

Adaptive Machine Learning for Real-Time Intrusion Detection in IoT

Ouku Bhulakshmi, Muddam Anusha, Ramisetty Somesh, Surasetty Badrinath,

Mangali Madhan Gopal and Pattan Thoufiq Khan

Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Santhiram Engineering College, Nandyal 518501, Andhra Pradesh, India

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Abstract: The Internet of Things (IoT) gadgets are extensively used throughout several domains, providing numerous conveniences to individuals' lives. However, the extensive deployment of IoT devices has made maintaining these systems against cyber-attacks a primary concern for researchers. IoT devices possess limited computing capabilities and storage resources, leading to inadequate security defense mechanisms and heightened vulnerability to malware and device assaults. Current IoT-focused intrusion detection solutions often merely identify specific malicious attempts or require intricate models and substantial processing resources to achieve elevated detection accuracy. In this study, we utilize three datasets: BoT-IoT, MedBIoT, and MQTT-IoT-IDS 2020. We implement various algorithms, including Decision Tree, Random Forest, KNN, XGBoost, DNN, CNN, and advanced ensemble techniques such as Stacking Classifier (DT + RF with LightGBM) and CNN + LSTM. Our results demonstrate that the Stacking Classifier achieved the highest performance, with superior accuracy, precision, recall, and F1 score. The Stacking Classifier achieved a high accuracy of 100% in BoT-IoT and MedBIoT, and 92.3% in MQTT-IoT-IDS 2020, effectively enhancing the robustness and accuracy of IoT intrusion detection in resource-constrained environments. This method provides a lightweight and efficient solution to improve security measures for IoT devices.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Internet of Things (IoT) is the network of billions of devices worldwide that collect and share data in real time. With the rapid evolution of technology, the adoption of IoT is gaining momentum, and more and more devices are connecting daily. IoT has developed dramatically in domains such as transportation, health care, industry and smart city. Azimjonov, J., & Kim, T. (2024). The number of total IoT connections worldwide was 12.2 billion active endpoints in 2021, as reported by Spring 2022. Amidst obstacles such as the COVID-19 pandemic and a faltering supply chain, the IoT market continued to develop with researchers forecasting an 18% increase to 14.4 billion active connections by 2022. Going forward, loosening supply chain bottlenecks and an additional acceleration of adoption may contribute to around 27bn connected IoT devices by 2025 (Li et al., 2024).

Despite the benefits of the rapid spread of IoT devices, it raises crucial privacy and security concerns Azimjonov, J., & Kim, T. (2024). Increasing number of Internet of Things (IoT) deployments have significantly resulted in risks that are associated with data breaches and cybercrimes, which have witnessed the loss of personal and corporate information. In 2021, an Israeli cyber-security company SAM disclosed more than 900 million IoT attacks in that year (Li et al., 2024). These are more examples of the growing vulnerabilities of IoT systems facing cyber threats.

IoT devices usually have constrained memory, computation and communication resources, thus complex and strong security protection is also hard to be supported (Fatima et al., 2024). Numerous devices pass the un-encrypted network data amongst devices over the wireless networks, thus attackers can intercept, read, and analyze communications. Apart from eavesdropping, attackers also create illicit traffic to break IoT devices (Tiwari et al., 2024). Such

malicious behavior may cause device to malfunction, provide illegal access, or even turning into a zombie by an adversary which uses the heterogeneity of the IoT for large scale attack.

A prime example of IoT vulnerabilities was seen in the 2016 Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attack launched against Dyn, a major service provider. The attack, facilitated by the Mirai botnet, exploited weakly secured IoT devices, leading to significant disruptions and outages across several services Otokwala, U., Petrovski, A., & Kalutarage, H. (2024). Such incidents highlight the urgent need for robust security measures to protect IoT networks. As IoT continues to expand, addressing these vulnerabilities remains a critical area of focus for researchers and developers alike (Almotairi, A et al., 2024).

2 RELATED WORK

In their study, (Wardana et al., 2024) proposed a lightweight, trust-managing, and privacy-preserving collaborative intrusion detection system (IDS) for IoT networks. Their system emphasizes collaboration between nodes to improve detection efficiency while preserving user privacy. By incorporating trust management mechanisms, the proposed model mitigates the impact of malicious nodes, ensuring robust intrusion detection. The system achieves lightweight performance through computationally efficient algorithms and is particularly suited for resource-constrained IoT environments. This work contributes significantly to balancing security and efficiency in distributed IoT networks.

Ramesh Kumar and Sudhakaran focused on enhancing IoT network security by leveraging feature selection techniques and the Light Gradient Boosting Machine (LGBM). Their robust intrusion detection system optimizes the computational overhead of feature processing while maintaining high accuracy in detecting intrusions. The authors utilized dataset preprocessing methods and LGBM's capability to handle large-scale datasets effectively. The results showed improved performance compared to conventional machine learning techniques, making the system a promising solution for securing IoT networks.

Gowthami and Vigenesh introduced a lightweight pyramidal U-Net architecture with a tri-level dual inception-based framework for distributed intrusion detection in IoT networks. This innovative framework leverages the pyramidal U-Net's hierarchical feature extraction capabilities combined

with dual inception modules for efficient intrusion detection. The authors emphasized the distributed nature of their approach, allowing scalability and adaptability to varying IoT network sizes. Their work stands out for its advanced architecture, which achieves superior detection rates with reduced resource consumption.

Francis et al. proposed a hybrid intrusion detection approach based on the Message Queuing Telemetry Transport (MQTT) protocol for industrial IoT. Their model addresses the unique vulnerabilities of the MQTT protocol, which is widely used in IoT communication. The hybrid approach combines anomaly-based and signature-based detection methods, ensuring comprehensive protection against known and emerging threats. The authors validated their approach using real-world MQTT datasets, achieving high accuracy and low false-positive rates. This work is particularly relevant for IoT applications relying on MQTT.

Vyšniūnas et al. proposed a risk-based system-call sequence grouping method for detecting malware intrusions in IoT networks. Their approach analyzes system call sequences to identify anomalous behavior indicative of malware. By grouping system calls based on risk levels, the model enhances the precision of intrusion detection while reducing computational complexity. The authors demonstrated the efficacy of their method using real-world malware datasets, showcasing its applicability to IoT environments where traditional signature-based methods may fail.

Musthafa et al. developed a novel intrusion detection system optimized for IoT by combining balanced class distribution, feature selection, and ensemble machine learning techniques. Recognizing the challenges posed by imbalanced datasets, the authors applied class balancing techniques to improve detection accuracy for minority attack types. Additionally, their feature selection approach reduces computational overhead, and the ensemble machine learning model achieves state-of-the-art performance. This study offers valuable insights into handling data imbalance in IoT intrusion detection.

Momand et al. introduced ABCNN-IDS, an attention-based convolutional neural network designed specifically for intrusion detection in IoT networks. Their architecture integrates attention mechanisms to focus on critical features, enhancing detection accuracy and robustness. The authors highlighted the model's ability to handle diverse attack types while maintaining computational efficiency. Experimental results demonstrated the superiority of ABCNN-IDS over traditional CNN-

columns, including metadata and categorical attack labels, were dropped to streamline the dataset for analysis. Missing values were handled by dropping rows with null entries, ensuring data consistency.

3.1.2 MedBioT

[illegible]

Figure 3: MedBoT.

The dataset in figure 3, MedBoTIoT (Guerra-Manzanares et al., 2020), comprises network traffic data from multiple CSV files, including *MQTT-DDoS-Connect Flood*, *MQTT-DoS-Connect Flood*, *MQTT-Malformed Data*, and *Benign* traffic. Each file represents specific traffic behavior, labeled as "DDoS," "DoS," "Malformed," and "Benign," respectively, by adding a target column. These datasets were combined using the `'concat()'` method to create a unified dataset for analysis. The data is tailored for intrusion detection in IoT networks, focusing on distinguishing between malicious and benign traffic patterns.

3.1.3 MQTT-IoT-IDS 2020

| № | Түрлері | Аймақ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|----|---------|---------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29 | Ақпарат | Ақпарат | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Figure 4: MQTT-IoT-IDS 2020.

The MQTT-IoT-IDS 2020 (H. Hindy et al., 2021). dataset contains 99,290 entries of network traffic data, focusing on MQTT-based IoT communication (figure 4). It includes features such as message

lengths, quality of service, and connection flags, providing insights into communication patterns. The dataset categorizes traffic into six labels: legitimate, DoS, brute force, malformed, slowite, and flood, enabling comprehensive analysis of both normal and malicious activities. It is structured with 28 columns, excluding unnecessary fields, and serves as a resource for intrusion detection and anomaly detection research in IoT networks.

3.2 Pre-Processing

We used pre-processing steps like data cleaning, label encoding, feature selection, and data visualization to prepare the dataset for analysis, ensuring accuracy, reducing complexity, and enhancing model performance for predictions.

Data Processing: Data processing involves preparing raw data for analysis by cleaning, transforming, and organizing it to ensure accuracy and reliability. This includes handling missing values, removing irrelevant features, encoding categorical variables into numerical formats, and scaling data for uniformity. Feature selection techniques are applied to identify the most important variables, reducing complexity and improving model performance. Data processing ensures the dataset is structured, consistent, and optimized for machine learning models, enabling effective pattern recognition, prediction, and decision-making during analysis.

Data Visualization: The dataset's subcategory distribution is visualized using a bar chart with a vibrant color palette, providing a clear comparison of data points across different classes. This highlights the frequency of benign and malignant nodules for better understanding of class imbalances. Additionally, a heatmap is used to display the correlation between features, offering a detailed view of relationships within the dataset. The colorful representation enhances the interpretability of feature interactions, aiding in identifying significant attributes relevant to the analysis and decision-making process.

Label Encoding: Label encoding is applied to transform categorical values into numerical ones, ensuring the dataset is suitable for machine learning algorithms. By converting subcategory labels into numeric representations, the process simplifies the data while retaining its meaningful structure. This transformation assigns unique integers to each category, allowing models to process and analyze the data more effectively. Label encoding is particularly useful for handling non-numeric columns, making

them compatible with computational methods while preserving their inherent distinctions for accurate analysis and prediction.

Feature Selection: Feature selection is performed to identify and retain the most relevant variables that significantly influence the target outcome, improving model performance and reducing complexity. By applying a percentile-based selection method, the process evaluates the mutual information between features and the target variable, ensuring only the top 25% of impactful features are retained. This approach enhances the dataset by focusing on critical predictors, eliminating irrelevant or redundant variables, and enabling the model to achieve better accuracy, efficiency, and interpretability in its analysis and predictions.

3.3 Training and Testing

The dataset is divided into two parts: one for training and another for testing, ensuring an effective evaluation of the model's performance. The training set, which comprises 80% of the data, is used to teach the model by identifying patterns and relationships between input features and the target variable. The testing set, containing 20% of the data, evaluates how well the trained model can generalize its predictions on unseen data. This balanced split ensures accuracy and reliability in assessing model performance.

3.4 Algorithms

A **Decision Tree** classifies incoming data as benign or malicious by creating a series of rules based on feature values. Its interpretability makes it effective for identifying threats and understanding decision-making processes in IoT environments (Almotairi et al., 2024).

Random Forest constructs multiple decision trees and aggregates their predictions for classification. It enhances accuracy, reduces overfitting, and handles diverse IoT data, detecting complex attack patterns with high performance and generalization capabilities (Wardana, A. A et al., 2024).

K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) classifies data points based on the majority class of their nearest neighbors. It detects potential threats by comparing features of incoming data with labeled examples, adapting well to changes in data distribution in real-time environments Ramesh Kumar, M., & Sudhakaran, P. (2024).

XGBoost is a gradient boosting algorithm that improves speed and performance. It handles large datasets and complex feature interactions, minimizing loss functions and preventing overfitting, ensuring robust and adaptive detection of evolving cyber threats in IoT systems Gowthami, D., & Vigenesh, M. (2024).

Deep Neural Network (DNN) processes high-dimensional data to learn complex patterns. It enhances detection of sophisticated attacks, improving accuracy in identifying malicious activities by capturing intricate relationships between features and handling diverse data types effectively Francis, G. T., Sour, A., & İnanç, N. (2024).

Convolutional Neural Network (CNNs) analyze structured grid data, such as images or signals. They automatically extract relevant features, improving anomaly detection and real-time threat identification, making them highly effective for detecting attacks in IoT environments through pattern recognition Vyšniūnas, T., Čeponis, D., Goranin, N., & Čenys, A. (2024).

Stacking Classifier (DT + RF with LightGBM): The Stacking Classifier integrates Decision Trees, Random Forest, and LightGBM to improve prediction accuracy. By combining strengths from each model, it reduces false positives and negatives, creating a robust system for threat identification in IoT devices.

4 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Accuracy: The true accuracy of a test is the proportion of the test to be able to correctly identify patient and healthy subjects. When we want to estimate the accuracy of a test, we need to compute the ratio of true positive and true negative cases over all tested cases. This can be expressed mathematically as:

$$\text{Accuracy} = \frac{TP+TN}{TP+FP+TN+FN} \quad (1)$$

Precision: Precision measures the proportion of true positives among the samples identified as positive. Therefore, the precision formula is expressed as:

$$\text{Precision} = \frac{\text{True Positive}}{\text{True Positive} + \text{False Positive}} \quad (2)$$

Recall: Recall is a machine learning metric that calculates the model's capability to find all relevant objects of a class. It represents how successful the

classification was in predicting the positive class, in relation to the actual positive instances.

$$\text{Recall} = \frac{TP}{TP + FN} \quad (3)$$

F1-Score: F1 score is an ML evaluation metric which gives an idea about how good your model is. It is a combination of precision and recall for a model.

Accuracy measures how many times the model made correct predictions over all predictions made.

$$F1 \text{ Score} = 2 * \frac{\text{Recall} \times \text{Precision}}{\text{Recall} + \text{Precision}} * 100 \quad (4)$$

In Table (1, 2 and 3) the Stacking Classifier consistently achieved the highest accuracy, outperforming all models across all datasets and metrics.

Table 1: Performance Evaluation Table – BoT-IoT.

| ML Model | Accuracy | Precision | Recall | F1_score |
|--------------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| KNN | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| DecisionTree | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| RandomForest | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| XGBoost | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| Extension | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| DNN | 0.622 | 0.073 | 0.270 | 0.115 |
| CNN | 0.993 | 0.995 | 0.993 | 0.994 |
| CNN+LSTM | 0.616 | 1.000 | 0.616 | 0.762 |

Table 2: Performance Evaluation Table – MedBIoT.

| ML Model | Accuracy | Precision | Recall | F1_score |
|--------------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| KNN | 0.991 | 0.994 | 0.991 | 0.992 |
| DecisionTree | 0.997 | 0.997 | 0.997 | 0.997 |
| RandomForest | 0.998 | 0.998 | 0.998 | 0.998 |
| XGBoost | 0.998 | 0.998 | 0.998 | 0.998 |
| Extension | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| DNN | 0.504 | 0.198 | 0.445 | 0.274 |
| CNN | 0.975 | 0.992 | 0.975 | 0.983 |
| CNN+LSTM | 0.923 | 0.979 | 0.923 | 0.949 |

Table 3: Performance Evaluation Table – UNSW-NB15 – With SMOTEENN.

| ML Model | Accuracy | Precision | Recall | F1_score |
|---------------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| KNN | 0.901 | 0.914 | 0.901 | 0.906 |
| Decision Tree | 0.907 | 0.922 | 0.907 | 0.912 |
| Random Forest | 0.907 | 0.922 | 0.907 | 0.913 |
| XGBoost | 0.908 | 0.925 | 0.908 | 0.914 |
| Extension | 0.923 | 0.934 | 0.923 | 0.926 |
| DNN | 0.393 | 0.002 | 0.043 | 0.004 |
| CNN | 0.793 | 0.895 | 0.793 | 0.821 |
| CNN+LSTM | 0.797 | 0.909 | 0.797 | 0.826 |

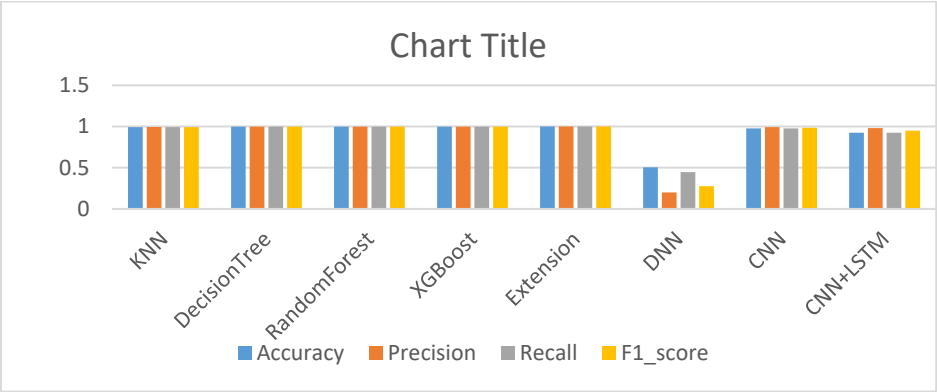


Figure 5: Comparison Graph – NSL-KDD – Without SMOTEENN.

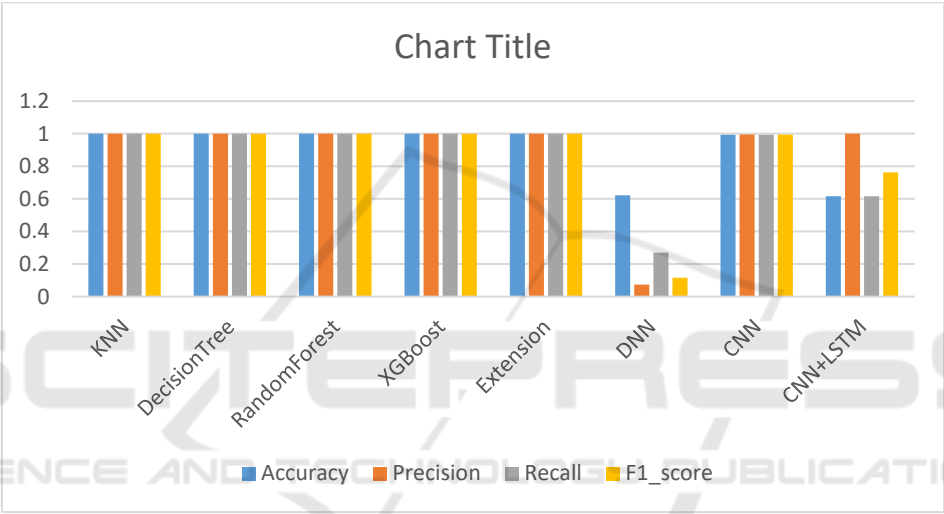


Figure 6: Comparison Graph – BoT-IoT.

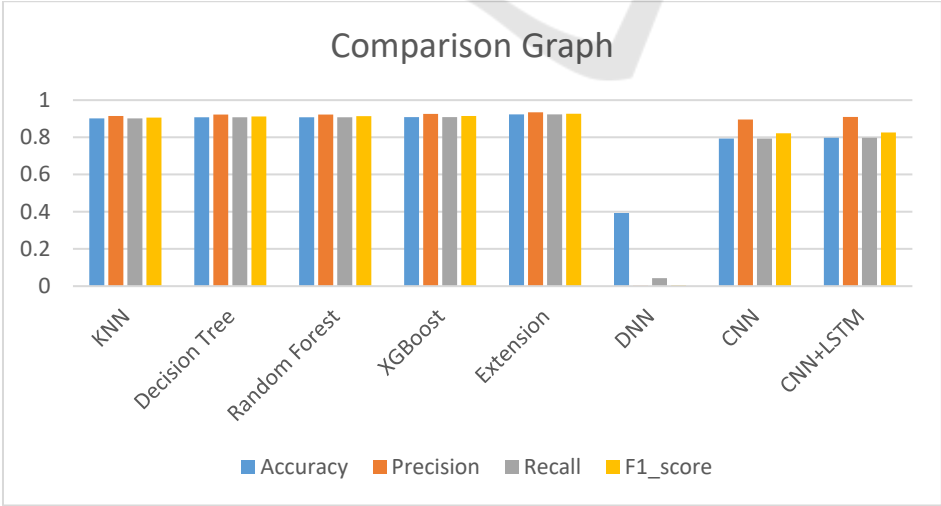


Figure 7: Comparison Graph – MQTT-IoT-IDS 2020.

In figure (5, 6 & 7) accuracy is represented in light blue, precision in orange, recall in grey and F1 Score in yellow. The Graphs illustrate the Stacking Classifier's superior performance across all metrics and datasets, consistently achieving the highest accuracy, demonstrating its robustness and effectiveness in intrusion detection.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study highlights the critical importance of robust and efficient intrusion detection systems (IDS) for securing Internet of Things (IoT) devices, which are increasingly vulnerable due to their limited computational and storage resources. The research explores a variety of machine learning algorithms, including Decision Tree (Almotairi et al., 2024), Random Forest (Wardana, A. A et al., 2024), KNN Ramesh Kumar, M., & Sudhakaran, P. (2024)., XGBoost Gowthami, D., & Vigenesh, M. (2024), DNN Francis, G. T., Sour, A., & İnanç, N. (2024), CNN Vyšniūnas, T., Čeponis, D., Goranin, N., & Čenys, A. (2024)., and advanced ensemble methods like Stacking Classifier (DT + RF with LightGBM) and CNN + LSTM, using datasets from BoT-IoT (N. Koroniotis et al., 2019), MedBioT (Guerra-Manzanares et al., 2020), and MQTT-IoT-IDS 2020 (H. Hindy et al., 2021). The results reveal that the Stacking Classifier, combining the strengths of multiple models, outperforms individual classifiers, achieving remarkable detection performance. It achieved 100% accuracy on the BoT-IoT and MedBioT datasets, and 92.3% accuracy on MQTT-IoT-IDS 2020. These findings demonstrate that the Stacking Classifier provides a highly effective, lightweight, and efficient solution for IoT intrusion detection, significantly enhancing security in resource-constrained environments. This method addresses the challenges posed by IoT devices' limitations while ensuring high detection accuracy, thereby making a substantial contribution to improving IoT security in practical applications.

The future scope of this study includes exploring more advanced ensemble techniques and hybrid models to further enhance detection accuracy and reduce computational overhead. Additionally, the integration of real-time detection systems, incorporating adaptive learning algorithms, can improve the responsiveness to emerging threats. Future research could also focus on incorporating anomaly detection and federated learning to address privacy concerns, enabling scalable and robust security solutions for diverse IoT environments.

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