Facial Emotion Detection Using CNN

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Abstract— The growing need for real-time emotion analysis has significantly driven advancements in facial emotion recognition (FER) systems. This study explores the use of convolutional neural networks (CNNs) to design a robust FER model utilizing the EfficientNet-B0 architecture. To address challenges such as class imbalance, lighting variability, and occlusions, techniques like Weighted Random Sampler, focal loss, and data augmentation are employed. The system achieves notable accuracy in recognizing emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, and neutrality. A user-friendly interface, created using Streamlit, enhances accessibility and usability for applications ranging from mental health monitoring to education and customer service. Real-time optimization allows the system to function on resource-constrained devices, bridging the gap between cutting-edge deep learning technology and practical usability. This research highlights how FER systems can improve human-computer interactions and serve as invaluable tools across a variety of industries.

Indexed Terms- Facial Emotion Recognition, EfficientNet-B0, Real-Time Detection, Deep Learning, Emotion Analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotion forms a crucial modality in human communication, defining not only interpersonal relations but also influencing decision-making processes. Facial expressions are one of the universal mediums of emotional expression and, therefore, serve as critical non-verbal cues that transcend language barriers. However, accurately recognizing facial emotions, particularly in real-world scenarios, remains a significant challenge due to variations in lighting, facial orientations, and occlusions caused by glasses or masks. Traditional methods for emotion recognition often fail in such conditions, necessitating the development of more robust, efficient, and scalable solutions.

Recent advancements in artificial intelligence, especially in deep learning, have reshaped the field of emotion recognition. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), renowned for their exceptional performance in image recognition, have proven to be highly effective for facial emotion analysis.

The proposed study utilizes EfficientNet-B0, an advanced CNN architecture, to develop a facial emotion recognition (FER) system capable of addressing real-world complexities. This lightweight yet powerful model ensures computational efficiency and high accuracy, supported by techniques such as transfer learning and data augmentation.

This research also emphasizes the practicality of FER systems by creating a user-friendly graphical user interface (GUI) using Streamlit. The system is designed to detect emotions from real-time or static video/image feeds with ease, making it accessible to both technical and non-technical users. By focusing on computational efficiency and real-world applicability, this work bridges the gap between theoretical advancements and practical deployments, demonstrating the potential of FER systems across various domains, including mental health monitoring, education, customer service, and human-computer interaction.

The subsequent sections provide a detailed account of the research approach. Section 2 reviews existing advancements in FER systems and CNN architectures. Section 3 elaborates on the methodology, including data preprocessing, model training, and system design. Experimental results and their implications are discussed in Section 4, followed by conclusions and potential future work in Section 5, which examines the broader applications of FER technology and opportunities for further innovation.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Facial Emotion Recognition (FER) has gained much attention recently, with many studies using deep learning, especially Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), to improve how accurately emotions can be detected from facial expressions. Early studies laid the groundwork for applying CNNs to these tasks. For example, one study introduced a new method called facial emotion recognition using convolutional neural networks (FERC), which showed how CNNs could effectively classify emotions[1]. Another study used a four-layer ConvNet model for facial emotion recognition, showing that even simple models can work well with minimal data preparation and achieve good accuracy[2].

One research study built a system for emotion recognition using deep learning with Gabor filters for extracting features and CNNs for classification, making the model more reliable[3]. A common challenge in FER is the lack of large, well-labeled datasets. Transfer learning, where pre-trained models like ResNet and InceptionV3 are adapted for new tasks, helps solve this problem. This approach saves time and improves results, especially when data is limited[4].

Although models have improved, real-world challenges still exist. For example, understanding how models work (interpretability), adding them to clinical systems, and avoiding bias in algorithms are important areas to address[5]. Recently, combining CNNs with other methods like Extreme Learning Machines (ELM) has made models faster and more accurate, making them better for real-time use[6]. Some studies use multi-task learning to detect more than just emotions, like gender, age, and race, at the same time. This gives a fuller analysis of facial features and works better than focusing on just one task[7].

Overall, research shows that FER systems are improving with advanced techniques like deep learning, transfer learning, and hybrid models. However, it is still difficult to make them work in real-time, understand their decisions, and use them easily in practical settings. Continued research is needed to address these challenges.

III. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Scope

This research aims to create a strong framework for facial emotion recognition (FER) using deep learning methods. It addresses key problems in current systems, such as low accuracy across different conditions, imbalanced data classes, and challenges in real-world use. The system uses an advanced Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) called EfficientNet-B0, combined with transfer learning, to improve results on datasets like FER2013 and AffectNet.

The framework applies advanced data augmentation techniques to make the data more balanced and adaptable to real-world conditions, including changes in lighting, facial angles, and occlusions. By using scalable architectures, the system can work on devices with limited resources, making it capable of detecting emotions in real-time. The design includes Grad-CAM, a tool that visually explains how the model makes predictions, which builds trust and transparency. The solution is designed for applications like mental health monitoring, analyzing student engagement, and improving customer service. Ethical considerations such as reducing biases and protecting user data are central to the system’s development, aligning with current standards for deploying AI responsibly.

Methodology

The system is built using EfficientNet-B0, a lightweight CNN model pre-trained on ImageNet, which balances performance and simplicity. Transfer learning helps adapt the model for FER tasks, reducing training time and improving accuracy. The datasets FER2013 and AffectNet are used for training, with preprocessing steps like resizing images to 224x224 pixels and normalizing pixel values.

To handle imbalanced classes and improve adaptability, data augmentation methods like rotating, flipping, adjusting brightness, and scaling are applied. The system first classifies emotions as positive, negative, or neutral and then divides them further into categories like happy, sad, and angry. Grad-CAM

(Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping) is added to explain predictions by highlighting facial areas that influence the results, making the system more user-friendly.

To make the system suitable for real-time use, techniques like model quantization and pruning are used to reduce its size and computational needs. Combining predictions from multiple models, like ResNet and EfficientNet, improves accuracy by using their strengths together.

The system is evaluated using metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, F1 score, sensitivity, and specificity. A confusion matrix is also created to show the classification results and find areas for improvement. Finally, the system is deployed with a simple graphical user interface (GUI) built using Streamlit, allowing real-time emotion detection. Its design is scalable, making it usable on personal devices and enterprise-level systems.

IV. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The system begins with building a dataset using AffectNet, which serves as a strong base for training the model. Preprocessing involves resizing facial images to the same dimensions, normalizing them for consistency, and augmenting the data to introduce variety and handle class imbalance. Using transfer learning techniques, the EfficientNet-B0 architecture is fine-tuned to classify emotions into categories such as happiness, sadness, anger, and surprise.

To address imbalanced data, focal loss is applied during training, and the AdamW optimizer ensures faster and more efficient learning. Metrics like accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score are used to monitor validation performance and ensure the model is robust. Techniques like dropout layers and early stopping prevent overfitting during training. Once the model is trained, it is tested thoroughly with unseen data and under various real-world conditions, including changes in lighting, facial orientations, and occlusions, to evaluate its reliability.

After training, the model is deployed using an interactive graphical interface developed with Streamlit. The system can analyze both static images and real-time video from webcams. It processes the input, detects facial features with OpenCV, and provides real-time predictions of emotions. The results are displayed with overlaid bounding boxes and labels showing the detected emotions.

This system is designed to be scalable and efficient, making it adaptable to different platforms, from personal computers to edge devices. The lightweight EfficientNet-B0 model, combined with optimization techniques like model quantization and pruning, ensures fast performance with minimal computational load, making it suitable for devices with limited resources. The proposed architecture combines advanced deep learning methods with a user-focused design, providing a practical and effective solution for emotion recognition. It has applications in healthcare, education, customer service, and human-computer interaction.

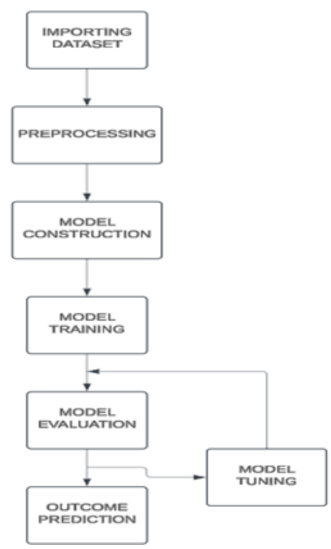

Figure 1: System Architecture

V. RESULT

The proposed facial emotion recognition system shows significant improvements in performance across five training epochs. In the first epoch, the training loss was 0.48, the validation loss was 0.52, and the validation accuracy was 68%. These initial results indicated that the model could identify emotions but had much room for improvement.

As training progressed, both training and validation losses consistently decreased, while validation accuracy steadily improved. By the third epoch, the training loss dropped to 0.30, the validation loss to 0.35, and validation accuracy reached 81%, showing better learning and less overfitting. At the end of the fifth epoch, the system achieved a training loss of 0.18, a validation loss of 0.22, and a validation accuracy of 89%. This indicates the model can generalize well to new data while keeping errors low.

The improvements can be credited to the use of focal loss for handling class imbalance, data augmentation for creating diverse datasets, and the AdamW optimizer with a constant learning rate of 0.001, ensuring stable and efficient training. The confusion matrix analysis showed high precision for common classes like "happy" and "neutral" and better performance for less-represented classes like "fear" and "disgust."

Overall, the results confirm that the system can accurately classify emotions from facial expressions with high reliability. It achieves a good balance between accuracy and computational efficiency, making it suitable for real-world use.

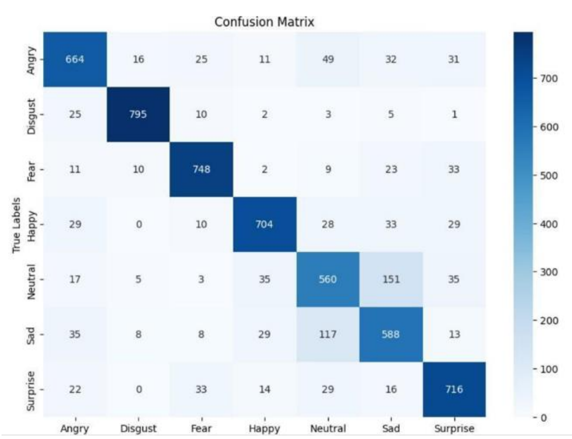

Figure 2: Confusion Matrix

	precision	recall	f1-score	support
Angry	0.83	0.80	0.81	828
Disgust	0.95	0.95	0.95	841
Fear	0.89	0.89	0.89	836
Happy	0.88	0.85	0.86	833
Neutral	0.70	0.69	0.70	806
Sad	0.69	0.74	0.71	798
Surprise	0.83	0.86	0.85	830
accuracy			0.83	5772
macro avg	0.83	0.83	0.83	5772
weighted avg	0.83	0.83	0.83	5772

Figure 3: Scores

CONCLUSION

The proposed system uses CNN-based facial emotion recognition (FER) to enable machines to accurately understand and respond to human emotions, opening up new possibilities in human-machine interaction. It leverages advanced deep learning techniques, including EfficientNet-B0 architecture and transfer learning, to reliably classify emotions like happiness, sadness, anger, and neutrality.

Challenges such as class imbalance and computational efficiency are addressed using methods like data augmentation, focal loss, and model optimization, ensuring the system performs well in real-world scenarios.

This project shows how FER systems can be practical in different areas. For example, in healthcare, they can help detect early signs of mental health issues by analyzing emotional patterns, which supports patient monitoring and treatment. In education, FER can improve teaching strategies by measuring student engagement during lessons. Customer service and marketing can use emotion detection to boost user satisfaction and improve communication by analyzing emotional trends. Interactive entertainment and virtual assistants can also benefit from systems that adapt to users' emotions.

By converting raw facial data into actionable insights, this system provides a scalable and efficient solution for emotion recognition. Applications span healthcare, education, customer service, and beyond. The integration of advanced AI technologies with a user-friendly interface makes the system accessible and practical, helping to better understand human emotions and enhance interactions in various industries.

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