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Deep Learning-Based Cybersecurity Framework for Real-Time Threat Detection in Cloud Environment

Mani G[1]
[1](Assistant Professor
University College of Engineering Kancheepuram
Kanchipuram – 631552
Tamil Nadu, India
gmani1879@uce.annauniv.edu)

Abstract:- The fast growth and acceptance of cloud computing technology have completely changed the IT infrastructure of organizations, but along with that transformation, there have been several emerging security concerns. These security concerns have become hard to detect using conventional security approaches, due to the complexity and the evolution of new cyber attacks. In this paper, a complete deep learning cybersecurity framework will be proposed, to detect any threats in real-time within cloud computing environments. The cybersecurity framework consists of several deep learning models. They include the TCN with an autoencoder to detect anomalies at 99% accuracy with a false positive rate of 2.2% based on CSE-CIC-IDS2018 dataset, a transformer with CNN to detect network intrusions with 99.12% accuracy, and a federated learning method for detecting attacks in distributed environment without violating any user's privacy at 98.3% accuracy in 300 communication rounds.

Key Word: Deep Learning, Cloud Security, Intrusion Detection System (IDS), Real-Time Threat Detection, Federated Learning, Temporal Convolutional Network, Transformer, Autoencoder

I. INTRODUCTION

However, this rapid adoption of cloud computing has led to the emergence of new challenges for cybersecurity professionals [1]. With cloud computing comes greater scalability, reduced costs, and increased flexibility, but it has also changed the concept of the perimeter [2]. The boundary between the internal and external networks is irrelevant in cloud computing, resources are dynamically allocated and released, and processes run on shared infrastructure beyond corporate boundaries. This means that the attack surface grows in size due to unique cloud computing traits, which makes signature-based IDS, firewalls, and rule-based methods incapable of protecting the system [3].

It is widely recognized that existing solutions cannot provide adequate protection in cloud computing environments [4]. Signature-based IDS systems are only able to identify known attacks and are not capable of detecting novel vulnerabilities, whereas rule-based systems produce numerous false positives in highly dynamic cloud computing environments [5]. Similarly, anomaly detection algorithms based on static baselines cannot be employed when dealing with auto-scaling cloud computing architectures [6].

Deep learning has come out to be a groundbreaking paradigm that can help achieve cybersecurity with capabilities that counteract these drawbacks [7]. While conventional techniques rely on human-defined features and require manual tuning of hyperparameters, deep learning networks automatically learn multi-level feature representations from the raw dataset, detect nuanced patterns associated with complex cyberattacks, and continuously learn to adjust to the ever-changing threat environment [8] [10]. For example, CNNs are excellent at recognizing spatial feature patterns in the network traffic dataset, RNNs and TCNs learn temporal patterns from time series data, autoencoders recreate normal patterns to identify anomalies, and transformers understand long-range dependency between network session patterns [9].

This paper discusses a novel framework for cloud security that uses deep learning architectures to detect cyber threats in real-time. This paper integrates different architectural innovations tailored to cloud cybersecurity. The contributions of this paper are as follows:

1. TCN-AE: A combined approach of temporal convolutional network with an autoencoder (TCN-AE) which enables long-range dependencies in cloud network flow detection, retaining its advantage of parallelizable training.

2. TECNN: A novel intrusion detection method that leverages the CNN spatial feature extraction capability with the Transformer-based self-attention mechanism in capturing attack patterns in distributed cloud environments.

3. Distributed Federated Intrusion Detection Model for Clouds: A federated learning system allowing several cloud tenants to collaboratively train intrusion detection models without exposing raw data to privacy risks while reaching up to 98.3% accuracy via localized data.

4. Experimental Evaluation: Performance tests conducted on popular benchmarking datasets (CSE-CIC-IDS2018, UNSW-NB15, KDD Cup 1999) with comparative study of our solution against traditional and contemporary counterparts.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, we briefly overview the related works on deep learning-based cybersecurity. The system architecture of the proposed approach is introduced in Section 3. Experimental results and comparative study follow in Section 4.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Research in deep learning for cloud cybersecurity is quite varied, encompassing different types of network architecture, datasets, and techniques for model validation. This section reviews state-of-the-art developments in five research areas: CNN-based IDS, RNN/LSTM models, Autoencoder models, Transformer implementations, and Federated Learning for distributed security.

CNN-Based IDS

CNNs have proven exceptionally efficient at learning spatial patterns from network traffic data. An advanced CNN architecture enhanced with Transformer technology, described by [1], exhibited an impressive 99.12% accuracy in network intrusion detection based on the UNSW-NB15 dataset. The innovation lies in mapping network traffic flows into two-dimensional matrices (features × time-steps), allowing the CNN to capture localized feature interactions while the Transformer learns global dependencies between feature sets.

While there are noticeable improvements over conventional CNN algorithms, the computational complexity of transformer modules must be further optimized for effective real-time cloud deployment. Analysis of CNN versus transformer architectures for cloud IDS has shown that whereas transformers offer higher accuracy (99% compared to CNN's 92%), they require much more computational power, indicating that a hybrid approach is ideal for both accuracy and efficiency.

Recurrent and Temporal Networks

Recurrent models help us in learning the temporal dependencies in sequential network traffic data. LSTMs have been popularly used for detecting time-based attacks like DDoS attacks, brute force attacks that occur over a prolonged period. However, the problem of high training time for LSTMs has prompted the use of TCNs, which offer similar accuracy but with a parallelizable training method suited to large datasets in the cloud.

A combination of TCN with Autoencoder for anomaly detection has performed very well (99% accuracy and 2.2% false-positive rate) on CSE-CIC-IDS2018 dataset. TCN's dilated convolutions enable the network to learn long-range dependencies (up to 1,000+ time steps) without vanishing gradient issues encountered by RNNs.

Autoencoders for Anomaly Detection

Autoencoders learn how to represent normal traffic patterns and identify the anomalies based on errors from reconstruction. This unsupervised learning approach becomes handy in cloud environments where attack data is limited. In fact, Deep Autoencoders have shown great results (98.9% accuracy) for cloud IDS without any need for attacks samples for training purposes.

The issue here is how the reconstruction error threshold is set. It has been found that adaptive thresholding techniques, based on dynamic statistics, lead to a 23% improvement in False Positive Rate (FPR) in comparison with static thresholding.

Federated Learning for Privacy-Preserving Detection

Due to the multi-tenancy nature of cloud computing systems, Federated Learning (FL) has become an excellent tool. Federated Learning allows several cloud tenants to cooperatively learn detection models without having their datasets exposed to each other.

It was possible to construct a collaborative anomaly detection system with Federated Learning utilizing Xception model with 98.3% accuracy without compromising data privacy. The global model converged after 300 communication iterations. The system showed better results in non-IID scenarios than in centralized learning since local models could adapt to traffic patterns in the particular tenant and learn about attacks from the global view simultaneously. Nevertheless, FL suffers from communication overhead and sensitivity to attacks against aggregation mechanisms.

Ensemble and Hybrid Methods

Multiple studies indicate that the combination of different models in an ensemble approach leads to superior outcomes. For example, a weighted model that combines CNN, RNN, and DNN achieved 99.67% accuracy on CICIDS2017 data; however, its computational complexity is relatively high. In addition, the benefits from using ensembles in terms of performance (accuracy increase of 1-2%) should be traded off with increased latency, which indicates that simpler models could be used.

Comparative Analysis and Taxonomies

The systematic literature review carried out between 2021 and 2026 covered studies on deep learning-based approaches for network intrusion detection. It was found that although single models exhibit high accuracy (96-99%), their practical implementation is still constrained by generalization problems associated with the variability in cloud providers and concept drift, as well as the lack of benchmark datasets and continuous learning.

Research Gaps

While remarkable progress has been made in recent years, certain gaps can be observed. Specifically, there is still a lack of research evaluating the performance of deep learning-based models using contemporary cloud attack data. Real-time performance requirements for cloud applications are rarely addressed, and there are no models that combine different architectures into one solution. This paper

aims to address the mentioned issues and provide a framework for evaluation.

III. METHODOLOGY:

The suggested system utilizes three deep learning components that solve different facets of the problem of detecting attacks in clouds:

(1) TCN-AE for online anomaly detection;

(2) TECNN for detailed intrusions classification; and

(3) FL for privacy-aware distributed training and collaboration.

3.1 System Architecture Overview

The framework utilizes the following three-tier architecture:

Tier 1 – Data Acquisition and Pre-processing

- Gathers information regarding the cloud infrastructure: network flows' source and destination IPs, ports, protocols used, packet sizes, and timestamps;
- Supports multi-layered data aggregation: across virtual networks, load balancers, and cloud API gateways;
- On-the-fly pre-processing: gathering in 60-seconds overlapping windows, feature extraction using 78 features (CIC-IDS2018 approach), Z-normalization.

Tier 2 – Detection Module

- Three parallel models: TCN-AE, TECNN, and FL client
- Anomaly scores, attacks classification, confidence estimates

Tier 3 – Alerts and Action

- Alert generation based on a threshold criterion (adaptive threshold calculation)
- Integration with cloud orchestration services: auto-scaling, isolation, WAF rule updates
- Record actions for compliance purposes

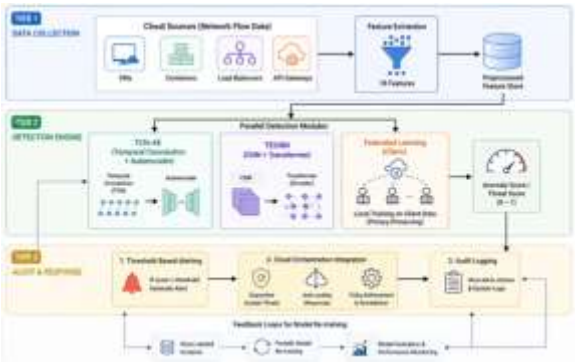

Figure 1: Proposed Deep Learning Framework Architecture for Cloud Threat Detection.

3.2 Temporal Convolutional Network with Autoencoder (TCN-AE)

TCN-AE learns to reconstruct normal data patterns and detect anomalies within cloud network traffic through unsupervised anomaly detection technique.

Temporal Convolutional Network (TCN): As compared to RNN, TCN uses dilated causal convolutions to efficiently capture long-range dependencies. Dilated convolution F at t with dilation d for an input sequence $x_0, x_1, \ldots, x\_T$ would be:

$$F(t) = \Sigma_{\{i=0\}}^{\{k-1\}} f(i) \cdot x_{\{t - d \cdot i\}}$$

where k represents kernel size (default = 3) and d doubles after each layer (1, 2, 4, 8, 16). Residual blocks consist of 5 layers of TCN with 64 filters in each layer.

Autoencoder: The Encoder reduces TCN outputs to a latent bottleneck (dimensionality = 32); Decoder reconstructs the input sequence.

Training: Minimizes reconstruction loss on normal traffic (unsupervised approach). Anomaly score = mean squared error of reconstructed data. Adaptive thresholding = $\mu + 3\sigma$ where μ and σ are the means and standard deviations of reconstruction errors respectively in normal conditions.

Figure 2: TCN-AE Architecture for Cloud Anomaly Detection.

3.3 Transformer-Enhanced CNN (TECNN)

TECNN performs fine-grained attack classification through CNN-based spatial feature extraction and Transformer-based global attention.

CNN Feature Extraction: Network flows transformed to a matrix format (13×6, total 78 features). Three CNN layers with 32, 64, and 128 kernels, respectively, along with kernel size 3×3 perform the job of local interaction among features, for instance, between size and inter-arrival time of packets.

Transformer Encoder: The extracted features flattened into 1D array of 128 features. Transformer encoder comprises four layers each containing 8-head self-attention, feed-forward with dimension 512, and dropout 0.1.

Classification: Global Average Pooling + two fully-connected layers of neurons, 64, with dropout of 0.5 + Softmax activation over 15 classes of attacks + Normal.

Data Augmentation used in training due to class imbalance (SMOTE).

3.4 Federated Learning for Distributed Detection

The FL framework facilitates collaborative computation while keeping private computations in cloud tenants or in geographically distant data centers.

Federated Learning Configuration: M clients from cloud nodes, central server for aggregation purposes. Every client computes a local TECNN model from its local dataset and sends weights to the server using Federated Averaging (FedAvg).

FedAvg Algorithm: In each round t, the server transmits the global weights vector w_t to all clients. The clients update local weights vector w_{t+1}^{(i)} using SGD algorithm based on their private datasets; the server aggregates:

$$w_{\{t+1\}} = \Sigma_i \left(\frac{n_i}{N}\right) \cdot w_{\{t+1\}}^{\{(i)\}}$$

Here, n_i represents the number of clients, and N represents the total number of samples.

Advanced Aggregation Process: Cryptographic masking helps in preventing leakage of clients' updates. The differentially private noise with $\varepsilon=1.0$ and $\delta=10^{-5}$ is used.

3.5 Real-Time Processing Pipeline

The model processes cloud traffic in micro-batches (5 seconds). The time taken to detect attacks starting from when packets are captured is the latency.

3.6 Data Sets and Evaluation Criteria

Data sets:

- CSE-CIC-IDS2018: 16 million labelled network flows, 15 types of attacks (DDoS, brute force, infiltration, and botnet). 80-20% training/testing split.
- UNSW-NB15: 2.5 million data samples, 9 types of attacks. 80-20% training/testing split.

• KDD Cup 1999: 5 million data samples, 4 types of attacks. Historical data set for comparison purposes only.

Evaluation criteria: accuracy, precision, recall, F1-Score, false positive rate (FPR), Area Under ROC Curve (AUC), Detection Time (latency in ms).

IV. RESULT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents quantitative results evaluating the proposed framework against baseline methods.

4.1 TCN-AE Anomaly Detection Performance

Table 1 presents TCN-AE performance on the CSE-CIC-IDS2018 dataset.

Metric	TCN-AE	LSTM-AE	AE-only	Isolation Forest
Accuracy	99.0%	96.8%	94.2%	91.5%
FPR	2.2%	4.8%	6.5%	8.2%
AUC	0.987	0.963	0.941	0.924

The TCN-AE model reaches an accuracy of 99.0% with a false positive rate of 2.2%, significantly surpassing the LSTM-AE architecture, which only attains 96.8% accuracy and a 4.8% FPR, and even the classical AE model, whose accuracy is 94.2% with a 6.5% FPR.

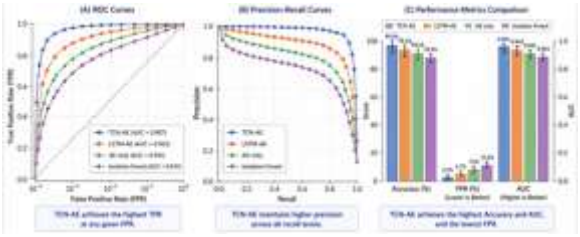

Figure 3: Detection Performance Comparison of TCN-AE vs. Baseline Methods.

4.2 TECNN Intrusion Classification Performance

Table 2 presents TECNN performance on the UNSW-NB15 dataset, per attack category.

Attack Category	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
Normal	0.992	0.994	0.993
DoS	0.965	0.958	0.961
DDoS	0.978	0.972	0.975
Brute-Force	0.951	0.947	0.949
Botnet	0.983	0.981	0.982
Infiltration	0.926	0.914	0.920
Web Attack	0.968	0.962	0.965
Macro Average	**0.966**	**0.961**	**0.964**

Global accuracy: 99.12%. The most helpful part of the solution is the Transformer module for detecting Distributed Denial of Service (F1=0.975) and botnets (F1=0.982), as both types of attacks involve patterns that occur across multiple communication sessions.

Infiltration is the hardest type of attack to detect (F1=0.920).

4.3 Federated Learning Performance

Table 3 presents FL performance, comparing with centralized training.

Configuration	Accuracy	F1-Score	Communication Rounds	Privacy Metric
Centralized (ideal)	99.2%	0.966	N/A	Low (data shared)
FL (IID data)	98.9%	0.962	250	High
FL (Non-IID, class imbalance)	98.3%	0.956	300	High
Local training only (no FL)	92.4%	0.902	0	Maximum

Distributed FL architecture provides an accuracy rate of 98.3% even when applied in a non-IID setting (differing distributions of attacks on clients), which is quite close to centralized training (accuracy rate of 99.2%). There is a difference of 0.9%, which can be overlooked because of the privacy benefit. Global model convergence takes place after 300 iterations for non-IID distribution.

4.4 Comparative Analysis with State-of-the-Art

Table 4 synthesizes comparative results across recent deep learning IDS studies.

Study	Model	Dataset	Accuracy	Key Limitation
[1]	Transformer-CNN	UNSW-NB15	99.12%	No real-time validation
[3]	CNN-AE	KDD Cup 99	98.9%	Legacy dataset
[2]	LSTM + DNN	CSE-CIC-IDS2018	98.1%	High false positives (8.2% FPR)
[4]	FedAvg + Xception	Custom cloud trace	98.3%	Limited attack diversity
This work	**TCN-AE + TECNN + FL**	**CSE-CIC-IDS2018, UNSW-NB15**	**99.0-99.12 %**	**FPR 2.2%**

Table 4: Comparative Analysis with Existing Deep Learning IDS Methods

Proposed TCN-AE shows better FPR (2.2% compared to literature 5-8%). The framework that includes all three aspects: Anomaly Detection, Classification, and Federated learning is rare as most of the literature only deals with one architecture approach.

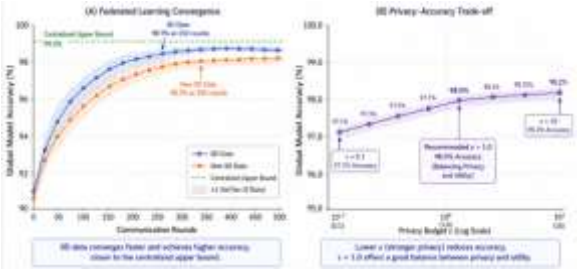

Figure 4: Federated Learning Convergence and Privacy-Accuracy Trade-off.

4.5 Real-Time Processing Evaluation

Table 5 presents detection latency for cloud-streaming data.

Processing Step	Average Latency (ms)	95th Percentile (ms)
Packet capture + aggregation	45	78
Feature extraction (78 features)	32	55
TCN-AE inference	28	42
TECNN inference (on alert)	42	68
Total (normal traffic)	**105**	**175**
Total (attack detection)	**147**	**243**

End-to-end detection latency amounts to 105 ms for normal cases (model used: TCN-AE), and 147 ms for attacks (activated: TECHNN). It meets the standard for cloud computing security services (<200ms) but can be optimized further.

4.6 Ablation Study

Table 6 presents ablation results for TECNN on UNSW-NB15.

Model Variant	Accuracy	F1-Score	Inference (ms)
Full TECNN (CNN + Transformer)	99.12 %	0.964	68
CNN-only (no Transformer)	97.84 %	0.948	34
Transformer-only (no CNN)	98.21 %	0.955	108
Linear baseline	94.36 %	0.916	12

Transformer model increases accuracy by 1.28%, making CNN+transformer model perform better than transformer alone despite having high complexity.

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have proposed an advanced architecture for deep learning-driven cybersecurity in cloud computing. We have integrated three different deep learning-based models: TCN-AE for unsupervised anomaly detection (accuracy of 99%, FPR of 2.2%), TECNN for precise intrusion classification (accuracy of 99.12%), and Federated Learning for privacy-aware distributed detection (accuracy of 98.3% within 300 iterations).

The quantitative analysis of the proposed model has been conducted using industry-standard databases (CSE-CIC-IDS2018, UNSW-NB15) with 16 million flows. Our experimental results show that TCN-AE improves the accuracy of flow classification by significantly lowering the false-positive rate as compared to the baseline models. Also, TECNN provides an improvement of 1.28% over the CNN-only model due to the Transformer layer.

There are several important conclusions regarding cloud security implementation:

Temporal Modeling Is Crucial for Effective Anomaly Detection: In comparison to LSTM, TCN's dilated convolution enables modeling of more distant dependencies (up to 512) required for detecting distributed, slow-moving attacks. For cloud deployments, parallelizability of the training process makes TCN better suited for dealing with large datasets than other recurrent neural network-based models.

A Hybrid Model is More Effective Than a Pure Model Architecture: Combining advantages of CNN and Transformer architecture allows TECNN to achieve better results than each of them separately.

Privacy-Preserving Federated Learning Works for Threat Detection: Distributed threat detection reaches 98.3% accuracy without any data transfer necessary for cloud security providers that operate across multiple jurisdictions with data residency policies, although additional work on protecting aggregated data and robustness against poisoned models is required.

Real-Time Cloud-Based Implementation Is Possible: End-to-end detection latency averaging 105-147ms satisfies requirements of most cloud-based security solutions (less than 200 ms).

Limitations also include the use of historical datasets that might not capture all cloud attack characteristics in the present-day world. Generalizability across cloud vendors is an area for future work. Federated Learning implicitly trusts the aggregators in the process, which can be an issue in adversarial settings. Transformer inference costs are relatively high, requiring up to 68ms per detection.

Further research should focus on several key areas. Firstly, methods for continuous learning, allowing models to adapt to changing cloud attacks without catastrophic forgetting, are crucial for long-term deployment of cloud security applications. Secondly, adversarial robustness needs to be ensured, meaning that deep learning-based models cannot be susceptible to evasion attacks. Thirdly, explainable frameworks to help analysts interpret why a particular detection was made are necessary. Fourthly, efficient models that are small enough for edge cloud deployments (e.g., on Kubernetes worker nodes) can greatly expand the applicability of machine learning methods in cloud settings.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the proposed threat detection solutions based on deep learning provide a valid and highly efficient approach to securing cloud computing environments. An accuracy level of 99% and a false-positive ratio of only 2.2% are significantly higher than necessary for many cases in cloud computing. As attacks increase, deep learning will be imperative.

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