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## **DAFTAR ISI**

# 2019 8th International Conference on Software and Computer Applications (ICSCA 2019)

## Table of Contents

Preface.....XIV

Conference Committees.....XV

### Session 1: High Performance Computing and Intelligent Computing

Geo-spatial-based Emotions: A Mechanism for Event Detection in  
Microblogs.....1

*Samer Muthana Sarsam, Hosam Al-Samarraie, Bahiyah Omar*

GPU Accelerated Maximum Likelihood Analysis for Phylogenetic  
Inference .....6

*Sandun Rajapaksa, Wageesha Rasanjana, Indika Perera, Dulani  
Meedeniya*

Reinforcing the Decision-making Process in Chemometrics: Feature  
Selection and Algorithm Optimization .....11

*Samer Muthana Sarsam*

Temporal Sentiment Tracking and Analysis on Large-scale Social Events.....	17
--	----

*Hussein Hazimeh, Mohammad Harissa, Elena Mugellini, Omar Abou Khaled*

Multi-Attention Network for Aspect Sentiment Analysis.....	22
--	----

*Huiyu Han, Xiaoge Li, Shuting Zhi, Haoyue Wang*

Enhancing Simplified General Perturbations-4 Model for Orbit Propagation Using Deep Learning: A Review.....	27
---	----

*Nor'asnilawati Salleh, Siti Sophiayati, Sharizal Fadlie Sabri*

Performance Analysis of an Fuzzy Logic Based LEACH Protocol.....	33
--	----

*Hong-Yi Tan, Wun-She Yap, Bok-Min Goi*

Personalized Ranking Point of Interest Recommendation Based on Spatial-Temporal Distance Metric in LBSNs.....	38
---	----

*Chang SU, Hao Li, Xianzhong Xie*

Cloud-Based IoT Solution for Predictive Modeling of Ship Fuel Consumption.....	44
--	----

*Keh-Kim Kee and Boun-Yew Lau Simon*

Questionnaire Development Process to Measure the SMEs' Continuous Use	
---	--

behavior towards Cloud Computing Services.....	50
--	----

*Mohammed A. Al-Sharafi, Ruzaini Abdullah Arshah, and Emad A. Abu-Shanab*

## **Session 2: Data Engineering and Big Data Technology**

Data Mining Using Clustering Algorithm as Tool for Poverty Analysis.....	56
--	----

*Janelyn A. Talingdan*

Application of Data Science for Controlling Energy Crises: A Case Study of Pakistan.....	60
--	----

*Saif Ullah, Muhammad Asif, Shahbaz Ahmad, Ulfat Imdad, Osama Sohaib*

A Survey on Privacy Preserving Data Mining Approaches and Techniques.....	65
---	----

*Maheyazah Md Siraj, Nurul Adibah Rahmat, Mazura Mat Din*

Dashboard-based Alumni Tracer Study Report Using Normalized Data Store Architecture.....	70
--	----

*Asroni, Juanita Yusanti, Slamet Riyadi*

An Improved Over-sampling Algorithm based on iForest and SMOTE.....	75
---	----

*Yifeng Zheng, Guohe Li, Teng Zhang*

Towards the Idea of Agricultural Market Understanding for Automatic Event Detection .....	81
--	----

*Mallika Kliangkhlao, Somchai Limsiroratana*

Removing Unclassified Elements in Investigating of Financial Wellbeing Attributes Using Rough-Regression Model.....	87
--	----

*Riswan Efendi, Susnaningsih Mu'at, Nelsy Arisandi, Noor Azah  
Samsudin*

(In)Security of the $AA_\beta$ Cryptosystem for Transmitting Large Data.....	91
--	----

*Muhammad Asyraf Asbullah, Muhammad Rezal Kamel Ariffin, Zahari  
Mahad, Muhamad Azlan Daud*

Missing Data Problem in Predictive Analytics.....	95
---	----

*Heru Nugroho, Kridanto Surendro*

Data Mining the Smartphone Manipulation Skills in a Coffee Farming Community: A Step for Risk Analysis.....	101
--	-----

*Melidiossa V. Pagudpud, Thelma D. Palaoag*

A Novel Efficient Query Strategy on Hibernate.....	105
--	-----

*Shuo Kuai, Yupeng Hu, Xinxiao Zhao, Dong Qin, Wentao Li, Xueqing  
Li*

### **Session 3: Algorithm Design and Optimization**



Collaborative Filtering Algorithm Based on User Characteristic and Time Weight .....	109
--	-----

*Panpan Wang, Hong Hou, Xiaoqun Guo*

An Efficient Algorithm for Recommender System Using Kernel Mapping Techniques .....	115
---	-----

*Summia Naz, Muazzam Maqsood, Mehr Yahya Durani*

Pressure Vessel Design Simulation: Implementing of Multi-Swarm Particle Swarm Optimization.....	120
---	-----

*Sinan Q. Salih, AbdulRahman A. Alsewari, Zaher M. Yaseen*

DCA-Based Algorithm for Cross-Functional Team Selection.....	125
--	-----

*Ngo Tung Son, Tran Thi Thuy, Bui Ngoc Anh, Tran Van Dinh*

Enhancing One-Dimensional Chaotic Map Based on Bitstream Dividing Model.....	130
--	-----

*Moatsum Alawida, Azman Samsudin, Wafa ' Hamdan Alshoura*

Solving 0/1 Knapsack Problem using Opposition-based Whale Optimization Algorithm (OWOA).....	135
--	-----

*Hammoudeh S. Alamri, Kamal Z. Zamli, Mohd Faizal Ab Razak, Ahmad Firdaus*

Simplifying the Algorithm Selection Using Reduction of Rankings of Classification Algorithms.....	140
---	-----

*Salisu Mamman Abdulrahman, Pavel Brazdil, Wan Mohd Nazmee Wan Zainon, Alhassan Adamu*

Algorithms of Classification of Mass Problems of Production Subject Domains .....149

*Eugene Malakhov, Denys Shchelkonogov, Vitaliy Mezhuyev*

Research on MOOC System Based on Bipartite Graph Context Collaborative Filtering Algorithm.....154

*Zhang Xiaoyan, Bai Jie*

## **Session 4: Software Design and Development**

Precise String Analysis for JavaScript Programs Using Automata .....159

*Nabil Almashfi, Lunjin Lu, Koby Picker, Christian Maldonado*

Empirical Investigation of UML Models Matching through Different Weight Calibration .....167

*Alhassan Adamu, Wan Mohd Nazmee Wan Zainon, Salisu Mamman Abdulrahman*

Adoption Issues in DevOps from the Perspective of Continuous Delivery Pipeline.....173

*M. Zulfahmi Toh, Shamsul Sahibuddin, Mohd Naz ' ri Mahrin*

Risk Management in Projects Based on Open-Source Software.....178

*Nguyen Duc Linh, Phan Duy Hung, Vu Thu Diep, Ta Duc Tung*

Visualizing Test-Defect Coverage Information to Support Analytical Reasoning and Testing.....184

*Sharifah Mashita Syed-Mohamad, Mohd Heikal Husin, Wan Mohd Nazmee Wan Zainon*

ML Polymorphism of Linear Lambda Calculus with First-class Continuations.....189

*Shin-ya NISHIZAKI*

Managing Quality Assurance Challenges of DevOps through Analytics..... 194

*Mahmoud Mohammad Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharifah Mashita Syed-Mohamad, Mohd Heikal Husin*

Acceptance of the Methods of Decision-making: A Case Study from Software Development Companies in Ukraine and Malaysia.....199

*Vitaliy Mezhuyev, Oleg M. Lytvyn, Iuliia Pershyna, Olesia Nechuiviter, Oleg O. Lytvyn, Vladimir Lavrik, Oksana Kovalska, Yurii Gunchenko*

Automating Business Process Model Generation from Ontology-based Requirements.....205

*Amarilis Putri Yanuarifiani, Fang-Fang Chua, Gaik-Yee Chan*

Verifying Cloud Application for the Interaction Correctness Using SoaML

and SPIN.....	210
---------------	-----

*Chunling Hu, Guoqing Geng, Bixin Li, Chao Tang, Xiaofeng Wang*

## **Session 5: Application Development and Application**

Model-Based Book Recommender Systems using Naïve Bayes enhanced with Optimal Feature Selection.....	217
---	-----

*Thi Thanh Sang Nguyen*

Development Support of User Interfaces Adaptive to Use Environment...	223
---	-----

*Seika Tanaka, Hajime Iwata, Junko Shirogane, Yoshiaki Fukazawa*

Proposing a Development of Geolocation Mobile Application for Airport Pickup of International Students PickUp.....	229
--	-----

*Zafeera Rashid, Chit Su Mon, Raenu Kolandaisamy*

Using a Hypertext Pre-processor Code in Converting .csv File into a Civil Service Commission Daily Time Record Format Applying Agile Model.....	233
---	-----

*Joel M. Gumiran and Cherry R. Gumiran*

SGApps: Designing and Developing Expert System Apps for Diagnosing Sugar Glider Diseases.....	238
---	-----

*Mimi Rosnida Osman, Munirah Mohd Yusof, Hanayanti Hafit*

Applying Design Science Research in the Development of Human Resource Record Management System with Predictive Analysis through Pointing System.....	243
--	-----

*Cherry R. Gumiran, Joel M. Gumiran*

Smart City Bus Application with Quick Response (QR) Code Payment.....	248
---	-----

*Sim Liew Fong, David Chin Wui Yung, Falah Y. H. Ahmed, Arshad Jamal*

BookCeption: A Proposed Framework for an Artificially Intelligent Recommendation Platform.....	253
--	-----

*Aniqa Zaida Khanom, Sheikh Mastura Farzana, Tahsinur Rahman, and Iftekhharul Mobin*

A Genre-Based Item-Item Collaborative Filtering: Facing the Cold-Start Problem.....	258
---	-----

*Surajit Das Barman, Mahamudul Hasan, Falguni Roy*

## **Session 6: Image Processing Technology and Application**

A review of Convolutional Neural Networks in Remote Sensing Image...	263
--	-----

*Xinni Liu, Fengrong Han, Kamarul Hawari Ghazali, Izzeldin Ibrahim Mohamed, Yue Zhao*

Segmentation of Microscopic Breast Cancer Images for Cancer Detection.....	268
--	-----

*Hamit Altıparmak, Fatih Veysel Nurçin*

Analyzing the Color Image of Taiwan Town by Using Data Mining.....	272
--	-----

*Yu-Wei Su, Tzren Ru Chou*

Defects Detection Technique of Use Case Views during Requirements Engineering.....	277
--	-----

*Poranat Tianual, Amnart Pohthong*

3D Coordinate Calculation and Pose Estimation of Power Meter based on Binocular Stereo Vision.....	282
--	-----

*Qingdan Huang, Wenxiong Mo, Liqiang Pei, Lian Zeng*

Brain Aneurysm Extraction in MRI Images.....	286
--	-----

*Rose Hafsah Ab. Rauf, Najwa Abd Ghafar, Noor Elaiza Abd. Khalid*

Cooperative Hierarchical Framework for Group Activity Recognition: From Group Detection to Multi-activity Recognition.....	291
--	-----

*Mohammed Al-Habib, Dongjun Huang, Majjed Al-Qatf, and Kamal Al-Sabahi*

Combination of Facial Recognition and Interaction with Academic Portal in Automatic Attendance System.....	299
--	-----

*Ngo Tung Son, Le Phuong Chi, Phan Truong Lam, Tran Van Dinh*

Reconstruct the Back of 3D Face Model Using 2D Gradient Based Interpolation.....	306
--	-----

*Wenbo Luo*

Low-Level Human Action Change Detection Using the Motion History Image.....	311
---	-----

*Yohwan Noh, DoHoon Lee*

## **Session 7: Computer Theory and Engineering**

A Model Driven Approach for State Management in Mobile Applications.....	315
--	-----

*Mehreen Khan, Farooque Azam, Muhammad Waseem Anwar, Fatima Samea, Mudassar Adeel Ahmed*

Modelling of the Prophet Mosque in Virtual Reality.....	320
---	-----

*Mohamad Izani Zainal Abidin, Aishah Abdul Razak*

Assessing Classcraft as an Effective Gamification App based on Behaviorism Learning Theory.....	325
---	-----

*Francisco C. Eugenio, Jr. and Ardhee Joy T. Ocampo*

Towards Smart Healthcare Management Based on Knowledge Graph Technology.....	330
--	-----

*Lan Huang, Congcong Yu, Yang Chi, Xiaohui Qi, Hao Xu*

An Artificial Cell Simulator based on Artificial Chemistry.....	338
<i>Chien-Le Goh, Hong Tat Ewe, Yong Kheng Goh</i>	
Artificial Intelligence Legal Policy: Limits of Use of Some Kinds of AI.....	343
<i>Dremliuga Roman, Prisekina Natalia</i>	
Towards Efficient Implementation of Realizability Checking for Reactive System Specifications.....	347
<i>Masaya Shimakawa, Atsushi Ueno, Shohei Mochizuki, Takashi Tomita, Shigeki Hagihara, Naoki Yonezaki</i>	
Electric Power Meter Classification Based on BOW.....	353
<i>Wenxiong Mo, Liqiang Pei, Qingdan Huang, Weijie Liao</i>	
Determining the Neural Network Topology: A Review.....	357
<i>Muh. Ibnu Choldun R., Judhi Santoso, Kridanto Surendro</i>	
Verification of Verifiability of Voting Protocols by Strand Space Analysis.....	363
<i>Shigeki Hagihara, Masaya Shimakawa, Naoki Yonezaki</i>	
Meta-Analysis of Acoustic Feature Extraction for Machine Listening Systems .....	369
<i>Ricardo A. Catanghal Jr, Thelma D. Palaoag, Carlwin Dayagdag</i>	
An Ensemble Filter Feature Selection Method and Outlier Detection Method	



for Multiclass Classification.....	373
------------------------------------	-----

*Dalton Ndirangu, Waweru Mwangi, Lawrence Nderu*

## **Session 8: Modern Information Theory and Technology**

Applying Formal Logic Validation to Enhance Natural Language Understanding .....	380
--	-----

*Worawan Marurngsith, Pakorn Weawsawangwong*

Privacy Enhancement for Delivery Route Optimization through Occupancy Prediction .....	385
--	-----

*Shimpei Ohsugi, Kenji Tanaka, Noboru Koshizuka*

Hybrid Approach for Forecasting Tourist Arrivals .....	392
--	-----

*Mei-Li Shen, Hsiou-Hsiang Liu, Yi-Hsiang Lien, Cheng-Feng Lee, Cheng-Hong Yang*

Development of Assessment System for Spine Curvature Angle Measurement .....	397
--	-----

*Chua Shanyu, Lim Chee Chin, Shafriza Nisha Basah, Asrul Fahmi Azizan*

Reservoir Parameter Prediction Using Optimized Seismic Attributes Based on Gamma Test.....	403
--	-----

*Ying Li, Guohe Li, Yifeng Zheng*

Proposal of Method for Analyzing International Students' Tourism Behavior Using a Tourism Support System.....	408
--	-----

*Tianyang Lan, Hiroki Tomizawa, Hisashi Ichikawa and Akihiro Abe*

Factors affecting the Social Networks Acceptance: An Empirical Study using PLS-SEM Approach.....	414
---	-----

*Muhammad Alshurideh, Said A. Salloum, Barween Al Kurdi, Mostafa Al-Emran*

The Extraction of Hidden Fault Diagnostic Knowledge in Equipment Technology Manual Based on Semantic Annotation.....	419
---	-----

*Zhen Wang, Yanling Qian, Long Wang, Shigang Zhang, Xu Luo*

Research on Domain Ontology Automation Construction Based on Chinese Texts.....	425
--	-----

*Bo Wang, Jun Luo, Shuyuan Zhu*

## **Session 9: Information Network and Information Security**

A UML Profile for Multi-Cloud Service Configuration (UMLPMSC) in Event-driven Serverless Applications.....	431
---	-----

*Fatima Samea, Farooque Azam, Muhammad Waseem Anwar, Mehreen Khan, Muhammad Rashid*

Implicit Recommendation with Interest Change and User Influence.....	436
<i>Qiaoqiao Tan, Fangai Liu, Shuning Xing</i>	
An Information Source Identification Algorithm Based on Shortest Arborescence of Network.....	442
<i>Zhong Li, Chunhe Xia, Tianbo Wang, Xiaochen Liu</i>	
CDAS: A Continuous Dynamic Authentication System.....	447
<i>Qi Li, Hao Chen</i>	
A User Attribute Recommendation Algorithm and Peer3D Technology based WebVR P2P Transmission Scheme.....	453
<i>Huijuan Zhang, Lei Qiao, Dongqing Wang</i>	
An Enhanced Key Security of Playfair Cipher Algorithm.....	457
<i>Richard M. Marzan, Ariel M. Sison</i>	
Shellfier: A Shellcode Detection Method based on Dynamic Binary Instrumentation and Convolutional Neural Network.....	462
<i>Yue Pan, Jing An, Wenqing Fan, Wei Huang</i>	
Role-Based ABAC Model for Implementing Least Privileges.....	467
<i>Muhammad Umar Aftab, Zhiguang Qin, Syed Falahuddin Quadri, Zakria, Arslan Javed, Xuyun Nie</i>	
Survey of Hyperledger Blockchain Frameworks: Case Study in FPT University's Cryptocurrency Wallets.....	472

*Tran Quy Ban, Bui Ngoc Anh, Ngo Tung Son, Tran Van Dinh*

Domain Specific Classification of Malay Based Complaints using the  
Complaint Concept Ontologies .....481

*Shaiful Bakhtiar bin Rodzman, Siti Suhaima binti Suhaili, Normaly  
Kamal Ismail, Nurazzah Abd Rahman, Syed Ahmad Aljunid, Aslida binti  
Omar*

## **Session 10: Digital Multimedia Technology and Application**

Problematic Use of Live Video Streaming Services: Impact of Personality  
Traits, Psychological Factors, and Motivations.....487

*Shuhui Sophy Cheng, Shao-Liang Chang, Chi-Ying Chen*

Detection of Random Correction from Source Code Snapshots.....491

*Yu Ohno, Hidetake Uwano, Shinji Uchida*

Reliable User Profile Analytics and Discovery on Social Networks.....496

*Hussein Hazimeh, Elena Mugellini, Omar Abou Khaled*

IPv6 QoS for Multimedia Applications: A Performance Analysis.....501

*Farooq Haider, Muhammad Hasanain Chaudary, Muhammad Sajjad  
Naveed, Muhammad Asif*

Social Media Application Usage and Women Entrepreneurship Achievement  
through E-Business Model: Case of Setiu Wetland.....505

*Masita @ Masila Abdul Jalil, Fatihah Mohd, Mustafa Man, Noraida Ali, Suriyani Muhamad*

A Model Integrating Information of Multiple Social Networks.....510

*Xiangling Fu, Chenwei Yan, Pengya Zhao*

## **Session 11: Wireless Communication Technology and Internet of Things Applications**

Real-Time Carbon Dioxide Monitoring Based on IoT & Cloud Technologies.....517

*Fan Xiu Ming, Riyaz Ahamed Ariyaluran Habeeb, Fariza Hanum Binti Md Nasaruddin, Abdullah Bin Gani*

A 3-Tier Architecture for Network Latency Reduction in Healthcare Internet-of-Things Using Fog Computing and Machine Learning.....522

*Saurabh Shukla, Mohd Fadzil Hassan, Low Tang Jung, Azlan Awang, Muhammad Khalid Khan*

DC programming and DCA for Secure Guarantee with Null Space Beamforming in Two-Way Relay Networks.....529

*Nguyen The Duy, Tran Thi Thuy, Luong Thuy Chung, Ngo Tung Son, Tran Van Dinh*

Portable TOR Router with Raspberry Pi.....533

<i>Arshad Jamal, Deperkdharrshan Kumar, Rabab Alayham Abbas Helmi,</i>	
<i>Sim Liew Fong</i>	
An Automated Software-Agents System for Detecting Road Speed Limit Offences.....	538
<i>Maythem K. Abbas, Low Tang Jung, Raed Abdulla</i>	
A Survey on Deployment and Coverage Strategies in Three-Dimensional Wireless Sensor Networks.....	544
<i>Fengrong Han, Xinni Liu, Izzeldin Ibrahim Mohamed, Kamarul Hawari Ghazali, Yue Zhao</i>	
Internet of Things Attacks Detection and Classification Using Tiered Hidden Markov Model.....	550
<i>Ahmad Alshammari, Mohamed A. Zohdy</i>	
Minimizing Flow Rules for Rerouting Multi-Flows in Multi-Failure Recovery over SDN.....	555
<i>Meng Sun, Kuoyi Shao, Lu Wang</i>	
Anomaly Event Detection for Sensor Networks on Apriori Algorithms and Subjective Logic.....	560
<i>Yuan Jinhui, Zhou Hongwei, Zhang Laishun</i>	
DC Programming and DCA for Power Minimization Problem in Multi-User Beamforming Networks.....	564

<i>Tran Thi Thuy , Nguyen Van Nam, Ngo Tung Son, Tran Van Dinh</i>	
Privacy Preserving of IP Address through Truncation Method in Network-based Intrusion Detection System.....	569
<i>Yee Jian Chew, Shih Yin Ooi, Kok-Seng Wong, Ying Han Pang</i>	
Research on Ultrasonic Positioning Algorithm.....	574
<i>Jingxuan HE, Jian ZHANG, Zeji HUI</i>	
Smart Transportation System Using RFID.....	579
<i>Sim Liew Fong, Amir Ariff Azham bin Abu Bakar, Falah Y. H. Ahmed, Arshad Jamal</i>	

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## **ARTIKEL**

# Determining the Neural Network Topology: A Review

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## ABSTRACT

One of the challenges in the successful implementation of deep neural network (DNN) is setting the value for various hyperparameters, one of which is the network topology, which is closely related to the number of hidden layers and the number of hidden neurons. Determining the number of hidden layers and the number of neurons is very important and has a large influence on DNN performance. Determining these two numbers manually (usually through trial and error methods) to find fairly optimal arrangement is a time-consuming process, while the automatic approach is divided into two, they are a model-based approach and a non-model based approach. The non-model-based approach, for example, is grid search and random search, whereas model-based approaches, for example, are using particle swarm optimization (PSO) algorithms. In some researches, how to determine the number of hidden layers or number of neurons, often the guidelines are unclear, even the roles and functions of both are explained minimally. Although it is still a difficult area of research, research to determine the number of hidden layers and the number of neurons must continue to be carried out, because these two numbers will greatly determine the performance of DNN.

## CCS Concepts

• Computing methodologies → Neural networks

## Keywords

Neural network; number; hidden layer; hidden neuron

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Neural networks have been successfully applied in a variety of problem areas as diverse as computer science, finance, medicine, engineering, physics, etc. The main reason is that neural networks have the ability to approach arbitrary functions. Over the past 30 years, a number of results have been published which show that artificial neural networks called feedforward networks with one hidden layer can approach all functions arbitrarily. One important aspect for designing neural networks is architecture or topology because it is closely related to generalization capabilities. In some cases using a fully connected network, and given a set of

predetermined inputs and outputs, the topology will be determined by how many hidden layers and how many neurons for each hidden layer. The majority of the literature discusses how to determine the number of hidden neurons (assuming only using one hidden layer), but very rarely discusses how to determine the optimal number of hidden layers. This is due to the opinion that networks with only one hidden layer are sufficient to approximate universally almost all functions [1][2]. However, several researches show that the use of two hidden layers provides better performance than if only using one hidden layer in some cases [2][3]. Since the increase in computer capabilities, the use of a neural network that has more than one hidden layer has become one of the attractions for researchers, especially since the use of deep neural networks to solve problems in the real world. Deep neural network learning can be interpreted as a technique that uses neural networks for learning that utilize many hidden layers between input and output layers [4]. One of the challenges in the successful implementation of deep neural networks is setting values for various hyperparameters, one of which is the network topology, which is closely related to the number of hidden layers and the number of hidden neurons. The determination of the number of hidden layers and the number of neurons is very important and has a large influence on the performance of deep neural networks [5][6]. The determination of these two numbers manually (usually through the 'trial and error' method) to find a fairly optimal topology is a time-consuming process.

Some researches on neural network topology have focused on determining the number of neurons because they only use one hidden layer, some focuses on the number of hidden layers (two or one hidden layer), some also determine the number of hidden layers and the number of neurons in each hidden layer. Research on determining the number of neurons hidden has been going on since the 1990s and is still an interesting topic for researchers [7][8][9]. Research comparing the performance of one or two hidden layers is still an interesting topic to date [3][10], while research which also calculates the number of hidden layers and the number of new neurons has been done in recent years, since the emergence of deep learning [4][5][10]. The determination of the right number of neurons is important to avoid under-fitting or over-fitting, while increasing the level of accuracy of the neural network. The choice of the number of hidden layers and the right number of neurons together aims to reduce the complexity of processing time while simultaneously maintaining the accuracy of the neural network [5]. Hidden layers in deep neural networks represent increasingly complex features progressively [11]. Some approaches to calculating optimal number of hidden neurons are: 'trial and error' [7], rule of thumb method, simple method, and two phase method [12]. Madhiarasan and Deepa (2017) propose a new

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method for calculating the number of neurons by registering as many as 151 functions of convergent functions and then simulating each of these functions to get the number of neurons that will produce a minimum error. Of the 151 functions, a function is finally chosen which produces a minimum error [13]. The hyper-parameter search approach for searching the number of hidden layers and the number of neurons on the deep neural network can be done manually or automatically. The manual approach is done by trial and error or rule of thumb, while the automatic approach is divided into two, they are a model-based approach and a non-model based approach [14]. Non-model based approaches, for example, are grid search and random search, whereas approaches that are model based, for example, are using particle swarm optimization (PSO) algorithms.

Deep neural networks have achieved great success in practice and have a great influence on the machine learning literature and artificial intelligence. Although it has achieved success on a practical level, the theoretical characteristics of determining the topology of a neural network are still being investigated. For example, methods for finding the number of hidden layers and the number of neurons in deep learning have been done, but until now it has not been based on established theories [5][15][16][17]. Many methods have been conducted to calculate the number of hidden layers and the number of neurons, for example: model-based automatic methods using PSO [4][14][18], automatic methods without models using grid search (GS) or random search [19][20]. Some manual methods are also proposed, for example: the number of hidden neurons is 2/3 of the number of inputs plus

the number of outputs, the number of hidden neurons per hidden layer follows the rules of the pyramid geometry, mathematical approach [21][22], trial and error/rule of thumb[23], the relationship between the number of hidden layers and the number of hidden layers is logarithmic [24]. In some of the above literature, how to determine the number of hidden layers or optimal number of neurons, often the guidelines are not clear, even the roles and functions of both are explained minimally. Some literature proposes methods or ways to determine the number of hidden layers or the number of neurons, but it does not generally apply, it depends on the type of input data and also depends on the output. Research in this area still leaves difficult research tasks [17]. Some of the methods mentioned, apparently cannot be applied to different types of data. Each researcher determines the number of hidden layers or the number of neurons based on past experience, while for beginner researchers even do it with 'trial and error'. Although it is still a difficult area of research, research to determine the number of hidden layers and the number of neurons must continue to be carried out, because these two numbers will greatly determine the deep neural network learning performance.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Determining the Number of Hidden Neurons

Summary and critics from researches calculating hidden neuron can be seen in table 1, which was presented chronologically from the 1990s to the present.

**Table 1. Research determines the number of hidden neurons**

No	Researcher	Function	Method	Critics
1	Sartori and Antsaklis(1991)[25]	Classification	the number of neurons is $p-1$ , where $p$ is the number of input features	No correlation checks were carried out between input features
2	Arai(1993)[26]	Classification of two categories	the number of neurons between $I-1$ to $I/3$ , where $I$ is the number of input features	Only for classification of two categories
3	Ji Yan Li(1995)[27]	Time Series	$m$ hidden neurons where the amount of data is $(m+1)m/2$	Just pay attention to the amount of data, variations in data are not noticed
4	Hagiwara(1994)[28]	Classification: Determines a 4x4 pixel image whether symmetry	Reducing the number of neurons and weights gradually	There is no guarantee that the number of neurons will get the right weight
5	Tamura and Tateishi(1997)[29]	Is not explained specifically	For one hidden layer: the number of neurons is $N-1$ , for two hidden layers the number of neurons is $N/2 + 3$ where $N$ is the number of inputs minus output	There is no empirical test Ignoring correlation, variations between input features, and between input features and output features
6	Fujita(1998)[30]	Not specifically explained	Add one by one the number of neurons, where the number of neurons is proportional to the number of data sets	Ignoring correlation, variations between input features
7	Keeni et al.(1999)[31]	Classification	Reducing the number of neurons little by little	Ignoring correlation, variations between input features

No	Researcher	Function	Method	Critics
8	Onoda(2001)[32]	Prediction	Using the Neural Network Information Criterion(NNIC)	Less practical
9	Islam and Murase(2001)[33]	Not specifically explained	Cascade Neural Network Design Algorithm(CNNDA)	Less practical
10	Zhang et al.(2003)[34]	Not specifically explained	Set Covering Algorithm(SCA)	Less practical
11	Choi(2008)[35]	Not specifically explained	An algorithm that separates training for input and output	Less practical
12	Shibata and Ikeda(2009)[36]	Not specifically explained	$N^{(h)} = N^{(i)}N^{(o)}$ and $\eta = 32 / (N^{(i)}N^{(o)})^{1/2}$	Do not see variations and correlations
13	Doukim et al.(2010) [37]	Pre-processing for feature extraction	Searching algorithm	Ignoring correlation, variations between input features
14	Panchal et al.(2011) [38]	Not specifically explained	The number of hidden neurons is inversely proportional to MSE	The number of neurons is known after learning
15	Hunter et al.(2012)[39]	Not specifically explained	$N^h = 2^n - 1$	Do not see variations and correlations
16	Sheela and Deepa(2013)[7]	Predictive	$(4n^2 + 3) / (n^2 - 8)$	Do not see variations and correlations
17	Madhiarasan and Deepa(2016)[8]	Predictive	$(8n - 4) / (n - 4)$	Do not see variations and correlations
18	Madhiarasan and Deepa(2017)[13]	Predictive	$u_n = (4n - 2) / (n - 3)$	Do not see variations and correlations

## 2.2 Comparison Using One or Two Hidden Layers

Research that compares the use of one or two hidden layers is performed on univariate and multivariate functions, which can be briefly read in table 2.

**Table 2. Research compares one or two hidden layer**

No	Researcher	Function	Method	Critics
1	Nakama (2011) [40]	Linear and quadratic	Comparing one and two hidden layers with other parameters together: one hidden layer reaches convergence faster	More than two hidden layers are not compared
2	Thomas et.al (2016) [10], Thomas et.al (2017) [2]	Predictive	Compare one and two hidden layers: two better hidden layers	More than two hidden layers are not compared
3	Guliyev and	Multivariate functions	Comparing one and two hidden	More than two hidden

Ismailov (2018) [1]		layers: one hidden layer is less able to approach multivariate functions	layers are not compared
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## 2.3 Determining The Number of Hidden Layers and The Number of Neurons

To determine the number of hidden layers and the number of neurons together broadly divided into two, they are the determination of automatically and manually determination [18]. Determination automatically can use the model, or non-model. There are manual determinations that use certain formulas; some are done by trial and error. Automatic determination without a model consists of grid search (GS) and random search (RS). GS is generally used to optimize DNN parameters only if the number is very low. First, users choose a range of values to explore. Then, DNN is trained for each specification along with other parameters. Usually, GS is carried out for the steps of a logarithmic scale, where the best combination is estimated, progressively in conducting a search [19]. The obvious disadvantage of GS is its time complexity - for parameters  $k$  to take different values for each (assuming that  $n$  is the same for all parameters), complexity grows exponentially at level  $O(n^k)$ . Random search (RS) is an alternative to GS, which integrates faster into parametrization. RS is not adaptive, meaning it is not dynamically updated during the experiment (solutions that have been found do not affect search). There is also a hybrid algorithm that combines RS with other techniques to improve its performance, for example, manual



updates provided by experts [19][20]. Model-based algorithms build replacement models of hyper-parameter spaces. Then, the hyper-parameter is set using this model. Most of these techniques use the Bayesian regression model that turns this problem into a trade-off between exploration, and exploitation. One model-based algorithm is using particle swarm optimization (PSO), an optimization technique by continuously calculating potential solutions using a quality reference. This algorithm optimizes

problems by moving particles/prospective solutions in the problem space using certain functions for the position and velocity of the particles. The movement of particles is affected by the best solution of the particle, and the best solution is generally obtained from other particles. The use of more than one hidden layer is usually accompanied by feature selection or feature extraction [41]. Summary and research criticism that calculates hidden layers and hidden neurons can be seen in table 3.

**Table 3. Research determines the number of hidden neurons**

No	Researcher	Function	Method	Critics
1	Karisma and Widyantoro (2016)[23]	Predictive	Rule of thumb	Difficult to apply to other cases
2	Koutsoukas et al. (2017)[6]	Predictive	Trial and error	Difficult to apply to other cases
3	Qolomany et al. (2017)[4]	Predictive	Particle Swarm Optimization	Need a long time. Architecture exists through a training process
4	Tej and Holban (2018)[42]	Classification	Clustering and Regression	Clustering is more related to variation and regression with correlation

### 3. CONCLUSION

Research that counts only the number of neurons is carried out assuming that the use of one hidden layer is able to approach almost all functions. Using more than one hidden layer will add to the burden of computer computing. But with the advancement of computer computing capabilities, the use of more than one hidden layer is worth considering. In addition, the majority of researches in this group do not consider the characteristics of the input feature, but only pay attention to the number of features or amount of data. By pre-processing processing input features, for example by looking at variations and correlations between or intra input features, it is hoped that better results will be obtained. Research that compares the use of one or two hidden layers, in addition to not paying attention to the characteristics of the data also does not compare the possibility of using more than two hidden layers. Research only focuses on performance comparisons between the use of one and two hidden layers. The research focuses on determining the number of hidden layers and the number of hidden neurons at once, the majority of research is conducted by trial and error or using rule of thumb for experienced researchers. The trial and error method can consume a lot of research resources with results that are not necessarily as expected. While using references from the results of experienced researchers also cannot be used as a handle, because basically the rule of thumb only applies to certain datasets or certain functions. So this group does not pay attention to the characteristics of the input feature to determine the network topology. The input feature character that can be considered is by calculating the correlation or variation between or input features. In future research the purpose of determining neural network topology is to minimize errors, should pay attention to the correlation and variance of features to achieve better performance. Besides minimizing errors, time complexity must also be considered due to the chosen neural network topology.

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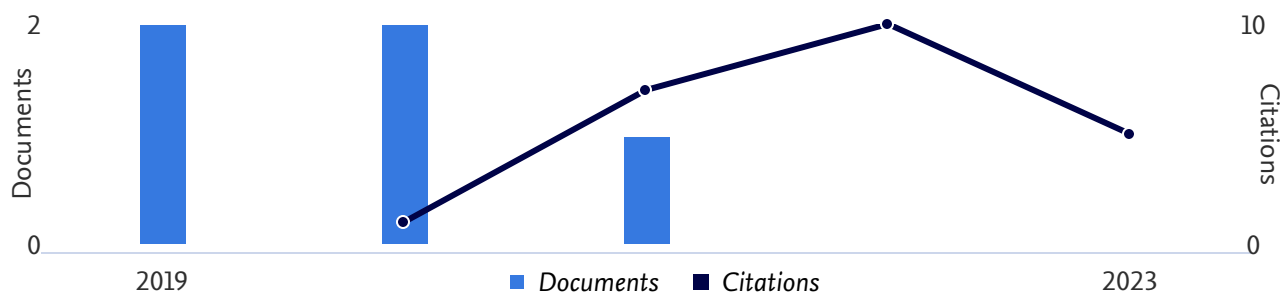
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# CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

**Paper Title: Determining the Neural Network Topology: A Review (C208)**

*This is to certify*

**Muh. Ibnu Choldun R., Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia**

has attended and delivered an oral presentation on 2019 8th International Conference on Software and Computer Applications (ICSCA2019) held during February 19-22, 2019 in Penang, Malaysia, co-organized by Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) and supported by Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP)



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