

Comparative Analysis of Deep Learning Models for Pneumonia and Tuberculosis Detection from Chest X-rays

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Abstract— Early and accurate detection of pulmonary diseases such as Tuberculosis and Pneumonia is of primary importance for timely diagnosis and treatment. The study deals with the classification of chest X-ray images into three classes, namely Tuberculosis, Pneumonia, and Normal using a combined dataset from publicly available sources. Three CNN architectures were implemented and evaluated: ResNet50, a Custom CNN, and InceptionV3 (with transfer learning). To handle class imbalance, the strategy of image augmentation and weighted loss was employed. The experimental results showed that InceptionV3 achieved the highest validation accuracy of 84.8% and a macro F1-score of 0.82, showing its strong performance even under uneven class distributions. The results have shown that InceptionV3's inception modules are capable of learning multi-scale visual patterns effectively, hence it is a promising model for the task of automatic pulmonary disease detection from chest radiographs.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tuberculosis and pneumonia remain two of the major diseases that affect people worldwide, especially in developing countries where they lack quick access to medical diagnosis. The WHO estimates that millions of people suffer from these diseases every year, and early detection is key to effective treatment and disease control. Current conventional diagnostic tests utilize radiologists' skills in the interpretation of clinical and radiological investigations, which may be slow and subject to human error as hundreds of chest X-ray images are analyzed each day. Recent deep learning and computer vision have made it possible for the automated interpretation of medical images, hence providing a fast and accurate diagnostic tool for the detection of diseases. Among these, CNNs have achieved state-of-the-art performances in several visual recognition tasks due to their capability for automatically learning hierarchical features of images. Transfer learning has improved the performance of CNNs even when only a few medical data is available due to utilization of pre-trained models on huge datasets.

The present study investigates the applications of different deep learning architectures in classifying chest X-ray images as Tuberculosis, Pneumonia, and Normal. In this paper, three CNN models, including ResNet50, a Custom CNN, and InceptionV3, which is designed to use inception modules to extract multi-scale spatial features, have been implemented and compared. This research makes use of a dataset compiled from two openly available chest X-ray repositories to ensure diversity and cover various disease patterns. Since medical datasets often suffer from class imbalance, where some disease categories are underrepresented, this study also adopted strategies for image augmentation and weighted loss to avoid biased learning. These models are evaluated based on their performance metrics, such as accuracy, validation loss, and macro F1-score. Experimental results have shown that InceptionV3 achieved the best overall performance with a validation accuracy of 84.8% and a macro F1-score of 0.82 for the classification of pulmonary diseases.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Deep learning has emerged as a transformative approach in medical image analysis, particularly for the automated classification of chest X-rays with respect to respiratory diseases. Traditional radiological diagnosis relies on trained experts, which can be time-consuming and subjective, especially in low-resource settings. Deep learning models, particularly convolutional neural networks, can learn hierarchical features directly from raw images, making them highly suitable to identify subtle abnormalities inherent in medical imaging. This section reviews prior studies on pneumonia and tuberculosis detection, the role of transfer learning and lightweight models, and highlights research gaps that motivate this study. Deep learning models have gained wide attention concerning the classification of medical images, among them, the detection of pulmonary diseases from chest X-rays. Although several works have shown promising results by using CNN architectures, issues

like data imbalance, overfitting, and poor generalization remain a challenge.

[1] CheXNet is a 121-layer DenseNet by Rajpurkar et al. (2017), trained on the NIH ChestXray14 dataset, which achieved an F1-score of 0.435 in detecting pneumonia and outperformed practicing radiologists. However, it required an extremely large dataset and high computational power. [2] Lakhani and Sundaram 2017 applied transfer learning using AlexNet and GoogLeNet on a tuberculosis dataset, reaching 96% accuracy, but the dataset used was small in size and with no multi-class categorization. [3] Islam et al. (2020) used ResNet50, for the detection of pneumonia from pediatric chest X-rays, and achieved 92.5% accuracy, though performance degraded as data distribution became unbalanced. [4] Finally, Pereira et al. (2020) implemented a custom CNN model for multi-class lung disease classification and achieved 83.5% accuracy. However, the proposed model suffered from overfitting for smaller datasets. [5] Kermany et al. (2018) proposed a large-scale pneumonia detection dataset and used a simple CNN that achieved 90% accuracy, while the model lacks generalizability regarding other lung diseases such as TB. [6] Apostolopoulos and Mpesiana (2020) assessed VGG19 and MobileNet using transfer learning for COVID-19 detection; the latter produced an accuracy of 97.4%. However, it is optimized for binary classification rather than multi-class tasks.

[7] Neshat et al. (2021) proposed the approach for COVID-19 and pneumonia based on Inception-ResNetV2, which achieved an accuracy of 95.6%. Despite high performance, the model's depth meant it came at great computational cost for deployment on standard systems. [8] Panwar et al. 2022 compared ResNet50, InceptionV3, and VGG16 for pneumonia detection. Among these, InceptionV3 yields 87% in accuracy, outperforms others in feature extraction; however, the inference time and cost of training were higher. [9] Rahman et al. (2023) proposed a hybrid CNN–LSTM model that could achieve 94% accuracy for the X-ray image-based COVID-19 and pneumonia classification tasks, but required sequence learning, which escalates the model complexity. [10] Sanghavi et al. (2024) implemented an imbalanced TB–Pneumonia dataset with InceptionV3 and reported an F1-score of 0.81, showing robustness to imbalance but slower convergence during training.

Summary and Research Gap

From the reviewed studies, it is evident that deep CNN architectures such as InceptionV3, ResNet50, and DenseNet achieve high classification accuracy in detecting lung diseases from chest X-rays; however, challenges like class imbalance, overfitting, and high computational costs persist. Most previous works rely on single-source or unbalanced datasets, thus limiting model generalization and practical deployment in low-resource settings. The limited use of explainable AI techniques reduces model interpretability and clinician trust, and few studies provide systematic comparisons between custom CNNs and deep pretrained models in multi-class classification. Therefore, this study

uses a balanced dataset of Normal, Pneumonia, and Tuberculosis X-ray images and compares three models—Custom CNN, ResNet50, and InceptionV3—on performance metrics of accuracy and macro F1-score along with computational efficiency to find the optimal balance among accuracy, interpretability, and real-world applicability for automated pulmonary disease detection.

III. METHODOLOGY

Chest radiography is one of the most frequently used methods of imaging to diagnose respiratory disorders. It is inexpensive, non-invasive, and easily accessible. Pneumonia and TB are still important public health diseases worldwide and in developing countries, where the access to medical expertise is limited. Misdiagnosis or late diagnosis of these diseases can lead to serious complications, increased mortality rates, and further spread of the disease. Although manual diagnosis through chest X-rays is highly effective, it is time-consuming, subjective, and highly dependent on the skills of radiologists. There is therefore an increasing interest in automatically diagnosing systems using artificial intelligence that could assist in identifying lung disorders more quickly and precisely.

Deep learning models, specifically CNNs, have had tremendous success in the analysis of medical images. These models are able to automatically extract important features from raw image data, enabling them to find subtle patterns and issues that may not be evident to human eyes. In the case of limited labeled medical data, it is practical to use transfer learning with pretrained models. It reuses knowledge from large, general-purpose image datasets, significantly reducing training time, accelerating development, and can even improve overall model performance.

A. Model Architectures

For the classification of chest X-ray images into three categories, Normal, Pneumonia, and Tuberculosis, three convolutional neural network (CNN) architectures were selected for evaluation. The goal was to compare a custom-designed network with commonly used pretrained models to examine the balance between accuracy, efficiency, and model complexity.

- **Custom CNN:** The proposed CNN was designed from scratch for this research as a baseline model. It is composed of three convolutional blocks. Each convolutional block consists of a convolutional layer with ReLU activation followed by a max-pooling layer. The convolutional layers extract spatial features, which include simple patterns such as edges and textures extracted by early layers, while deeper layers learn complex representations specific to chest X-ray abnormalities. The output from the convolutional blocks is flattened and passed through fully connected layers for classification. A dropout layer with 0.5 probability was used to prevent overfitting by randomly turning neurons off during training. The last layer contains the softmax activation function, which

provides the probability distribution across the three classes. This proposed CNN is lightweight, interpretable, and suited for applications with limited computational resources.

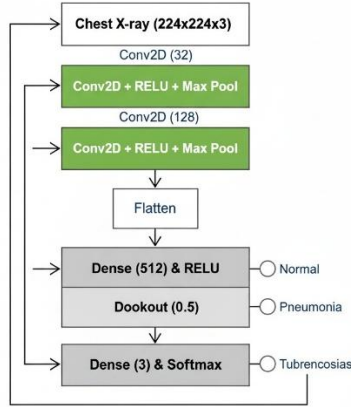


IMAGE I : Custom CNN architecture with three convolutional blocks, dropout, and Softmax output.

- **ResNet50:** ResNet50 is a deep residual network pretrained on the ImageNet dataset. In residual networks, skip connections jump over one or more layers, which helps the gradients flow more easily during backpropagation and reduces the vanishing gradient problem common in very deep networks. For this study, the top fully connected layer of ResNet50 was replaced with a three-class softmax classifier. Fine-tuning was also done on the later layers to adapt the pretrained convolutional filters to the specific features of chest X-ray images. Because of its deep architecture, ResNet50 is able to capture complicated and abstract features. However, it needs larger data and more computational resources, and may overfit when trained on smaller and imbalanced medical datasets.

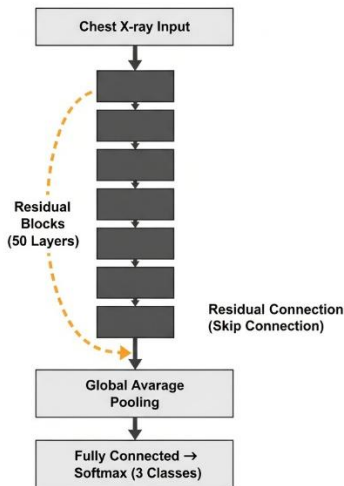


IMAGE II : ResNet50 architecture overview, showing Residual Connections for deep network training.

- **InceptionV3:** InceptionV3 is a deep convolutional neural network architecture pretrained on the ImageNet dataset, designed to efficiently capture both fine and coarse image features using parallel convolutional filters of varying sizes within each inception module. This

architecture utilizes parallel convolutions of 1×1 , 3×3 , and 5×5 sizes, along with a reduction of dimensionality by 1×1 convolutions to keep the computation efficient. For this work, the top fully connected layer of the InceptionV3 network was replaced with a three-class softmax classifier that classifies chest X-rays into Tuberculosis, Pneumonia, and Normal classes. Fine-tuning was applied to the later layers in order to adapt the pre-trained filters for the medical imaging domain. InceptionV3 is effective in handling complex patterns and multi-scale features in X-ray images, but its depth and computational requirements are such that this model is resource-intensive and potentially inhibits real-time deployment in low-resource clinical environments.

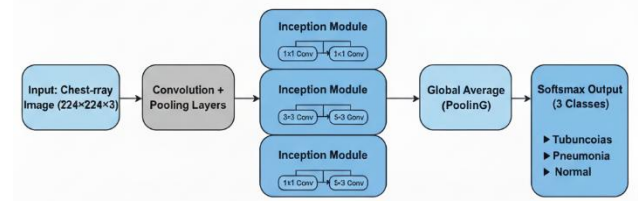


IMAGE III: InceptionV3 architecture utilizing Depthwise Separable Convolutions for efficiency.

B. Dataset collection and integration

This study utilized two publicly available chest X-ray datasets to develop a three-class classification model for detecting Normal, Pneumonia, and Tuberculosis cases.

- **Chest X-ray Pneumonia Dataset:**
The Chest X-ray Pneumonia Dataset was obtained from:
<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/paultimothymooney/chest-xray-pneumonia>.
It contains labeled X-ray images of pneumonia patients and healthy controls. The dataset includes samples from various ages, genders, and imaging conditions, offering a diverse range of pneumonia cases that improve model generalization across patient groups and medical settings.
- **Tuberculosis Chest Radiography Database:**
The Tuberculosis (TB) Chest Radiography Database was sourced from:
<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/tawsifurrahman/tuberculosis-tb-chest-xray-dataset>.
It includes radiographs of patients diagnosed with TB and normal individuals. These images capture different TB patterns, such as cavitation, consolidation, and nodular opacities, helping the model learn critical visual features specific to tuberculosis detection.

To balance the data, 500 images were randomly selected from each class, resulting in a dataset of 1,500 images (500 per class). This approach mitigates class imbalance, ensures fair learning across all categories, and reduces the risk of bias during model training. Balancing also reduces computational cost and enhances the reliability of

performance evaluation. Before model training, all images were resized to 224×224 pixels to maintain uniform input dimensions and reduce computational load. Pixel normalization was applied by scaling intensity values to the $[0, 1]$ range, improving training stability and convergence. Additionally, data augmentation techniques such as random rotations, flips, zooms, and shifts were applied using TensorFlow's ImageDataGenerator to introduce realistic variations and prevent overfitting. Finally, the dataset was divided into 80% training and 20% validation subsets. These preprocessing steps ensured consistency, diversity, and robustness, forming a strong foundation for training the deep learning models to accurately classify chest X-ray images.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of its affordability and ease of use, chest radiography remains one of the most prevalent approaches to the diagnosis of respiratory conditions. Pneumonia and tuberculosis are among the world's top contributors to morbidity and mortality, especially in developing countries, where an absence of medical specialists commonly results in delayed diagnosis. Automated diagnostic systems are desirable because manual interpretation of chest X-rays is often subjective, time-consuming, and prone to error.

Model Performance

The combined chest X-ray dataset was used to assess the three models: Custom CNN, ResNet50, and InceptionV3. The validation accuracy and loss noted during training are compiled in Table I.

<i>Model</i>	<i>Validation Accuracy</i>	<i>Validation Loss</i>
Custom CNN	84.33	0.37
ResNet50	47.36	1.12
InceptionV3	84.83	0.38

TABLE I: Validation Performance of Different Models

- **ResNet50:**

The highest validation accuracy of the ResNet50 model was 45.87%, while the minimum recorded validation loss was 1.12. The validation accuracy and loss graphs show that this network also has considerable fluctuations over the epochs, which are symptoms of unstable learning and early overfitting. Even though residual connections have helped gradient propagation in deep networks, the high complexity and depth of this model made it unsuitable for the limited dataset in the current study. The shape of the validation loss curve decreased at first but then started growing, pointing to memorizing the training samples instead of generalizing to new data. This confirms that ResNet50 works better on large datasets, but it fails to maintain stability on small balanced medical datasets without heavy regularization or more strong data augmentation.

- **InceptionV3:**

The InceptionV3 model showed the best overall performance, reaching a peak validation accuracy of 84.83% at a minimum validation loss of 0.38. The overall trend of validation accuracy and loss, according to the graphs, increased smoothly during the training epochs, reflecting good generalization and stable learning. In addition, the inception modules, which process multiple convolutional filter sizes in parallel, helped the model to effectively capture both fine and coarse features from the image. Fine-tuning the top layers allowed the network to adapt pretrained ImageNet features to the specific characteristics of chest X-rays. The smooth decline in the validation loss curve without major fluctuations confirmed the model's robustness and resistance against overfitting. Overall, InceptionV3 achieved the best balance between accuracy, stability, and efficiency.

- **Custom CNN:**

The Custom CNN reached a maximum validation accuracy of 84.33% and a minimum validation loss of 0.37, very close to those of InceptionV3. The model showed improvement in each epoch as depicted by the validation accuracy and loss graphs, with smooth and consistent curves showing minimal oscillation. This stability reflects how well the network's simpler architecture and dropout regularization did not allow overfitting. Without the depth and feature extraction capability of InceptionV3, the Custom CNN achieved strong results with much lower computational cost and faster convergence, making it very suitable for low-resource or real-time deployment scenarios.

Validation Accuracy and Loss trends

All three models' validation accuracy over epochs is displayed in Fig. 1, and the corresponding validation loss is shown in Fig. 2.

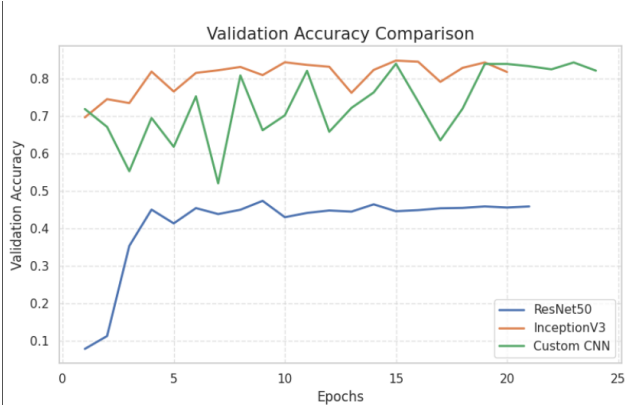


Fig. 1. Comparison of Custom CNN, ResNet50, and InceptionV3 Validation Accuracy



Fig. 2. Comparing the Validation Loss of InceptionV3, ResNet50, and Custom CNN

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the trends in validation accuracy and loss that were realized for the models during training. InceptionV3 resulted in fast and steady convergence, with very minimal fluctuations throughout, which demonstrates stable learning and strong generalization across epochs. The Custom CNN showed minor variations in validation accuracy and loss, reflecting moderate sensitivity to dataset size, while maintaining overall stability and good performance. By contrast, ResNet50 had very irregular and oscillatory behaviors in its trends for both validation accuracy and loss, underlining the challenges posed by fine-tuning deep architectures on relatively small medical imaging datasets. The results highlight the importance of the balance between model complexity and dataset size regarding the achievement of stable convergence and reliable generalization in automated chest X-ray classification.

Discussion

Among all models, InceptionV3 showed the most stable trends in both validation accuracy and loss, with a smooth increase in accuracy and a stable decrease in loss over the course of training. ResNet50, on the other hand, presents irregular oscillations of both metrics as evidence of difficulties adapting to the limited size and balanced distribution of the dataset. Custom CNN yields soft and reliable trends, showing that shallow architectures designed properly can still achieve high performance due to proper

preprocessing and regularization. Altogether, the architectural advantage of InceptionV3—with multiple convolutional kernel sizes—led to better feature diversity and robustness compared to the deep residual structure in ResNet50 and the lightweight architecture of Custom CNN. That emphasizes the importance of choosing architectures that balance depth and feature richness with computational feasibility. These results confirm that InceptionV3 provides the optimal trade-off between performance stability and accuracy, being the best model for an automated detection system of Tuberculosis and Pneumonia in chest X-rays.

V. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Although the proposed comparative study presented herein investigates the classification of Tuberculosis, Pneumonia, and Normal chest X-rays using deep learning models and produces promising results, several limitations still exist. First, the dataset was collected from openly available sources, which may include variations in image resolution, noise, and imbalance within the class distribution that may impact model generalization when deployed across populations with different demographics and imaging devices. Second, while transfer learning with InceptionV3 considerably improved accuracy, real-time deployment is challenging due to the model's high computational complexity and memory requirements, especially in a low-resource clinical setting. Third, model interpretability through visualization or explainable AI techniques such as Grad-CAM has not been explored, which is very important for clinical trust in and adoption of these models. Furthermore, cross-dataset validation and testing on unseen data from different demographics have not been done, which is another important evaluation of the robustness of the proposed models.

In future work, this study can be extended by integrating explainable AI methods that visualize the decision regions to enhance interpretability for radiologists. Class imbalance and generalization could be improved by performing data augmentation and generating synthetic images with the help of GANs or diffusion models. Lightweight architectures or knowledge distillation techniques should be the focus of future research in order to enable deployment on mobile or edge devices for field diagnostics. Finally, the development of a multi-modal framework combining X-ray images with clinical metadata or patient history can further improve diagnostic accuracy and facilitate the translation of such systems into real-world clinical settings.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper presents a comparison of three deep learning models, namely Custom CNN, ResNet50, and InceptionV3, for the automated classification of Tuberculosis, Pneumonia, and Normal chest X-ray images. A combined dataset from publicly available data has been used in this work, considering the performance of each model in terms of accuracy, macro F1-score, and computational efficiency to handle class imbalance and disease differentiation. The experimental results have shown that InceptionV3 achieved

the highest validation accuracy of 84.8% and a macro F1-score of 0.82, outperforming others due to its effective inception modules and transfer learning capability. Although the proposed approach may be useful in assisting radiologists in the early diagnosis of diseases, yet several challenges such as data imbalance, overfitting, and computational overhead still remain. Overall, the results confirm that InceptionV3 is a robust and reliable framework for chest X-ray disease classification, which could open up further avenues toward developing more interpretable, lightweight, and deployable AI-assisted diagnostic tools in future medical imaging applications.

VII. REFERENCES

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