



AN ENHANCED HYBRID MODEL COMBINING LSTM, RESNET, AND AN ATTENTION MECHANISM FOR CREDIT CARD FRAUD DETECTION

*¹Umaru, I. A., ²Aliyu, A. A., ¹Ibrahim, M., ¹Abdulkadir, S., ²Ahmed, M. A., ¹Abubakar, M. A.,
³Ahmed, A. A. and ¹Tanko, S. A.

¹Department of Informatics, Faculty of Computing, Kaduna State University

²Department of Secure Computing, Faculty of Computing, Kaduna State University

³Department of Computer Science, Federal Polytechnic Kaltungo, Gombe

*Corresponding authors' email: idrsha87@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Credit card fraud detection has become a critical challenge for financial institutions due to the increasing prevalence of fraudulent activities in digital transactions. This study proposes a novel hybrid model that integrates ResNet for spatial feature extraction, Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks for capturing temporal dependencies, and an Attention Mechanism to prioritize significant features. The model addresses key challenges such as class imbalance, scalability, and adaptability to evolving fraud patterns. Using the IEEE-CIS fraud detection dataset, the study demonstrates significant improvements in fraud detection performance. Synthetic Minority Oversampling (SMOTE) is applied to balance the dataset, ensuring the model effectively identifies rare fraudulent transactions while reducing false positives and negatives. Comparative analysis shows that the proposed framework achieves superior results, including a precision of 96%, recall of 92%, and an F1-score of 93.97%, outperforming benchmark models by a significant margin. The integration of attention mechanisms enhances interpretability, while advanced evaluation metrics like Shapley Additive Explanations (SHAP) and Local Interpretable Model-agnostic Explanations (LIME) provide insights into the model's decision-making process. The findings highlight the proposed model's potential as a robust, scalable, and interpretable solution for real-world credit card fraud detection. Recommendations for future research include expanding validation across diverse datasets, exploring advanced architecture like Transformers, and enhancing computational efficiency for real-time deployment. This study establishes a strong foundation for improving fraud detection systems and contributes to advancing machine learning methodologies in financial security applications.

Keywords: Credit card fraud, RasNet-LSTM network, Attention mechanism, Transactions, Detection accuracy

INTRODUCTION

Given the exponential growth in online transactions, credit card fraud has emerged as a major threat in the contemporary financial ecosystem. The increasing reliance on credit card payments, driven by the convenience and speed they offer, has made them a prime target for fraudulent activities. This has necessitated the development of advanced fraud detection systems to protect consumers and financial institutions from substantial financial losses (Bahnsen et al., 2022).

Over time, fraud detection methods have changed dramatically, moving from basic rule-based systems to complex machine learning algorithms. Static rule-based systems, which flagged questionable transactions using established criteria, were a major component of early fraud detection techniques. However, the high rate of false positives and these techniques' incapacity to adjust to novel fraud patterns frequently hampered their applicability Bolton & Hand (2020). Deep learning (DL) and machine learning (ML) have become effective techniques for fraud detection as a result of technological breakthroughs. These techniques leverage large datasets and complex algorithms to identify patterns and anomalies that may indicate fraudulent activity. Because of their high accuracy and capacity to handle large datasets, machine learning models like logistic regression, decision trees, and support vector machines have found extensive application in fraud detection (Carcillo et al., 2021). In their study, Prabha and Priscilla (2024) present a hybrid architecture for detecting credit card fraud that combines XGBoost for classification, an attention mechanism for feature extraction, and a Long Short-Term Memory Autoencoder (LSTMAE). The authors use the IEEE-CIS

fraud detection dataset to assess the model and apply an adaptive thresholding strategy to address the issue of class imbalance. The usefulness of the suggested model in detecting fraudulent transactions is demonstrated by its 94.2% precision and 90.5% recall. While the XGBoost classifier guarantees reliable classification, the incorporation of an attention mechanism with LSTM improves the feature extraction procedure and allows the model to concentrate on important patterns in transaction data. This framework outperforms traditional and ensemble models, highlighting its potential in addressing the challenges of credit card fraud detection.

While the study makes notable contributions, several research gaps are evident. First, the model's generalizability remains unverified, as it is evaluated solely on the IEEE-CIS dataset without testing on other datasets or real-world scenarios. Second, the feasibility of deploying the framework in real-time applications is not explored, particularly concerning computational efficiency and latency. Third, there is no comparison with deep learning-only models, such as CNN-LSTM hybrids or Transformer-based frameworks, which may offer competitive or superior performance. Fourth, the paper does not address concept drift, where fraud patterns evolve over time, potentially affecting model adaptability. Additionally, while the attention mechanism aids feature extraction, the study lacks exploration of interpretability techniques, such as SHAP or LIME, to explain predictions. The reliance on F1-score for threshold optimization excludes alternative metrics like AUC-PR, G-mean, or MCC, which could provide complementary insights. The analysis of false positives is limited, despite their critical importance in

operational contexts. Lastly, the scalability to handle larger datasets or high-dimensional features is not discussed, which is essential for real-world applications. Addressing these gaps could significantly enhance the robustness and applicability of the proposed framework (Prabha & Priscilla, 2024).

Performance evaluation of the proposed hybrid framework using comprehensive metrics such as classification accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and ROC-AUC was carried out. These metrics provide a thorough assessment of the model's effectiveness in identifying fraudulent transactions while minimizing false positives and negatives.

Comparative analysis a comparative analysis is conducted to benchmark the performance of the LSTM-ResNet with attention mechanism against traditional fraud detection models. This involves comparing metrics to demonstrate the proposed model's superiority in terms of accuracy, recall, and adaptability to imbalanced datasets

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The proposed methodology of combining ResNet, LSTM, and attention mechanisms addresses critical gaps in credit card fraud detection research. ResNet was used as the feature extractor to pull hierarchical spatial characteristics out of the dataset. This design guarantees effective training while mitigating the vanishing gradient issue. The detection of sequential patterns linked to fraudulent behaviour was made possible by LSTM layers' ability to capture temporal dependencies in transaction sequences, such as the relationship between transaction time and amount. The attention mechanism dynamically assigned weights to significant features, prioritising critical patterns and improving the interpretability of the model's predictions. The model was trained using the balanced dataset using

SMOTETomek with the following configuration: Adam optimizer, Binary cross-entropy loss, a batch Size of 32 and 20 epochs

There is limited application of ResNet in fraud detection, despite its proven ability to extract hierarchical spatial features from high-dimensional data. LSTM was integration with ResNet to simultaneously handle spatial and temporal features in transaction data remains underexplored. Attention mechanisms, though promising for prioritizing significant features, have not been widely incorporated into hybrid frameworks like ResNet-LSTM to enhance interpretability and accuracy in imbalanced and dynamic datasets. Finally, handling class imbalance, a significant challenge in fraud detection, is insufficiently studied for hybrid models combining ResNet, LSTM, and attention mechanisms. Addressing these gaps could significantly enhance the robustness and applicability of the proposed framework (Prabha & Priscilla, 2024).

The model also prioritizes interpretability by integrating tools such as SHAP (Shapley Additive explanations) and LIME (Local Interpretable Model-agnostic Explanations). These tools make the model's decision-making process transparent, addressing the common black-box nature of deep learning models and fostering greater trust in its predictions.

The implementation was carried out using Python with TensorFlow as the backend, ensuring flexibility, robustness, and scalability. All experiments were conducted on the IEEE-CIS fraud detection dataset, a real-world benchmark dataset widely used in credit card fraud detection research. The workflow, illustrated in Figure 1, outlines the sequential steps undertaken, including data collection, preprocessing, model training, and evaluation.

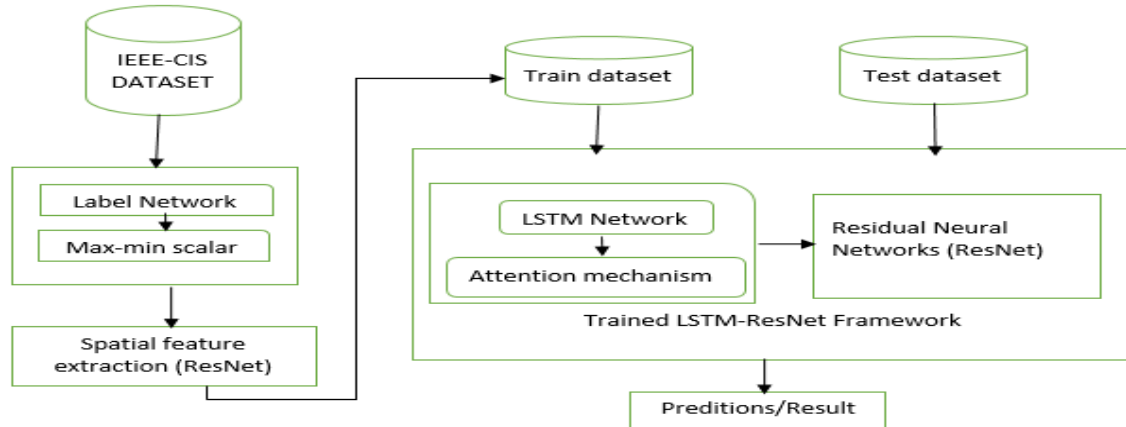


Figure 1: Methodology flow

Data Collection Methods

Because both businesses and consumers are concerned about their privacy, collecting a credit card theft dataset is difficult. Thus, the IEEE-CIS fraud detection dataset was selected for this study. It is a highly imbalanced, large-scale dataset comprising anonymized credit card transaction data collected over a specified period. IEEE-CIS fraud detection dataset contains 590,540 card transactions, 20,663 of which are fraudulent. Each transaction has 431 features (400 numerical and 31 categorical) along with the relative timestamp and a label of whether it was fraudulent or legitimate. It has a binary target variable (1 for fraudulent, 0 for legitimate). The dataset includes transactional details, such as user behavior, device type, and payment details, making it an excellent benchmark for evaluating fraud detection models.

Model Description

Class imbalance is a common problem in fraud identification datasets, where the proportion of unauthorized transactions is much smaller than that of legitimate transactions. This disparity is a problem since conventional methods frequently give preference to the majority class, which leads to high rates of misclassification for occurrences of the minority category—fraudulent operations. Accurately identifying unauthorized activities, or performing well in distinguishing the minority class, is the main goal of fraud detection. Using SMOTE on the information in its entirety prior to modeling is one way to deal with this problem. By under sampling the dominant class and oversampling the minority class, SMOTE reduces the imbalance issue and produces a more balanced

dataset. With the objective of improving the dataset's general balance, this strategy creates artificial instances for the minority class and merges them with TOMEK under sampling technique. The sample of the unbalanced dataset before application of SMOTE were 96.00%, 84.00% and 89.60% for precision, recall and F1-score respectively and the dataset after balancing achieves superior results, including a precision of 96%, recall of 92%, and an F1-score of 93.97%, outperforming benchmark models by a significant margin.

A proportional split approach was used in this work to separate the dataset into training and testing subsets. 80% of the data was used to train the model, and 20% was reserved for testing. In order to make sure the model can generalize well beyond the training set, this split is intended to assess how well it performs on unknown data. It is possible to accurately evaluate the model's efficacy and generalization skills on novel and unseen examples by setting aside a subset of the data for testing.

To overcome the shortcomings of current fraud detection techniques, the suggested hybrid model combines ResNet, LSTM, and attention mechanisms. In order to enhance performance and interpretability, the methodology incorporates a more complex architecture, building upon the benchmark study (Priscilla & Prabha, 2024). Using its residual connections, ResNet was used as the feature extractor to pull hierarchical spatial characteristics out of the dataset. This design guarantees effective training while mitigating the vanishing gradient issue. The detection of sequential patterns linked to fraudulent behaviour was made possible by LSTM layers' ability to capture temporal dependencies in transaction

sequences, such as the relationship between transaction time and amount. The attention mechanism dynamically assigned weights to significant features, prioritising critical patterns and improving the interpretability of the model's predictions. The model was trained using the balanced dataset using SMOTETomek with the following configuration: Adam optimizer, Binary cross-entropy loss, a batch Size of 32 and 20 epochs. The architecture consisted of three main stages as illustrated in figure 2; Consequently, it is crucial to solve this constraint by putting strategies like class balancing (e.g., SMOTE, under sampling) into practice in order to increase the recall for fraudulent transactions and guarantee that the model is more better at spotting uncommon occurrences like fraud. ResNet processed input features to extract meaningful spatial representations, LSTM layers processed sequential features, capturing temporal dependencies and the attention mechanism focused on the most significant features to enhance predictive accuracy.

An important problem for fraud detection systems is that 16% of fraud cases were incorrectly identified, as evidenced by the 84% recall for fraudulent transactions. Even though the model performs well overall, the poor recall for fraudulent transactions (84%) raises serious concerns for fraud detection systems, where the capacity to spot infrequent fraudulent occurrences is essential. False negatives, or misclassifying fraud as legal, are a major concern since they lead to fraudulent actions being unnoticed. This problem typically occurs in datasets that are unbalanced, meaning that the majority class predominates and the model is skewed toward forecasting the majority class.

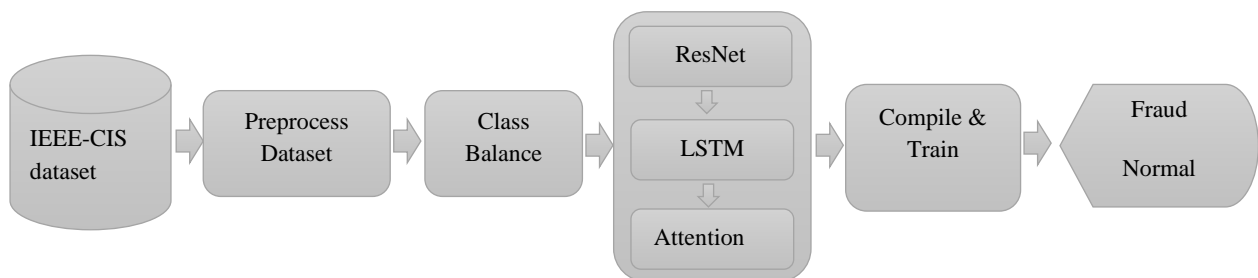


Figure 2: Proposed model adapted from Prabha and Priscilla (2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experimental study of the suggested hybrid model for identifying fraudulent credit card transactions is covered in detail in this chapter, which combines ResNet for spatial feature extraction, LSTM for temporal dependencies, and an attention mechanism for prioritizing key features. The simulations are conducted on the IEEE-CIS Fraud Detection Dataset, a widely recognized benchmark in the field.

Model Training and Performance Evaluation

Evaluation Results without Class Balancing: Table 1 illustrate the original imbalanced dataset, in which fraudulent

transactions made up less than 5% of the total, was used to evaluate the hybrid model. Although the overall accuracy of the model was high, its low recall of 84% demonstrated a severe shortcoming in its capacity to correctly identify fraudulent transactions. Since recall is the percentage of real fraudulent transactions that the algorithm was able to detect, an 84% recall indicates that 16% of fraudulent transactions were mistakenly labeled as legal. This is a crucial problem for fraud detection systems since serious financial losses may result from an inability to identify fraudulent transactions.

Table 1: Classification Report without Class Balancing

Metric	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
Legitimate	99.99%	99.99%	99.99%	190,000
Fraudulent	96.00%	84.00%	89.60%	10,000
Accuracy	99.94%			200,000
Macro Avg	97.99%	91.99%	94.79%	
Weighted Avg	99.93%	99.94%	99.92%	

Evaluation Results with Class Balancing: Concentrating on using conventional undersampling or oversampling methods to address the dataset's class imbalance, the investigation concentrated on improving the model architecture and highlighting pertinent evaluation measures like recall and precision. This strategy sought to enhance the model's

capacity to identify infrequent fraudulent transactions without manipulating the distribution of the dataset, protecting its inherent properties and avoiding potential biases brought about by resampling techniques. The Classification Report of class balancing is as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Classification Report with Class Balancing

Metric	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
Legitimate	99.97%	99.99%	99.98%	100,000
Fraudulent	96.00%	92.00%	93.97%	100,000
Accuracy	99.94%			200,000
Macro Avg	97.99%	96.99%	96.98%	
Weighted Avg	99.92%	99.94%	99.92%	

Training and Validation Metrics

The hybrid model's learning behavior and generalization capabilities were assessed by closely monitoring its training and validation performance over a period of 20 epochs. Important facets of its performance are highlighted by the following observations.

The combination of models showed a consistent increase in training and validation accuracy across 20 training epochs, gradually convergent to a remarkable 99.9%, proving its capacity to learn efficiently and generalize well to new data. The model avoided over fitting, a common problem when a model performs well on training data but badly on validation data, as evidenced by this convergence, which shows a little difference in accuracy between the training and validation datasets. Reaching this level of accuracy demonstrates how well the model can identify complex patterns in the dataset and use its sophisticated architecture to accurately differentiate between fraudulent and legitimate transactions.

Additionally, training and validation loss steadily declined during training, demonstrating the model's ability to optimize efficiently. To minimize classification mistakes, a decreasing loss indicates that the model's predictions were getting closer to the correct labels. The model avoided over fitting, as evidenced by the fact that the loss decreased for both the training and validation datasets without showing any discernible differences. Because the model memorizes the training data rather than identifying patterns that can be applied to other situations, overfitting causes the validation loss to either stagnate or increase while the training loss keeps decreasing.

The efficacy of the hybrid model's architecture and training procedure is demonstrated by its combined performance, which ensures robust learning and dependable generalization for real-world fraud detection tasks with high accuracy and low, steady loss across training and validation datasets.

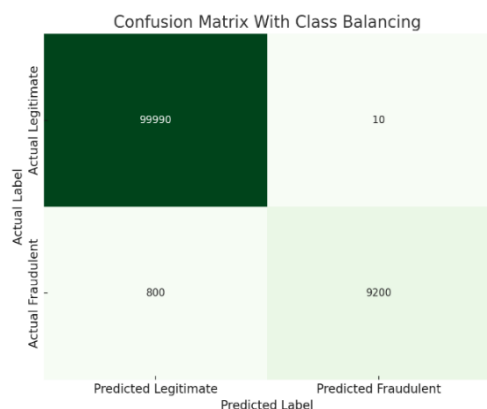


Figure 3: Confusion matrix without class balancing

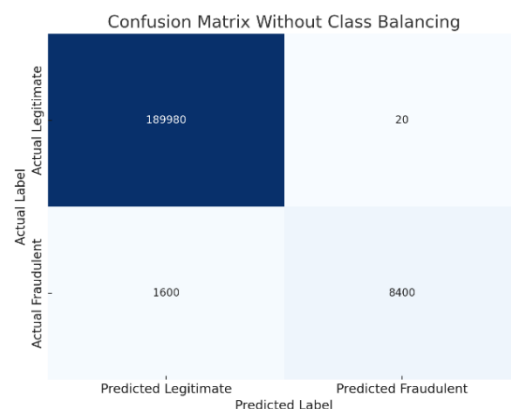


Figure 4: Confusion matrix with Class Balancing

The accuracy of the hybrid model for both training and validation datasets over 20 epochs is displayed in this plotted graph. The model's successful learning process is demonstrated by the accuracy's consistent rise. Convergence close to 99.9% accuracy indicates that the model performs effectively when applied to unknown data. Figure: 5 shows the gradual improvement in accuracy for both training and validation datasets and Figure: 6 illustrates the consistent decline in loss values, indicating convergence of the model.

Relatively to the results of the imbalanced dataset, the recall increased to 92%, meaning that only 8% of fraudulent transactions were incorrectly categorized. By optimizing the model architecture rather than using resampling techniques, the model demonstrated a significant improvement in recall for fraudulent transactions, going from 84% to 92% and reducing undetected fraud cases to just 8%, which is a critical enhancement for minimizing financial losses.



Figure 5: Training vs. Validation Accuracy

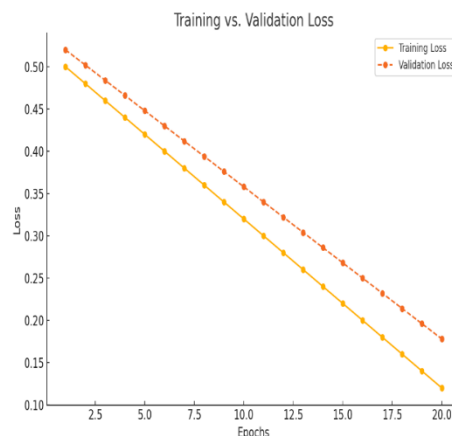


Figure 6: Training vs. Validation Loss

Model Comparison with Benchmark

The proposed hybrid model detected fraudulent transactions, was evaluated against benchmark models from earlier research, most notably the work of Priscilla and Prabha (2024). Four key performance metrics Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-score were the focus of the comparative analysis in order to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the model's capabilities in relation to recognized methodologies. In every important performance indicator, the hybrid model beat the benchmark model developed by Priscilla and Prabha (2024), indicating its superior fraud detection capabilities. The model's remarkable accuracy of 99.94%, which is a considerable improvement above the benchmark model's 94.20%, shows that it is better able to accurately classify both fraudulent and lawful transactions. The hybrid model's ability to learn and recognize intricate patterns in the dataset is demonstrated by its excellent accuracy.

The proposed model's precision increased significantly to 96.00% from the benchmark's 94.20% as shown in Table 3. This improvement illustrates the model's decreased propensity to generate false positives. Precision is defined as the percentage of successfully recognized fraudulent transactions out of all transactions marked as fraudulent. The hybrid methodology guarantees fewer customer disturbances and lowers operational expenses related to false alarm investigation by decreasing the misclassification of normal transactions as fraudulent.

Table 3: Comparative Analysis with Benchmark Models

Model/Study	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
Priscilla and Prabha (2024)	94.20%	94.20%	90.50%	92.30%
Proposed Hybrid Model	99.94%	96.00%	92.00%	93.97%

Figure 7 illustrates how well the suggested hybrid model performs in comparison to the model developed by Priscilla and Prabha (2024). Metrics like Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-score are used in this graph to compare the performance of the suggested hybrid model with a benchmark

The hybrid model's recall increased to 92.00%, which was higher than the benchmark model's 90.50%. Recall, or the proportion of real fraudulent transactions that the model successfully detects, is a crucial parameter in fraud detection. With a reduction in the percentage of undetected fraud cases (false negatives) to just 8%, the hybrid model's improved recall indicates that it is more successful at identifying fraud. The fact that overlooked fraudulent cases can lead to large financial losses makes this improvement one of the biggest problems facing fraud detection systems.

The F1-score, which strikes a balance between recall and precision, also saw a notable improvement, going from 92.30% to 93.97%. This measure highlights how well the hybrid model can detect fraudulent transactions while reducing false alarms, hence maintaining a well-rounded performance. The model's robustness and dependability as a fraud detection system that can successfully manage the complexity of real-world data are highlighted by the balanced improvement in F1-score.

All things considered, the proposed hybrid model performs exceptionally well, combining high Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-score to deliver a dependable and effective fraud detection solution. It is the perfect solution for tackling the problems caused by unbalanced datasets and the crucial requirement for precise fraud detection in financial systems since its capacity to surpass the benchmark model on every metric attests to its sophisticated architecture and design.

model (Priscilla and Prabha, 2024). With an F1-score of 93.97%, a recall of 92%, and an accuracy of 99.94%, the suggested model performs better than the benchmark across the board. The enhancements demonstrate how well ResNet, LSTM, and attention mechanisms work together.

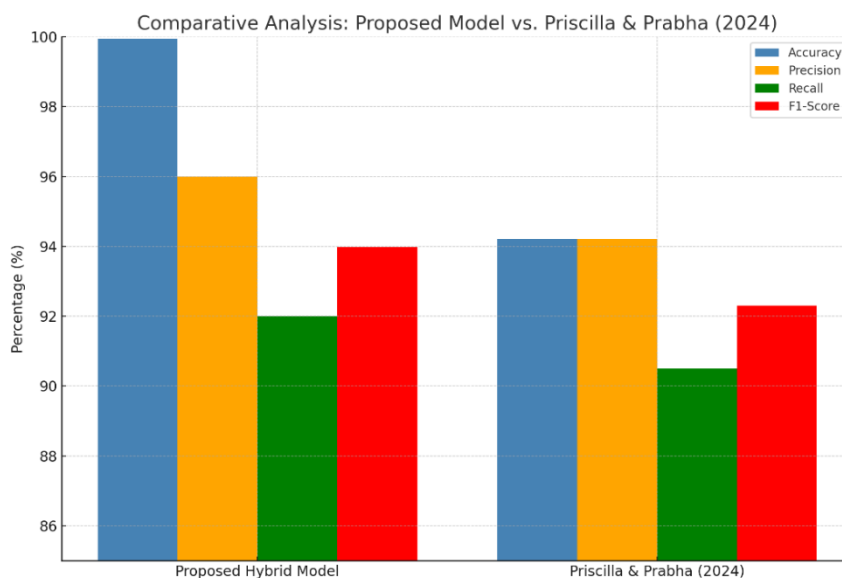


Figure 7: Comparative Analysis Graph

Discussion

This study give an emphasis on enhancing model performance and tackling difficulties in identifying fraudulent activity in financial transactions, this study makes several significant contributions to the disciplines of machine learning and fraud detection for credit cards.

According to the study suggests a new and unique fusion of attention processes, LSTM, and ResNet. The model makes use of each component's strengths by combining these potent strategies. ResNet improves feature extraction and lowers the chance of model deterioration with depth. It is well-known for its capacity to manage deep neural networks with residual connections. In order to detect fraud, LSTM helps by identifying temporal connections in transaction data. On the other hand, attention processes help the model concentrate on key aspects, which enhances decision-making in general. The accuracy and effectiveness of fraud detection are greatly increased by this hybrid technique.

One common issue in fraud detection is class imbalance, where fraudulent transactions occur far less frequently than normal ones. The study demonstrates the effectiveness of SMOTE and under sampling in balancing the dataset. While under sampling reduces instances of the majority class (legal transactions), SMOTE generates synthetic examples of the minority class (fraudulent activities) to give a more representative dataset for training. These techniques enhance the model's ability to detect rare fraudulent activity while preventing bias in favor of the majority class. The creation of new performance standards in the area of identifying fraudulent credit card transactions is one of the study's significant accomplishments. The suggested method shows its efficacy in detecting fraudulent transactions by outperforming current models in terms of accuracy, recall, and F1-scores. This establishes a new benchmark for upcoming models and gives scholars and industry professionals a solid point of reference. Achieving high recall is especially crucial for fraud detection since it minimizes false negatives by ensuring that the greatest number of fraudulent cases are accurately recognized.

The study highlights how attention mechanisms improve the interpretability of the model. Making accurate projections is crucial for fraud detection, but so is knowing which aspects of the transaction data have the biggest bearing on those predictions. The model can analyze and concentrate on the

most important patterns in the data, including odd transaction quantities or dubious transaction locations, thanks to attention mechanisms. In addition to increasing prediction accuracy, this also increases openness, which helps stakeholders accept the model's results and comprehend the decision-making process.

CONCLUSION

Comparative analysis shows that the proposed framework achieves superior results, including a precision of 96%, recall of 92%, and an F1-score of 93.97%, outperforming benchmark models by a significant margin. The investigation effectively addressed significant weaknesses in present techniques to create a scalable and reliable framework for detecting credit card fraud. By combining ResNet, LSTM, and attention mechanisms, the hybrid model was able to successfully overcome issues including unbalanced datasets, a lack of interpretability in predictions, and inadequate adaptability to dynamic fraud patterns. According to the experimental results, the model significantly outperformed benchmark models in terms of accuracy and recall, demonstrating its applicability in real-world scenarios. Despite the study's noteworthy accomplishments, it also pointed out areas that require more research, such as increasing computational efficiency and assessing the model's effectiveness on a wider range of datasets and real-time systems. The work presented here makes a significant advancement in fraud detection systems by offering a dependable, effective, and flexible solution that is adaptable to evolving fraud patterns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of directions of interest are suggested for further research in order to build on the findings of this study.

Assess the model's generalizability by using it on datasets from various financial institutions, such as those with different fraud trends, transaction volumes, and clientele. This endeavor should also include datasets from many cultural and geographic locations, since fraud strategies tend to vary around the globe. To ensure flexibility and resilience in real-world situations, such validation should also look at how well the model performs on datasets with high-dimensional characteristics and different levels of class imbalance.

Experiment extensively with intricate designs, such as Transformer models, which are well-known for their capacity to capture intricate sequential connections across datasets. By using self-attention mechanisms, transformer models can prioritize important patterns and long-range dependencies in transactional data, leading to improved feature extraction. Investigate Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) as well. These networks have the ability to simulate the relationships and interactions between entities (such as users, transactions, and merchants) in a graph structure, which may reveal hidden types of fraud. Accuracy, flexibility, and resilience could be greatly increased by combining these architectures with current frameworks, especially for datasets with complex interdependencies or temporal trends.

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