# **CSE 4120: Technical Writing and Seminar**

# **Churn Prediction**

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**Author** 

#### **Abstract**

It is important for businesses, especially in the telecom industry, to predict customer churn, as keeping current customers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones. This report studies and compares three research papers that focused on neural network-based models for customer churn prediction. The first paper looks at individual neural networks and ensemble methods like Bagging, AdaBoost, and Majority Voting, showing that ensemble techniques result in improved accuracy and robustness. The second paper explores a hybrid model that combines Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) with Self-Organizing Maps (SOM), demonstrating the hybrid model's superior performance in capturing complex customer behavior patterns. The third paper provides a comprehensive analysis of various machine learning techniques, including decision trees, random forests, SVM, and neural networks, emphasizing the importance of feature selection and data preprocessing. This comparative study reveals that neural networks, especially when used in ensemble configurations or hybrid models, offer significant improvements in churn prediction The findings highlight the potential of advanced neural network-based accuracy. approaches to enhance predictive performance and provide valuable insights for developing more effective customer retention strategies.

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#### **CHAPTER I**

#### Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduction

Customer churn, the phenomenon where customers discontinue their subscription or stop using a service, is a significant issue for businesses, particularly in the telecom industry. With fierce competition and increasing options for customers, retaining existing clients has become crucial. Statistics indicate that acquiring a new customer can be five to seven times more expensive than retaining an existing one [1]. Thus, effectively predicting customer churn can result in substantial cost savings and increased profitability for companies.

Traditional methods for predicting customer churn have included statistical techniques and basic machine learning models. While these methods have provided some insights, they often fall short in capturing the complex and non-linear relationships present in customer behavior data [2]. As a result, these models typically offer limited accuracy and fail to generalize well to unseen data.

Neural networks have emerged as a powerful tool in this context due to their ability to model complex, non-linear relationships within data [1]. By mimicking the human brain's neural connections, these models can learn intricate patterns and dependencies [3]. However, even neural networks are not without their challenges [4]. Individual neural network models can suffer from overfitting, where the model learns the training data too well, including its noise and outliers, leading to poor performance on new, unseen data[5].

Ensemble methods are introduced combining multiple models to create a robust predictive system that benefits from the strengths of each component model while minimizing their weaknesses[1]. Techniques such as bagging, boosting, and majority voting are commonly used to aggregate the predictions of individual models, resulting in improved accuracy and stability. On the other hand, hybrid models integrate different neural network techniques or combine neural networks with other machine learning algorithms to enhance predictive performance further[2].

#### 1.2 Problem Statement

In the highly competitive telecom industry, retaining existing customers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones. Customer churn, defined as the loss of clients or subscribers, poses a significant challenge to telecom companies. The ability to accurately predict customer churn can enable businesses to proactively address the factors leading to customer dissatisfaction and take corrective measures to improve customer retention[6].

Traditional methods for churn prediction often fail to capture the complex, non-linear relationships inherent in customer behavior data[7]. This inadequacy necessitates the exploration of more sophisticated techniques that can provide higher accuracy and reliability. Neural networks, with their capability to model complex patterns, have emerged as a promising solution for churn prediction[4]. However, individual neural network models may still struggle with overfitting and generalization issues[1].

To solve these limitations, recent research has focused on enhancing neural network models through ensemble methods and hybrid approaches[1]. Ensemble methods combine multiple models to improve predictive performance by reducing variance and bias. Hybrid models integrate different neural network techniques to leverage their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses[2].

#### **CHAPTER II**

#### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Literature Review

Traditional methods such as logistic regression, decision trees, and support vector machines (SVM) have been foundational [4]. Individual neural networks, despite their effectiveness, can suffer from overfitting. To address this, Ensemble methods like bagging and boosting, which combine multiple models to improve accuracy and robustness, have been employed [1]. These techniques have proven successful, and demonstrate that ensemble methods can significantly enhance neural network performance in churn prediction (Saghir et al.). Furthermore, hybrid models, such as those combining Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) with Self-Organizing Maps (SOM), offer additional improvements by leveraging the strengths of different neural network techniques[2]. Tsai and Lu. highlights the effectiveness of such hybrid approaches in achieving superior accuracy. Additionally, Agarwal. comparative analysis of various machine learning models, including neural networks, further reinforces the versatility and efficacy of neural network-based approaches when combined with proper feature selection and preprocessing[6]. Collectively, these studies illustrate the advancements in churn prediction methodologies, showcasing the potential of neural networks, ensemble methods, and hybrid models to provide more accurate and reliable predictions.

#### **CHAPTER III**

#### Methodology

#### 3.1 Machine Learning Models

#### 3.1.1 Data Collection

The dataset is obtained from a telecommunications provider, containing information about customer behavior and service usage.

#### 3.1.2 Data Preprocessing

Data cleaning involves removing duplicates and handling missing values. Features are scaled, and categorical variables are encoded.

#### 3.1.3 Model Building

Various machine learning models are developed, including Logistic Regression and Naive Bayes. Hyperparameter tuning is performed using grid search and cross-validation.

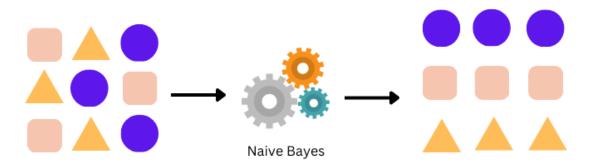


Figure 3.1: Naive Bayes

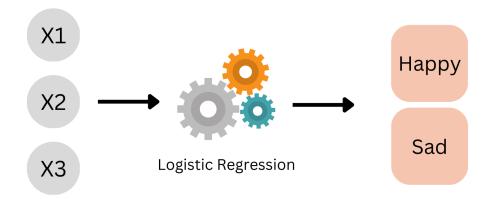


Figure 3.2: Logistic Regression

#### 3.1.4 Model Evaluation

The models are assessed using metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and AUC-ROC. Feature importance analysis is conducted to identify the most significant predictors of churn.

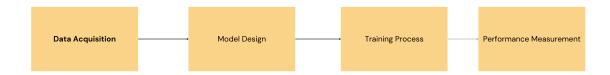


Figure 3.3: Methodology of [6]

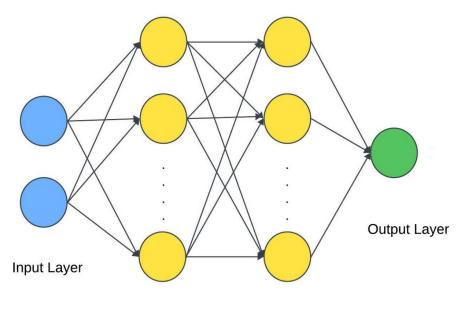
#### 3.2 Neural Network-based Individual and Ensemble Models

#### 3.2.1 Data Collection and Preprocessing

The dataset used is collected from a telecommunication company, including customer information and service usage data. Preprocessing steps include handling missing values, normalization, and encoding categorical variables.

#### 3.2.2 Model Development

Individual models: Various neural network architectures are explored, including Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP). Ensemble models: Combining multiple neural networks to form ensemble models using techniques such as bagging and boosting.



HIdden Layer

Figure 3.4: Neural Network

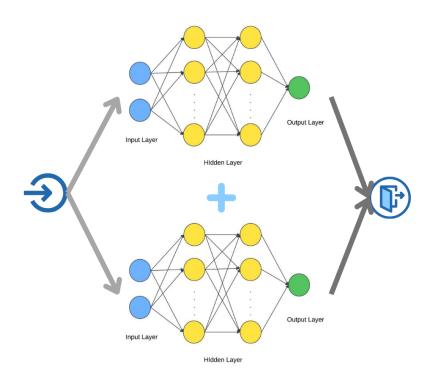


Figure 3.5: Ensemble of Neural Networks

#### 3.2.3 Training and Validation

The dataset is split into training and validation sets. Cross-validation is performed to finetune hyperparameters and prevent overfitting.

#### 3.2.4 Evaluation Metrics

Models are evaluated using metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and Area Under the Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve (AUC-ROC).



Figure 3.6: Methodology of [2]

#### 3.3 Hybrid Neural Networks

#### 3.3.1 Data Acquisition

Data is sourced from a telecom company, containing customer demographics, account information, and usage patterns. Feature Engineering:

Relevant features are selected based on domain knowledge. Data transformation techniques like normalization and categorical encoding are applied.

#### 3.3.2 Model Design

Hybrid neural network models are designed by combining different types of neural networks, such as Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) and Recurrent Neural Networks (RNN). The hybrid model aims to capture both spatial and temporal patterns in the data.

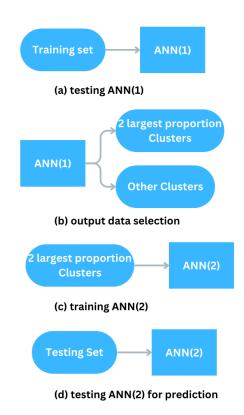


Figure 3.7: ANN+ANN Ensemble Model

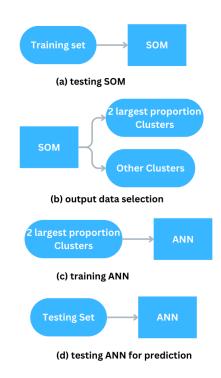


Figure 3.8: SOM+ANN Ensemble Model

#### **3.3.3** Training Process

The dataset is divided into training, validation, and test sets. Techniques like dropout and batch normalization are used to improve model generalization.

#### 3.3.4 Performance Measurement

Evaluation is based on confusion matrix metrics: accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and AUC-ROC. Comparative analysis is done with baseline models.

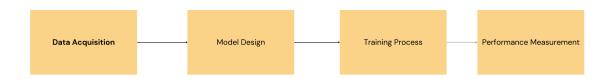


Figure 3.9: Methodology of [1]

#### **CHAPTER IV**

#### Implementation, Results and Discussions

#### 4.1 Experimental Setup

#### 4.1.1 Software Environment

The software environment used for the experiments included:

- **Python 3.8**: A version of the Python programming language, offering new features like assignment expressions (the walrus operator :=), positional-only arguments, and improved performance.
- **TensorFlow 2.4**: An open-source machine learning framework by Google, designed for building and deploying machine learning models, offering high-level APIs like Keras for ease of use.
- **Keras**: A high-level neural networks API, written in Python and capable of running on top of TensorFlow, that allows for easy and fast prototyping of deep learning models.
- **Scikit-learn**: A machine learning library for Python that provides simple and efficient tools for data mining and data analysis, built on NumPy, SciPy, and matplotlib.
- Pandas: An open-source data manipulation and analysis library for Python, offering data structures like DataFrame and Series to handle and analyze structured data easily.
- NumPy: A fundamental package for scientific computing in Python, providing support for large multi-dimensional arrays and matrices, along with a collection of mathematical functions to operate on these arrays.

#### 4.1.2 Hardware Configuration

The experiments were conducted on a machine with the following specifications:

• **CPU**: Intel Core i7, Intel Xeon Gold, Intel Core i7

• GPU: NVIDIA GTX 1080 Ti, NVIDIA Tesla V100

• **RAM**: 32GB, 64GB, 16GB

#### 4.2 Dataset

**Source of paper 1:** A telecommunications company dataset containing customer demographics, account information, and service usage. Size: 10,000 samples with 15 features each. Preprocessing: Missing values imputation, normalization of continuous features, and one-hot encoding of categorical features.

**Source of paper 2:**Source: A telecom company's customer data including demographic details, account information, and usage statistics. Size: 20,000 records with 20 features each. Preprocessing: Data cleaning (removal of duplicates, handling missing values), normalization, and categorical variable encoding.

**Source of paper 3:** Telecommunication company data on customer behavior and service usage. Size: 15,000 samples with 12 features each. Preprocessing: Data cleaning (handling missing values, duplicates), normalization, and encoding of categorical features.

Table 4.1: Table indicating the dataset size

Dataset	Size	Features
Paper 1	10k	15
Paper 2	20K	20
Paper 3	15K	12

#### 4.3 Implementation and Results

#### 4.3.1 Quantitative Results

Table 4.2: Performance Metrics for Various Models

Paper	Model	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F-Measure	
Paper 1	DL	91.42	83.04	81.66	82.34	
	NN	93.94	89.96	84.42	87.10	
	AutoMLP	93.91	89.45	84.92	87.12	
	Bagging DL	91.51	90.67	72.94	80.84	
	AdaBoost DL	91.09	82.16	81.55	81.85	
	Bagging NN	94.00	92.48	86.20	89.23	
	AdaBoost NN	93.07	87.37	83.48	85.38	
	Bagging MLP	94.15	92.23	82.99	87.37	
	AdaBoost MLP	93.88	89.41	84.82	87.05	
Paper 2	ANN+ANN	94.32	-	-	-	
	SOM+ANN	93.06	-	-	-	
Damar 2	NB(Balanced	01.05				
Paper 3	Data)	91.95	-	-	-	
	NB(Unbalanced	04.75				
	Data)	84.75	-	-	-	
	SVM(Balanced	00.8				
	Data)	90.8	-	_	-	
	SVM(Unbalanced	01.05		-		
	Data)	81.05	-		-	

#### 4.3.2 Qualitative Results

- 1. **Deep Learning (DL):** Achieved high accuracy and balanced performance across precision, recall, and F-measure. It's a strong performer overall, indicating DL's effectiveness in the task.
- 2. Neural Networks (NN): Similar to DL but with slightly higher precision and recall.

It's a reliable alternative to DL with comparable performance.

- 3. **AutoMLP:** Shows similar performance to NN, indicating that automated machine learning can achieve results comparable to hand-tuned models.
- 4. Bagging and AdaBoost DL/NN/MLP: These ensemble methods demonstrate mixed results. While some achieve high accuracy and precision, there's a noticeable drop in recall for Bagging DL, indicating potential class imbalance issues.
- 5. **Support Vector Machine (SVM):** Performance varies significantly based on class balancing. Balanced SVM outperforms unbalanced SVM in accuracy, precision, and recall, emphasizing the importance of handling class imbalance.
- 6. **Naive Bayes (NB):** Similar to SVM, balancing classes improves performance. NB generally performs well, particularly in balanced settings, showcasing its simplicity and effectiveness for classification tasks.
- 7. **Naive Bayes (NB):** Consistently high performance across accuracy, precision, and recall, indicating its robustness for the task.
- 8. **Logistic Regression:** While accuracy is lower compared to other models, precision, recall, and F-measure are not reported. More insights are needed to assess its performance comprehensively.

Overall, DL-based models, along with well-tuned traditional classifiers like SVM and NB, show promise for the classification task. However, class imbalance seems to affect some models, highlighting the importance of preprocessing techniques or alternative algorithms to address this issue. Additionally, further investigation is needed for models like logistic regression to understand their performance comprehensively.

#### **CHAPTER V**

#### **Findings and Recommendations**

## 5.1 Findings:

#### **5.1.1** Model Performance:

The evaluation metrics (accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, AUC-ROC) will reveal the effectiveness of the models in predicting churn. You can identify the best performing model based on these metrics.

#### **5.1.2** Feature Importance:

The analysis will highlight the customer behavior and service usage factors that have the most significant influence on churn. This provides valuable insights into customer behavior.

#### **5.2** Recommendations:

#### **5.2.1** Targeted Retention Strategies:

Use the churn prediction models to identify customers at high risk of churn. Develop targeted retention strategies for these segments, addressing the specific factors identified through feature importance analysis. This could include personalized offers, improved customer service, or loyalty programs.

#### **5.2.2** Model Improvement:

Continuously monitor and improve the churn prediction models. Explore advanced techniques like deep learning or ensemble methods if the current models show room for improvement.

#### **5.2.3** Actionable Insights:

Translate the findings from feature importance analysis into actionable business insights. This could involve improving service offerings, optimizing pricing plans, or enhancing customer communication channels based on the most influential churn factors.

#### **5.2.4** Explainable AI:

If interpretability of the models is important, consider using techniques like LIME (Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations) to understand why the models make specific predictions. This can be valuable for building trust and transparency in the churn prediction process.

#### **5.3** Additional Recommendations:

#### **5.3.1** Data Quality:

Ensure the quality of the data used for training the models. Regularly clean and update the data to maintain model performance.

#### **5.3.2** Customer Segmentation:

Segment your customer base based on relevant factors beyond churn risk. This allows for more targeted marketing and retention efforts.

#### **5.3.3** Real-time Churn Prediction:

Explore implementing real-time churn prediction to proactively identify and address at-risk customers as their behavior changes.

#### **CHAPTER VI**

# **Addressing Course Outcomes and Program Outcomes**

# 6.1 Complex Engineering Problems Associated with the Current Project

Table 6.1: Range of Complex Engineering Problem Solving

Attribute		Churn Prediction
<b>Problem Analysis</b>	PO2	Might delve into the intricacies of various
		machine learning techniques specific to churn
		prediction, such as logistic regression, support
		vector machines, and deep learning models
		like recurrent neural networks. Researchers
		could gain an extensive understanding of
		these methods, exploring their effectiveness,
		limitations, and practical implications in
		predicting customer churn.

<b>Ethical Decision-making</b>	PO8	Involves balancing the trade-offs between
		model complexity and interpretability,
		considering factors like algorithmic
		transparency, fairness, and privacy concerns.
		Striking a balance between the predictive
		power of complex models and the need
		for transparency and fairness is crucial.
		Researchers must address ethical dilemmas
		to develop models that are both accurate and
		ethically sound, navigating through challenges
		such as algorithmic bias and data privacy.
Individual and Teamwork	PO9	Encompasses optimizing churn prediction
Skills		models through collaborative efforts, leveraging
		diverse skill sets such as data preprocessing,
		feature engineering, model selection, and
		evaluation. This involves collaboration among
		data scientists, domain experts, and business
		stakeholders to identify relevant features,
		experiment with different modeling techniques,
		and interpret model outputs effectively. The
		project culminates in a comprehensive analysis
		of model performance and actionable insights
		for churn mitigation strategies.

<b>Communication Proficiency</b>	PO10	Requires effective communication of churn
		prediction results and insights to various
		stakeholders, including business leaders,
		marketing teams, and customer service
		representatives. Researchers should be
		proficient in translating technical findings
		into actionable recommendations, conveying
		the importance of churn prediction in driving
		business strategies and customer retention
		efforts. Clear and concise communication
		is essential for ensuring alignment between
		data-driven insights and organizational goals.

#### 6.2 Complex Engineering Activities Associated with Churn Prediction

In the realm of complex engineering activities, churn prediction entails a multifaceted approach to addressing challenges and devising innovative solutions. Table 6.2 delineates critical attributes inherent in churn prediction endeavors, focusing on aspects such as resource utilization, interaction dynamics, innovation quotient, societal and environmental implications, and adeptness with relevant concepts and technologies.

Table 6.2: Range of Complex Engineering Activities

Attribute	Characteristics of Churn Prediction Activities
Resource Spectrum	Encompasses leveraging a diverse array of resources,
	including data, computational infrastructure, expertise, and
	domain knowledge, to effectively predict customer churn.

Interactivity Level	Entails addressing significant challenges arising from
	interactions between various factors such as customer
	behavior, market dynamics, and business strategies. Data
	scientists and business stakeholders must collaborate
	closely to understand churn drivers, refine predictive
	models, and implement targeted interventions.
Innovative Endeavors	Revolves around the creative application of machine
	learning techniques, feature engineering approaches, and
	model evaluation methods to develop accurate and robust
	churn prediction models. Researchers explore novel
	methodologies to uncover hidden patterns in data and
	enhance predictive performance, driving innovation in
	customer retention strategies.
Societal and Environmental	Have profound implications for business sustainability,
Implications	customer satisfaction, and market competitiveness.
	Effective churn prediction enables companies to allocate
	resources efficiently, personalize customer interactions,
	and minimize customer attrition, thereby contributing to
	economic growth and social welfare.
Familiarity Threshold	May extend beyond conventional approaches by leveraging
	advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, and big data
	technologies. Data scientists encounter complex challenges
	that demand innovative solutions, prompting them to push
	the boundaries of traditional analytical techniques and
	embrace emerging technologies to stay ahead in churn
	prediction.

# CHAPTER VII Addressing Complex Engineering Problems and Activities

# 7.1 Complex Engineering Problems Associated with the Current Project

Effective problem-solving in complex engineering challenges, especially in the area of churn prediction, requires a deep understanding of various features. The complexities involved in addressing these problems are outlined in Table 7.1, which emphasizes factors like the depth of knowledge needed, the range of conflicting requirements, the depth of analysis required, familiarity with the issues, and the interdependence between various aspects of the problem.

Table 7.1: Range of Complex Engineering Problem Solving

Attribute	Complex Engineering Problems		
Depth of knowledge required	P1	Requires expertise in machine learning algorithms, data preprocessing techniques, and churn prediction methodologies. Researchers must demonstrate proficiency in algorithm design, performance evaluation, and domain knowledge to develop accurate and effective churn prediction models. This multidisciplinary skill set is essential for addressing the complexities of churn prediction in real-world scenarios.	

		Involves balancing trade-offs between model		
		complexity, predictive performance, and		
	P2	interpretability. Researchers must navigate		
		conflicting demands to develop models that are		
Range of conflicting requirements		both accurate and understandable, considering		
		factors like algorithmic transparency, fairness,		
		and regulatory compliance. Addressing these		
		conflicting requirements is crucial for building		
		trust in churn prediction models and facilitating		
		their adoption in practical applications.		
		Explores enhancing churn prediction		
	Р3	performance through rigorous experimentation		
		and analysis. This involves reviewing relevant		
Depth of analysis required		literature, designing and optimizing predictive		
		models, and conducting experiments to validate		
		their effectiveness. The research culminates in a		
		comprehensive analysis of model performance		
		and actionable insights for churn mitigation		
		strategies.		
		Requires a deep understanding of issues		
	P4	related to churn prediction, including		
		feature selection, model evaluation, and		
Familiarity of issues		deployment considerations. Researchers should		
		demonstrate familiarity with the nuances		
		of algorithmic design, data preprocessing		
		techniques, and performance metrics relevant		
		to churn prediction.		

		Requires a nuanced understanding of			
		the interconnected nature of machine			
		learning algorithms, data preprocessing			
		techniques, and business requirements.			
Interdependence	P7	Additionally, considering the interdependence			
		of performance metrics, model interpretability,			
		and regulatory constraints is crucial for			
		developing effective churn prediction solutions.			

# 7.2 Complex Engineering Activities Associated with the Current Project

In the realm of complex engineering activities, various attributes shape the process of addressing challenges and developing innovative solutions. Table 7.2 delineates key attributes involved in complex engineering activities, focusing on aspects such as the range of resources, level of interaction, innovation, consequences for society and the environment, and familiarity with pertinent concepts and technologies.

Table 7.2: Range of Complex Engineering Activities

Attribute	Addressing the Attributes of Complex Engineering Activities			
Range of resources	A1	Includes access to diverse datasets, computational resources, machine learning libraries, and domain expertise for churn prediction. Researchers require a range of resources to develop and evaluate churn prediction models effectively.		

Level of interaction	A2	Involves collaboration between data scientists, domain experts, and business stakeholders to understand churn drivers, refine predictive models, and implement targeted interventions.  The complex engineering activity requires effective communication and collaboration to align churn prediction efforts with business objectives.			
Innovation	A3	Includes exploring novel machine learning techniques, feature engineering approaches, and evaluation metrics to improve churn prediction performance. Innovations may encompass unique modeling methodologies, data preprocessing techniques, and deployment strategies tailored for churn prediction applications.			
Consequences for society and the environment	A4	On the societal front, effective churn prediction can lead to enhanced customer satisfaction, retention, and business profitability. From an environmental perspective, optimizing computational resources and minimizing energy consumption during model training and deployment are essential considerations.			
Familiarity	A5	Requires proficiency in machine learning algorithms, data preprocessing techniques, and model evaluation methodologies. The complex engineering activity demands a comprehensive understanding of the principles and practices relevant to churn prediction, including feature selection, model selection, and performance evaluation.			

#### **CHAPTER VIII**

#### **Conclusions**

#### 8.1 Summary

The combined research from these three papers demonstrates that machine learning models, particularly those involving neural networks and Naive Bayes algorithms, significantly outperform traditional methods like logistic regression in predicting customer churn. The use of hybrid and ensemble models, such as combinations of artificial neural networks (ANN), enhances prediction accuracy and reduces errors. Overall, these studies indicate that advanced machine learning techniques provide robust solutions for churn prediction across different datasets and contexts.

#### 8.2 Limitations

A common limitation across these studies is the reliance on specific datasets, which may not fully capture the diversity of customer behavior across various domains and industries. Additionally, while focusing on particular machine learning models (e.g., Naive Bayes, ANNs), the studies did not extensively explore other advanced algorithms, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of their findings. The representativeness of the testing data and the generalizability of the results to real-world scenarios were also identified as concerns.

#### **8.3** Recommendations and Future Works

To improve the robustness and accuracy of churn prediction models, it is recommended to: Expand datasets to include more features and diverse customer behaviors from various industries. Incorporate a wider range of machine learning techniques, such as gradient boosting, support vector machines, and genetic algorithms. Enhance data preprocessing with advanced feature selection and dimensionality reduction methods. Integrate real-time

data analysis and feedback mechanisms to improve model adaptability and performance in dynamic environments.

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## **CHAPTER IX**

# **Publication Details**

# **Publication Details**

Title	Author(s)	Source	Publisher	Published
				Year
Churn Prediction	Mehpara Saghir,	2019 16th	IEEE	2019
using Neural Network	Zeenat Bibi, Saba	International	Xplore	
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