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AI-Driven Predictive Maintenance for Identifying Failure-Prone Components in Industrial Equipment

*L.B.A. Nethmal, H.K.I.S. Lakmal, Udara S.P.R. Arachchige

Department of Mechatronic & Industrial Engineering, NSBM Green University, Homagama, Sri Lanka
*lbanethmal@students.nsbm.ac.lk

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Abstract: This research is focused on the integration of advanced machine learning methods with real- time vibration and acoustic signal data to develop a smart predictive maintenance (PdM) system that can detect failure-tendency components of industrial machinery before catastrophic failure. The prime objective is to reduce unplanned downtime, enhance operational efficiency, and enable cost-effective maintenance planning by pre-fault detection. The paper begins by analyzing how maintenance practice has transformed from traditional reactive and preventive approaches to modern condition-based and predictive maintenance systems. There is particular emphasis put on the shift towards data-driven approaches that leverage continuous sensor input for timely decision-making. With the capture of both vibration and acoustic patterns, the research emphasizes the relevance of multi-modal sensor fusion to enhance diagnostic performance. Vibration signals contain information about mechanical resonance and imbalance, while acoustic signals provide complementary indications for anomaly detection, especially under noisy or dynamic industrial conditions. The proposed paradigm uses AI models like machine learning and deep learning techniques to identify patterns in relation to future failures. It is scalable so that real-time deployment on embedded systems or edge systems can be done for the application of low-latency fault detection without appeals to cloud infrastructure. In addition, the study addresses some of the significant deficiencies present in the literature: limited use of combined acoustic-vibration data for PdM, unavailability of annotated datasets in real-world industrial settings, and lack of robust AI models deployable in resource- constrained scenarios. In addressing these deficiencies, this research provides a foundation for developing a robust, adaptive, and intelligent PdM system deployable across a wide range of manufacturing industries.

Index Terms: Acoustic Signal Analysis, Condition Monitoring, Deep Learning (DL), Machine Learning (ML), Predictive Maintenance (PdM), Short Term, Vibration Analysis.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of modern industrial operations, abrupt machine failures are a significant contributor to production losses, revenue losses, and rising maintenance costs. These unexpected failures are largely due to the limitations of traditional maintenance strategies such as reactive maintenance, which remedies faults only after their occurrence, and preventive maintenance, which adheres to fixed schedules regardless of equipment condition. [1], [2] in their research work showed that while those methods produce some degree of reliability, they are inefficient and not responsive to the dynamics of real-time operations.

Predictive Maintenance (PdM) surmounts these limitations through the application of real-time sensor data and artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms in forecasting impending machine failures before they happen. Through the identification of patterns from sensor signals, PdM systems allow for timely interventions, thus reducing unplanned downtime, prolonging equipment life, and optimizing resource planning [3], [4].

PdM relies on condition monitoring [5], in which sensor inputs such as vibration, temperature, pressure, and acoustic emissions are continuously assessed to ascertain the health of critical components.

Among these types of data, vibration signals have long been utilized for fault detection in rotating equipment such as motors, bearings, and fans. Using vibration analysis, imbalance, misalignment, and mechanical looseness faults are identified [6]. Recent research, however, indicates that acoustic signal analysis, particularly when passed through advanced ML processing, is able to complement vibration data by capturing high-frequency anomalies that cannot be detected using traditional methods. For example, [7], [8] demonstrated that acoustic signals can, under certain circumstances, be superior to vibration signals in fault detection, especially under varying industrial conditions.

Integration of vibration and acoustic information referred to as multi-sensor fusion—has been an interesting topic for its potential to improve prediction accuracy and reliability. Nevertheless, most existing systems utilize these modalities separately, missing synergistic diagnostic information. This work introduces an AI-based predictive framework integrating vibration and acoustic signal analysis for identifying failure-prone parts in industrial machinery [9] [10]. It emphasizes typical rotating equipment in plant operations like motors, fans, and bearings, where the early detection of faults can greatly enhance operation continuity and cost- effectiveness.

The proposed research builds upon existing research by incorporating recent advances in sensor technology, deep learning, and edge computing. The research also addresses main gaps in the literature, such as the lack of publicly available fused datasets, the complexity of real-time deployment, and the difficulty of training accurate models with limited labeled data [11], [12]. By filling these gaps, this research aims to offer an extendable, intelligent PdM solution to enhance the reliability of equipment in diverse industrial fields.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Predictive Maintenance and Condition Monitoring

Predictive Maintenance (PdM) relies on forecasting failure of machinery in advance utilizing real-time sensor data through advanced machine learning techniques. Condition monitoring is the foundation of PdM, which is the meticulous measurement and analysis of various sensor signals such as vibration, temperature, pressure, and acoustic emissions to track abnormal operating behavior. This allows the maintenance staff to shift from reactive to proactive practices, delivering on-schedule intervention prior to critical failure [13].

As pointed out by [14], modern PdM systems have significantly enhanced with the use of deep learning techniques. These models can learn high-level representations of sensor signals autonomously, thus enhancing pattern detection and failure prediction accuracy. Similarly, [15] points out that machine learning algorithms, [16] particularly if trained with large data, can generalize to different kinds of machines and environments and overcome most of the deficiencies in rule-based or physics-based methods [17], [18] The advances provide the foundation for more intelligent, automated, and scalable predictive maintenance solutions in many different industrial contexts [19] [20], [21].

2.2 Vibration-Based Fault Detection Techniques

Vibration analysis has been used all along as a gold standard technique for the detection of mechanical failures in rotating equipment such as motors, bearings, and fans. The principle is simple: to capture vibrations caused by moving parts and analyze them for wear, imbalance, misalignment, or mechanical looseness. All these failures have distinctive patterns in the vibration spectrum, and diagnosis is therefore done with signal processing techniques [22], [6], [23] Three broad categories are standard for the extraction of feature vibration signals: time domain, frequency domain, and time-frequency (e.g., wavelet-based) approaches. Statistical parameters such as root mean square (RMS), peak-to-peak, and crest factor are time-domain features. Frequency-domain methods employ Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) for the extraction of characteristic frequencies related to specific types of faults. Wavelet-based approaches are useful for the identification of transient events and local faults by decomposing the signal at multiple resolution levels [24], [25]

Machine learning algorithms have enhanced vibration diagnostics over the past few years. applied k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN) and Random Forest algorithms on industrial motor vibration datasets with encouraging performance in fault classification tasks. The models employ engineered features from sensor signals to detect patterns that are indicative of various fault conditions [26].

Nevertheless, aside from all its advantages, there are some limitations to vibration analysis. The most prominent among these are sensor and mounting condition sensitivity on signal quality. Furthermore, environmental noise and structure-borne resonances common in industrial settings might mask fault-related features, leading to false alarms or false dismissals. These necessitate effective preprocessing and, in some cases, complementary sensor modalities such as acoustic analysis to make the fault detection more reliable and the system more resilient [18], [27], [28].

2.3 Acoustic Signal Analysis in Industrial Machinery

Acoustic signals—picked up by piezoelectric sensors or non-contact microphones—are a promising modality for detecting incipient mechanical faults in industrial machines. The signals can exhibit abnormal sound patterns due to friction, resonance, knocking, grinding, or whining that may occur much earlier than physical failure [29] can be detected or diagnosed through vibration signals. Acoustic sensors provide flexibility and safety in deployment, particularly in inaccessible or harsh environments, when compared to vibration sensors physically mounted on the machine.

Research in [6], [7] has determined that in the majority of industrial applications, especially those subjected to varying operating loads or noisy ambient conditions—acoustic signals provide better fault detection than vibration-based [30] methods. This is due to the wider frequency bandwidth and sensitivity to weak anomalies detected by sound-based monitoring systems [31], [32].

The QU-DMBF dataset as a provided benchmarking standard provides real-world vibration and sound recordings in rotating machinery to enable comparative evaluation of diagnostic algorithms. Feature extraction within acoustic signals is typically performed by time-frequency transforms such as Short-Time Fourier Transform (STFT), spectrograms, and Mel-Frequency Cepstral Coefficients (MFCCs). These techniques are intended to distinguish the fault-related sound patterns from background noise [7],[7]. Deep learning models like CNNs have been trained directly on spectrogram images, whereas MFCCs are employed as input features for conventional ML models like SVM and Random Forests.

Although useful, acoustic analysis is not without challenges. Ambient noise, microphone directionality, distance, and reverberation are a few parameters that induce variability in the recordings. Sophisticated denoising, signal preprocessing, and robust feature learning are necessary, therefore, for effective use in industrial PdM systems in the field. However, the use of acoustic data is increasingly recognized as a valuable complement to vibration-based diagnostics, particularly in data fusion approaches [33], [34].

2.4 Machine Learning Applications in PDM

Machine learning techniques such as Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), Support Vector Machines (SVM), Decision Trees, and Random Forests have found extensive applications in predictive maintenance (PdM) operations because they can detect and classify patterns of various mechanical faults [3]. These traditional ML algorithms perform extremely well with formatted feature-rich data derived from vibration and acoustic signals. Their computational efficiency, comparatively lower complexity, and extensive availability within current toolkits make them desirable for most industrial applications.

More recently, deep learning algorithms like Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks have shown outstanding performance in processing raw sensor signals and doing time-series classification. CNNs find extensive usage due to their capacity to automatically extract spatial features from waveforms or spectrograms, whereas LSTMs are particularly good at learning temporal dependencies and are therefore particularly suited for analysis of sequential sensor data.

Although extremely accurate, deep learning models are generally difficult to deploy real-time due to their computational, memory, and training data demands. They tend to be the most heinous issues within edge devices or embedded systems where processing resources are scarce. This calls for the development or building of light model structures, pruning techniques, or quantization techniques to provide efficient inference without sacrificing diagnostic performance [35], [36].

Model explainability is also still a concern. While ML algorithms such as Decision Trees provide explainable decision logic, deep models tend to act as black boxes. Current trends in

PdM studies target the use of explainable AI (XAI) techniques that enable practitioners to comprehend model behavior, build trust, and make sense of the root causes of faults predicted by the model. Collectively, the synergistic integration of traditional ML and newer DL methods, supplemented by techniques for enhancing model transparency and performance, represents a promising path towards intelligent and scalable PdM systems.

Broader machine-learning advances relevant to PdM include benchmarking and ensemble methods, transfer learning and domain adaptation, health-index modeling, and unsupervised anomaly detection [7], [37] .

2.5 Sensor Fusion and Edge Deployment

Sensor fusion—signal integration from multiple sensing modalities such as vibration and acoustics—is regarded as a promising way to improve predictive maintenance (PdM) systems' accuracy, reliability, and fault classification capability [8]. The multimodal approach takes advantage of signal complementarity between each sensor type: vibration signals capture mechanical vibration [29] and resonance behavior, while acoustic signals capture susceptibility to fine-surface-level and airborne flaws that may escape detection by vibration sensors. When integrated, these data sets paint a richer, more detailed image of machine condition [38], [39].

While theoretical potential has been adequately demonstrated in research studies, real-world applications of sensor fusion in industrial environments are scarce. Sensor synchronization, increased data dimensionality, computational complexity, and noise variability are limits to its use on a large scale. Yet advances in data fusion algorithms, signal preprocessing, and feature extraction techniques are gradually filling those gaps [40], [41].

In parallel with sensor fusion, there is growing interest in deploying AI models at the edge— i.e., on or near the machine—rather than in faraway cloud infrastructure. This is particularly pertinent for latency-sensitive and bandwidth-limited applications [10]. Edge computing enables real-time decision-making with lower reliance on continuous network connectivity. New research by [42] and others examines light AI models such as quantized neural networks and spiking neural networks, which are specifically adapted for low-power edge devices. The models possess the best compromise between computational efficiency and prediction accuracy, making them suitable for embedded diagnosis in industrial PdM applications [43].

In the context of multimodal fusion and embedded deployment, impactful studies explore gearbox/pump fusion, sensor fusion, on-device inference and quantized/spiking architectures for real-time applications [17].

Sensor fusion and edge AI thus form a frontier of intelligent maintenance technologies that offer autonomous, scalable, and context-aware health monitoring of mission-critical equipment.

2.6 Data Challenges and Weak Supervision

A long-standing and well-documented issue in predictive maintenance (PdM) is the lack of labeled fault data, essential for supervised machine learning model training. It is impractical, costly, and time-consuming to acquire such labeled data in actual industrial settings because failures are infrequent phenomena and gathering real failure [29] instances may involve intentional machine destruction, which is not desirable. Additionally, normal operation sensor readings overwhelmingly out number faulty condition readings, resulting in highly imbalanced data sets.

In order to address the above challenge, various approaches have been suggested to reduce the dependency on vast amounts of annotated data. One of the approaches is weak supervision, where labels are generated based on heuristics, noisy sources, or expert rules and not by manual labeling. The approach is scalable and produces decent predictive performance while significantly reducing labeling effort.

Another method is transferring learning, in which a model that is trained in one domain or machine type is shifted to another but related target domain. This applies to what is known from highly labeled data in one environment to improve performance in data-scarce environments. Few-shot learning goes one step further and trains models to generalize from as little as a few labeled examples. These approaches are especially useful in PdM when fault classes may be rare, and it is not possible to obtain large failure [44] data for every machine type.

Self-supervised and semi-supervised learning methods have also been explored through research, which incorporate vast quantities of unlabeled data for pretraining and fine-tuning of the model with a very small subset of labeled samples. With these strategies coupled, researchers aim to build strong prediction models that are not only data-efficient but also transferable to many industrial settings.

The incorporation of such techniques in PdM platforms is a significant benchmark towards large-scale AI solutions in real-world settings of smart manufacturing.

Similarity-based classification, self- and semi-supervised pretraining, transfer between devices, and forecasting under data sparsity are included under label-efficient learning in PdM.

3 IDENTIFIED RESEARCH GAP AND NOVELTY

Based on an extensive review of existing literature, several existing research gaps have been identified in the area of AI-based predictive maintenance (PdM):

- Limited application of vibration and acoustic signals combined in real-time PdM systems: Most existing systems are grounded on vibration or sound signals individually, although mounting evidence suggests that their combination can significantly enhance fault detection performance. Multimodal fusion in real-time is not well researched, particularly under varying operating conditions.
- Lack of standardized datasets that combine sound and vibration: While a variety of public vibration datasets and some public sound datasets are available, datasets with synchronized recordings of both modalities are scarce. This hinders the training and testing of sensor fusion models for industrial applications.

- Lack of emphasis on deploying models in edge systems: The majority of ML and DL models designed for PdM are computationally intensive and lack optimization for running on power-constrained edge devices, which are necessary to enable real-time fault prediction in remote or bandwidth-constrained industrial settings.
- Over-dependence on supervised learning even when there is limited labeled data available: Most current PdM solutions rely on the fact that there is copious amounts of labeled data available, which is not the case in most industrial applications. Few works apply weak supervision, self-supervised learning, or domain adaptation to mitigate label scarcity.

This research aims to fill such gaps by designing and evaluating a lightweight, real-time predictive maintenance system that integrates vibration and acoustic signal data using machine learning. The code will be written with computational efficiency as the central theme so that the software is compatible with edge devices. Benchmarking will be done using publicly available data sets such as QU-DMBF and simulated environments as models of real-world industrial processes. By proposing multimodal fusion, investigating label-efficient learning techniques, and emphasizing real-time deployability, this paper aims to add an able, scalable PdM solution that can be used across various industries in smart manufacturing.

4 CONCLUSION

AI-driven predictive maintenance using vibration and sound signals presents a revolutionary shift in how industries ensure the health and reliability of their equipment. Traditional vibration analysis has been the basis for mechanical diagnostics for many years, offering direct access to internal dynamics like imbalance, misalignment, and bearing faults. But acoustic signal analysis also brings an additional sensitivity of its own, detecting high-frequency anomalies and surface irregularities that would be otherwise hidden. Together, these sensing modalities provide a more complete understanding of equipment behavior.

When fused by sensor fusion, vibration and acoustic signals yield complementary information, improving the precision of fault classification and enabling earlier detection of minor mechanical degradations. Such fusion is even more resilient when combined with machine learning algorithms that can automatically extract, learn, and interpret intricate patterns from high-dimensional sensor data.

Also, the development and deployment of light machine learning models become feasible to deploy such predictive systems in real-time on embedded or edge computing. Edge-compatible systems avoid the latency and bandwidth constraints of cloud-based systems for real-time fault response and near-zero system downtime. Interestingly enough, through data-efficient learning techniques such as weak supervision or transfer learning, these models can function accurately even with sparse-labeled datasets—circumventing the biggest issue of real-world industrial environments.

This study contributes to the literature by proposing a robust, scalable, and responsive AI- driven PdM system combining multi-sensor fusion with advanced ML techniques. With the ability to run in constrained environments and generalize across a broad class of machines, it represents a significant step towards intelligent, autonomous industrial maintenance.

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