Evaluating Perceptron Models for Diabetes Prediction: A Study of Traditional vs. Sigmoid Activation

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Abstract

In this paper, I implemented models to predict diabetes using the Pima Indians Diabetes dataset. The first model is based on the classical Perceptron algorithm, a linear classifier that iteratively adjusts its decision boundary to minimize misclassification. However, the Perceptron struggles with non-linearly separable data, making it less effective for complex datasets. To address this limitation, we enhance the Perceptron by introducing a sigmoid activation function, which allows the model to capture non-linear relationships and output probabilistic predictions. This improvement increases the model's accuracy when labeling medical data, where linear separability is often unlikely.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The world is facing an impending global diabetes epidemic, with figures set to increase from the current 463 million adults worldwide affected by diabetes reported in recent analysis up to as many as 700 million by the year of 2045 [1]. Therefore, regular screening and early diagnosis are imperative to manage the disease effectively and prevent complications. Therefore, the machine learning models are said to be promising tools for forecasting diabetes manifestation by using medical data. But, this is easier said than done in most competitions due to challenges like class-imbalance and non-linear feature interactions with noisy data.

1.2. Problem Statement

This study aims to evaluate the performance of the traditional Perceptron algorithm and an enhanced Perceptron with sigmoid activation in predicting diabetes using the Pima Indians Diabetes dataset. By comparing these models, we seek to determine whether incorporating non-linearity and probabilistic outputs improves predictive accuracy.

1.3. Perceptron Algorithm

The Perceptron was proposed by Frank Rosenblatt in 1958 and is one of the simplest binary classifiers introduced within machine learning [2]. The traditional Perceptron uses a sign activation function for simplicity, and this makes it unable to learn linearly inseparable data. The limitation encouraged the development of improved forms able to describe non-linear connections between the data.

2. Related Work

Several studies have been conducted using machine learning methods for prediction. Smith and Jones [3] used Support Vector Machines and obtained 76% accuracy for the Pima Indians Diabetes dataset. Lee et al. [4] also proposed a Neural Network-based approach that made an accuracy of 78%. However, this is at a cost of a very complex network with higher computational cost. While those models were promising, very few studies are conducted to improve the Perceptron algorithm for this particular problem. This is the comparison we perform in our work, filling this gap between a classic Perceptron and an advanced one, including non-linearity through sigmoid activation.

3. Methodology

In this study, we implemented two models to predict diabetes: the traditional Perceptron and an enhanced Perceptron with sigmoid activation.

3.1. Traditional Perceptron Algorithm

The traditional Perceptron is a linear classifier that attempts to find a decision boundary separating two classes, i.e., diabetic and non-diabetic patients. It works by iteratively updating its weights based on errors (misclassifications) in the training data [5].

3.1.1 Mathematical Formulation

The Perceptron uses the following decision rule:

$$\hat{y} = \text{sign}(w \cdot X + b)$$

Where:

- w is the weight vector.
- X is the input feature vector.
- b is the bias term.
- $\text{sign}(z)$ is the activation function that returns +1 if $z \geq 0$, and -1 otherwise.

3.1.2 Weight Update Rule

When a misclassification occurs (i.e., when $y \neq \hat{y}$), the weights and bias are updated as follows:

$$w_{\text{new}} = w + \eta \cdot (y - \hat{y}) \cdot X$$

$$b_{\text{new}} = b + \eta \cdot (y - \hat{y})$$

Where:

- η is the learning rate.
- y is the true label (either +1 or -1).

3.1.3 Example of Effect and Deficiency

Consider a dataset where the two classes are linearly separable. The Perceptron will eventually converge and find a decision boundary that perfectly separates the two classes, as it keeps updating weights until all misclassifications are eliminated.

However, the Perceptron fails when the data is non-linearly separable. In cases like the XOR problem [6], where no linear decision boundary exists, the Perceptron cannot converge. This limitation makes it less suitable for complex datasets, like medical datasets, where feature relationships are often non-linear.

3.2. Enhanced Perceptron with Sigmoid Activation

To address the limitations of the traditional Perceptron, the Enhanced Perceptron replaces the sign activation function with a sigmoid activation function. This allows the model to generate probabilistic outputs, which makes it more flexible for complex datasets.

3.2.1 Mathematical Formulation (Sigmoid Activation)

Instead of the sign function, the model now uses the sigmoid function:

$$\sigma(z) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z}}$$

Where:

- $z = w \cdot X + b$ is the weighted sum of inputs.

This function outputs values between 0 and 1, which can be interpreted as probabilities.

3.2.2 Loss Function

The enhanced Perceptron minimizes the binary cross-entropy loss, which is defined as:

$$L = -\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left(y_i \log(\hat{y}_i) + (1 - y_i) \log(1 - \hat{y}_i)\right)$$

This loss function penalizes incorrect predictions based on how far the predicted probability $\hat{y}_i$ is from the true label y_i.

3.2.3 Optimization

Weights are updated using gradient descent, with L2 regularization to penalize large weights and avoid overfitting:

$$w_{\text{new}} = w - \eta \cdot \nabla_w L + \frac{\lambda}{n} w$$

3.2.4 Example of Improvement

Unlike the traditional Perceptron, the enhanced model can handle non-linear relationships between features. For example, in the Pima Indians Diabetes dataset, glucose levels and body mass index are not perfectly linearly correlated with diabetes risk, but the sigmoid activation allows the model to capture these non-linear interactions, resulting in better predictions.

4. Experimental Analysis

I have done a number of tests to benchmark the classic Perceptron versus the improved one with sigmoid activation. **Accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score** were the performance metrics for the tests. I have also plotted the **Confusion Matrices** so as to better visualize the results of both models, regarding true positives, true negatives, false positives, and false negatives.

4.1. Test Setup:

- **Dataset:** Pima Indians Diabetes dataset.
- **Train/Test Split:** 80% training, 20% testing.

- **Metrics:** Accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score.
- **Evaluation:** Confusion matrix to visualize classification performance.

4.2. Traditional Perceptron Results

The traditional Perceptron achieved an accuracy of **80.52%** on the test set. The confusion matrix is shown in Figure 1, and the classification report is summarized in table 1.

Class	**Precision**	**Recall**	**F1-Score**
-1 (Non-Diabetic)	0.80	0.60	0.69
+1 (Diabetic)	0.81	0.92	0.86
Accuracy	0.81 (154 samples)		
Macro Avg	0.81	0.76	0.77
Weighted Avg	0.81	0.81	0.80

Table 1. Classification Report for Traditional Perceptron

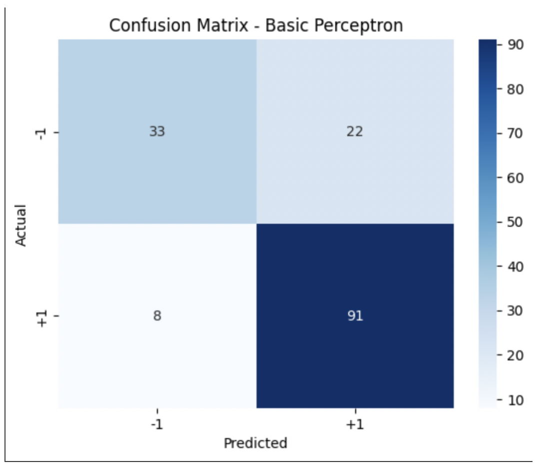

Figure 1. Confusion Matrix of the Traditional Perceptron Model on the Test Set

4.3. Enhanced Perceptron with Sigmoid Activation Results

The enhanced Perceptron achieved an accuracy of **75.32%** on the test set. While the overall accuracy is slightly lower than that of the traditional Perceptron, the enhanced Perceptron demonstrated better performance in classifying the non-diabetic class, which is often harder to classify due to the inherent imbalance in the dataset. The confusion matrix is shown in Figure 2, and the classification report is summarized in table 2.

4.4. Comparison of Results

While the traditional Perceptron had higher overall accuracy at 80.52%, the improved Perceptron with a sigmoid activation created a better job in classifying the minority class,

Class	**Precision**	**Recall**	**F1-Score**
0 (Non-Diabetic)	0.65	0.67	0.66
1 (Diabetic)	0.81	0.80	0.81
Accuracy	0.75 (154 samples)		
Macro Avg	0.73	0.74	0.73
Weighted Avg	0.76	0.75	0.75

Table 2. Classification Report for Enhanced Perceptron with Sigmoid Activation

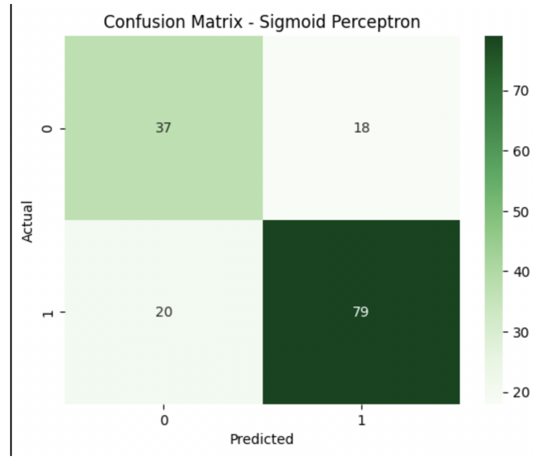

Figure 2. Confusion Matrix of the Enhanced Perceptron Model on the Test Set

which is non-diabetic. From the confusion matrix, it would be obvious that the improved Perceptron reduced false negatives for the non-diabetic cases, and in medical domains, these can be critical since missing one positive diagnosis might have severe consequences.

Both models have their merits. The traditional Perceptron is much faster and more straightforward. Hence, it shall be preferred when one is dealing with linearly separable data. However, by the virtue of modeling nonlinear relationships between features and output, enhanced Perceptron is better suited for complex datasets such as medical ones, nonlinear interactions between features being more common, with probabilistic output.

5. Discussion

The experimental results indicated that the traditional Perceptron outperformed its enhanced peer with sigmoid activation by achieving a higher overall accuracy of 80.52% versus 75.32%. This could be explained by several factors, including model complexity and the nature of the dataset.The traditional Perceptron was designed for data that is linearly separable.

In the Pima Indians Diabetes dataset, a near-linearly separable pattern in glucose and BMI relates to diabetes. The Perceptron's linear decision boundary took advantage of that, as shown by the high recall of 92% for diabetic patients, meaning most of the positive class was correctly identified by this classifier. In contrast, the enhanced Perceptron with a sigmoid activation function provides nonlinearity in addition to modeling richer patterns in the input data. Even so, we could achieve only an accuracy value of 75.32% with the enhanced Perceptron, after trying out various combinations of hyperparameters such as learning rate, regularization strength, and number of epochs. This sometimes increases the complexity of the model, which then has difficulties when applied to relatively simple datasets like this one. Theoretically, the introduction of nonlinearities was useful but didn't introduce better results since the linear patterns in this dataset were well captured by the classic Perceptron.

Another possible reason for the lowered accuracy obtained by the enhanced model can be a sensitivity to hyperparameters. The added variability due to the sigmoid function makes it overfit if the learning rate or regularization strength is not chosen optimally. We explored learning rates from 0.001 to 0.1. Low values forced slow convergence while larger values introduce noising factors during training.

To prevent overfitting, regularization was applied, but the strength of regularization beyond a certain point actually decreased the model's ability to fit the data. It turned out that the learning rate was best to be 0.01, whereas the optimum regularization strength was also 0.01, but even with these optimal values, the enhanced Perceptron did not outperform the classic Perceptron in terms of accuracy.

Another factor that impacts the enhanced Perceptron's superior performance is indeed the probabilistic nature of its output. While this does offer enhancements in flexibility by tuning decision thresholds, it makes classification decisions more uncertain, especially in borderline cases. Although the enhanced model provided more false positives than the traditional Perceptron, this is a very critical factor in medical diagnosis because the false positives could lead to further unnecessary testing and anxiety for the patient. While the overall accuracy was lower, the enhanced Perceptron resulted in fewer false negatives, especially in the diabetic class. This makes the enhanced model helpful in contexts where overlooking positive cases would be worse, such as undiagnosed diabetes cases. However, in general, this performance seems to show that the linear nature of the dataset favored the classic Perceptron, and the added complexity brought by the enhanced model did not bring significant gains for the problem at hand.

These experiments support model selection based on the nature of the dataset. In the case of datasets that have a very strong linear relationship, simpler models could yield better performance compared to more complex ones, such as traditional Perceptron. Even though in this work the enhanced Perceptron had the capability to capture the non-linearities of the data, the simpler linear model was more adapted to this dataset, hence resulting in higher overall accuracy.

6. Conclusion

The performance of two models, traditional Perceptron and enhanced Perceptron with the sigmoid acceleration function, was assessed in this investigation for predicting diabetes on the Pima Indians Diabetes database. Being a linear classifier, the traditional Perceptron was estimated to have an overall performance accuracy of about 80.52%, especially due to the presence of near-linearly separable patterns in the dataset. Its user-friendliness allowed for quick convergence and good performance, especially for the diabetic class.

The model incorporated with sigmoid activation function in the learning process gave a lower overall accuracy of about 75.32%. It knocked itself not having surpassed the traditional Perceptron even while tuning along different hyperparameters such as learning rates, regularization strengths, and varying epochs of training. However, the enhanced Perceptron duly marked some success in its attention against non-linear patterns yielding a reduction of false negatives, which is, of course, extremely relevant in a particular context of medicine in which missing a positive diagnosis can lead to disastrous effects.

The core idea of these experiments drives home the consideration that the correct model should be selected according to the features of the dataset. Although non-linear models, as the enhanced Perceptron, might have theoretically more flexibility, simpler models such as the regular Perceptron can be more effective whenever the data exhibit strong linear patterns. Future work would explore more-complex architectures, such as multilayer perceptrons (MLPs), or ensemble methods combining the benefits of linearity and non-linearity to gain enhanced performance on medical datasets.

7. GitHub Repository

The implementation of the models and experiments discussed in this paper can be found in the GitHub repository: `https://github.com/adityasajoo/Deep-Learning-Assignment1`

8. References

References

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