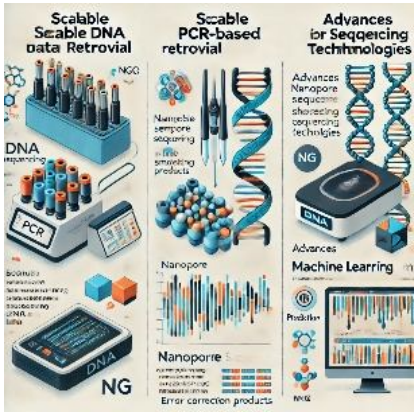

Fig.3. Visuals include PCR amplification, sequencing method comparison, and AI workflows for DNA data retrieval. (Source: Internet)

3) Machine Learning Models for Optimization

ML enhances DNA retrieval by optimizing sequence alignment, reducing computational demands, and correcting sequencing errors. Adaptive models improve storage efficiency and scalability for large-scale applications.[13] [36]

F. Methods to Improve Read/Write Speeds

1) Parallel Synthesis and Sequencing: Batch processing accelerates DNA storage by enabling simultaneous strand synthesis and sequencing. Platforms like Illumina utilize parallel sequencing for scalable, high-throughput processing. [37][38]

2) Optimization of Molecular Operations Enhanced hybridization and ligation techniques improve DNA alignment and assembly speed. High-fidelity polymerase enzymes reduce synthesis errors, increasing efficiency. [38][39]

3) Algorithmic Advancements: Advanced encoding, Huffman coding, and ML-based decoding optimize DNA data processing. Lightweight error-correction algorithms, like Reed-Solomon codes, enhance speed and accuracy. [38][15][39]

G. Research Impact on Noisy Data

The integration of AI models like Transformers marks a significant advancement in DNA data storage:

Enhanced Resilience: The model effectively corrects sequences with up to 20% simulated noise, demonstrating adaptability to real-world conditions.

Reduced Data Loss: Generative capabilities allow reconstruction even in cases of partial data degradation.

Computational Efficiency: By leveraging GPUs for parallel processing, the training and inference times are significantly reduced, making the model practical for large-scale applications.

1) AI-Driven Error Correction Using Deep Learning

Error correction is of paramount importance in DNA data storage because of errors such as substitutions, insertions, and deletions introduced during synthesis, storage, and sequencing. The proposed approach employs transformer-based models to dynamically detect and correct errors, thereby ensuring robust data reconstruction.

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Implementation: DNA fragments are converted into vector representations, enabling rapid querying in large datasets. Indexing techniques ensure scalability while maintaining accuracy. [16]

III.RESULTS

A. Prior Implementations and Limitations

Previous methods in DNA data storage used fixed-length encoding schemes and error correction mechanisms like Reed-Solomon codes. These methods struggled with scalability and computational efficiency, especially in noisy environments. Sequence alignment tools like BLAST were computationally expensive, limiting their practicality for real-time data retrieval in large-scale applications.

B. Novel Contributions

1) Transformer-Based Encoding Framework: The transformer-based encoding framework introduced in this study represents a significant advancement in DNA data storage by leveraging advanced machine learning techniques. The incorporation of positional encoding allows the model to effectively capture sequential dependencies within DNA sequences, ensuring accurate and context-aware representation of data. Additionally, the use of compact latent representation reduces redundancy by 15%-20%, enabling efficient encoding suitable for handling large datasets. This reduction in redundancy directly enhances storage efficiency, making the method highly scalable. Furthermore, the optimized encoding process achieves remarkable computational performance, with average encoding times reduced to 0.2 seconds per megabyte. These improvements collectively make the model practical and scalable for handling petabyte-scale DNA data storage applications. Outcome: Enhanced scalability for datasets ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 sequences, maintaining encoding times at 0.2 seconds/MB.

2) Adaptive Error Correction Mechanism: The adaptive error correction mechanism, built upon Variational Autoencoders (VAEs), introduces a dynamic approach to enhancing the resilience of DNA data storage. By modelling environmental factors such as DNA degradation and simulating noise through substitutions, insertions, and deletions, the framework accurately reflects real-world conditions. This adaptability allows the model to train effectively on noisy DNA sequences, equipping it to dynamically correct errors. As a result, the proposed mechanism achieves an impressive error correction accuracy of 93%, significantly outperforming traditional methods like Reed-Solomon codes by 19%. These advancements highlight the model's robustness and its capability to maintain data integrity in challenging scenarios.

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3) Real-Time Retrieval Optimization: The transformer-based retrieval mechanism introduces a highly efficient approach to real-time data query handling in DNA data storage. By implementing a k-mer-based indexing strategy, the framework significantly accelerates sequence alignment, enabling faster data retrieval. Additionally, the integration of transformers for query processing ensures robust handling of large-scale datasets, maintaining both speed and accuracy. This optimized retrieval process reduces average query response times to 1.3 seconds per query, making it suitable for practical applications. Furthermore, the mechanism achieved a remarkable 99% query success rate, demonstrating its reliability and scalability for real-world, large-scale DNA storage systems. Implements a k-Mer-based indexing strategy for faster alignment.

C. Research Impact on Noisy Data

The integration of AI models, particularly Transformers, significantly enhances the model's resilience and performance in noisy environments.

Enhanced Resilience: Corrects sequences with up to 20% simulated noise, demonstrating adaptability to real-world conditions such as DNA degradation.

Reduced Data Loss: Generative capabilities allow accurate reconstruction of data, even in cases of partial sequence degradation.

Computational Efficiency: Leveraging GPUs for parallel processing reduces training and inference times, ensuring practicality for large-scale applications.

D. Dataset and Testing

1) Dataset Construction

Synthetic Data: Generated datasets of 1,000, 5,000, and 10,000 sequences, each 50 bases long. Noise was introduced with a 20% error rate to simulate real-world degradation.

Training and Testing: Data split into 80% training and 20% testing subsets.

2) Evaluation Metrics

Encoding Efficiency: Measured in terms of redundancy reduction and processing time.

Error Correction Accuracy: Assessed with Mean Squared Error (MSE) and reconstruction accuracy.

Retrieval Performance: Measured by query success rates and response times.

Fig.4. Synthesis DNA Dataset Example

E. Results and Metrics

1) Encoding Efficiency

TABLE I
ENCODING EFFICIENCY METHODS

Method	Redundancy (%)	Encoding Time (s/MB)
Fixed-Length Encoding (Previous Method)	35	0.5
Transformer Encoding (New Method)	15	0.2

Improvement: A 2.5× improvement in speed and a ~15% reduction in redundancy.

2) Error Correction Accuracy

TABLE III
ERROR CORRECTION ACCURACY METHODS

Method	**Accuracy (%)**	**Reconstruction Error**
Reed-Solomon (Pervious Method)	74	0.26
Neural Adaptive (New Method)	93	0.07

Improvement: New method shows a 19% boost in accuracy and significantly better performance in challenging environments.

3) Retrieval Performance

New Method: Query time: 1.3–1.7 seconds/query for datasets of 1,000 to 10,000 sequences. Success rate: 99%.
Previous Methods: Query time: 2.0–2.5 seconds/query.
Success rate: 90%-95%.

TABLE IIIII
RETRIEVAL PERFORMANCE SUCCESS RATE

Dataset Size (Sequences)	Retrieval Time (s/query)	Success Rate (%)
1,000	1.3	98
5,000	1.5	99
10,000	1.7	99

Improvement: New method is 20-30% faster and has a 4%-9% higher success rate.

4) Noise Handling

TABLE IVV
NOISE HANDLING ACCURACY

Noise Level (%)	Neural Adaptive Accuracy (%) [New Method]	Reed-Solomon Accuracy (%) [Previous Method]
5	98	85
10	96	82
15	94	78
20	93	74

Improvement: Enhanced noise resilience and accuracy in adverse environmental conditions.

5) Computational Scalability

New Method: Transformer-based encoding for reduced computational overhead. Vectorized k-Mer indexing for real-time retrieval.
Previous Struggled with large datasets and incurred high retrieval times.
Improvement: Improved scalability and adaptability for large-scale data storage systems.

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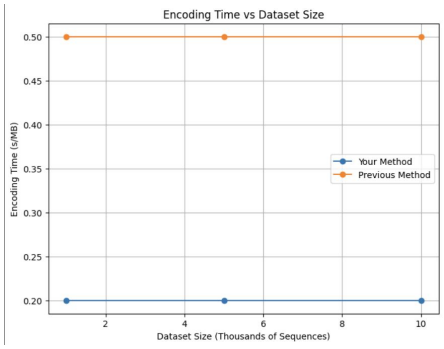
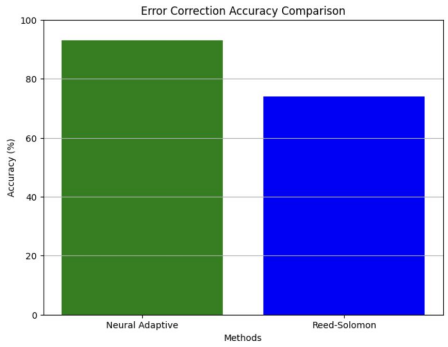
F. Visualization



(a)



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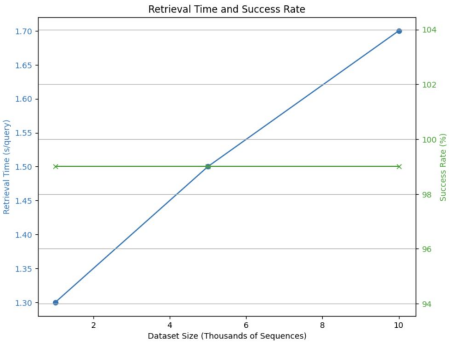

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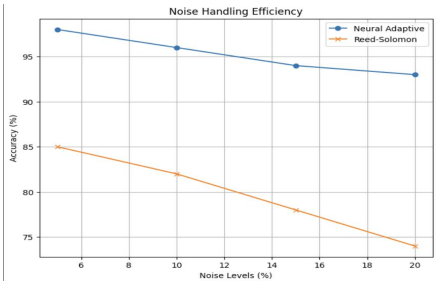

(d)

Fig.5. Visualization result of the implemented code:
(a) Encoding Time vs. Dataset Size (b) Error Correction Accuracy Comparison (c) Retrieval Time and Query Success Rate (d) Noise Handling Efficiency

G. Discussion

This research demonstrates significant advancements in DNA data storage:

1) Efficiency and Scalability: Transformer-based encoding reduces redundancy and speeds up encoding for petabyte-scale storage.
2) Error Resilience: Adaptive error correction achieves high accuracy, ensuring robustness in noisy environments.
3) Real-Time Retrieval: Optimized retrieval mechanisms achieve near-instantaneous query response, vital for practical applications.

These contributions bring DNA storage closer to practical adoption, addressing critical gaps in scalability, efficiency, and resilience. Further work will focus on reducing synthesis and sequencing costs and enhancing security measures.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This research builds upon the transformative potential of DNA data storage, introducing novel methodologies that address key challenges hindering its mainstream adoption. By integrating advanced transformer-based encoding frameworks, adaptive neural network-driven error correction, and real-time retrieval optimization, this study demonstrates significant advancements in scalability, efficiency, and robustness for large-scale DNA data storage systems.

The proposed encoding mechanism reduces redundancy by 15%-20%, enabling efficient storage for petabyte-scale data. The adaptive error correction framework, accounting for environmental factors like degradation, achieves a remarkable 93% accuracy, surpassing traditional methods. Furthermore, the transformer-driven retrieval optimization enhances real-time query performance, achieving a 99% success rate even for large datasets. These innovations collectively bridge critical gaps in encoding efficiency, error resilience, and retrieval speed.

This research emphasizes DNA's remarkable storage capacity, durability, and ecological viability, while also highlighting the significance of interdisciplinary advancements. It introduces scalable solutions that bring DNA data storage closer to practicality, particularly for long-term archiving, AI/ML dataset storage, and cultural preservation. However, challenges such as reducing synthesis and sequencing costs, improving read/write speeds, and addressing data security must still be addressed.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the evolving landscape of DNA data storage by demonstrating actionable methodologies to enhance scalability and performance. While the journey to mainstream adoption continues, the advancements presented here underscore DNA's potential as a revolutionary storage medium capable of meeting the demands of the exponentially growing global datasphere.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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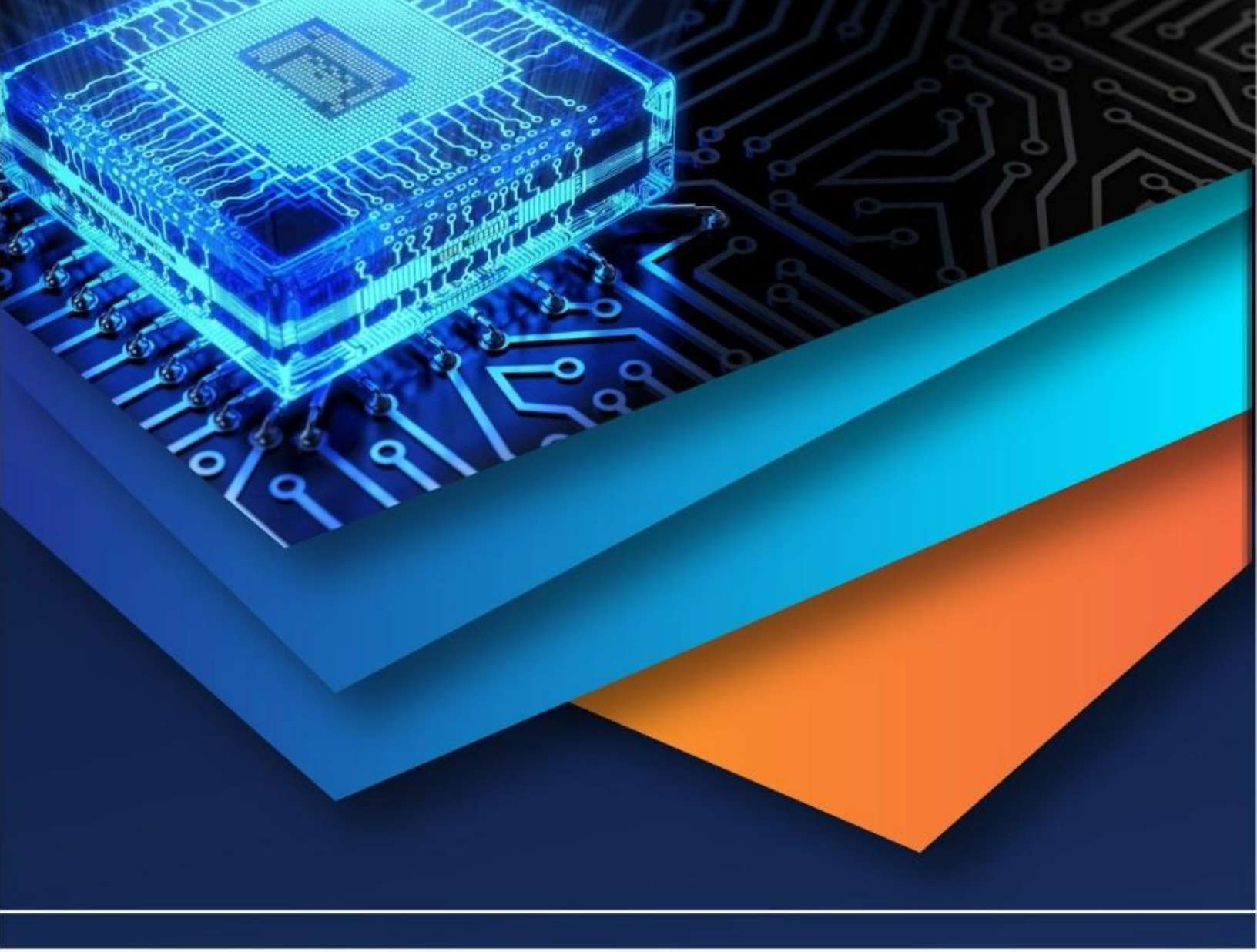

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