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An Explainable Artificial Intelligence Framework for Smart Traffic Management and Emergency Response on National and State Highways

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Abstract.

Efficient traffic management and quick response actions to emergencies are crucial in order to provide safety on the roads and reduce congestion on national and state highways. Conventional traffic management methods tend to be rule-based, inflexible and unable to take decisions in real time. In this work, a novel traffic monitoring and emergency response solution by Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) is proposed, by combining three main components: vehicle detection, congestion prediction, and incident identification and emergency route optimization. The plan includes machine learning and deep learning models with explainability methods to ensure that traffic authorities and emergency responders can make decisions with transparency and interpretability. Data from traffic sensors, CCTV cameras, GPS tagged vehicles, and weather forecasts are used to detect traffic anomalies and to forecast traffic congestion.

Keywords: Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI), Smart Traffic Management, Emergency Response, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Traffic Prediction, National and State Highways

1. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization, growing number of vehicles and the expansion of road networks have led to high rates of traffic jams and road accidents. Although the highways play vital roles in economic development and transportation of people and goods, the major issues are highway congestion, delayed emergency response time, inefficient incident management, fuel consumption, pollution and economic losses. The traditional traffic control schemes primarily rely on rigid and manually enforced regulations, which are insufficient for traffic flow and crisis situations. Hence, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) must be able to monitor, predict and support decision-making to improve highway safety and efficiency in real-time [1], [2]. Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, deep learning and computer vision are important technologies in ITS. Using information from CCTV cameras, traffic

sensors, GPS, connected cars, and weather stations, these techniques can be used for vehicle detection, prediction of traffic flows, analysis of traffic congestion, accident detection, and prioritization of emergency vehicles. In transportation applications, however, safety is a critical concern and the decisions of many AI models are hard to interpret and validate, as they are considered black-box systems [3, 4]. This transparency can enhance trust, help validate decisions, and help transportation agencies, emergency responders, and policy makers make informed decisions [5,6]. Quick response is essential to minimize death, injury and property damage after highway accidents. Ambulances, fire services and police vehicles can suffer delays due to congestion, lack of situational awareness and inefficient route planning. The integration of AI and IoT can facilitate real-time traffic monitoring, congestion forecasting, and adaptive emergency traffic management. The incorporation of XAI may help clarify route choice and prioritize emergency situations, further enhancing the reliability of operations and stakeholders' confidence. Unified platform for the interwoven integration of traffic monitoring, congestion prediction, incident detection, emergency response management, and explainable decision support. The plan is to enhance traffic efficiency, decrease the emergency response time and enable clear, reliable and trusted transportation decisions [9] [10].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Explainable Artificial Intelligence in Transportation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly leveraging on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) for traffic prediction, congestion monitoring and accident detection. But many of the AI models are black boxes, and their decisions are hard for transportation authorities to comprehend. Explicable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) is addressing this limitation by explaining the predictions of the AI. Molnar [11] noted that explainability is key to trust, accountability and regulatory compliance. Lundberg and Lee [12] presented an explanation-based approach called SHAP (SHapley Additive exPlanations), which measures the contribution of individual features to model predictions. These methods make machine learning and deep learning models more interpretable in transportation, among other uses.

2.2 AI-Based Traffic Prediction and Management

Over the last few years, there have been a number of research efforts to improve the monitoring and prediction of traffic with the help of deep learning, computer vision, reinforcement learning and sensor-based technologies. For real-time traffic management and anomaly detection, studies on traffic classification and prediction using explainable AI have highlighted the need for accurate predictions and interpretability [13]. Haydari and Yılmaz [16] surveyed deep learning and reinforcement learning for ITS, and presented their applications in adaptive traffic signal control, route optimization and autonomous decision-making. Nellore and Hancke [18] emphasized the need for wireless sensor networks (WSN) and the Internet of Things (IoT) to support real-time traffic monitoring and analyzing traffic congestion.

2.3 Explainable AI for Emergency Response and Autonomous Transportation

When it comes to emergency transportation applications, there's often a tight deadline to meet and dependable, accurate decision-making is imperative, otherwise the consequences could be dire. During emergencies, XAI can offer explanations for predictions and recommendations, enabling that decision to be validated by XAI. Degas et al. [15] explored AI and XAI in AIR and illustrated how explainable decision-making in AIR can be crucial for operational safety and reliability. Likewise, Kuznietsov et al. [17] highlighted the importance of applying XAI in the field of autonomous driving, where AI decision-making directly impacts on human lives. Grad-CAM [14] is a new method that generates visual explanations by highlighting areas of an image that are important for CNN predictions. These methods aid in the clear identification of accidents and traffic monitoring.

2.4 Problems and Future Directions

The use of AI, IoT, and real-time transportation data has been the subject of numerous recent studies. A multi-agent machine learning approach to the identification of accidents and emergency coordination was proposed by Ayesha et al. [19] and showed encouraging results. Alnowaiser et al. [20] proposed a GNN-LSTM model along with SHAP explainability for smart city traffic accident severity prediction. These methods can predict accurately and make predictions understandable at an interpretive level, but most research is based on urban contexts or specific modes of transportation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The proposed research is an Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) Framework for Smart Traffic Management and Emergency Response on National and State Highways to enhance the traffic monitoring and traffic congestion prediction, incident detection and emergency vehicle routing.

3.1 Data Acquisition

The proposed architecture gathers heterogeneous traffic information from various sources such as CCTV cameras, traffic sensor networks, GPS-equipped vehicles, roadside IoT devices, weather forecasting stations, and databases from emergency service providers. Data collected comprises vehicle count, speed, traffic density, weather, location and time. The traffic data is encoded in the form of

$$D = \{x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots, x_n\} \quad (3.1)$$

The data set D consists of a traffic record x_i and the number of observations is n. They are each stored as:

$$x_i = (v, s, d, w, l, t) \quad (3.2)$$

v is number of vehicles, s is average speed, d is traffic density, w is weather, l is location, and t is the timestamp.

3.2 Data Preprocessing

Data is cleaned for missing data, duplicated data, noise and inconsistencies. If there are missing values they are replaced with the meaning:

$$x' = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m x_i \quad (3.3)$$

The numeric attributes are normalized with Min-Max normalization:

$$x_{norm} = \frac{x - x_{min}}{x_{max} - x_{min}} \quad (3.4)$$

This normalizes the values from 0 to 1 and enhances the training of the model.

3.3 Feature Engineering

The traffic data includes vehicle counts, lane occupancy, average speed, weather conditions, accident records, road type and congestion levels. Redundant and highly correlated features are eliminated to enhance the prediction efficiency. The feature set selected is displayed as:

$$F = \{f_1, f_2, f_3, \dots, f_k\} \quad (3.5)$$

where F is the selected features and k is the number of all features.

3.4 AI-Based Traffic Prediction Model

The processed data is fed into an AI model to predict congestion, detect abnormal traffic, and identify incidents. The forecast is given as:

$$\hat{Y} = f(X, \theta) \quad (3.6)$$

where x is the input features and θ is the model parameters. Congestion probability is calculated using:

$$P = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z}} \quad (3.7)$$

where $z = w^T X + b$. If $P > 0.5$, the traffic condition is classified as congested; otherwise, it is considered normal.

4. Results and Analysis

The proposed explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) framework was evaluated for the effectiveness for smart traffic management and emergency response on national and state highways. The performance measures used were the standard classification performance

measures (Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score) and operational performance measures (Congestion detection rate, emergency response time).

Table 2. Performance Comparison of Traffic Prediction Models

Model	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-Score (%)
Decision Tree	90.24	89.10	88.45	88.77
Random Forest	93.16	92.85	92.10	92.47
Support Vector Machine	94.08	93.71	93.28	93.49
XGBoost	95.64	95.20	94.86	95.03
Proposed Framework XAI	97.82	97.35	97.01	97.18

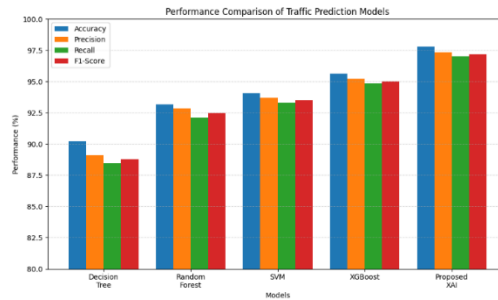


Figure 2: Performance Comparison of Traffic Prediction Models

The following tables and figure will compare the proposed Explainable AI framework with the other machine learning models for traffic prediction. The proposed framework was found to have the highest Accuracy (97.82%), Precision (97.35%), Recall (97.01%), and F1-Score (97.18%) which indicates that the framework has a good ability to detect traffic congestion and incidents.

Table 3. Operational Performance of the Proposed Smart Traffic Management Framework

Performance Metric	Conventional System	Proposed Framework XAI
Congestion Detection Rate (%)	89.42	97.21
Incident Detection Rate (%)	90.15	98.04
Average Emergency Response Time (min)	12.8	7.3
Route Optimization Accuracy (%)	91.56	98.18
Decision Transparency Score (%)	65.30	96.75

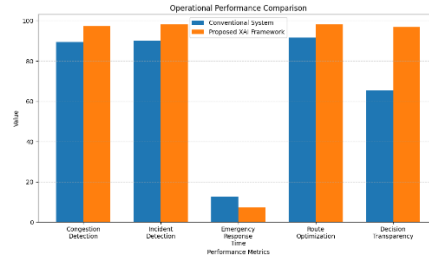


Figure 3: Operational Performance Comparison

The operational performance of the proposed framework is given in Table 3 and figure 3. The XAI-based system is able to greatly improve congestion mitigation, incident detection and reduce the average emergency response time from 12.8 minutes to 7.3 minutes, compared to the traditional traffic management system.

4. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to create Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) system to Smart Traffic Management & Emergency Response in National and State Highway. The framework aims to make real-time traffic monitoring, real-time congestion prediction using AI, real-time incident detection, providing explainable decision support for the traffic system, and real-time emergency route optimization, into a smart transport system.

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