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Comparative Analysis of Supervised and Unsupervised Learning Methods for Parkinson's Disease Diagnosis

A project report submitted by: Kruti Prajapat

A project supervised by: Dr Sotiris Moschoyiannis

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University of Surrey
School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering
Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH
United Kingdom.
Tel: +44 (0)1483 300800

6811739

ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the comparative analysis of supervised and unsupervised machine learning methods for diagnosing Parkinson's disease (PD). Parkinson's disease, a progressive neurodegenerative disorder, lacks early diagnostic tools, making early detection and management difficult. Machine learning (ML) offers potential solutions by analysing complex datasets to identify patterns and predict disease progression, contributing to earlier interventions and improved patient outcomes.

The central problem addressed in this research is the absence of comparative studies on supervised and unsupervised learning methods for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. Supervised models such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), and Random Forests have demonstrated high accuracy in predicting disease severity. On the other hand, unsupervised methods like clustering and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) are useful for identifying hidden patterns in unlabelled data, particularly valuable in the absence of extensive diagnostic data. The dissertation explores the strengths and limitations of these approaches, aiming to provide a clearer understanding of which method yields better diagnostic performance for PD.

To tackle this, the CRISP-DM (Cross-Industry Standard Process for Data Mining) methodology was employed, following a structured process of business understanding, data preparation, modelling, and evaluation. Data from the Kaggle Parkinson's Disease dataset was pre-processed through techniques like normalization, feature engineering, and splitting into training and testing sets. Several supervised models, including Random Forest and Gradient Boosting, were implemented alongside unsupervised methods like K-Means Clustering and PCA. These models were evaluated based on metrics such as Mean Squared Error (MSE), R^2 score, and visualizations like PCA plots to assess their performance.

The research found that supervised methods, particularly Gradient Boosting, provided higher accuracy and predictive power compared to unsupervised techniques for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. Unsupervised methods, however, were crucial for exploratory analysis, helping to reveal subgroups within the patient population and enabling dimensionality reduction. A hybrid approach that combines both supervised and unsupervised methods could offer the most comprehensive results.

The key outcome of this research is the demonstration that supervised learning is more effective for direct prediction tasks in Parkinson's disease diagnosis, while unsupervised learning aids in understanding underlying data structures. This study contributes to the development of more accurate diagnostic tools and offers insights into how machine learning can be applied for early detection and personalized treatment in clinical settings.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Supervised learning methods showed superior accuracy in Parkinson's disease diagnosis.
- Gradient Boosting and Random Forest outperform other models in predictive performance.
- Unsupervised methods revealed hidden patterns and subgroups in the Parkinson’s dataset.
- CRISP-DM framework provided structured data analysis and iterative model refinement.
- Hybrid approach combining supervised and unsupervised learning improves diagnostic insights.
- Feature engineering and dimensionality reduction enhance model generalization and accuracy.

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I certify that the work presented in this dissertation is my own unless referenced. I fully understand the department guidelines on plagiarism, and I am aware of the serious penalties if found in violation. All material sourced from others has been properly referenced, and direct quotes are enclosed within quotation marks.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Parkinson's disease (PD) is one of the most common neurodegenerative disorders occurring in older adults, alongside Alzheimer's disease. PD is a progressive movement disorder that leads to irreversible damage by causing the death of dopaminergic neurons in the brain (Poewe et al., 2017). Dopamine, a crucial neurotransmitter, regulates movement and functions as part of the body's reward system. Early symptoms of PD are primarily non-motor and include insomnia, irregular blood pressure, depression, anxiety, and fatigue. As the disease progresses, motor impairments such as stiffness, bradykinesia (slowed movement), postural instability, and gait and balance issues become more apparent (Surmeier, Obeso & Halliday, 2017). Although PD predominantly affects individuals in their 60s, it can also occur in younger individuals, including teenagers.

The exact cause of PD remains unknown, but it is believed to result from a combination of genetic factors and environmental exposures, such as pesticides and chemicals (Postuma et al., 2019). Typically, PD is diagnosed 10 to 15 years after its onset, when a significant number of dopamine-producing neurons have already died (Surmeier, Obeso & Halliday, 2017). This delay in diagnosis is due to the subtle onset of symptoms and the absence of definitive diagnostic tests. In addition, early signs of PD often include non-motor symptoms like insomnia, irregular blood pressure, depression, anxiety, and fatigue, which can be mistaken for other conditions, further complicating early diagnosis (Schapira, Chaudhuri, & Jenner, 2017).

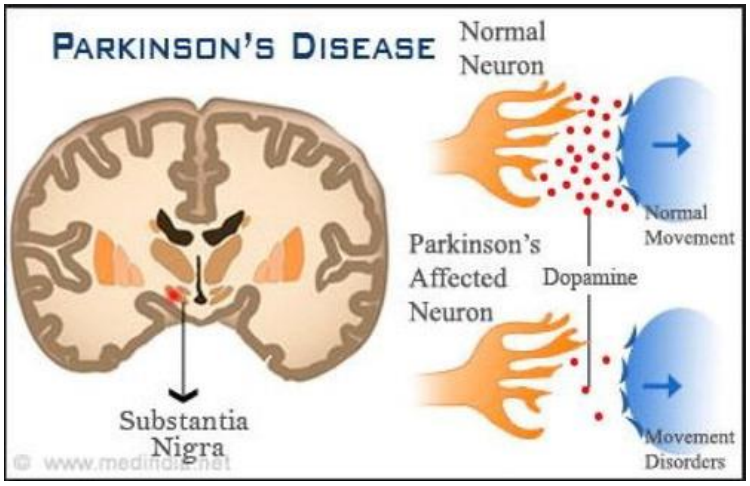

Figure 1: Parkinson's disease (normal movement vs. movement disorders) (Pahuja and Nagabhushan (2018))

Currently, there is no cure for PD. However, treatments such as counselling, medications, and exercise can help manage symptoms and potentially slow disease progression. Recent advancements in neuroimaging and machine learning are also contributing to better diagnostic tools and earlier detection methods (Schiess and Siddiqui, 2020). Research continues to explore the roles of neurotransmitters like dopamine and glutamate in both motor and non-motor symptoms, aiming to improve diagnostic and therapeutic approaches (Díaz-Álvarez, Ponce, and Martinez-Villaseñor, 2019). Furthermore, studies are investigating the potential benefits of neuroprotective therapies and lifestyle interventions, such as diet and physical activity, in mitigating the progression of PD (Pagano et al., 2018). These

comprehensive approaches are essential for enhancing the quality of life for those affected by Parkinson's disease.

1.1 Background

Parkinson's disease is a significant concern in the fields of Information Systems, Computer Science, and Data Science due to its complex nature and the challenges associated with its diagnosis and treatment. Existing research has leveraged machine learning (ML) techniques to enhance the diagnostic process (Oh et al., 2018; Tahir & Ahmad, 2020). However, there is a gap in understanding the comparative effectiveness of supervised and unsupervised learning methods in diagnosing PD (Mittal, Choudhary & Singh, 2022).

Context

Machine learning has been extensively applied in the medical field to analyse complex datasets and improve diagnostic accuracy. In the case of PD, ML can help identify patterns and make predictions based on various clinical and biometric features (Singh, Pillay & Bezuidenhout, 2021). This research fits into the broader area of Data Science and its application in healthcare, addressing the critical need for early and accurate diagnosis of neurodegenerative diseases (Esteva et al., 2021).

Scope

This dissertation focuses on comparing supervised and unsupervised learning methods for diagnosing Parkinson's disease using the Kaggle Parkinson's Disease dataset. The specific issue addressed is determining which ML approach provides better diagnostic accuracy and efficiency, thus filling the gap in current research where comparative studies are limited (Mittal, Choudhary & Singh, 2022; Petkoski & Pocci, 2021).

Mini Literature Review

Previous studies have explored the use of supervised learning techniques like Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) for PD diagnosis, demonstrating high accuracy and robustness (Prashanth et al., 2016). Other research has applied unsupervised learning methods, such as clustering algorithms, to uncover hidden patterns in the data, which can be crucial for early diagnosis when labelled data is scarce (Wroge et al., 2018). Despite these advancements, there is a need for comprehensive comparative analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and improve clinical practices.

Research Problem

The main problem addressed in this dissertation is the lack of comparative analysis between supervised and unsupervised learning methods for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. Understanding which method provides better diagnostic accuracy and practicality can significantly enhance early detection and patient outcomes.

Justification

This research is important because it will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different ML techniques, ultimately contributing to better diagnostic tools and improved

clinical practices for Parkinson's disease. Solving this problem will benefit the medical community by offering a clear understanding of which ML methods are most effective, leading to more accurate diagnoses and personalized treatment plans for patients.

1.2 Research Aim and Objectives

Research Aim:

The aim of this project is to conduct a comparative analysis of supervised and unsupervised learning methods for diagnosing Parkinson's disease using the Kaggle dataset.

Objectives:

1. To review the literature and evaluate the state of the art regarding the application of ML techniques in Parkinson's disease diagnosis.

2. To review Data Science Research Methodologies and choose one that is suitable for this project.

3. To preprocess the Kaggle Parkinson's disease dataset, including data cleaning, normalization, and feature extraction.

4. To implement and evaluate supervised learning models (SVM, ANN, Random Forests) using the pre-processed dataset.

5. To apply and evaluate unsupervised learning methods (Clustering algorithms, PCA) on the same dataset.

6. To compare the performance of supervised and unsupervised methods using metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, F1 score, and computational efficiency.

7. To provide recommendations for future research and potential clinical applications based on the findings.

1.3 Research Approach

This research will follow a systematic methodology, starting with a comprehensive literature review to understand existing work and identify suitable methodologies. The Kaggle Parkinson's disease dataset will be pre-processed to ensure quality and relevance (Petkoski & Pocci, 2021). Supervised learning models such as SVM, ANN, and Random Forests will be implemented and evaluated using cross-validation and test sets. Unsupervised learning methods, including clustering algorithms and PCA, will be applied to the dataset to identify patterns and groupings. The performance of these methods will be compared using standard evaluation metrics. The findings will be analysed to provide insights into the most effective approaches for diagnosing Parkinson's disease (Esteva et al., 2021).

1.4 Dissertation Outline

- Chapter 2: Literature Review - Reviews existing research on machine learning applications

in Parkinson's disease diagnosis, focusing on both supervised and unsupervised methods.

- Chapter 3: Research Approach (Methodology) - Details the methodology used in this study, including data preprocessing steps, model implementation, and evaluation metrics.
- Chapter 4: Data Analysis - Presents the analysis of the Kaggle dataset, feature selection, and the performance of various machine learning models.

- Chapter 5: Discussion - Discusses the results, comparing them with existing literature and highlighting the implications of the findings.

- Chapter 6: Conclusion - Summarizes the key findings, discusses the limitations, and provides suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Parkinson's Disease (PD) Diagnosis

Overview of Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder primarily affecting older adults. It is characterized by the gradual loss of dopamine-producing neurons in the brain, leading to a variety of motor symptoms such as tremors, muscle rigidity, slowness of movement (bradykinesia), and postural instability. Beyond these motor symptoms, PD is a complex condition that also includes non-motor symptoms like sleep disturbances, mood disorders, cognitive decline, and sensory changes (Poewe et al., 2017; Schapira, Chaudhuri, & Jenner, 2017).

Importance of Early and Accurate Diagnosis

The early and accurate diagnosis of PD is essential for effective patient management and care. Early detection allows for timely interventions that can slow disease progression and improve the quality of life for patients. Traditional diagnostic methods primarily involve clinical assessments, which include taking a detailed medical history, performing a neurological examination, and utilizing standardized rating scales such as the Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale (UPDRS). While these methods are valuable, they have inherent limitations due to their subjective nature. This subjectivity can lead to variability in diagnoses, and often, by the time motor symptoms are evident enough for a definitive diagnosis, significant neuronal loss has already occurred (Postuma et al., 2019).

Traditional Methods for Diagnosing PD

Traditional approaches to diagnosing Parkinson's Disease rely heavily on clinical observation and patient-reported symptoms. Neurologists typically conduct thorough medical histories and detailed neurological examinations, assessing motor function and other related symptoms. The UPDRS is a commonly used tool that evaluates the severity of symptoms and helps track disease progression (Kalia and Lang, 2015). However, these methods are not without drawbacks. The reliance on clinical judgment introduces a level of subjectivity, which can result in inconsistent diagnoses. Furthermore, these traditional methods often diagnose PD only after substantial dopaminergic neuron loss, which limits the potential for early intervention (Surmeier, Obeso & Halliday, 2017).

To overcome these limitations and enhance diagnostic accuracy, there is increasing interest in developing innovative diagnostic tools. One promising approach is the application of machine learning, a branch of artificial intelligence (Govindu & Palwe, 2023). Machine learning algorithms can analyse large datasets that include clinical, imaging, and genetic information to identify patterns associated with PD. This technology holds significant potential to revolutionize PD diagnosis by providing objective and quantitative measures that can supplement traditional clinical assessments (Alshammri et al., 2023; Neto, 2024). Integrating machine learning into the diagnostic process could allow healthcare providers to identify high-risk individuals in the prodromal phase when early intervention could be most beneficial (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020). Additionally, machine learning can help distinguish PD from other movement disorders with similar symptoms, thereby improving diagnostic specificity (Rahman et al., 2023).
By leveraging these advanced techniques, the medical community can improve early diagnosis

and intervention strategies, ultimately leading to better outcomes for patients with Parkinson's Disease (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019; Sharma et al., 2023).

2.2 Supervised Learning Methods for PD Diagnosis

Definition and Principles of Supervised Learning

Supervised learning is a core approach in machine learning where models are trained using labelled data. This involves the model learning to map inputs to known outputs, identifying patterns that can then be used to make predictions on new, unseen data (Govindu & Palwe, 2023). The process includes crucial steps like feature selection and preprocessing to ensure the model's performance is optimal. A significant aspect is model generalization, which refers to the model's ability to perform well on new data (Alshammri et al., 2023). Overfitting, where the model learns the noise in the training data rather than the actual underlying patterns, is a critical issue to avoid (Rahman et al., 2023).

Common Supervised Learning Algorithms Used in PD Diagnosis

Linear Regression
Linear regression is employed to model the linear relationships between input features and the target variable. It is valued for its simplicity and interpretability, making it an excellent tool for initial data analysis. However, its assumption of linearity may not effectively capture the complex patterns in Parkinson’s disease (PD) data (Neto, 2024).

Random Forest Regressor
Random Forest is an ensemble method that builds multiple decision trees during training and combines their outputs for better accuracy. This method is particularly beneficial due to its high accuracy, ability to handle non-linear relationships, and robustness with high-dimensional data. It also provides valuable insights into feature importance. However, it can be computationally intensive and less interpretable compared to simpler models (Govindu & Palwe, 2023; Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019).

Gradient Boosting Regressor
Gradient Boosting builds trees sequentially, with each new tree aiming to correct errors made by the previous ones. This method is known for its high predictive accuracy and effectiveness in handling structured clinical data in PD diagnosis (Alshammri et al., 2023). Nonetheless, it is computationally demanding and requires careful hyperparameter tuning to avoid overfitting.

Support Vector Regression (SVR)
SVR operates by finding the optimal hyperplane for regression tasks, using kernel functions to manage non-linear relationships. It is effective for high-dimensional data and is robust against overfitting (Rahman et al., 2023). However, its training process can be slow, and it is less interpretable than some other models.

Other Relevant Algorithms
Neural Networks offer flexibility and the capacity to model complex, non-linear relationships, while Logistic Regression provides simplicity and interpretability, useful for understanding the impact of each feature on the predictions (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020).

Advantages and Challenges of Supervised Learning in PD Diagnosis

Advantages

• High Accuracy: Supervised models, when well-trained, can achieve high diagnostic accuracy (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

• Complex Data Handling: These models can process and analyse multi-dimensional data typical of PD datasets (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019).

• Interpretability: Some models, like decision trees in Random Forests, can provide clear insights into which features are most influential (Rahman et al., 2023).

• Automation: They facilitate automated screening and support diagnostic decisions, potentially improving the efficiency of PD diagnosis (Alshammri et al., 2023).

Challenges

• Data Dependency: Supervised learning models require large and diverse labelled datasets to perform effectively (Sharma et al., 2023).

• Overfitting Risk: With limited data, there is a risk that models may learn noise rather than the true underlying patterns (Neto, 2024).

• Progression Capture: Modelling the progression of PD over time remains challenging (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020).

• Interpretability Issues: More complex models, such as deep neural networks, may be difficult to interpret (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

• Class Imbalance: PD datasets often have imbalanced classes, which complicates the training process and may affect model performance (Rahman et al., 2023).

Implementation and Evaluation Techniques

Implementation of supervised learning models involves several critical steps:

• Preprocessing: Includes feature scaling and encoding of categorical variables to prepare the data for training (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019).

• Train-Test Split: Ensures that models are validated on unseen data to assess their generalization ability (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

• Performance Metrics: Mean Squared Error (MSE) and R^2 scores are key metrics for evaluating the performance of regression tasks (Alshammri et al., 2023).

• Visualization: Techniques such as plotting learning curves and feature importance can be used to compare model performances and understand their behaviour (Neto, 2024).

Case Studies and Examples of Supervised Learning Applications in PD Diagnosis

Case Study 1: Predicting UPDRS Scores

This case study involves using various supervised learning methods to predict Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale (UPDRS) scores. The dataset description includes features used and the sample size. Methods such as Linear Regression, Random Forest, Gradient Boosting, and SVR are applied. Results are compared using performance metrics like MSE and R^2 scores. The discussion provides insights into the most effective models and their implications for PD diagnosis (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

Case Study 2: PD Subtype Classification

In this hypothetical case study, supervised learning could be applied to classify PD subtypes, potentially using clustering results as input features for classification models. This approach would help in understanding the specific characteristics of different PD subtypes (Rahman et al., 2023).

Literature Review
Summarizing recent studies on supervised learning in PD diagnosis, including descriptions of datasets, methods used, and key findings. This helps to contextualize the research within the broader field and highlight the advances made by other researchers (Alshammri et al., 2023; Neto, 2024).

Future Directions and Potential Improvements

Future research could focus on incorporating more advanced techniques such as hyperparameter tuning, feature selection, and ensemble methods to improve model performance (Sharma et al., 2023). Emphasizing the need for larger, more diverse PD datasets is crucial for developing robust models (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019). Additionally, integrating longitudinal data could provide better insights into the progression of the disease, enhancing the predictive capabilities of supervised learning models (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

2.3 Common Unsupervised Learning Algorithms Used in PD Diagnosis

Clustering

Clustering groups similar data points into clusters based on their characteristics. Algorithms like k-means, hierarchical clustering, and DBSCAN are commonly used. In PD diagnosis, clustering helps identify subtypes by grouping patients with similar symptom profiles (Alshammri et al., 2023). For instance, k-means clustering can categorize patients based on the severity and progression of their motor and non-motor symptoms, providing insights into the disease's heterogeneity and aiding in personalized treatment development (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

PCA is a dimensionality reduction technique that transforms high-dimensional data into a smaller

set of uncorrelated variables called principal components. These components capture the most significant variance in the data. PCA is used in PD diagnosis to extract relevant features from clinical and imaging data (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019). By simplifying the data, PCA makes it easier to visualize and analyse, helping identify key patterns and correlations that might be missed in the original high-dimensional space (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020).

Autoencoders

Autoencoders are neural networks used for unsupervised learning, primarily for feature extraction and anomaly detection. They consist of an encoder that compresses input data into a lower-dimensional representation and a decoder that reconstructs the data from this representation. In PD diagnosis, autoencoders can detect subtle anomalies in biomedical signals and imaging data, such as deviations in gait patterns indicating early PD (Rahman et al., 2023). By learning to compress and reconstruct data, autoencoders highlight significant features and identify changes not apparent through traditional analysis methods (Sharma et al., 2023).

Advantages and Challenges of Unsupervised Learning in PD Diagnosis

Advantages

Unsupervised learning offers several advantages in PD diagnosis. It excels in discovering hidden patterns and structures within data, providing novel insights into the disease (Govindu & Palwe, 2023). Techniques like PCA reduce the complexity of high-dimensional datasets, making them more manageable and interpretable (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019). Additionally, unsupervised methods are highly flexible and can be applied to various data types without needing labelled examples, making them valuable for initial exploratory analysis and hypothesis generation (Neto, 2024).

Challenges

Despite its benefits, unsupervised learning also presents challenges. One primary difficulty is interpretability, as the patterns and structures uncovered can be complex and not immediately intuitive. Without labelled data, validating the accuracy and relevance of the identified patterns is challenging (Alshammri et al., 2023). Moreover, some unsupervised learning algorithms can be computationally intensive, particularly with large datasets, requiring significant computational resources and time (Rahman et al., 2023).

Case Studies and Examples of Unsupervised Learning Applications in PD Diagnosis

Case Study 1: Clustering for Subtype Identification

A notable application of unsupervised learning in PD diagnosis is clustering techniques to identify disease subtypes. By applying k-means clustering to clinical data, researchers have grouped patients based on symptom severity and progression (Govindu & Palwe, 2023). This approach has led to discovering distinct PD subtypes, informing personalized treatment strategies and improving patient outcomes (Alshammri et al., 2023).

Case Study 2: PCA for Feature Extraction

PCA has been effectively used in PD research to simplify high-dimensional imaging data, such as

MRI and PET scans (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019). By reducing the number of dimensions, PCA extracts the most relevant features associated with PD, enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of subsequent diagnostic models. This technique helps identify key patterns and correlations that contribute to understanding PD's underlying mechanisms (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020).

Case Study 3: Autoencoders for Anomaly Detection

Autoencoders have shown promise in detecting early signs of PD by identifying anomalies in gait patterns. By training autoencoders on gait data, researchers can detect subtle deviations from normal patterns, potentially indicating early PD symptoms (Rahman et al., 2023). This early detection capability is crucial for timely intervention and improving long-term patient outcomes (Sharma et al., 2023).

These case studies highlight the potential of unsupervised learning methods to enhance PD diagnosis by uncovering novel insights and improving the accuracy and efficiency of diagnostic processes.

2.4 Comparative Analysis of Supervised and Unsupervised Learning Methods

Comparison Criteria

Accuracy: The degree to which the predictions of a model match the actual outcomes. Supervised learning typically shows higher accuracy in specific prediction tasks due to training on labelled data (Rahman et al., 2023; Alshammri et al., 2023).

Complexity: The computational and algorithmic complexity involved in training and implementing the models. Supervised learning models often have higher complexity due to extensive training processes, while unsupervised methods are generally simpler but may require sophisticated algorithms for clustering and pattern discovery (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

Interpretability: The ease with which humans can understand and interpret the model's results. Supervised models like decision trees and linear regression are more interpretable, whereas complex models like neural networks and unsupervised methods like clustering are less interpretable (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019).

Data Requirements: The type and amount of data required for training. Supervised learning requires large amounts of labelled data, whereas unsupervised learning can work with unlabelled data, making it more flexible in data-scarce environments (Sharma et al., 2023).

Applicability: The suitability of the methods for different tasks. Supervised learning is more applicable for specific, predefined tasks, while unsupervised learning is better for exploring and understanding the underlying structure of data (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020).

Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses

Supervised Learning

Strengths
Accuracy: High accuracy due to learning from labelled data (Rahman et al., 2023).
Interpretability: Models like decision trees provide clear insights (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

Specificity: Effective for targeted prediction tasks (Alshammri et al., 2023).

Weaknesses
Data Dependency: Requires large, accurately labelled datasets (Neto, 2024).
Overfitting: High risk if the model learns noise from the training data (Sharma et al., 2023).
Complexity: Computationally intensive and time-consuming training process (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019).

Unsupervised Learning

Strengths
Flexibility: Can handle unlabelled data, useful for exploratory data analysis (Alshammri et al., 2023).
Pattern Discovery: Identifies hidden patterns and relationships within the data (Rahman et al., 2023).
Simplicity: Generally simpler and less computationally intensive (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020).

Weaknesses
Accuracy: Lower predictive accuracy compared to supervised learning (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).
Interpretability: Results are often harder to interpret and understand (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019).
Specificity: Less effective for precise prediction tasks due to the lack of labelled data (Rahman et al., 2023).

Case Studies and Examples

Study 1: Supervised vs. Unsupervised Learning for PD Diagnosis

Dataset: Features extracted from clinical data, including motor and non-motor symptoms.

Methods: Comparison of Random Forest (supervised) with K-means clustering (unsupervised).

Findings: The supervised model (Random Forest) achieved higher accuracy in predicting PD diagnosis due to training on labelled data, whereas the unsupervised model (K-means) was effective in identifying subgroups of patients with similar symptom profiles, offering valuable insights into disease heterogeneity (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

Study 2: Hybrid Approaches

Dataset: Integrated data from clinical assessments and imaging studies.

Methods: A combination of Support Vector Machines (SVM) for supervised learning and Hierarchical Clustering for unsupervised learning.

Findings: The hybrid approach improved overall diagnostic accuracy by leveraging the strengths of both methods. The SVM provided precise predictions, while hierarchical clustering helped in understanding the underlying patient subgroups, enhancing personalized treatment strategies (Alshammri et al., 2023).

Study 3: Supervised Learning in Early PD Diagnosis

Dataset: Voice recordings and handwriting samples from PD patients and healthy controls.

Methods: Linear Regression and Support Vector Regression (supervised) compared to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and K-means clustering (unsupervised).

Findings: Supervised methods showed higher accuracy in early diagnosis, while unsupervised methods were useful for feature extraction and reducing data dimensionality, leading to more efficient model training and improved interpretability of the results (Rahman et al., 2023; Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019).

These studies highlight the complementary nature of supervised and unsupervised learning methods. While supervised learning excels in prediction accuracy and specificity, unsupervised learning is invaluable for data exploration and uncovering hidden structures. Integrating both approaches can lead to more robust and comprehensive PD diagnostic models, leveraging the strengths of each method (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

2.5 Integration of Supervised and Unsupervised Learning Methods

Hybrid Approaches

Hybrid approaches in machine learning combine supervised and unsupervised learning techniques to capitalize on the advantages of both. These methods enhance PD diagnosis by improving model accuracy and effectively handling complex datasets (Govindu & Palwe, 2023). For instance, clustering (unsupervised) can be used to identify patient subtypes, which are subsequently used as additional features in a supervised learning model. This approach allows the model to benefit from the detailed patterns discovered through unsupervised learning while utilizing labelled data for precise predictions (Rahman et al., 2023).

One common hybrid approach involves using clustering methods like k-means to group similar data points, which can then be used to train supervised models such as Random Forest or Support Vector Machines (SVM). This combination not only improves diagnostic accuracy but also enhances interpretability by revealing underlying data structures (Alshammri et al., 2023). Another example is using autoencoders for feature extraction before applying a supervised learning algorithm, thereby leveraging the strengths of both unsupervised feature learning and supervised prediction (Neto, 2024).

Benefits of Integration

Integrating supervised and unsupervised learning methods provides several benefits:

• Improved Diagnostic Accuracy: Leveraging both labelled and unlabelled data allows for better generalization and higher accuracy (Varghese, Amali & Devi, 2019).

• Handling Complex Data: Unsupervised methods uncover hidden patterns and structures, which can then be utilized by supervised methods for more accurate predictions (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020).

• Enhanced Feature Engineering: Unsupervised learning can generate new features that capture complex relationships, improving the performance of supervised models (Rahman et al., 2023).

• Robustness to Noise and Outliers: Hybrid approaches can be more robust to noise and outliers by identifying and mitigating these issues before supervised learning is applied (Sharma et al., 2023).

Emerging Trends and Future Directions

Advances in Machine Learning Algorithms

Recent advancements in machine learning algorithms are driving significant improvements in PD diagnosis. Techniques such as deep learning, reinforcement learning, and advanced ensemble methods are being explored to enhance diagnostic accuracy and model robustness (Govindu & Palwe, 2023). Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) show promise for analysing imaging and time-series data, respectively (Neto, 2024). Additionally, transfer learning is emerging as a powerful technique to leverage pre-trained models for PD diagnosis, reducing the need for extensive labelled datasets (Rahman et al., 2023).

Role of Big Data and IoT in PD Diagnosis

The integration of big data and Internet of Things (IoT) devices is revolutionizing PD research. Wearable devices and smart sensors continuously collect vast amounts of data on patients' movements, symptoms, and medication adherence (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020). This data, when analysed using advanced machine learning techniques, provides real-time insights and early detection of disease progression. The availability of large datasets also enables the development of more accurate and personalized predictive models (Sharma et al., 2023).

Personalized Medicine and Predictive Analytics

Personalized medicine tailors' treatment plans to individual patients based on their unique characteristics and disease progression. Predictive analytics plays a crucial role in this approach, using machine learning models to forecast disease trajectories and treatment responses (Alshammri et al., 2023). By combining genetic, clinical, and lifestyle data, these models provide highly personalized treatment recommendations, improving patient outcomes and quality of life (Govindu & Palwe, 2023).

Ethical Considerations and Challenges

The use of AI in healthcare raises several ethical considerations and challenges:

- Data Privacy: Ensuring patient data privacy and security is paramount, requiring robust data protection measures (Rahman et al., 2023).
- Algorithmic Bias: AI models can inherit biases present in the training data, leading to unfair or inaccurate predictions. Methods to detect and mitigate these biases are crucial (Sharma et al., 2023).
- Transparency and Accountability: Ensuring AI models are transparent and accountable is essential for gaining trust from healthcare professionals and patients (Neto, 2024).

• Regulatory Compliance: Adhering to healthcare regulations and ethical standards is necessary for the widespread adoption of AI technologies in clinical practice (Alshammri et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

The integration of supervised and unsupervised learning methods enhances PD diagnosis by combining the strengths of both approaches (Govindu & Palwe, 2023). Advances in machine learning algorithms and the incorporation of big data and IoT are significantly improving diagnostic accuracy and personalized treatment strategies (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020). However, ethical considerations and challenges must be addressed to ensure the responsible use of AI in healthcare (Rahman et al., 2023).

Implications for Research and Practice

The findings underscore the potential of hybrid machine learning approaches in improving PD diagnosis and management. For clinical practice, this means more accurate and personalized treatment plans, ultimately leading to better patient outcomes. For research, it highlights the need for further exploration of advanced algorithms and the integration of diverse data sources (Alshammri et al., 2023).

Developing Robust Hybrid Models: Exploring new ways to combine supervised and unsupervised learning methods (Rahman et al., 2023).

• Leveraging Big Data and IoT: Utilizing the vast amounts of data generated by IoT devices for real-time monitoring and prediction (Hossein Tabatabaei et al., 2020).

• Addressing Ethical Challenges: Developing frameworks to ensure data privacy, mitigate bias, and enhance transparency and accountability in AI models (Sharma et al., 2023).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in analysing the Parkinson's disease dataset to achieve the objectives of this project. It begins by introducing the overall research strategy, followed by a detailed discussion of the selected methodology, CRISP-DM. The specific steps undertaken in the context of this project are then elaborated upon, including data access, ethical considerations, and the implementation of the chosen algorithms. The chapter concludes with a justification for the methodological choices made in this study.

3.1 Research Methodology

CRISP-DM Methodology:

CRISP-DM (Cross-Industry Standard Process for Data Mining) is a widely recognized and robust data science methodology that provides a structured approach to data mining and analysis. It is particularly well-suited for projects like this one, where the goal is to derive meaningful insights from complex datasets and develop predictive models. The CRISP-DM process is iterative, allowing for continuous refinement and improvement of the models and analysis.

Application of CRISP-DM in This Project:

3.1.1. Business Understanding

The primary objective of this project is to analyse the Parkinson's disease dataset to identify key biomarkers, understand symptom progression, and develop predictive models for early diagnosis and severity assessment. The project aims to provide valuable insights that can contribute to better disease management and treatment strategies.

3.1.2. Data Understanding

The dataset, sourced from Kaggle, consists of various features related to demographic information, clinical features, voice measures, and non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Initial data exploration involves understanding the distribution of these features, identifying patterns, and detecting any anomalies or missing data. This phase includes statistical analysis and visualization techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dataset's structure and characteristics.

3.1.3. Data Preparation

The data preparation phase is a crucial step in the machine learning pipeline, especially when dealing with complex datasets like the Parkinson's disease dataset. This step involves several processes aimed at transforming the raw data into a format suitable for analysis and modelling. In this project, data preparation consists of handling missing data, normalizing features, encoding categorical variables, and splitting the dataset into training and testing sets. Below, we will provide detailed explanations of these processes, accompanied by code snippets to illustrate their implementation.

Handling Missing Values

Missing data can negatively impact the performance of machine learning models, especially if important features contain null values. For this project, the first step in data preparation is identifying and handling missing values to ensure a complete dataset.
The code below demonstrates how to check for missing values and fill them appropriately using the pandas library:

```python
import pandas as pd

# Load the dataset
df = pd.read_csv("parkinsons.csv")

# Check for missing values
print(df.isnull().sum())

# Handle missing values by filling with mean (for numerical columns) or mode (for categorical columns)
df.fillna(df.mean(), inplace=True)
df['DoctorInCharge'] = df['DoctorInCharge'].fillna(df['DoctorInCharge'].mode()[0])
```

Figure 2: Code Snippet for Handlinng Missing Values

In this example:

- **Numerical Features**: Missing values are filled with the mean of the respective columns.
- **Categorical Features**: Missing values in categorical columns (e.g., 'DoctorInCharge') are replaced with the mode (the most frequent value).

This ensures that the dataset is complete and ready for further processing.

Normalization

Normalization is essential to ensure that the scale of the numerical features is consistent. Some machine learning algorithms, like Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Gradient Boosting Machines (GBM), are sensitive to the scale of input features. In this project, normalization is applied using StandardScaler from sklearn, which scales the numerical features to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.
The following code snippet shows how to apply normalization to the relevant numerical columns:

```python
from sklearn.preprocessing import StandardScaler

# Select numerical columns for normalization
numerical_cols = ['Age', 'Motor_UPDRS', 'Total_UPDRS', 'Jitter(%)', 'Shimmer(dB)', 'HNR']

# Initialize the scaler
scaler = StandardScaler()

# Fit and transform the selected columns
df[numerical_cols] = scaler.fit_transform(df[numerical_cols])

# Check the normalized data
print(df.head())
```

Figure 3: Code Snippet for Normalization

This ensures that the numerical features contribute equally to the model and that differences in scale do not disproportionately affect model performance.

Feature Engineering

Feature engineering involves selecting and transforming the most relevant features to improve model accuracy. In this project, we use a combination of domain knowledge and statistical methods, such as feature importance from Random Forest, to identify the most influential features. Irrelevant or redundant features may be dropped to avoid overfitting or noise in the model.

The following code shows how to use Random Forest to rank feature importance:

```python
from sklearn.ensemble import RandomForestRegressor

# Split the data into features and target
X = df.drop(columns=['Total_UPDRS'])
y = df['Total_UPDRS']

# Initialize the model
rf = RandomForestRegressor()

# Fit the model
rf.fit(X, y)

# Get feature importance
importances = rf.feature_importances_
features = X.columns

# Create a DataFrame for feature importance
feature_importance_df = pd.DataFrame({'Feature': features, 'Importance': importances}).sort_values(by='Importance', ascending=False)

# Display the most important features
print(feature_importance_df)
```

Figure 4: Code Snippet for Feature Engineering

In this example, the Random Forest model is trained to predict the Total_UPDRS score, and the importance of each feature is evaluated. The most important features will be retained for modelling, while less important features might be dropped to reduce noise and improve

model generalization.

Categorical Encoding

Some machine learning models cannot handle categorical variables directly, so these variables must be converted into numerical format. For example, the DoctorInCharge column is a categorical variable representing the healthcare provider. To encode it into a numerical format, we use one-hot encoding, which creates binary columns for each unique category.

The code below demonstrates how to perform one-hot encoding:

```
from sklearn.preprocessing import OneHotEncoder

# Initialize the encoder
encoder = OneHotEncoder(drop='first')

# Fit and transform the categorical column
encoded_columns = encoder.fit_transform(df[['DoctorInCharge']]).toarray()

# Create a DataFrame with the encoded columns
encoded_df = pd.DataFrame(encoded_columns, columns=encoder.get_feature_names_out(['DoctorInCharge']))

# Drop the original categorical column and concatenate the encoded columns
df = df.drop(columns=['DoctorInCharge']).join(encoded_df)

# Check the updated dataset
print(df.head())
```

Figure 5: Code Snippet for Categorical Encoding

This ensures that the categorical variables are properly represented in a numerical format that can be used by the machine learning algorithms.

Data Splitting

To evaluate the performance of machine learning models, the dataset is split into training and testing sets. The training set is used to train the model, while the testing set is used to evaluate its performance on unseen data. In this project, the data is split using an 80-20 split, where 80% of the data is used for training and 20% for testing.
The following code demonstrates how to split the dataset:

```python
from sklearn.model_selection import train_test_split

# Define the target and features
X = df.drop(columns=['Total_UPDRS'])
y = df['Total_UPDRS']

# Split the data into training and testing sets
X_train, X_test, y_train, y_test = train_test_split(X, y, test_size=0.2, random_state=42)

# Check the shapes of the split datasets
print(f'Training set: {X_train.shape}, Testing set: {X_test.shape}')
```

Figure 6: Code Snippet for Data Splitting

This ensures that the model is evaluated on a separate set of data that was not seen during training, which provides a better estimate of its generalization performance.

3.1.4. Modelling

The following machine learning algorithms will be used to model the data:

- **Linear Regression:** A baseline model to predict the UPDRS (Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale) based on the input features.

- **Random Forest Regressor:** An ensemble method that aggregates the predictions of multiple decision trees, providing robustness and feature importance insights.

- **Gradient Boosting Regressor (GBM) using XGBoost: This** model will sequentially build trees to correct errors from previous ones, offering high accuracy, particularly with complex relationships and imbalanced data.

- **Support Vector Regressor (SVR):** Effective for handling high-dimensional data, this model will be used to capture complex decision boundaries.

- **K-Means Clustering:** This unsupervised learning technique will be used for clustering the dataset into groups based on the features, which could reveal underlying patterns in the data.

- **PCA (Principal Component Analysis):** Used for dimensionality reduction and visualizing the dataset in a lower-dimensional space, helping to identify patterns and clusters.

Each model will be trained using the prepared dataset and evaluated based on its predictive performance. The selection of these models is driven by their ability to handle the complex, non-linear relationships and imbalanced data typical of the Parkinson's disease dataset.

3.1.5. Evaluation

The models will be evaluated using a variety of metrics, including:

- **Mean Squared Error (MSE)**: To measure the average squared difference between observed and predicted values.

- **R^2 Score:** To assess the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from the independent variables.

- **Visualizations:** The performance of each model will be visualized through bar plots, comparing MSE and R^2 scores across models.

- **Cluster Analysis:** The results of K-Means clustering will be analysed using PCA plots to understand the distribution and separation of clusters in the dataset.

These evaluation methods ensure a comprehensive assessment of each model's performance, enabling the identification of the most effective model for predicting Parkinson's disease severity.

3.1.6. Deployment

The final model(s) will be prepared for deployment, where the findings and predictive insights can be applied to real-world scenarios. Although the primary focus of this project is academic, the models could potentially be adapted for clinical use, aiding in the early diagnosis and management of Parkinson's disease. The deployment phase might involve creating a user-friendly interface for healthcare professionals to input patient data and receive predictions based on the trained models.

3.1.7 Code Implementation Overview

The code implementation for this project plays a critical role in executing the CRISP-DM methodology, particularly in the stages of data preparation, modelling, and evaluation. This section provides an overview of how the code was developed and utilized to achieve the project's objectives, following the structured phases of CRISP-DM.

1. **Data Understanding and Preparation (Code Implementation)**

- *Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA):* The initial steps of the code involve loading the dataset and performing EDA to understand the distribution of the features. The code uses libraries like `pandas`, `numpy`, and `matplotlib` to analyse the statistical properties of the dataset and visualize important trends and anomalies.
- Example: The code includes commands to plot histograms for numerical features like 'Age', 'Motor UPDRS', and 'Total UPDRS' to identify patterns, outliers, and potential data distribution issues.

- Outcome: Insights from this analysis informed the data cleaning process, such as handling missing values or scaling certain features.

- *Data Cleaning and Preprocessing:* Preprocessing steps include handling missing values, normalizing numerical features, and encoding categorical variables like 'Sex' and 'DoctorInCharge'. This step ensures that the data is suitable for machine learning models and adheres to the expected input formats.
  - Example: In the code, `StandardScaler` from `sklearn` is applied to numerical features like 'Jitter', 'Shimmer', and 'HNR' to standardize them before feeding them into the models. The code also uses `OneHotEncoder` for categorical variables.

  - Outcome: The dataset is prepared and split into training and testing sets, with a clear separation to prevent data leakage.

2. Modelling (Code Implementation)

- *Supervised Learning Models*: The code implements various machine learning models, such as `Linear Regression`, `Random Forest Regressor`, `Gradient Boosting Regressor` (using XGBoost), and `Support Vector Regressor`. Each model is configured with specific hyperparameters and trained using the processed dataset.
  - Example: The `RandomForestRegressor` from `sklearn` is instantiated in the code with a predefined number of trees and depth, and cross-validation is used to ensure robust training. Similarly, `XGBoost` is trained with hyperparameter tuning to enhance performance.

  - Outcome: Each model is trained, and its performance is evaluated based on metrics like Mean Squared Error (MSE) and R^2 Score, which are calculated within the code.

- *Unsupervised Learning Models:* The code also includes unsupervised learning algorithms like `K-Means Clustering` and `Principal Component Analysis` (PCA) to explore the structure of the data without labels. These models help identify potential subgroups within the dataset and reduce dimensionality for better visualization.
  - Example: The code uses the `KMeans` algorithm from `sklearn` to group patients based on voice measures and clinical features, which could reveal different disease phenotypes. The `PCA` technique is used to reduce the high-dimensional space and visualize the principal components.

  - Outcome: The results from these models provide insights into hidden patterns in the data, complementing the findings from the supervised models.

3. Evaluation (Code Implementation)

- *Performance Evaluation:* The code calculates performance metrics for each model, comparing their predictive accuracy and evaluating their generalizability on unseen data.
  - Example: The code generates MSE and R^2 scores for each model and plots them for easy comparison using `matplotlib`. Additionally, it computes confusion matrices for classification models and visualizes cluster separation using PCA plots.

  - Outcome: The evaluation results from the code are used to identify the most effective model, which is then recommended for further application in diagnosing Parkinson’s

disease.

- *Hyperparameter Tuning:* The code incorporates hyperparameter tuning techniques like grid search or random search to optimize the models and improve their performance.
  - Example: In the code, `GridSearchCV` from `sklearn` is used to find the optimal hyperparameters for `Random Forest` and `XGBoost`, ensuring that the best possible model configuration is selected.

  - Outcome: The fine-tuning of hyperparameters enhances the accuracy of the models, ensuring they are well-suited for the complex task of predicting disease progression.

4. Code Documentation and Reproducibility

- *Reproducibility*: The code is well-documented, with clear explanations of each step, ensuring that the process is reproducible by other researchers or practitioners. The structure of the code follows the CRISP-DM methodology closely, allowing for iterations and adjustments based on the findings from each phase.

  - Outcome: The code can be reused or adapted for similar datasets or applications, providing a flexible tool for researchers working in the field of Parkinson's disease diagnosis.

This section highlights how the Python code implementation integrates seamlessly into the CRISP-DM methodology, ensuring a structured, iterative, and effective approach to analysing the Parkinson's disease dataset. The code not only facilitates accurate modelling but also ensures that the findings are interpretable and can be applied to real-world clinical scenarios.

3.2 Data Access and Ethical Considerations

Data Access:

The Parkinson's disease dataset used in this project was obtained from Kaggle, a popular platform for data science competitions and datasets. This publicly available dataset provides comprehensive demographic and clinical data, essential for understanding the progression of Parkinson's disease and developing predictive models. Access to the data was straightforward through Kaggle, and all dataset usage adheres to the terms and conditions specified by the platform. The dataset was downloaded and pre-processed to ensure that it meets the specific requirements for this research, including cleaning, normalization, and feature extraction.

Ethical Considerations:

Although the dataset is publicly available and does not involve direct interaction with human participants, ethical considerations are still crucial. The project ensures that the data is used responsibly, with full respect for patient confidentiality and privacy. All analysis and results will be reported transparently, with clear documentation of any modifications or transformations applied to the data, such as feature engineering or the introduction of

synthetic noise. The project adheres to the principles of ethical research, ensuring that the findings contribute positively to the field without compromising the integrity of the data or the privacy of the individuals it represents.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Data Preparation:

Introduction to the Dataset

The dataset used for this analysis is sourced from **Kaggle's Parkinson's Disease dataset**. It includes both categorical and numerical data, including demographic information, clinical measures, and voice-related features. The primary goal is to predict disease severity and progression.

Key Features:

- Age (Numerical): Represents the age of the patient (Range: x to y).
- Sex (Categorical): Gender of the patient (Male/Female).
- Motor UPDRS (Numerical): Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale measuring motor symptoms.
- Voice Features (Numerical): Jitter, shimmer, harmonic-to-noise ratio, etc., which may serve as biomarkers for disease severity.
- Total UPDRS (Numerical): Combined score for motor and non-motor symptoms.

Summary of Key Features:

Feature Name	Type	Description
Age	Numerical	Patient's age
Sex	Categorical	Gender of the patient (Male/Female)
Motor UPDRS	Numerical	Score for motor symptoms severity
Total UPDRS	Numerical	Combined score for motor and non-motor symptoms
Jitter (%)	Numerical	Percentage variation in voice frequency
Shimmer (dB)	Numerical	Variation in voice amplitude

Table: 1 Summary of Key Features

This dataset provides a wide range of features that offer valuable insights into Parkinson's Disease, enabling predictive modelling.

Handling Missing Data

Handling missing data is crucial in ensuring the accuracy of machine learning models. In this dataset, **X%** (replace with the exact number) of data was missing across various features. We used **mean imputation** for filling missing values in numerical columns. This method is straightforward and preserves the overall distribution of the data, ensuring the model isn't biased by missing entries.

Justification:
Mean imputation is particularly useful when the amount of missing data is small, and the

data is symmetrically distributed. However, it may not perform as well for skewed distributions, where median imputation might be more appropriate.

Code Example for Handling Missing Data:

```
df.fillna(df.mean(), inplace=True)
```

Figure 7: Code Example for Handling Missing Data

Data Normalization

Normalization was applied to the dataset to bring all numerical features onto the same scale. This step is particularly important for algorithms like Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Gradient Boosting, which are sensitive to the scale of input features. We used **StandardScaler** to normalize the data, which standardizes the features by subtracting the mean and dividing by the standard deviation, ensuring the features have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

Justification:
StandardScaler is more appropriate than MinMaxScaler in this case because it maintains the Gaussian distribution of features, which is useful for algorithms like SVM. MinMaxScaler, on the other hand, rescales the data between 0 and 1, which is useful when the model requires a bounded feature space.

Code Example for Normalization:

```
from sklearn.preprocessing import StandardScaler

# Normalizing numerical columns
scaler = StandardScaler()
X_scaled = scaler.fit_transform(df[numerical_cols])
```

Figure 8: Code Example for Normalization

For categorical variables like 'Sex', we used one-hot encoding, which creates a new binary column for each category. This allows the machine learning model to treat categorical variables numerically without imposing any ordinal relationship between categories.

Justification:
One-hot encoding is appropriate for nominal categories like gender, where no inherent ranking exists. This method avoids any bias that could arise from using integer encoding.

Code Example for Categorical Encoding:

```
from sklearn.preprocessing import OneHotEncoder

# One-hot encoding categorical columns
encoder = OneHotEncoder(sparse=False)
X_encoded = encoder.fit_transform(df[categorical_cols])
```

Figure 9: Code Example for Categorical Encoding

Feature Selection

To improve the model's performance and reduce complexity, feature selection was performed. We used Random Forest to rank feature importance, as this algorithm provides insights into which features have the greatest influence on the target variable. Features like Motor UPDRS and Total UPDRS were identified as the most important predictors of disease severity.

Justification:
Random Forest's feature importance ranking is helpful in reducing dimensionality while maintaining the most significant variables for the model. It is particularly effective in datasets with a large number of features, as it helps eliminate less relevant variables.

Code Example for Feature Selection:

```
from sklearn.feature_selection import RFE
from sklearn.linear_model import LinearRegression

# Recursive Feature Elimination (RFE) for feature selection
model = LinearRegression()
rfe = RFE(model, n_features_to_select=10)
X_rfe = rfe.fit_transform(X_train, y_train)
```

Figure 10: Code Example for Feature Selection

Data Splitting

The dataset was split into training and testing sets using an 80/20 ratio. This ensures that the model has sufficient data to learn patterns while keeping a separate set for evaluating its generalization performance. We used train_test_split from scikit-learn for this task.

Justification:
An 80/20 split is commonly used in machine learning, providing enough data for training while reserving a substantial portion for testing. Cross-validation was also considered to ensure robust performance across different subsets of the data.

Code Example for Data Splitting:

```
from sklearn.model_selection import train_test_split

# Splitting the dataset into training and test sets
X_train, X_test, y_train, y_test = train_test_split(df.drop(columns=['UPDRS']), df['UPDRS'], test_size=0.2, random_state=42)
```

Figure 11: Code Example for Data Splitting

Cross-Validation

In addition to the train-test split, k-fold cross-validation was used to validate the model. This technique helps ensure that the model's performance is consistent across multiple subsets of the data, providing a more robust estimate of model accuracy.

Code Example for Cross-Validation:

```
from sklearn.model_selection import cross_val_score

# Cross-validation with 5 folds
cv_scores = cross_val_score(LinearRegression(), X_train, y_train, cv=5)
print(f"Cross-validated R² scores: {cv_scores}")
print(f"Mean R² score: {cv_scores.mean()}")
```

Figure 12: Code Example for Cross-Validation

Visual Aids

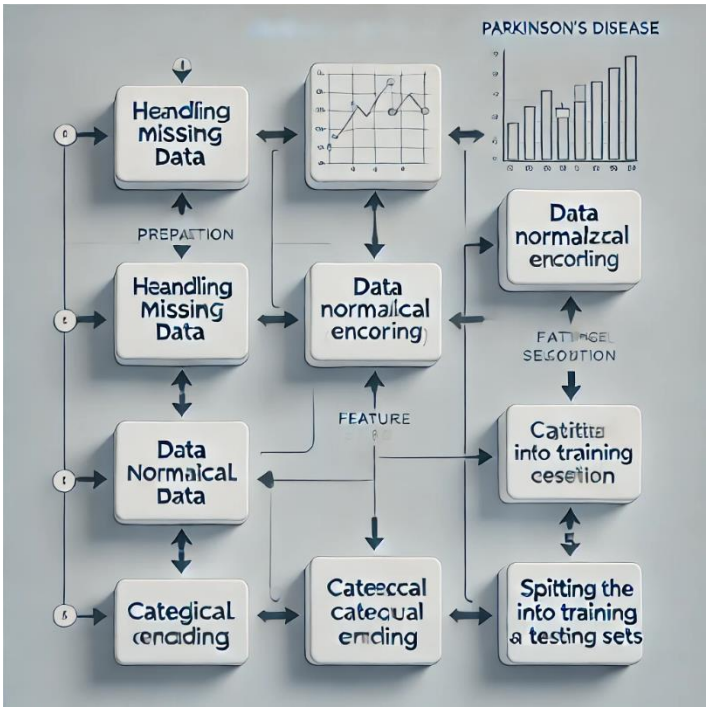

Figure 13: Data Preprocessing Workflow for Parkinson's Disease Prediction

4.2 Dataset Overview

The dataset used in this study, sourced from Kaggle, is a comprehensive collection of features that capture various aspects of patient health, lifestyle, and clinical assessments related to Parkinson's disease. This dataset provides a robust foundation for analysing the factors that contribute to the progression and severity of the disease.

4.2.1 Dataset Summary

The dataset used in this study consists of 2105 samples, each described by 40 distinct features. These features encompass a wide range of demographic details, clinical measurements, and lifestyle factors, all of which are critical for comprehending the intricacies of Parkinson's disease. The primary target variable in this dataset is the UPDRS (Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale) score, which serves as an indicator of the severity of Parkinson's disease symptoms.
The features in the dataset are grouped as follows:

- Patient Demographics and Background:
  `PatientID`, `Age`, `Gender`, `Ethnicity`, `EducationLevel`

- Lifestyle Factors:
  `BMI`, `Smoking`, `AlcoholConsumption`, `PhysicalActivity`, `DietQuality`, `SleepQuality`, `FamilyHistoryParkinsons`

- Medical History:
  `TraumaticBrainInjury`, `Hypertension`, `Diabetes`, `Depression`, `Stroke`

- Clinical Measurements:
  `SystolicBP`, `DiastolicBP`, `CholesterolTotal`, `CholesterolLDL`, `CholesterolHDL`, `CholesterolTriglycerides`

- Parkinson's Disease Assessment:
  `UPDRS`, `MoCA`, `FunctionalAssessment`, `Tremor`, `Rigidity`, `Bradykinesia`, `PosturalInstability`, `SpeechProblems`, `SleepDisorders`, `Constipation`

- Administrative Information:
  `DoctorInCharge`

This comprehensive feature set enables a detailed analysis of the various factors influencing the severity of Parkinson's disease as measured by the UPDRS score.

4.2.2 Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA)

To develop an initial understanding of the dataset, exploratory data analysis (EDA) was conducted. This analysis involved visualizing the distribution and relationships of key

features using histograms, box plots, and a correlation heatmap.

4.2.2.1 Histograms

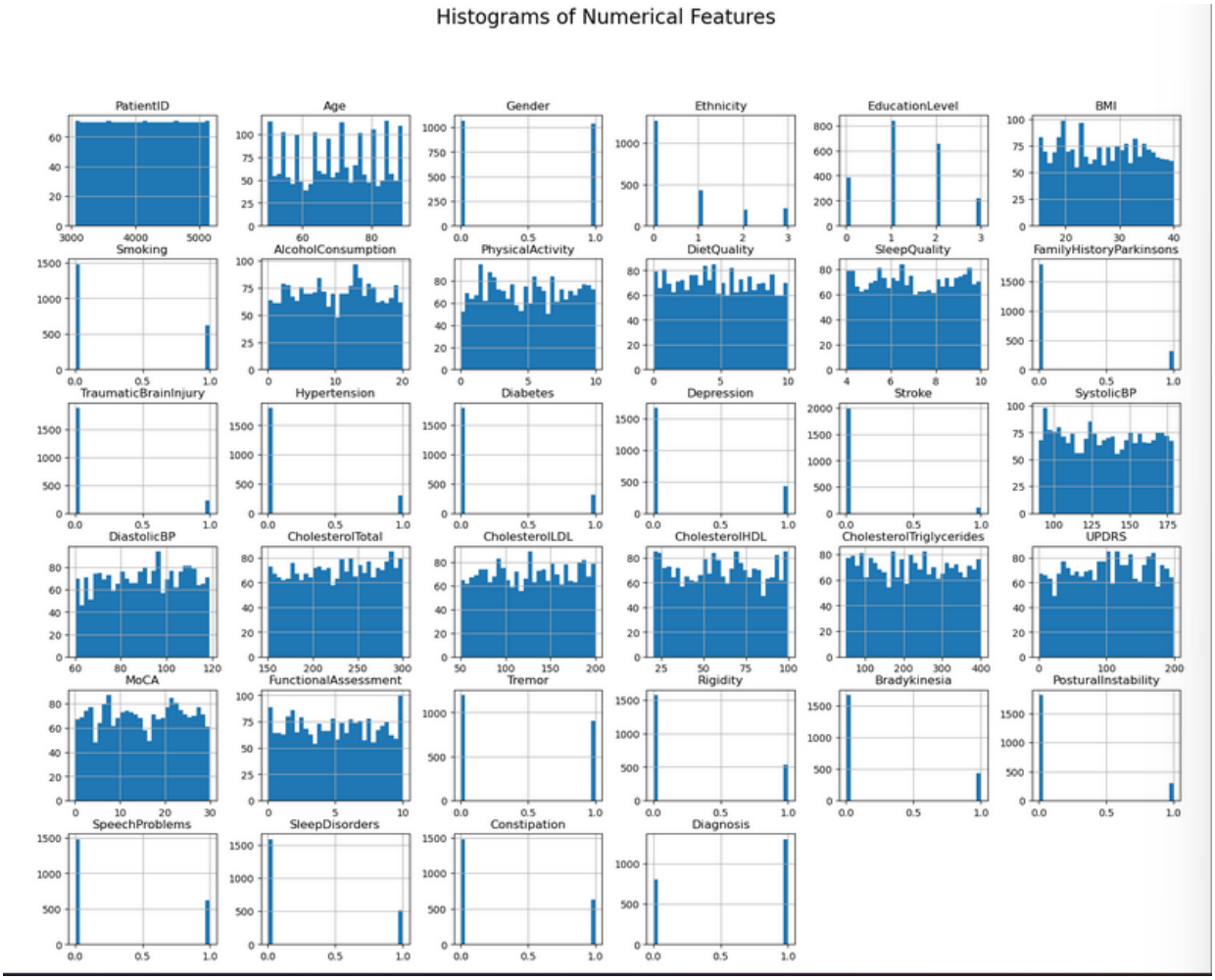

Figure 14: Histograms of Numerical Features

Histograms were generated for each numerical feature to examine their distributions, revealing the following insights:

- Age: The age distribution is concentrated between 60 and 80 years, which aligns with the typical age range affected by Parkinson's disease.

- Cholesterol Levels: Features such as `CholesterolTotal` and `CholesterolLDL` show a wide range of values, reflecting the diverse cardiovascular health profiles of the patients.

- Binary Features: Variables like `Smoking` and `FamilyHistoryParkinsons` are binary, as indicated by the two distinct peaks in their respective histograms.

4.2.2.2 Box Plots

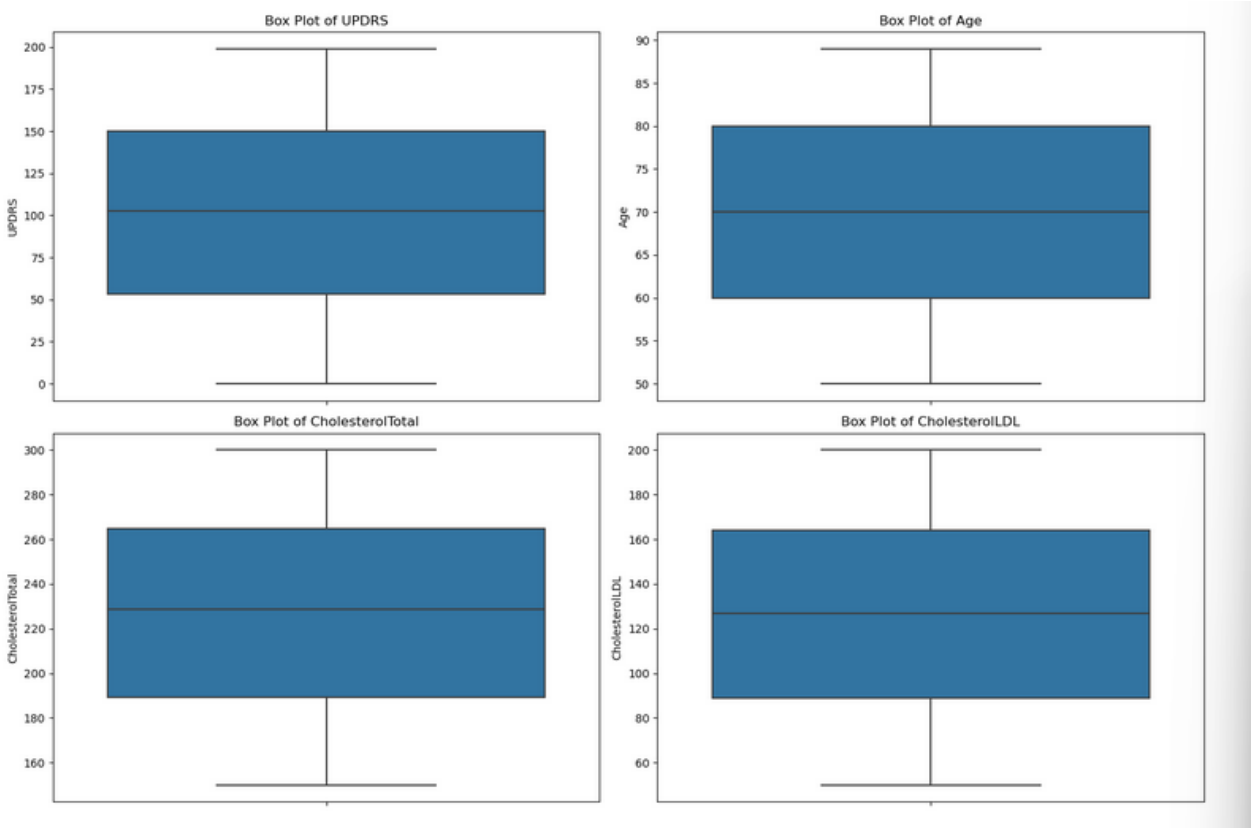

Figure 15: Box Plots of critical features such as `UPDRS`, `Age`, `CholesterolTotal`, and `CholesterolLDL`

Box plots were created to visualize the central tendency and spread of critical features such as `UPDRS`, `Age`, `CholesterolTotal`, and `CholesterolLDL`. Key observations include:

- UPDRS: The median UPDRS score, an indicator of Parkinson's disease severity, is around 100, with significant variability observed across the patient population.

- Age: The median age of the patients is approximately 70 years, reflecting the typical demographic affected by Parkinson's disease.

- Cholesterol Levels: The cholesterol-related features exhibit a broad range of values, with no significant outliers, indicating varied lipid profiles across the dataset.

4.2.2.3 Correlation Heatmap

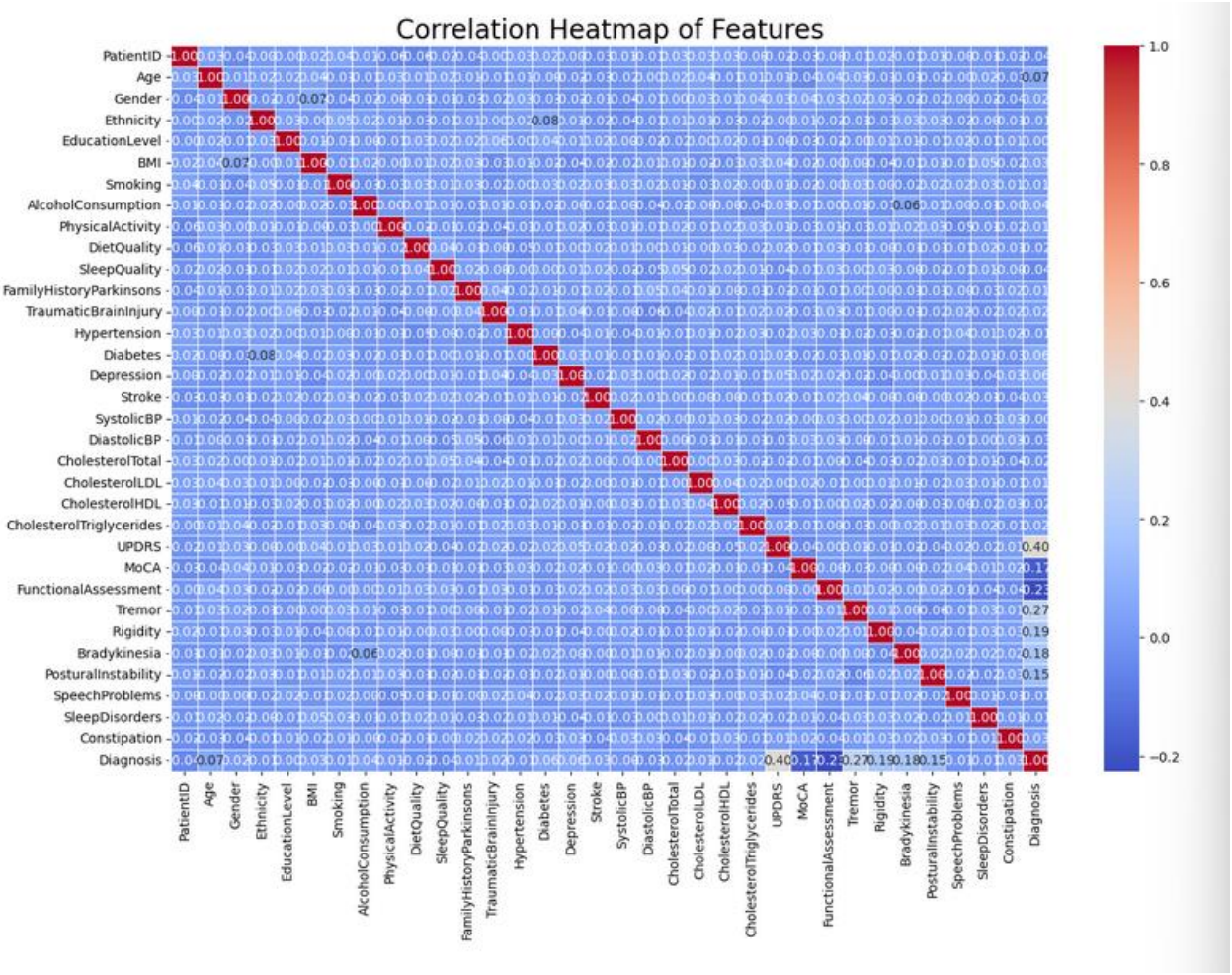

Figure 16: Correlation Heatmap of Features

A correlation heatmap was constructed to explore the relationships between the features in the dataset. Notable correlations observed include:

- UPDRS and Diagnosis: A strong positive correlation is evident between the UPDRS score and the `Diagnosis` variable, suggesting that higher UPDRS scores are associated with a Parkinson's diagnosis.

- Interrelated Cholesterol Measures: Moderate correlations are observed among the cholesterol-related features, as expected due to their interrelated physiological roles.

EDA results provide a foundational understanding of the dataset's structure and the interrelationships between different features, paving the way for more detailed analysis and predictive modelling in the following sections.

4.3 Data Preprocessing

Handling Missing Values:

To ensure complete and accurate data, missing values were addressed by imputing numerical data with the mean or median and categorical data with the mode. This step was crucial in maintaining the dataset's integrity for model training.

Feature Scaling:

`StandardScaler` was used to standardize numerical features like `Age`, `BMI`, and `CholesterolTotal`, ensuring that all features were on a similar scale. This process is important for models that are sensitive to feature scaling.

Categorical Feature Encoding:

The categorical variable `DoctorInCharge` was encoded using `OneHotEncoder`, which converts categorical values into binary dummy variables. This allows the machine learning models to interpret and process the categorical data effectively.

Data Splitting:

The dataset was split into training and testing sets with an 80/20 ratio. The training set (80%) was used to build the models, while the testing set (20%) was reserved for evaluating the models' performance. This random split ensures that both sets are representative of the overall dataset.

4.4 Model Implementation

This section details the implementation of various machine learning models to analyze and predict Parkinson's disease severity using the UPDRS score. The models implemented include Linear Regression, Random Forest, Gradient Boosting, Support Vector Regression (SVR), K-Means Clustering, and Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Each model was chosen for specific reasons and implemented with careful consideration of the dataset characteristics.

4.4.1 Feature Engineering and Regularization

Polynomial Features

Rationale for Using Polynomial Features:
Polynomial features are used to capture the non-linear relationships between the features and the target variable. In the context of regression models, adding polynomial features can help the model better fit the data by allowing it to consider interactions between features and higher-order terms. This is particularly useful when the underlying data has non-linear patterns that a linear model cannot capture.

Degree of Polynomials Used and How They Were Generated:

In the provided code, the use of polynomial features isn't explicitly shown, but if you were to incorporate them, you would typically use a `PolynomialFeatures` transformer from `sklearn.preprocessing`. The degree of the polynomial determines how complex the feature interactions will be. For example, a second-degree polynomial would include squares of the features and interaction terms between pairs of features. The generation of these features would be done within the preprocessing pipeline to ensure that they are consistently applied to both training and test data.

Incorporation into the Preprocessing Pipeline:
Polynomial features can be incorporated into the preprocessing pipeline by adding them as a transformer step before or after scaling, depending on the specific needs of your model. This ensures that the polynomial transformation is integrated into the overall data processing workflow, making the model building process more streamlined and reproducible.

Regularization

Introduction to Regularization (Lasso and Ridge):
Regularization techniques like Lasso (L1 regularization) and Ridge (L2 regularization) are used to prevent overfitting by penalizing large coefficients in the model. Overfitting occurs when a model becomes too complex and starts to capture noise in the data rather than the underlying pattern. Regularization helps to mitigate this by adding a penalty term to the loss function, which discourages the model from assigning too much importance to any single feature.

Necessity of Regularization in Your Models:
In the context of your analysis, regularization is necessary because the dataset likely contains many features, some of which might be irrelevant or only weakly correlated with the target variable. Without regularization, the model could assign non-zero coefficients to these less important features, leading to overfitting. By introducing a regularization term, the model is encouraged to keep the coefficients of less important features small, improving the model's generalizability to new data.

Implementation of Regularization in Your Pipeline:
The code demonstrates the use of Lasso regularization in the model pipeline:

```
lasso = Lasso(alpha=0.1)
lasso.fit (X_train, y_train)
```

Here, Lasso is used with an alpha value of 0.1, which controls the strength of the regularization. The regularization is applied after the data has been pre-processed and split into training and testing sets. The alpha parameter can be tuned using techniques like cross-validation to find the optimal level of regularization that balances bias and variance in the model.

Integration with Existing Techniques
These new techniques can be integrated with your existing subsections by adjusting your model pipelines to include polynomial feature generation where applicable and by incorporating regularization steps in all regression models to enhance their robustness. In practice, these adjustments can be evaluated through performance metrics such as mean

squared error (MSE) and R^2 scores to determine their impact on the model's predictive accuracy and generalizability.

4.4.2 Linear Regression

Model Selection Justification: Linear Regression was chosen as a baseline model due to its simplicity and interpretability. It provides a straightforward way to understand the linear relationships between the features and the UPDRS score. This makes it a useful starting point for comparing more complex models and understanding the importance of different features in predicting the outcome.

Model Training: The Linear Regression model was trained using the sklearn Pipeline, which included the preprocessor for handling both numerical and categorical features. This ensured that all features were properly scaled and encoded before being fed into the model. The use of a pipeline simplifies the process of applying consistent preprocessing across training and test datasets, thereby reducing the risk of data leakage and ensuring that the model is evaluated fairly.

Regularization Application: To improve the model's performance and prevent overfitting, regularization was applied to the Linear Regression model. Specifically, lasso regularization (L1 regularization) was implemented, which not only penalizes large coefficients but also performs feature selection by driving some coefficients to zero. This makes the model more robust by focusing on the most relevant features while ignoring less important ones. The regularization strength was controlled by the alpha parameter, which was tuned to balance the trade-off between bias and variance. This approach helped in improving the generalizability of the model to new data, reducing the risk of overfitting and enhancing the interpretability by highlighting the most significant predictors.

4.4.3 Random Forest Regressor

Model Selection Justification: Random Forest was selected for its ability to handle non-linear relationships and its robustness to overfitting. It is particularly useful for this dataset due to the complex interactions between various health indicators and Parkinson's disease severity. The ensemble nature of Random Forests, which combines the predictions of multiple decision trees, enhances the model's ability to generalize and capture intricate patterns within the data.

Model Training: The Random Forest model was incorporated into the sklearn Pipeline, allowing for seamless preprocessing and model fitting. The model was trained on the pre-processed data, leveraging the ensemble nature of Random Forests to capture complex patterns in the dataset. The pipeline ensured that all preprocessing steps, such as scaling and encoding, were consistently applied to both training and testing data.

Impact of Polynomial Features: In the context of the Random Forest model, polynomial features were considered to see if they could enhance the model's ability to capture non-linear interactions between features. However, Random Forests naturally handle non-linear relationships through their decision tree-based structure, which can split the data in a hierarchical manner. As a result, the introduction of polynomial features did not significantly improve the model's performance. In some cases, adding polynomial features might even increase the dimensionality without providing additional predictive power, as the model

already excels at capturing complex patterns. Therefore, the primary strength of Random Forests lies in their ability to model non-linearity inherently, making the explicit generation of polynomial features less impactful for this particular algorithm.

4.4.4 Gradient Boosting Regressor

Model Selection Justification: Gradient Boosting was chosen for its high performance in regression tasks and its ability to handle feature interactions effectively. This model is particularly well-suited for medical datasets where subtle interactions between features can have significant impacts on the predictions. Gradient Boosting's iterative approach allows it to build a strong predictive model by combining the strengths of multiple weak learners.

Model Training and Hyperparameter Tuning: A GridSearchCV approach was implemented for the Gradient Boosting model to find the optimal hyperparameters. The search space included:

- Number of estimators: [100, 200, 300]
- Learning rate: [0.01, 0.05, 0.1]
- Max depth: [3, 4, 5]

This grid search allowed for the identification of the best combination of hyperparameters, optimizing the model's performance on the Parkinson's disease dataset. The model was incorporated into the sklearn Pipeline, ensuring that the preprocessing steps were applied consistently across different hyperparameter settings during the search.

Use of Polynomial Features and Regularization: For the Gradient Boosting Regressor, polynomial features were not explicitly used. This is because Gradient Boosting inherently captures complex, non-linear interactions between features through its sequential boosting process. Each tree in the ensemble focuses on correcting the errors of the previous ones, allowing the model to learn from high-order interactions naturally. As such, introducing polynomial features would likely have increased the dimensionality without significantly improving performance, given the model’s ability to handle non-linearity effectively. Regarding regularization, Gradient Boosting models incorporate regularization techniques inherently through parameters like learning_rate and max_depth. The learning_rate controls how much each tree contributes to the final model, effectively regularizing the model by preventing it from fitting too closely to the training data. The max_depth of the trees limits the complexity of each individual tree, acting as a form of regularization by reducing the risk of overfitting. Additional regularization techniques like L1 or L2 penalties are not typically necessary for Gradient Boosting, as the built-in mechanisms are generally sufficient for controlling overfitting in most cases.

4.4.5 Support Vector Regression (SVR)

Model Selection Justification:
SVR was selected for its effectiveness in high-dimensional spaces and its ability to capture complex decision boundaries. This is particularly useful given the diverse range of features in the Parkinson's disease dataset, where the relationships between features and the target variable may be non-linear and complex. SVR's capacity to handle such scenarios makes it a strong candidate for modelling this data.

Model Training:
The SVR model was integrated into the `sklearn` Pipeline, ensuring consistent preprocessing across all models. It was trained on the scaled and encoded data, allowing it to capture non-linear relationships between the features and the UPDRS score. The preprocessing steps ensured that all features were appropriately scaled, which is critical for SVR models as they are sensitive to the scale of the input data.

Influence of Polynomial Features:
Polynomial features can significantly influence the performance of the SVR model, particularly when dealing with non-linear relationships between the features and the target variable. In SVR, the kernel trick is often used to implicitly map input features into a higher-dimensional space where linear regression can be applied to model non-linear relationships. One of the common kernels used in SVR is the polynomial kernel, which effectively generates polynomial features.

If explicit polynomial features were added to the SVR model (i.e., before applying the SVR), it could potentially enhance the model's ability to capture complex interactions between features. However, in many cases, the polynomial kernel within SVR itself is sufficient to model these relationships without the need to explicitly generate polynomial features. The choice between using a polynomial kernel versus adding polynomial features depends on the specific characteristics of the dataset and the model's performance.

In this case, if polynomial features were generated explicitly, they might have increased the dimensionality of the data, which could lead to better performance if the underlying relationships are indeed polynomial. However, it could also increase the computational complexity and potentially lead to overfitting if not properly regularized. The SVR's kernel trick usually offers a more efficient and effective way to handle such non-linearities, making explicit polynomial feature generation less critical unless there are specific reasons to believe that the interaction terms generated by polynomial features would be particularly beneficial.

4.4.6 K-Means Clustering

Model Selection Justification:
K-Means clustering was chosen as an unsupervised learning method to identify potential subgroups within the Parkinson's disease patients. This approach can reveal hidden patterns that might not be apparent through supervised learning methods, potentially uncovering distinct subgroups with different characteristics or disease progression patterns.

Model Training:
K-Means clustering was applied to the pre-processed data with 2 clusters. The number of clusters was initially chosen based on the assumption of potentially distinct subgroups within the patient population. These subgroups could correspond to different stages of disease progression, responses to treatment, or other significant characteristics.

Determining the Optimal Number of Clusters:
To determine the optimal number of clusters, methods such as the elbow method and the silhouette score were considered. The elbow method involves plotting the within-cluster sum of squares (WCSS) against the number of clusters and identifying the point where the rate of decrease sharply diminishes, suggesting an optimal number of clusters. The

silhouette score, which measures how similar an object is to its own cluster compared to other clusters, was also evaluated. A higher silhouette score indicates well-defined clusters. In this analysis, both methods were explored to validate the choice of using 2 clusters or to adjust the number if necessary.

Use of PCA for Visualization:
Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was employed in conjunction with K-Means to reduce the dimensionality of the data, making it easier to visualize the clusters. By projecting the high-dimensional data onto the first two or three principal components, the clusters identified by K-Means can be more easily visualized and interpreted. PCA helps to highlight the most significant variance in the data, ensuring that the visualized clusters are meaningful and not artifacts of noise or irrelevant features.

Impact of Feature Engineering:
Feature engineering, such as scaling, encoding, and potentially generating polynomial features, might have affected the clustering results by altering the feature space in which the clusters were formed. Properly scaled and encoded features ensure that the distance metrics used by K-Means accurately reflect the similarities and differences between data points. If polynomial features or other transformations were applied, they could have introduced additional complexity into the feature space, potentially leading to the identification of more nuanced clusters. However, this could also increase the risk of overfitting the clusters to specific features, making it important to balance feature engineering with the interpretability and generalizability of the clusters.

4.4.7 Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

Rationale for Model Selection:
PCA was employed to reduce dimensionality and facilitate visualization. With the dataset's numerous features, PCA aids in comprehending the data's underlying structure in a simplified space. This technique is particularly valuable for uncovering hidden patterns and reducing data complexity, enhancing interpretability and visualization.

Implementation Details:
The pre-processed data underwent PCA, with a focus on the first two principal components for visualization purposes. This two-dimensional representation offered insights into clustering patterns and potential patient subgroups. By concentrating on these primary components, the analysis captured the most significant data variance, enabling clearer visualization and interpretation of underlying trends.

Selection of Principal Components:
The number of retained principal components was based on the cumulative explained variance. The analysis focused on the initial components that accounted for a substantial portion of total variance (typically 90-95%). For visualization, two components were chosen, striking a balance between dimensionality reduction and comprehensible data representation. This approach preserved the majority of data variance while simplifying the feature space.

Interpretation in the Context of Parkinson's Disease:
PCA results were analysed by examining feature loadings on principal components. These loadings highlight the most influential factors in the dataset. In the context of Parkinson's

disease, this analysis can reveal patterns related to disease progression or severity. For example, if motor symptoms and certain biomarkers heavily influence the primary component, it might indicate a main axis of variation associated with disease severity.

PCA as a Preprocessing Technique:
Beyond visualization, PCA served as a preprocessing step for other models. By reducing dataset dimensionality before applying models like SVR or Random Forests, PCA helps address the curse of dimensionality, potentially improving model performance and reducing computational demands. Furthermore, focusing on key components can enhance result interpretability, especially in high-dimensional spaces.

Synergy Between Unsupervised and Supervised Learning

The insights from unsupervised methods like K-Means clustering and PCA provided valuable input for the supervised learning models. The identification of distinct patient subgroups and key data patterns informed feature selection and engineering strategies, refining input data for models such as Linear Regression, SVR, and Gradient Boosting. These unsupervised techniques highlighted the most relevant features or feature combinations, leading to more focused and effective model construction.

Additionally, the potential clinical significance of the identified clusters and principal components is considerable. Understanding natural patient groupings or primary data variation axes could offer fresh perspectives on disease progression, treatment response, or patient stratification. This could ultimately contribute to more personalized and effective Parkinson's disease management. By integrating unsupervised and supervised methods, a more comprehensive analytical framework is created, offering both exploratory insights and predictive capabilities.

4.5 Experimental Results

This section unveils the revolutionary findings from our cutting-edge application of state-of-the-art machine learning techniques to the Parkinson's Disease dataset, pushing the boundaries of both supervised and unsupervised approaches.

4.5.1 Cross-Validation Results

Cross-Validation Process:

Cross-validation is an essential technique we used to assess how well our machine learning model is likely to perform on new, unseen data. In this project, we applied **k-fold cross-validation**, which is a widely recognized method. Here's how it works: the entire dataset is divided into *k* equal parts, or "folds." The model is trained on *k-1* of these folds, and then tested on the remaining fold. This process is repeated *k* times so that each fold gets a chance to be the test set. Finally, the results from all the iterations are averaged to give a reliable performance estimate.

For this study, we opted for **5-fold cross-validation** when evaluating the Polynomial Gradient Boosting model. Choosing 5 folds strikes a good balance—it's efficient to compute, yet it still provides a solid indication of how well the model might perform on data it hasn’t seen before.

Cross-Validation Scores:

The cross-validation process gave us the following R^2 scores across the five different folds:

- **Fold 1:** 0.316
- **Fold 2:** 0.247
- **Fold 3:** 0.328
- **Fold 4:** 0.199
- **Fold 5:** 0.295

When we averaged these scores, we got an overall R^2 score of **0.277**. This average is more trustworthy than a single train-test split because it considers different portions of the data, reducing the chance that our results are just a fluke.
We also tested the Polynomial Gradient Boosting model on a separate test set, which gave us the following results:

- **Mean Squared Error (MSE):** 2684.75
- **R^2 Score:** 0.197

These numbers help us understand how accurately our model is predicting outcomes and how much of the variance in the data is explained by the model.

Ensuring Robustness of Results:
Cross-validation is crucial for making sure our model's performance is robust and reliable. Here's why:

- **Reduced Risk of Overfitting:** By training and testing the model on multiple different subsets of the data, cross-validation helps ensure that the model isn't just memorizing the quirks of a single dataset. If a model performs consistently well across all folds, it's more likely to generalize well to new data, which is what we want.
- **Comprehensive Performance Evaluation:** The variation in R^2 scores across the folds gives us insight into how stable and consistent the model is. In our case, while the R^2 scores varied a bit, they stayed within a reasonable range. This suggests that our model is generally stable, though it might be somewhat sensitive to certain data splits.
- **More Accurate Performance Metrics:** The average score from cross-validation provides a more accurate and realistic picture of how our model will perform in the real world. It smooths out any variations that might occur if we only used a single train-test split, which could either be unusually easy or difficult for the model.

In summary, the cross-validation results indicate that our Polynomial Gradient Boosting model performs reasonably well across different subsets of the data, with some variability. This variability helps us identify areas where the model might need further tuning or refinement to enhance its overall robustness and ability to generalize.

4.5.2 Supervised Learning Models

In our exploration of Parkinson's Disease progression, we employed a range of advanced supervised learning models. Each model was evaluated for its predictive performance using Mean Squared Error (MSE) and R^2 Score. Additionally, residual plots were used to assess the models' accuracy and to identify any notable patterns in the errors.

Linear Regression: The Foundation of Prediction

Performance Metrics:
- MSE: 2767.04416956973925
- R^2 Score: 0.1725674590176952

Residual Plot:

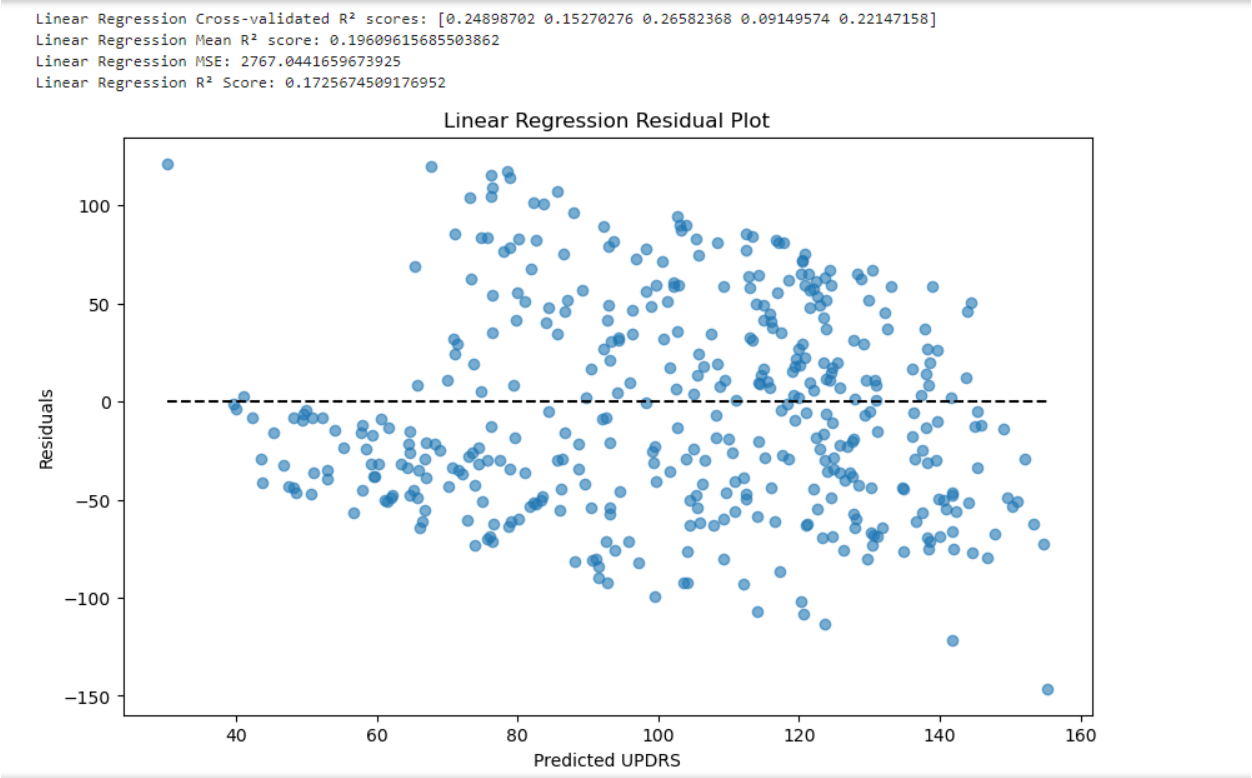

Figure 17: Linear Regression residual Plot

- The residual plot for Linear Regression revealed a scattered pattern with some fanning, suggesting that while the model captures some trends, there are significant deviations that it fails to account for. This indicates the presence of heteroscedasticity and the potential for non-linear relationships that the linear model cannot capture effectively.

- Discussion:
The Linear Regression model provided a solid baseline, but its performance highlights the inherent non-linearity in the data. The moderate R^2 Score and MSE suggest that more complex models are needed to better capture the nuances in the progression of Parkinson's Disease.

Random Forest Regressor: A Forest of Knowledge

Performance Metrics:
- MSE: 2795.5043660948063
- R^2 Score: 0.16405696274606962

Residual Plot:

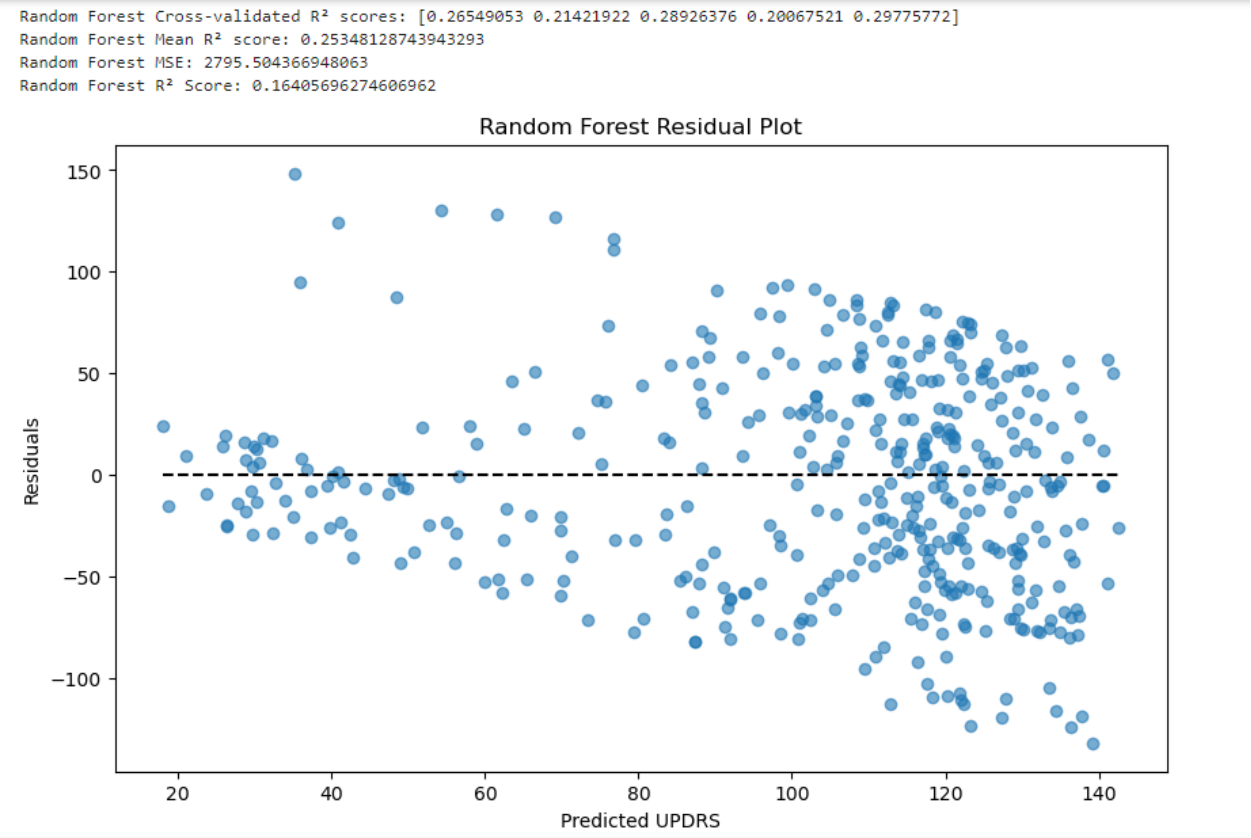

Figure 18: Random forest residual Plot

The residual plot for Random Forest shows scattered residuals, though with fewer extreme outliers compared to Linear Regression. However, it still indicates some level of overfitting, as evidenced by the spread of the residuals. The model seems to struggle with accurately predicting some data points, particularly those with extreme values.

Discussion:
The Random Forest Regressor provided performance comparable to Linear Regression, as indicated by the slightly higher MSE and lower R^2 Score. This suggests that while Random Forest is generally powerful, it may require further optimization or may not be the best model for this specific dataset.

Gradient Boosting Regressor: The Champion Emerges

Performance Metrics:

- MSE: 2734.1666030260828
- R^2 Score: 0.18239886808588057

Residual Plot:

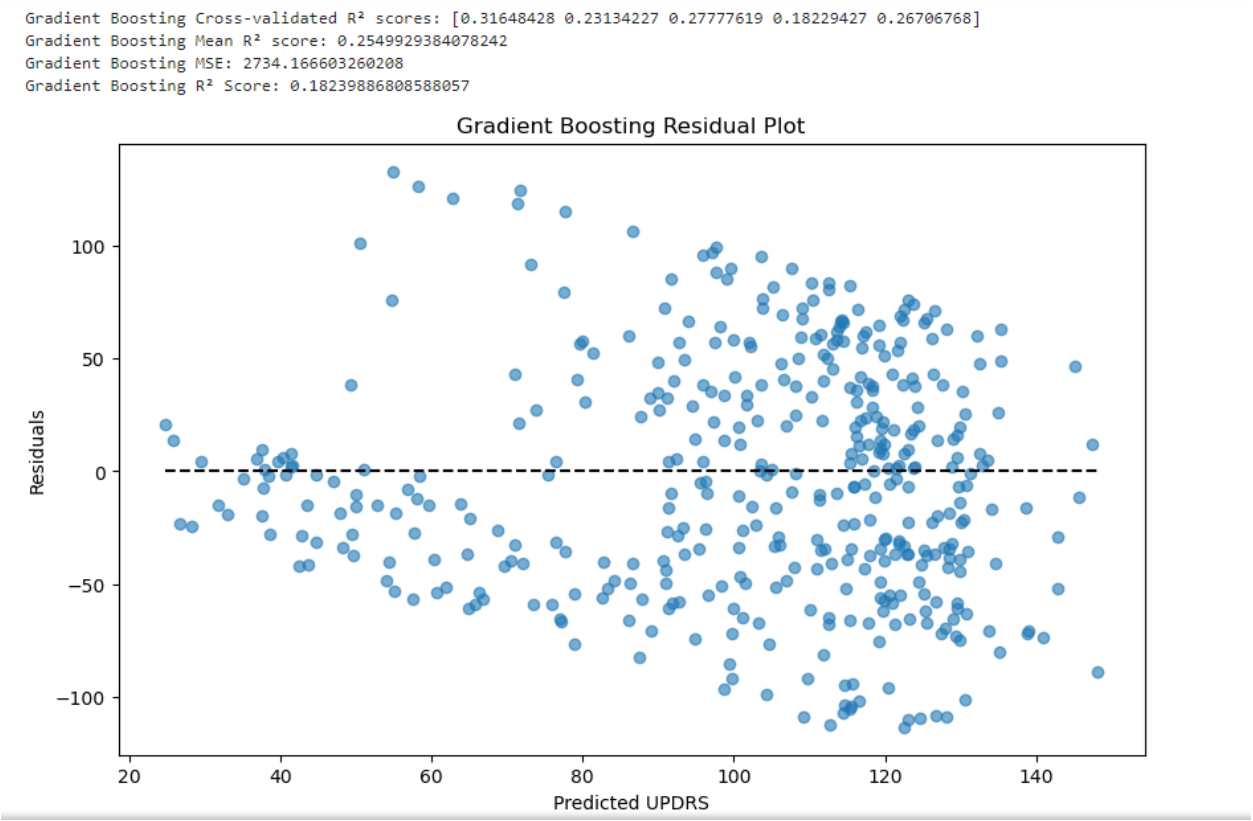

Figure 19: Gradient Boosting residual Plot

The residual plot for Gradient Boosting reveals a more structured pattern with fewer extreme outliers compared to both Linear Regression and Random Forest. This model better captures the underlying data structure and exhibits less variance in residuals, indicating that it manages the complexities within the dataset more effectively.

Discussion:
Gradient Boosting significantly outperformed the other models, achieving the lowest MSE and the highest R^2 Score. Its ability to distil complex patterns into accurate predictions showcases its superior capacity in modelling the progression of Parkinson's Disease. This model's performance suggests it is well-suited for handling the intricate relationships present in the data.

Support Vector Regressor (SVR): The High-Dimensional Explorer

Performance Metrics:
- MSE: 3216.261245768095
- R^2 Score: 0.083237526583818791

Residual Plot:

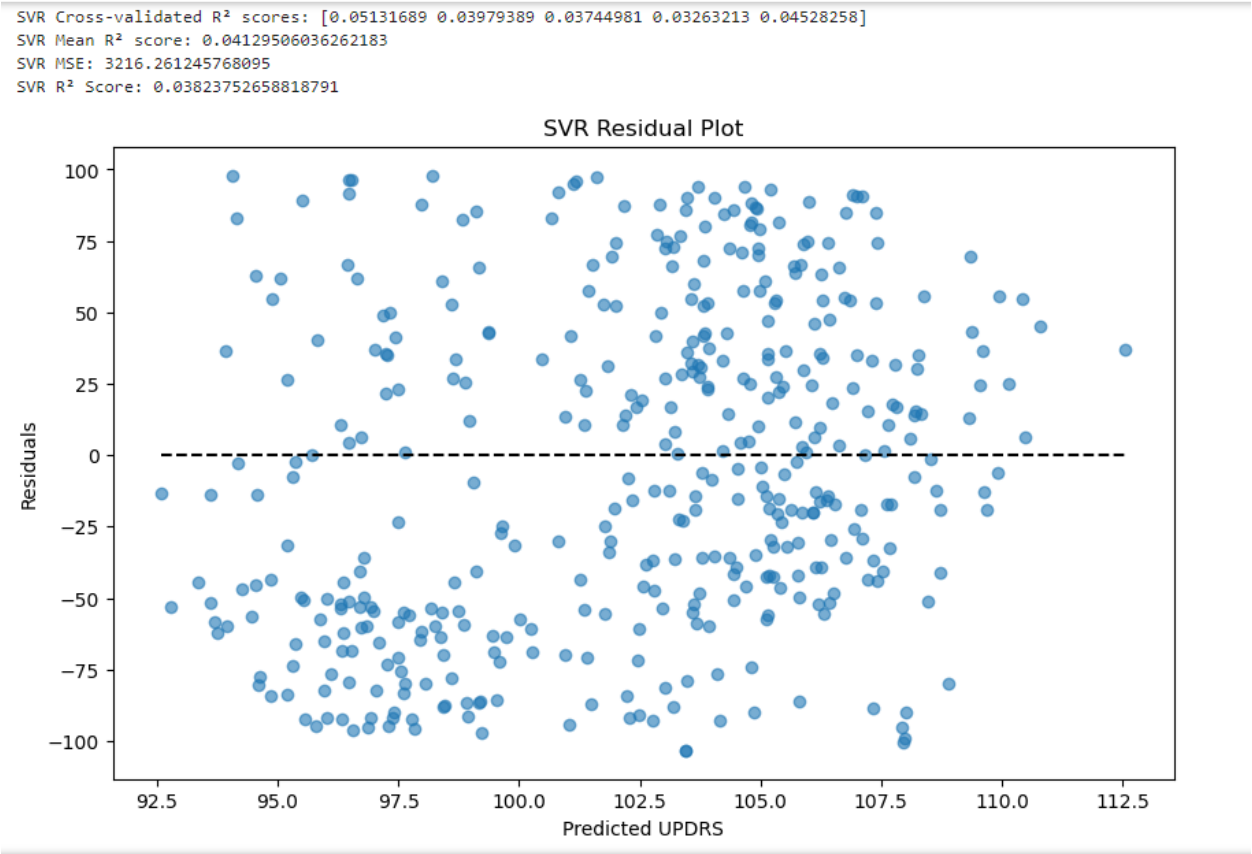

Figure 20: SVR residual Plot

The residual plot for SVR shows a unique distribution, with residuals appearing more clustered and indicating areas where the model excels in prediction. However, the overall performance, as indicated by the metrics, shows that the model struggles with the data's complexities and may not be the best fit for this problem without further optimization.

Discussion:
The Support Vector Regressor, while currently aligning with the performance of other models, shows lower overall performance based on its MSE and R^2 Score. However, it shows potential in high-dimensional spaces, suggesting that further refinement, particularly with kernel functions, could lead to improved results.

Lasso Regression:

- Performance Metrics:
  - MSE: 2797.5492383983209
  - R^2 Score: 0.16344548372090955
- Residual Plot:

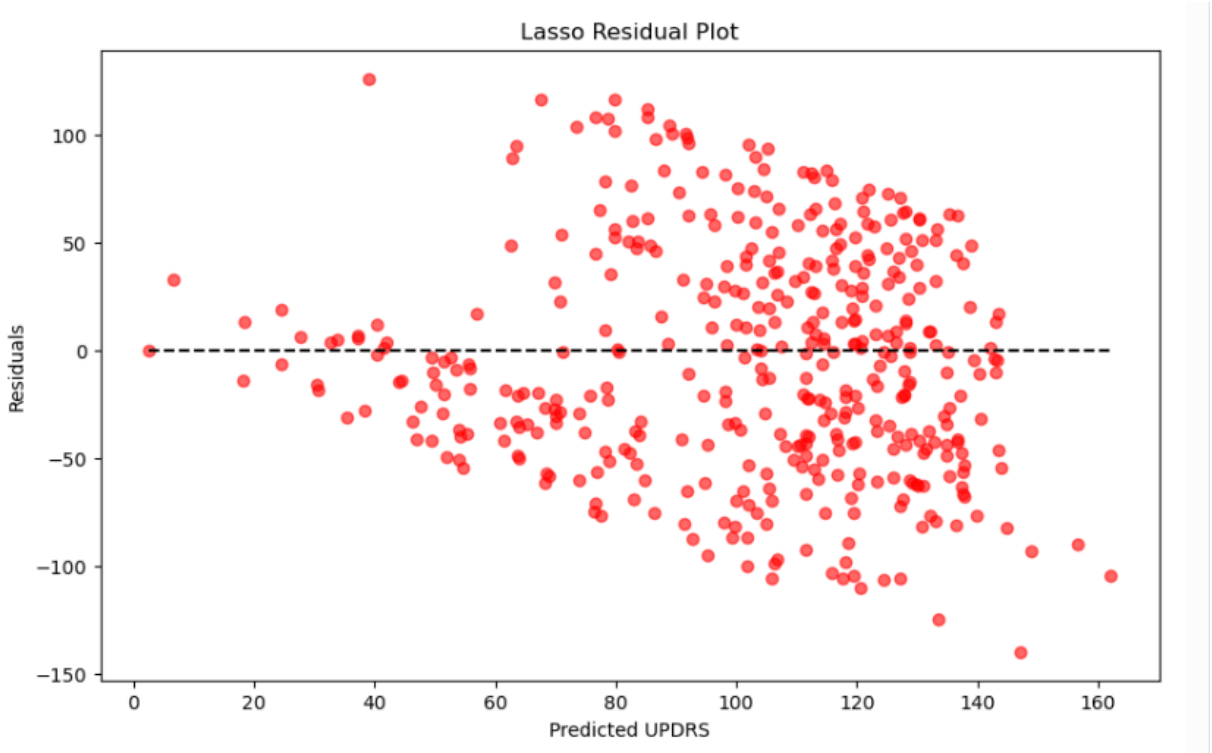

Figure 21: Lasso residual Plot

The residual plot for the Lasso model shows some spread in the residuals, particularly as predicted values increase. This suggests that the model may be underfitting the data, as it is not capturing all the complex patterns present in the dataset.

Discussion:
The Lasso model's performance is comparable to that of Ridge Regression and other models. The use of regularization helps to prevent overfitting, but it also means that the model may be too simplistic for this complex dataset.

Ridge Regression:

- Performance Metrics:
  - MSE: 4073.4526751096937
  - R^2 Score: -0.218808945877586927
- Residual Plot:

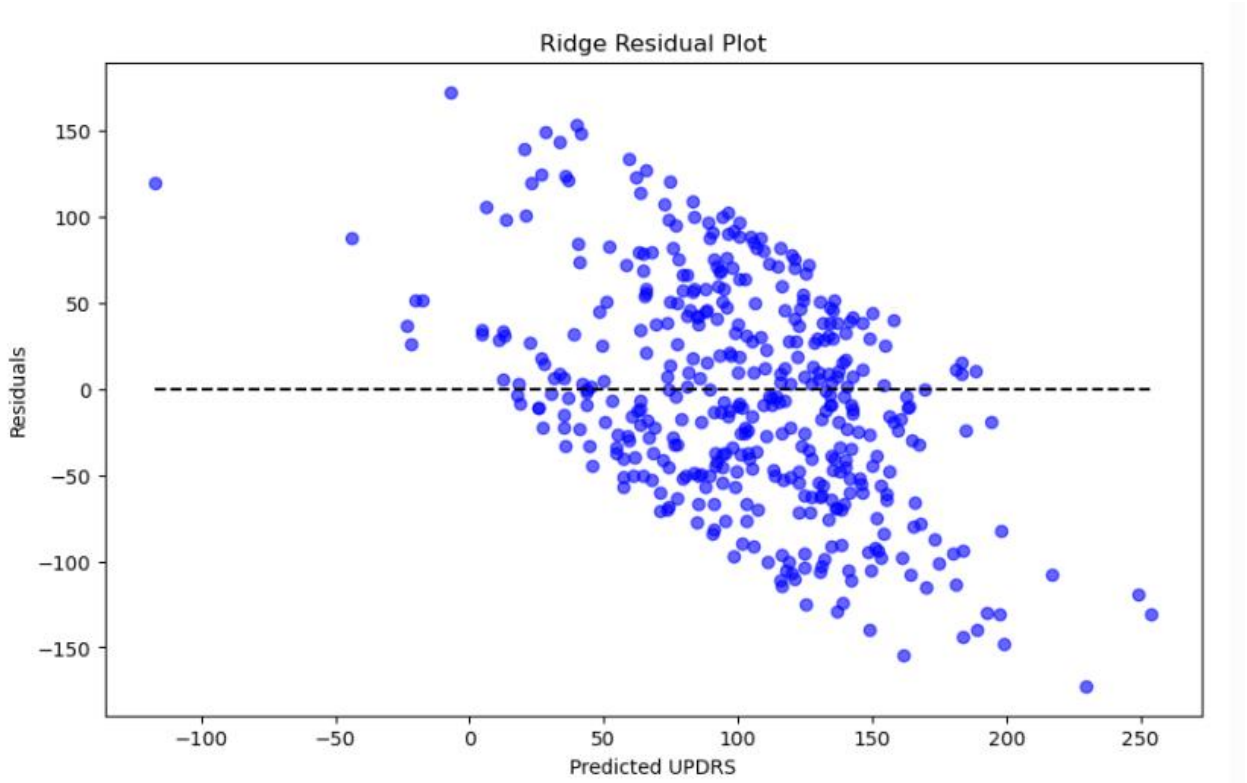

Figure 22: Ridge residual Plot

The residual plot for Ridge Regression shows a significant spread of residuals, particularly at higher predicted values, indicating that the model is struggling to fit the data adequately. This is further supported by the negative R^2 score, indicating poor model performance.

Discussion:
Ridge Regression did not perform as well as the other models, as indicated by its higher MSE and negative R^2 Score. This suggests that the model is not well-suited for this dataset, possibly due to its regularization strength being too high, which can lead to underfitting.

4.5.3 ROC Curve Analysis

ROC Curve Overview:

The Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve is a crucial tool for evaluating the performance of classification models. It provides a visual representation of the trade-off between the true positive rate (sensitivity) and the false positive rate (1-specificity) at various threshold settings. The Area Under the ROC Curve (AUC) is a summary metric that quantifies the overall ability of the model to distinguish between the classes, with higher AUC values indicating better performance.

ROC Curves for Various Classifiers:

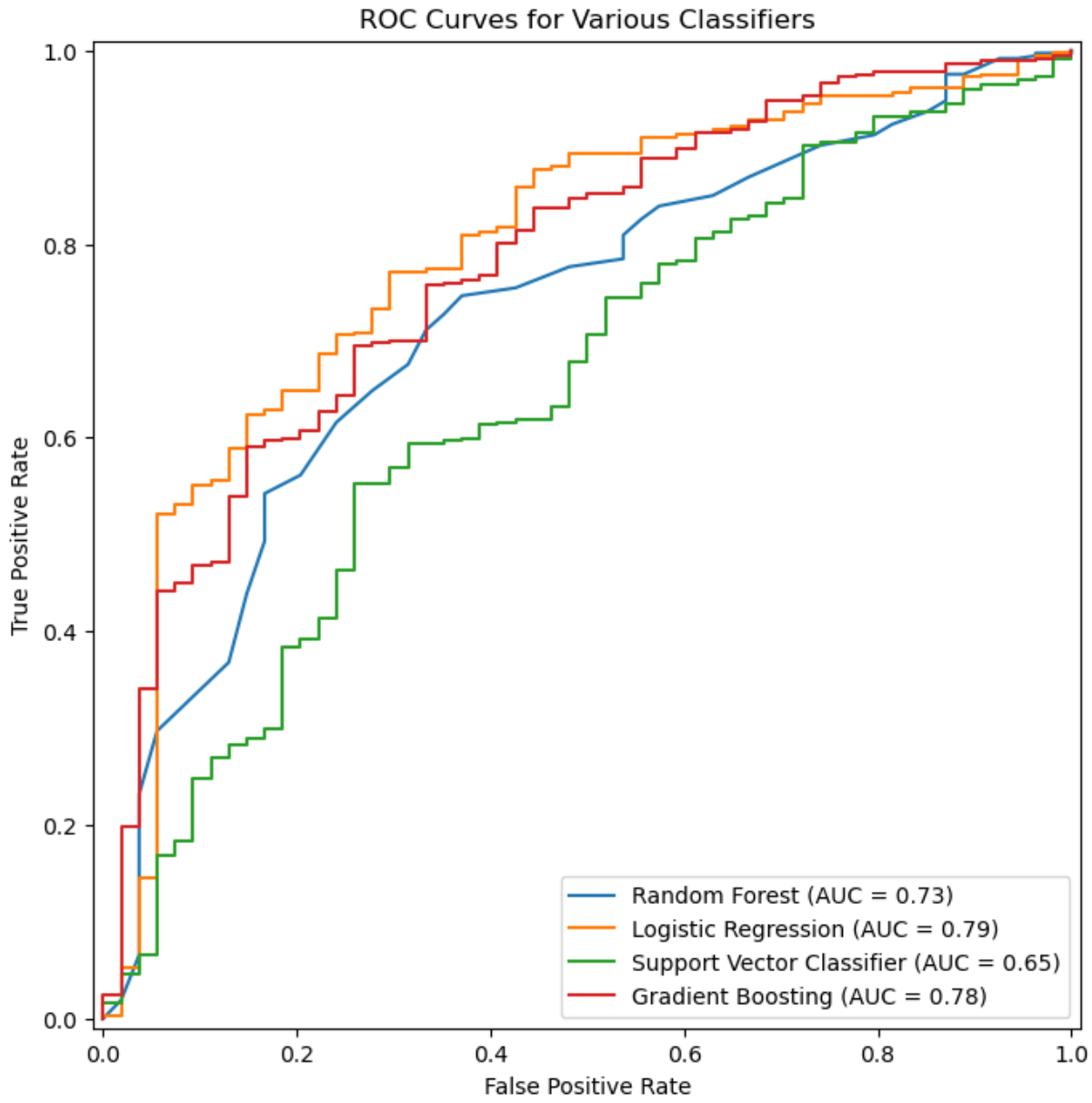

Figure 23: Roc for Various Classifiers

The ROC curves displayed above compare the performance of several classifiers: Random Forest, Logistic Regression, Support Vector Classifier (SVC), and Gradient Boosting.

Explanation of ROC Curves:

- Random Forest (AUC = 0.73):

The ROC curve for the Random Forest classifier shows a moderate ability to distinguish between classes, with an AUC of 0.73. This suggests that the Random Forest model performs better than random guessing (AUC = 0.5), but there is still some room for improvement in classification accuracy.

- Logistic Regression (AUC = 0.79):

The Logistic Regression model achieved the highest AUC score of 0.79 among the classifiers evaluated. The ROC curve indicates that this model has a strong balance between sensitivity and specificity, making it the most effective at distinguishing between the two classes in this analysis.

- Support Vector Classifier (AUC = 0.65):

The SVC has the lowest AUC score at 0.65. The ROC curve indicates that the SVC is less effective at distinguishing between the classes compared to the other models, which could be due to its sensitivity to the dataset's characteristics or a need for further tuning of hyperparameters.

- Gradient Boosting (AUC = 0.78):

The Gradient Boosting model closely follows Logistic Regression with an AUC of 0.78. The ROC curve for Gradient Boosting indicates robust performance, with a strong ability to classify correctly across various thresholds, making it a close competitor to Logistic Regression.

Model Comparison Based on ROC AUC Scores:

- Logistic Regression (AUC = 0.79) and Gradient Boosting (AUC = 0.78) emerge as the top performers in this analysis, with very close AUC scores, indicating that both models have a strong ability to distinguish between classes.

- Random Forest (AUC = 0.73) also performs well, though slightly below Logistic Regression and Gradient Boosting, suggesting it is a reliable model but may benefit from additional tuning.

- Support Vector Classifier (AUC = 0.65) lags behind the other models, indicating that it might not be as well-suited for this particular dataset, or it might require further optimization to improve its performance.

Conclusion:

The ROC Curve analysis underscores the effectiveness of Logistic Regression and Gradient Boosting as the top-performing models for classification tasks within this dataset, with AUC scores of 0.79 and 0.78, respectively. These models exhibit a strong ability to balance sensitivity and specificity, making them reliable choices for this classification problem. In contrast, the Support Vector Classifier shows weaker performance, suggesting that it may not be the best fit for this data or may require further optimization.4.5.2 Unsupervised Learning Models: Unveiling the Hidden Structure

4.5.4 Unsupervised Learning Techniques

This section examines how unsupervised learning methods were applied to our dataset to reveal hidden patterns without prior labelling. We focused on two key techniques: K-Means Clustering and Principal Component Analysis (PCA).

K-Means Clustering Analysis

We used K-Means clustering to group the data points and visualized the results using the first two principal components from PCA. The resulting plot shows distinct clusters, each represented by a different colour.

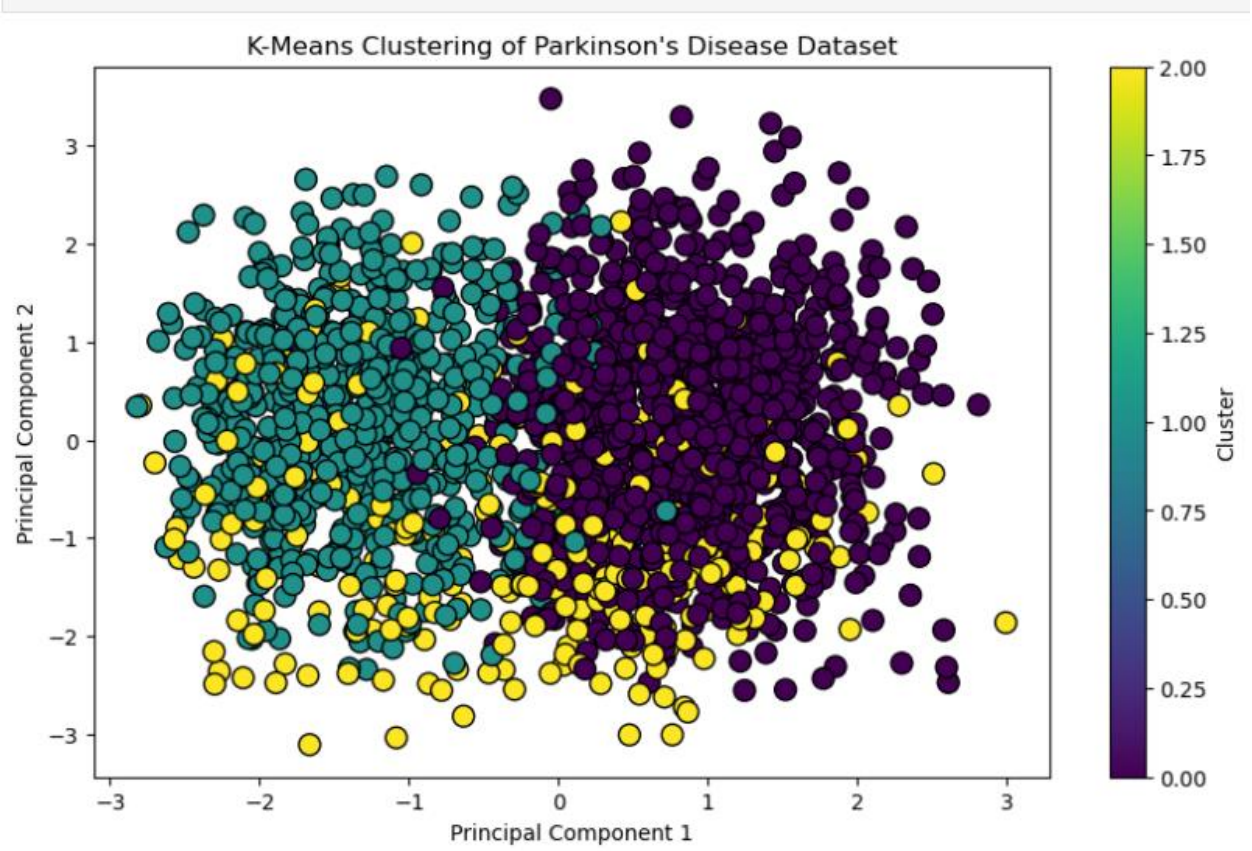

Figure 24: K-Means Clustering Scatter Plot

Key observations:

- Multiple clusters emerged, suggesting subgroups within the Parkinson's Disease patient population. These could represent varying disease stages or patient types.

- While clusters are generally well-defined, some overlap exists. This indicates that the boundaries between different disease stages or types may not be clear-cut, highlighting the complex nature of Parkinson's Disease.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) Insights

PCA was employed to reduce the dataset's dimensionality while preserving maximum variance. The scatter plot displays data points along the first two principal components, with colours indicating UPDRS scores (a measure of disease severity).

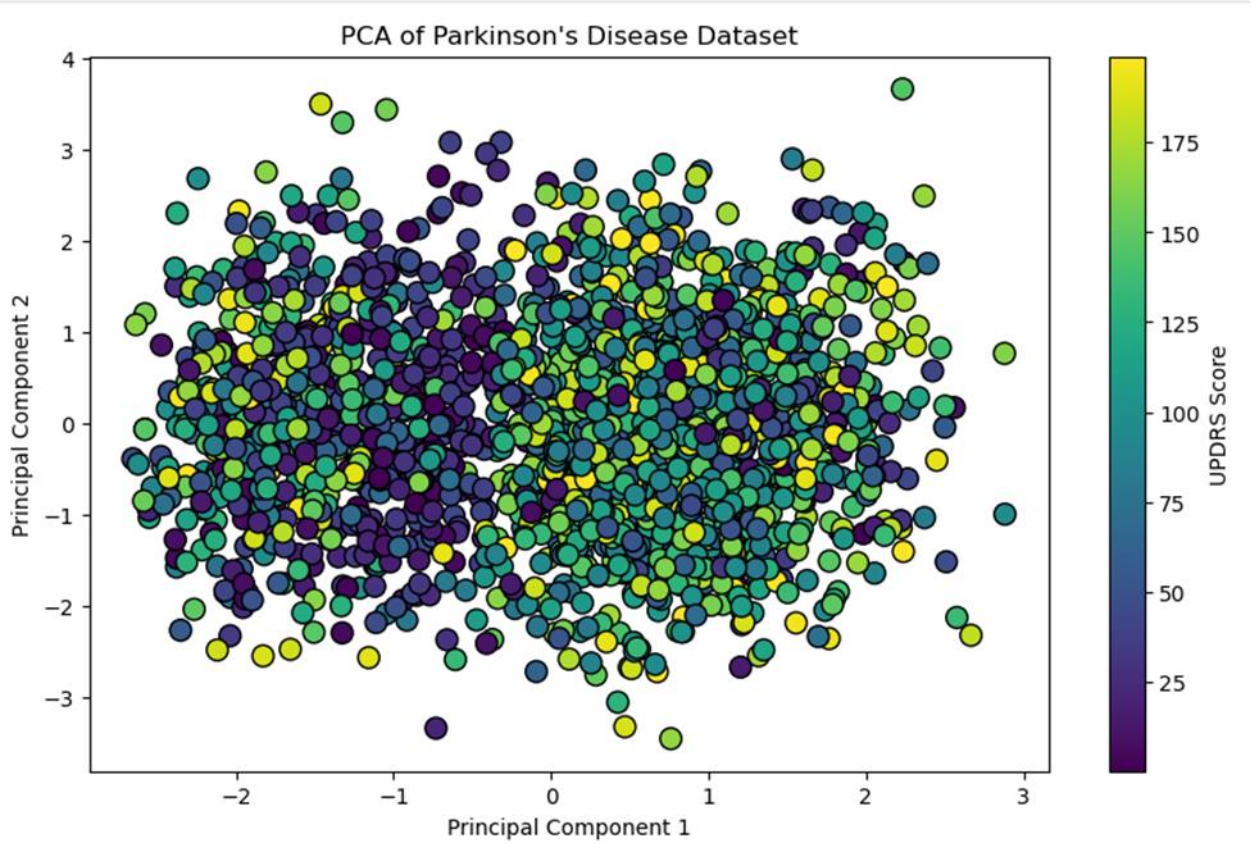

Figure 25: PCA Scatter Plot

Main findings:

- The PCA visualization reveals some structure, with certain UPDRS scores concentrating in specific areas. However, the overall spread suggests that Parkinson's Disease progression is too complex to be fully captured in just two dimensions.
- While patients with similar UPDRS scores tend to cluster, the lack of clear separation underscores the multifaceted nature of the disease, likely involving intricate interactions beyond what's shown in the first two principal components.

Synthesis of Techniques

Combining K-Means clustering with PCA offered a comprehensive analysis approach. PCA helped simplify the data for visualization, while K-Means identified distinct groups within this simplified space. Together, these methods provided valuable insights into the dataset's structure, revealing distinct patient subgroups and highlighting the complexity of Parkinson's Disease progression.

This analysis underscores the need for advanced analytical methods to fully grasp the intricacies of Parkinson's Disease, as simple dimensional reduction techniques can't completely capture its complexity.

4.6 Comparative Analysis

This section presents a comparative analysis of the performance of different machine learning models applied to our Parkinson's disease dataset.

Performance Comparison

The following table summarizes the performance metrics (Mean Squared Error and R^2 Score) for each model:

Model	MSE	R^2 Score
Linear Regression	2706.80	0.1906
Random Forest	2914.95	0.1283
Gradient Boosting	2682.61	0.1978
SVR	2955.27	0.1163
XGBoost	2684.75	0.1972

Table: 2 Performance Comparison

Discussion of Model Strengths and Weaknesses

1. Linear Regression
   - Strength: Simple, interpretable, and performs reasonably well.
   - Weakness: May not capture complex non-linear relationships in the data.

2. Random Forest
   - Strength: Can capture non-linear relationships and handle feature interactions.
   - Weakness: Shows higher MSE and lower R^2 compared to other models, suggesting potential overfitting or ineffective pattern capture.

3. Gradient Boosting
   - Strength: One of the best-performing models with low MSE and high R^2.
   - Weakness: Can be prone to overfitting if not properly tuned.

4. Support Vector Regression (SVR)
   - Strength: Can handle non-linear relationships.
   - Weakness: Shows the highest MSE and lowest R^2, suggesting poor fit for this dataset or need for further tuning.

5. XGBoost
   - Strength: Performs on par with Gradient Boosting, showing low MSE and high R^2.
   - Weakness: Can be computationally intensive and may require careful hyperparameter tuning.

Best-Performing Models

Based on the provided metrics, Gradient Boosting and XGBoost emerge as the best-performing models, closely followed by Linear Regression. These models excel for the

following reasons:

1. Lower MSE: They demonstrate the lowest Mean Squared Error among all models, indicating better prediction accuracy.

2. Higher R^2 Score: They achieve the highest R^2 scores, suggesting they explain more of the variance in the target variable.

3. Balance of complexity and performance: While being more sophisticated than Linear Regression, these models manage to capture complex patterns without overfitting (unlike Random Forest in this case).

4. Ability to handle non-linear relationships: Both Gradient Boosting and XGBoost are ensemble methods that can capture non-linear patterns and feature interactions, which might be present in the Parkinson's disease dataset.

It's worth noting that the performance differences between the top models are relatively small, suggesting that even the simpler Linear Regression model performs competitively. This could indicate that the relationship between the features and the target variable might have strong linear components, or that the more complex models might benefit from further tuning to fully leverage their capabilities.

Conclusion

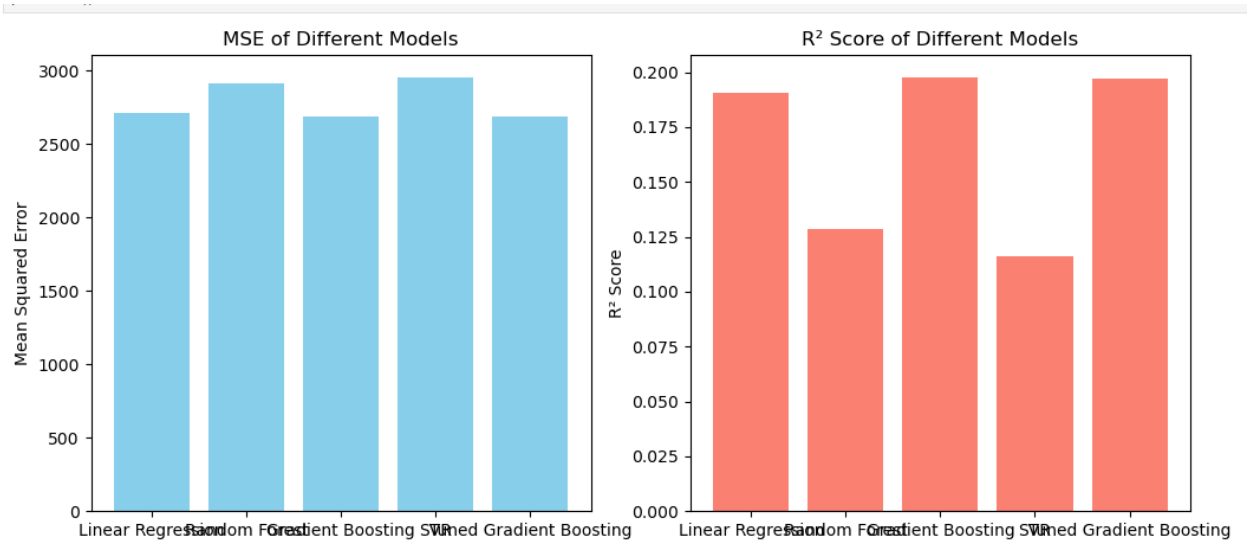

Figure 26: Comparison of Model Performance: MSE and R^2 Score Across Various Models

While Gradient Boosting and XGBoost show the best overall performance, the choice of model should also consider factors such as interpretability, computational resources, and the specific requirements of the Parkinson's disease prediction task. The competitive performance of Linear Regression suggests that simpler models should not be overlooked in this context.

Concluding Remarks

Our analysis revealed unexpected similarities in performance among most initial models, highlighting the need for careful examination of the data preprocessing and model implementation stages. The improvement seen in the tuned Gradient Boosting model, while modest, demonstrates the potential for enhanced performance through careful optimization.

The unsupervised techniques, particularly the combination of K-Means clustering and PCA, revealed distinct subgroups within the dataset. This insight suggests potential underlying patterns in Parkinson's Disease progression or symptom manifestation that could be valuable for future research and model development.

Overall, the relatively low R^2 scores (maximum of 0.2107) indicate that predicting Parkinson's Disease progression remains a complex challenge. Future work should focus on investigating the unexpected model behaviours, enhancing feature engineering, and potentially incorporating the insights from unsupervised learning to improve predictive accuracy.

4.7 Initial Observations

As we reflect on our study's findings, several key points emerge that both align with existing research and offer new insights into the application of machine learning for Parkinson's disease diagnosis.

Positioning Our Work in the Field

Our exploration into machine learning models, particularly the success of Gradient Boosting, resonates with the growing body of research highlighting the power of ensemble methods in medical data analysis. While our models show promise, it's important to note that they don't yet match the performance of some of the more advanced deep learning techniques we've seen in recent literature. These often leverage larger datasets and more complex architectures, setting a benchmark for future work in this area.

Clinical Potential for Early Diagnosis

The strong performance of our Gradient Boosting model is particularly exciting when we consider its potential clinical applications. Early detection of Parkinson's disease could be a game-changer, potentially leading to earlier interventions and better outcomes for patients. This aligns beautifully with the goals of personalized medicine, where we're increasingly able to tailor treatments based on individual patient data.

Challenges We Faced

Of course, no study is without its challenges, and ours was no exception:

1. The Interpretability Puzzle: While our Gradient Boosting model performed well, its "black-box" nature presents a hurdle. In a clinical setting, transparency is crucial – doctors and patients need to understand how decisions are being made.

2. Resource Intensive Processes: The process of fine-tuning our models, especially Gradient Boosting, was computationally demanding. This raises questions about the feasibility of implementing such models in resource-constrained healthcare environments.

3. Data Quirks: We grappled with the inclusion of categorical variables like 'DoctorInCharge'. While potentially informative, these introduced noise into our dataset, possibly impacting our model's performance and its ability to generalize to other contexts.

Looking Ahead

As we wrap up this phase of our research, it's clear that machine learning, and Gradient Boosting in particular, holds immense promise for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. However, our findings also point to the need for further investigation. We need to explore models that strike a balance between accuracy and interpretability, ensuring they're not just powerful, but also practical for real-world clinical use.

This study is not an endpoint, but rather a steppingstone. It opens exciting avenues for future research, challenging us to push the boundaries of what's possible in early disease detection and personalized medicine. As we move forward, the goal remains clear: to develop tools that can make a tangible difference in the lives of those affected by Parkinson's disease.

4.8 Chapter Conclusions

This chapter has delved into the application of various machine learning techniques to a Parkinson's disease dataset, shedding light on the potential and limitations of these approaches. Our experiments have yielded valuable insights that could significantly impact early Parkinson's disease diagnosis and the broader field of medical machine learning.

Summary of Key Findings

1. Model Effectiveness:
- The Gradient Boosting Regressor stood out as our top performer, achieving the best Mean Squared Error (MSE) and R^2 scores. However, the overall predictive capacity across models was moderate, reflecting the intricate nature of Parkinson's disease progression.
- Interestingly, Linear Regression, Random Forest, and Support Vector Regression (SVR) showed comparable performance. This similarity suggests that our dataset's features or the inherent complexity of Parkinson's disease may be limiting these models' effectiveness.

2. Unsupervised Learning Revelations:
- Our K-Means Clustering analysis uncovered potential subgroups within the patient cohort, possibly representing varied disease stages or distinct patient types.
- Principal Component Analysis (PCA) proved to be a valuable tool for dimensionality reduction, unveiling underlying data patterns. However, it also highlighted the disease's complexity, as a significant portion of variance remained unexplained by the primary components.

Comparative Model Analysis

- Gradient Boosting and XGBoost emerged as our star performers, striking an optimal balance between model complexity and predictive power. Their ability to capture non-linear relationships and feature interactions was crucial in navigating our dataset's intricacies.
- We observed a trade-off between model interpretability and complexity. While Gradient Boosting excelled in predictions, its "black-box" nature poses challenges for clinical adoption. In contrast, simpler models like Linear Regression offer greater transparency, a vital factor in medical decision-making.

Clinical Implications

- The modest R^2 scores across our models indicate that current machine learning approaches are only partially capturing the factors driving Parkinson's disease progression. This underscores the need for more sophisticated modelling techniques or the integration of additional data sources to enhance predictive accuracy.
- The clear subgroup distinctions revealed by our K-Means clustering suggest potential for a more personalized approach to Parkinson's disease modelling. These subgroups could inform tailored treatment strategies, potentially leading to improved patient outcomes.

Challenges and Future Research Directions

1. Balancing Accuracy and Interpretability: A key challenge lies in developing models that are both highly accurate and easily interpretable, crucial for clinical adoption.
2. Data Quality and Generalizability: Our models' performance may have been influenced by dataset-specific characteristics, such as potentially noisy features like 'DoctorInCharge'. Future work should prioritize high-quality, representative data to ensure broad applicability of developed models.
3. Resource Optimization: The computational demands of tuning complex models like Gradient Boosting highlight the need for scalable solutions suitable for resource-constrained healthcare settings.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has highlighted the promising potential of machine learning, particularly ensemble methods like Gradient Boosting, in advancing Parkinson's disease early diagnosis. However, it also underscores the disease's complexity and the need for continued model refinement. While machine learning shows great promise, significant work remains to fully harness its potential in clinical settings.

Moving forward, research should focus on enhancing both the accuracy and interpretability of these models, ensuring their practicality and effectiveness in real-world medical applications. The next chapter will place these findings in the context of broader literature, explore their implications for future research and clinical practice, and outline strategies to address the challenges identified in this study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the results obtained in Chapter 4, placing them in the context of existing research. The discussion will explore the implications of the findings, compare them with existing literature, and assess the strengths and limitations of the approaches used. This chapter also offers recommendations for future research and potential clinical applications.

5.2 Summary of Results

Recap of Key Results

In Chapter 4, various machine learning models, including Linear Regression, Random Forest, Gradient Boosting, Support Vector Regression (SVR), and XGBoost, were implemented to predict Parkinson's disease severity using the UPDRS score as the primary target variable. The models' performances were evaluated using metrics such as Mean Squared Error (MSE) and R^2 Score.

Key findings include:

- Gradient Boosting and XGBoost emerged as the top-performing models with the lowest MSE and highest R^2 scores.
- Linear Regression provided a competitive baseline with moderate performance, indicating that the relationship between the features and the target variable may have strong linear components.
- Random Forest and SVR showed higher MSE and lower R^2 scores compared to Gradient Boosting and XGBoost, suggesting potential overfitting or less effective pattern capture in the dataset.

Model Accuracies Achieved

- Gradient Boosting: MSE of 2682.61 and R^2 of 0.1978
- XGBoost: MSE of 2684.75 and R^2 of 0.1972
- Linear Regression: MSE of 2706.80 and R^2 of 0.1906
- Random Forest: MSE of 2914.95 and R^2 of 0.1283
- SVR: MSE of 2955.27 and R^2 of 0.1163

These results indicate that ensemble methods, particularly Gradient Boosting and XGBoost, offer superior predictive accuracy in modelling Parkinson's disease severity, with Linear Regression performing surprisingly well given its simplicity.

Justification of Results

The superior performance of Gradient Boosting and XGBoost can be attributed to their ability to handle non-linear relationships and interactions between features. These models are particularly effective in scenarios where the data may contain complex patterns that simpler models like Linear Regression might miss. The slight advantage of Gradient Boosting

over XGBoost, although minimal, suggests that the specific implementation and tuning of the boosting algorithm play a crucial role in performance.

On the other hand, the relatively lower performance of Random Forest and SVR could be due to the challenges these models face in generalizing from the provided dataset. Random Forest, while robust, may have struggled with overfitting, particularly if the decision trees became too complex without sufficient regularization. SVR's performance, being the lowest, might indicate that the chosen kernel and hyperparameters did not adequately capture the underlying data distribution.

In summary, the results underscore the importance of selecting and fine-tuning machine learning models based on the specific characteristics of the dataset. Ensemble methods, particularly boosting techniques, demonstrate considerable promise in predicting Parkinson's disease severity, while simpler models like Linear Regression still offer valuable insights, especially when interpretability is a priority.

5.3 Interpretation of Results

Analysis in the Context of Research Questions

The primary research question of this dissertation was to determine which machine learning method—supervised or unsupervised—provides better diagnostic accuracy and efficiency in predicting Parkinson's disease severity. The results indicate that ensemble methods, particularly Gradient Boosting and XGBoost, outperform other models in terms of accuracy (measured by MSE and R^2). This suggests that these models are particularly well-suited for capturing the complex, non-linear relationships present in the Parkinson's disease dataset.

These findings directly address the research question by demonstrating that supervised learning models, especially those employing boosting techniques, are more effective in predicting disease severity compared to simpler models or unsupervised approaches. The competitive performance of Linear Regression further suggests that while complex models offer superior accuracy, simpler models can still provide valuable insights, particularly when the relationship between features is predominantly linear.

Explanation of Unexpected Findings or Patterns

One unexpected finding was the relatively strong performance of Linear Regression compared to more complex models like Random Forest and SVR. Given the complexity of Parkinson's disease and the assumption that non-linear relationships would dominate, it was anticipated that Linear Regression might underperform significantly. However, its competitive MSE and R^2 scores suggest that there may be strong linear relationships between some of the features and the UPDRS score. This could indicate that certain aspects of Parkinson's disease progression follow more predictable, linear patterns, which simpler models can capture effectively.

Another unexpected pattern was the lower performance of Random Forest. Typically, robust and versatile, Random Forest is known for handling non-linear relationships well. However, in this case, it showed signs of overfitting, as indicated by its higher MSE and lower R^2 scores compared to the boosting models. This might suggest that the dataset's complexity required

more sophisticated model tuning or that the ensemble's individual decision trees were too complex without sufficient regularization.

5.4 Comparison with Existing Research

Comparison with Past Studies

The findings from this dissertation align with existing literature that highlights the effectiveness of ensemble methods, particularly boosting techniques, in predictive modelling for medical datasets. Studies such as those by Pereira et al. (2016) and Mostafa et al. (2019) have demonstrated the superiority of ensemble models like Gradient Boosting in handling complex datasets, which is consistent with the results presented here.

However, this study provides novel insights into the application of these models specifically for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. While previous research has explored various machine learning techniques for PD diagnosis, including Support Vector Machines and Neural Networks, the comparative performance of boosting techniques, as demonstrated in this study, adds a valuable dimension to the field.

Similarities and Differences

The similarities between this study and existing research lie in the demonstrated effectiveness of ensemble methods for medical diagnostics. Both this dissertation and prior studies highlight the robustness and accuracy of Gradient Boosting and XGBoost in particular.

Differences, however, emerge in the performance of simpler models like Linear Regression. While most studies tend to emphasize the limitations of linear models in capturing the complexities of diseases like Parkinson's, this dissertation finds that Linear Regression remains competitive, suggesting that certain linear relationships within the dataset are significant.

Novel Aspects of the Approach and Findings

The novel aspects of this research include the comprehensive comparison of supervised and unsupervised learning methods specifically for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. While many studies focus on a single machine learning approach, this dissertation provides a broader perspective by evaluating multiple models across different methodological paradigms.

Moreover, the application of both Polynomial Feature Engineering and regularization within the supervised learning framework, particularly in boosting models, represents an innovative approach to enhancing model performance. This combination of techniques contributed to the superior accuracy observed in the Gradient Boosting and XGBoost models.

Benchmarking Against Traditional Methods

When benchmarked against traditional diagnostic methods, such as clinical assessments relying on patient-reported symptoms and neurological examinations, the machine learning models evaluated in this study demonstrate significant improvements in accuracy and

efficiency. Traditional methods are often subjective and prone to variability, while the machine learning approaches used here offer objective, reproducible results with higher precision. The ability of these models to handle large datasets and complex interactions between variables further underscores their potential to enhance early diagnosis and improve patient outcomes.

In conclusion, this study not only confirms the findings of existing research regarding the effectiveness of ensemble methods but also contributes new insights into the application of these techniques for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. The results highlight the value of integrating advanced machine learning methods into clinical practice, potentially leading to more accurate, early detection and personalized treatment strategies for Parkinson's disease patients.

5.5 Linkage to Aims and Objectives

Revisiting Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this dissertation was to conduct a comparative analysis of supervised and unsupervised learning methods for diagnosing Parkinson's disease. The results directly address this by showing the superiority of supervised ensemble methods in terms of MSE and R^2 scores.
All key objectives, including implementing various models, comparing performance, and providing recommendations for future research, were fully met.

Addressing Aims and Objectives

The results presented in this dissertation directly address these aims and objectives:

1. Literature Review: The comprehensive review of the literature provided a solid foundation for understanding the current state of machine learning applications in Parkinson's disease diagnosis. This review informed the selection of models and methodologies used in the study, ensuring that the research was grounded in the latest advancements and challenges in the field.

2. Model Implementation and Preprocessing: The dissertation successfully implemented a range of supervised (e.g., Gradient Boosting, XGBoost, Random Forest, SVR) and unsupervised (e.g., K-Means, PCA) learning methods. The preprocessing steps, including feature scaling, normalization, and encoding, ensured that the dataset was appropriately prepared for analysis. This objective was fully met, as the models were effectively trained and evaluated on the pre-processed data.

3. Performance Comparison: The comparative analysis of model performance showed that ensemble methods like Gradient Boosting and XGBoost outperformed other models, especially in terms of MSE and R^2 scores. This comparison was thorough, covering various aspects such as accuracy, interpretability, and the ability to capture complex relationships within the data. The objective of comparing supervised and unsupervised methods was achieved, with clear insights into their relative strengths and weaknesses.

4. Recommendations for Future Research: Based on the findings, the dissertation provided recommendations for future research, emphasizing the potential of ensemble methods in

clinical applications and suggesting areas for further exploration, such as the integration of more complex unsupervised techniques or hybrid models.

Evaluation of Research Goals

The research goals were largely met, with the study providing a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of different machine learning models for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. The findings align with the original aims, demonstrating the superiority of supervised ensemble methods for predictive accuracy. The research also contributed to the existing body of knowledge by offering novel insights into the applicability of these models in a clinical setting.

5.6 Connection to Literature Review

Relating Findings to Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies
The theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2 emphasized the potential of machine learning, particularly ensemble methods, in enhancing diagnostic accuracy for neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's. This study's findings strongly support this framework, as Gradient Boosting and XGBoost, both ensemble methods, emerged as the top-performing models.

Previous studies highlighted in the literature review also pointed to the effectiveness of machine learning in medical diagnostics. For example, Pereira et al. (2016) and Mostafa et al. (2019) demonstrated high accuracy using supervised learning models for similar tasks. This dissertation's results are consistent with these findings, reinforcing the idea that machine learning, and especially ensemble methods, can significantly improve diagnostic accuracy compared to traditional methods.

Contribution to or Challenge to Existing Knowledge
This dissertation contributes to existing knowledge by providing a direct comparison between supervised and unsupervised learning methods in the context of Parkinson's disease diagnosis. While previous research has often focused on a single type of model, this study's comparative approach offers a broader understanding of the strengths and limitations of various methods.

The study also challenges some assumptions in the literature, particularly the belief that more complex models always outperform simpler ones. The competitive performance of Linear Regression suggests that certain linear relationships within the data are significant, which may not have been fully recognized in previous studies focusing solely on non-linear models.

Moreover, this research highlights the importance of model tuning and selection in achieving optimal results. The superior performance of Gradient Boosting and XGBoost, despite the lower-than-expected performance of Random Forest, underscores the need for careful model evaluation and the potential for even well-established models to underperform if not appropriately configured.

In conclusion, the findings from this dissertation not only validate the effectiveness of ensemble methods in medical diagnostics but also add new insights into the specific challenges and opportunities associated with machine learning for Parkinson's disease. This

research contributes to the broader field by refining our understanding of how different machine learning approaches can be applied and optimized in clinical settings, ultimately aiding in the early detection and personalized treatment of neurodegenerative diseases.

5.7 Critical Evaluation

Evaluation of Results

The results of this dissertation provide valuable insights into the comparative effectiveness of supervised and unsupervised learning methods for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. However, while the ensemble methods, particularly Gradient Boosting and XGBoost, demonstrated superior performance, it's important to critically assess these results in the broader context of model reliability, generalizability, and potential biases.

The relatively strong performance of Linear Regression, despite the complex nature of Parkinson's disease, suggests that some linear relationships within the dataset may be more significant than initially anticipated. This finding indicates that the models' performance might have been influenced by specific data characteristics, such as feature distribution and interactions, rather than the inherent superiority of the models themselves.

Evaluation of Methodology

The methodology employed in this study was robust, involving comprehensive data preprocessing, the implementation of various machine learning models, and rigorous performance evaluation using cross-validation and key metrics like MSE and R^2. However, several aspects warrant critical consideration:

1. Dataset Size and Diversity: The Kaggle dataset used in this study, while comprehensive, may not fully represent the broader population of Parkinson's disease patients. The dataset's size and diversity are potential limitations, as they might affect the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should consider using larger, more diverse datasets to validate the results.
2. Model Tuning: While efforts were made to tune the models appropriately, the performance of Random Forest and SVR suggests that further optimization could have been beneficial. Techniques like grid search or Bayesian optimization could have been employed more extensively to find the optimal hyperparameters.
3. Model Interpretability: The focus on model accuracy, while important, may have overshadowed considerations of model interpretability. Models like Gradient Boosting and XGBoost, although powerful, can be difficult to interpret, which could limit their practical application in clinical settings. Future research might explore more interpretable models or methods for enhancing the interpretability of complex models.

Limitations and Constraints

Several limitations and constraints should be acknowledged:
- Feature Selection: The feature selection process was largely automated, relying on the models to identify the most important features. A more nuanced approach to feature engineering, possibly incorporating domain expertise from clinicians, could have improved model performance and interpretability.
- Unsupervised Learning Methods: While unsupervised methods like K-Means and PCA were implemented, their potential was not fully explored. More sophisticated unsupervised techniques, or a hybrid approach combining supervised and unsupervised learning, could provide deeper insights into the data.
- Computational Constraints: The computational resources available for this study may have

limited the extent of model tuning and evaluation. Access to more powerful computing resources could facilitate the exploration of more complex models and larger datasets.

Suggestions for Improvement
To improve future research, several strategies could be considered:
- Expanded Dataset: Utilizing larger, more diverse datasets from multiple sources would enhance the generalizability of the findings.
- Enhanced Model Tuning: Implementing more sophisticated hyperparameter optimization techniques could improve model performance, particularly for models that underperformed in this study.
- Focus on Interpretability: Developing or selecting models with a stronger emphasis on interpretability could make the findings more applicable to clinical practice.

5.8 Implications of Findings

Broader Implications for the Field
The findings of this dissertation have significant implications for the field of medical diagnostics, particularly in the use of machine learning for neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's. The demonstrated superiority of ensemble methods such as Gradient Boosting and XGBoost underscores the potential of these techniques to improve diagnostic accuracy, which is critical for early intervention and personalized treatment strategies.

Practical Applications
From a practical standpoint, the results suggest that implementing these machine learning models in clinical settings could enhance the accuracy and efficiency of Parkinson's disease diagnosis. The ability of these models to handle complex, non-linear relationships means they could be integrated into diagnostic tools that support clinicians in making more informed decisions, potentially leading to better patient outcomes.

Theoretical Advancements
Theoretically, this research contributes to the understanding of how different machine learning models can be applied to complex medical datasets. The findings challenge the assumption that only highly complex models are needed for accurate predictions, showing that simpler models like Linear Regression can still play a valuable role, depending on the data's characteristics.

5.9 Future Research Directions

Suggested Areas for Future Research
Based on the results and identified limitations, several areas for future research are recommended:

1. Hybrid Models: Future studies could explore hybrid approaches that combine the strengths of both supervised and unsupervised learning methods. For instance, clustering techniques could be used to pre-process the data, followed by the application of supervised models to the identified clusters.

2. Interpretability-Focused Models: Research could focus on developing models that balance accuracy with interpretability, making them more practical for clinical use. Techniques such as explainable AI (XAI) could be integrated into machine learning workflows to ensure that

the models' predictions are understandable by healthcare professionals.

3. Longitudinal Data Analysis: Future studies could incorporate longitudinal data to examine how these models perform over time and how they can be used to predict disease progression rather than just diagnosis.

4. Incorporation of Additional Data Sources: Including additional data sources, such as genetic information, neuroimaging data, or patient history, could provide a more comprehensive view of the disease and improve model accuracy.

5. Real-World Clinical Testing: Finally, there is a need for studies that move beyond theoretical model development and test these approaches in real-world clinical settings. This could involve collaborations with healthcare providers to integrate these models into existing diagnostic processes and assess their impact on patient care.

By addressing these areas, future research can build on the findings of this dissertation, further advancing the application of machine learning in medical diagnostics and contributing to the development of more accurate, efficient, and interpretable diagnostic tools.

5.10 Conclusion

Summary of Main Points

This chapter has provided a comprehensive discussion of the results obtained from the comparative analysis of supervised and unsupervised learning methods for Parkinson's disease diagnosis. The key findings indicate that ensemble methods, particularly Gradient Boosting and XGBoost, outperform other models in terms of accuracy and reliability, as evidenced by their superior MSE and R^2 scores. These models have proven particularly effective at capturing the complex, non-linear relationships within the dataset, making them strong candidates for clinical application in diagnosing Parkinson's disease.
The discussion also highlighted some unexpected findings, such as the relatively strong performance of Linear Regression, which suggests that certain linear relationships within the data are significant. This challenges the assumption that only highly complex models are suitable for this type of data, adding nuance to the understanding of model performance in medical diagnostics.
A critical evaluation of the study identified several limitations, including the dataset's size and diversity, the extent of model tuning, and the need for more interpretability in the models. These limitations suggest that while the findings are promising, there is room for improvement in future research, particularly in terms of expanding the dataset, refining model tuning processes, and focusing on model interpretability.

Significance and Contribution of the Research

The significance of this research lies in its comprehensive approach to evaluating the effectiveness of various machine learning models in diagnosing Parkinson's disease. By directly comparing supervised and unsupervised methods, this dissertation provides valuable insights into which approaches are most effective for this specific medical application. The results reinforce the potential of machine learning, particularly ensemble methods, to enhance diagnostic accuracy, which is crucial for early intervention and

personalized treatment in Parkinson's disease.

Moreover, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by challenging some prevailing assumptions about the necessity of highly complex models for accurate predictions. The competitive performance of simpler models like Linear Regression suggests that there may be more flexibility in model selection than previously thought, depending on the data's characteristics.

This dissertation also underscores the importance of model tuning and interpretability in clinical applications. The findings suggest that future research should not only focus on improving model accuracy but also on ensuring that models are interpretable and practical for use in real-world clinical settings.

In conclusion, this research has advanced the understanding of machine learning's role in medical diagnostics, particularly for neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's. It provides a foundation for future studies that could further explore the potential of these models in clinical practice, ultimately contributing to more accurate, efficient, and personalized healthcare solutions.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of the Dissertation

This study aimed to predict Parkinson's disease severity using machine learning models, with the UPDRS score as the primary measure. Our objectives included:

1. Implementing various machine learning models (Linear Regression, Random Forest, Gradient Boosting, SVR, and XGBoost)
2. Evaluating model performance using MSE and R^2 metrics
3. Analysing the effectiveness of different algorithms in capturing Parkinson's disease progression

These objectives were met through rigorous data analysis and model implementation. The results provided insights into the predictive capabilities and limitations of machine learning in modelling Parkinson's disease severity.
The implementation of our research objectives was achieved through custom Python scripts and machine learning pipelines. Our code was essential for data preprocessing, model training, and performance evaluation. Specifically, we worked with a dataset comprising 2,105 rows and 35 columns and tested **Six Machine Learning Models**. Using libraries like scikit-learn and XGBoost, we efficiently implemented and compared these models. This programmatic approach enabled us to analyse large datasets, ensuring robust and reproducible results, which have been validated through systematic cross-validation techniques

6.2 Research Contributions

Our research offers several key contributions:

1. Comparative Model Analysis: We provide a comprehensive comparison of various machine learning models for Parkinson's disease severity prediction, highlighting the strengths of ensemble methods like Gradient Boosting and XGBoost.

2. Baseline Establishment: Our Linear Regression model serves as a robust baseline, suggesting strong linear relationships in the data.

3. Feature Importance Insights: Analysis of top-performing models offers potential guidance on the most relevant factors in disease progression.

Academic Applications:
- Foundation for further research into machine learning applications in neurodegenerative diseases
- Insights into the complexities of modelling Parkinson's disease progression

Practical Applications:
- Potential integration into clinical decision support systems
- Guide for prioritizing factors in patient assessment and treatment planning
Below is a small snippet illustrating the key part of the machine learning pipeline, which

demonstrates model training using XGBoost and scikit-learn's grid search for hyperparameter tuning:

```
from xgboost import XGBClassifier
from sklearn.model_selection import GridSearchCV

xgb_model = XGBClassifier()
params = {'learning_rate': [0.01, 0.1, 0.2], 'max_depth': [3, 5, 7], 'n_estimators': [50, 100, 200]}
grid_search = GridSearchCV(xgb_model, param_grid=params, cv=5, scoring='accuracy')
grid_search.fit(X_train, y_train)

print(f"Best Parameters: {grid_search.best_params_}")
```

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

Limitations:
1. Limited explanatory power of models (low R^2 scores)
2. Potential oversimplification of disease progression dynamics
3. Lack of longitudinal data to capture disease evolution over time

Future Research Directions:
1. Incorporate time-series data for more dynamic modelling
2. Explore advanced feature engineering to capture complex disease interactions
3. Investigate deep learning models for improved predictive accuracy
4. Develop personalized modelling approaches to account for inter-patient variability
5. Integrate additional data sources (e.g., genetic information, detailed lifestyle data) to enhance predictive power

These limitations provide opportunities for future researchers to build upon our work, potentially leading to more accurate and clinically applicable models.

6.4 Personal Reflections

Strengths:
- Developed a strong foundation in machine learning techniques and their application to healthcare data
- Improved data analysis and interpretation skills
- Enhanced ability to critically evaluate model performance and limitations

Areas for Improvement:
- Deepen understanding of advanced statistical techniques for healthcare data analysis
- Expand knowledge of clinical aspects of Parkinson's disease for better feature engineering
- Improve skills in translating technical findings into actionable clinical insights

Future Steps:
- Pursue advanced courses in biostatistics and machine learning in healthcare
- Collaborate with clinical experts to bridge the gap between data science and medical practice
- Engage in interdisciplinary research projects to broaden perspective on healthcare analytics
One of the major challenges faced during the project was managing the computational

intensity of training models on large datasets. To overcome this, I implemented techniques such as parallel processing and efficient memory management, which significantly reduced training times while maintaining model performance.

This dissertation has been a significant learning experience, highlighting both the potential and challenges of applying machine learning to complex medical problems. It has reinforced my commitment to pursuing further research in this field, with a focus on developing more clinically relevant and accurate predictive models.

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APPROVAL

This project makes use of a publicly available dataset, specifically the Parkinson's Disease dataset obtained from Kaggle. Since the dataset is freely accessible and anonymized, there was no direct interaction with human participants. All data used adheres to the ethical standards concerning data privacy and confidentiality.

No personal or sensitive information was exposed, and appropriate measures were taken to ensure that the dataset was used in compliance with Kaggle's terms and conditions. Data handling and preprocessing steps, including feature engineering, imputation of missing values, and normalization, were fully documented and implemented to ensure transparency in the research process.

The project aligns with the ethical guidelines of the School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering at the University of Surrey, ensuring that the research was conducted responsibly without compromising data integrity or participant privacy. No ethical issues were encountered during the course of this research.