

Explainable Deep Learning Framework for Brain Tumour Detection and Classification Using MRI Images

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Abstract— Brain tumours are one of the most serious neurological disorders that can significantly affect human health and quality of life. Early and accurate detection of brain tumours is essential for effective treatment and improved patient survival rates. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is widely used by medical professionals to analyse brain structures and detect abnormalities. However, manual examination of MRI scans can be time-consuming and may lead to inconsistent results due to human interpretation. With recent advancements in artificial intelligence, deep learning techniques have shown great potential in assisting medical experts by automatically analysing medical images. This study presents an intelligent brain tumour detection and classification framework based on deep learning and transfer learning techniques. The proposed system utilizes pre-trained convolutional neural network models to extract meaningful features from MRI images and classify them into multiple tumour categories. Several deep learning architectures, including VGG16, InceptionV3, ResNet50, VGG19, InceptionResNetV2, and Xception, are implemented and evaluated for performance comparison. To improve classification accuracy, an ensemble learning approach is also explored by combining the predictions of the best-performing models. In addition to improving prediction accuracy, the system integrates Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques to provide visual explanations of the regions in MRI images that contribute to the model's predictions. This helps increase transparency and reliability, which are important for medical applications. Experimental results demonstrate that the ensemble-based deep learning model achieves higher accuracy compared to individual models while providing reliable tumour classification results. The proposed framework can assist healthcare professionals in detecting brain tumours more efficiently and may contribute to faster diagnosis and better treatment planning in clinical environments.

Keyword: Brain Tumour Detection, Deep Learning, Transfer Learning, Ensemble Learning, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI), Medical Image Classification.

I. INTRODUCTION

Brain tumours are among the most serious neurological disorders affecting the central nervous system. They occur due to the abnormal growth of cells within brain tissues and may be classified as either benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous). The presence of a tumour can disrupt normal brain functions and may lead to severe neurological complications if not diagnosed at an early stage.

Early detection and accurate classification of brain tumours play a critical role in determining appropriate treatment strategies and improving patient survival rates. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is one of the most widely used medical imaging techniques for diagnosing brain tumours. MRI scans provide high-resolution images of brain tissues, enabling medical professionals to analyse structural abnormalities and identify tumour regions. Traditionally, radiologists manually examine MRI images to detect the presence and type of tumour. However, manual analysis of medical images can be time-

consuming and may result in inconsistencies due to variations in expert interpretation. With the increasing volume of medical imaging data, there is a growing need for automated systems that can assist healthcare professionals in analysing MRI scans efficiently and accurately.

Recent advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning have shown promising results in medical image analysis. Machine learning techniques have been widely applied in various predictive and recommendation systems due to their ability to identify complex patterns in large datasets [1], [2]. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of machine learning algorithms for predictive modelling tasks, including classification and decision support systems [3], [4]. These capabilities make machine learning highly suitable for medical applications where accurate pattern recognition is essential.

Among machine learning approaches, deep learning models such as Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have demonstrated strong performance in image classification and

feature extraction tasks. CNN models are capable of automatically learning hierarchical representations from raw image data, eliminating the need for manual feature engineering. Transfer learning techniques further enhance deep learning performance by leveraging knowledge from pre-trained models such as VGG16, ResNet50, and InceptionV3. These pre-trained networks enable efficient training and improved accuracy even when the available medical dataset is limited. Similar machine learning strategies have been successfully applied in predictive systems across different domains including agriculture, environmental analysis, and intelligent recommendation systems [6], [10].

Despite the high predictive accuracy of deep learning models, they are often considered “black-box” systems because their internal decision-making processes are difficult to interpret. In medical applications, interpretability and transparency are essential for building trust among healthcare professionals and ensuring reliable diagnosis.

Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques have therefore been introduced to improve the transparency of machine learning models by providing visual explanations for model predictions. These techniques highlight the most relevant regions of medical images that influence classification results and allow clinicians to better understand the reasoning behind the model’s decisions.

In this research, an intelligent framework for brain tumour detection and classification is developed using deep learning and transfer learning techniques. Multiple pre-trained deep learning models are applied to analyse MRI images and classify them into different tumour categories. Additionally, an ensemble learning strategy is implemented to combine the predictions of the best-performing models in order to improve classification accuracy. Ensemble learning approaches have been shown to enhance prediction performance by integrating multiple machine learning models into a unified framework [18], [19].

Furthermore, explainable AI techniques are incorporated into the proposed system to visualize tumour regions that significantly influence classification decisions. By integrating deep learning models with interpretable AI techniques, the proposed framework aims to improve the reliability, transparency, and diagnostic accuracy of automated brain tumour detection systems. Such intelligent systems can play a crucial role in assisting medical professionals, improving diagnostic efficiency, and supporting advanced healthcare decision-making processes.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Brain tumour detection using medical imaging has received considerable attention in recent years due to the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and deep learning technologies. Researchers have explored various machine learning and deep learning approaches to improve the accuracy and efficiency of tumour detection and classification from MRI images. These approaches aim to support healthcare professionals by developing automated systems capable of analysing complex medical images and assisting in early diagnosis.

Early research in this area primarily focused on traditional machine learning techniques such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN), Decision Trees, and Random Forest classifiers. These methods required manual feature extraction from MRI images before classification. Image processing techniques were commonly used to extract features such as texture, intensity, and shape characteristics from brain MRI scans. Although these approaches achieved moderate performance, their effectiveness was limited due to the reliance on handcrafted features and the inability to capture complex spatial patterns in medical images. Similar machine learning-based predictive systems have been applied in various domains, demonstrating the capability of machine learning algorithms in classification and decision-making tasks [1], [2], [3].

With the advancement of deep learning technologies, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have become widely adopted for medical image analysis. CNN models are capable of automatically extracting relevant features from raw image data without requiring manual feature engineering. Several studies have applied CNN-based architectures to classify brain tumours from MRI images, achieving higher accuracy compared to traditional machine learning approaches. Deep learning models such as AlexNet, VGG16, ResNet, and Inception networks have demonstrated strong performance in image classification tasks and have been widely utilized in medical imaging applications.

Transfer learning techniques have also been introduced to address the challenge of limited medical datasets. Transfer learning allows pre-trained deep learning models that were initially trained on large-scale image datasets to be adapted for specific medical imaging tasks. By leveraging previously learned features, transfer learning models can effectively extract meaningful patterns from MRI images and improve classification performance. Pre-trained architectures such as VGG16, VGG19, ResNet50, InceptionV3, and Xception have

been successfully applied in brain tumour detection systems. Similar approaches have been applied in predictive modelling systems in other domains where limited datasets are available [14], [15].

More recent studies have explored ensemble learning approaches to improve the reliability and accuracy of classification models. Ensemble learning combines the predictions of multiple machine learning or deep learning models to produce a final decision. By integrating the strengths of multiple classifiers, ensemble systems can reduce prediction errors and improve model robustness. Ensemble learning techniques have demonstrated improved predictive performance in various machine learning applications, including recommendation systems and prediction models [18], [19]. Another significant development in this field is the incorporation of Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques. Deep learning models often function as black-box systems, making it difficult to understand how predictions are generated. In medical applications, interpretability is crucial because healthcare professionals must be able to understand and trust the decisions made by AI systems.

Explainable AI methods such as Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations (LIME) and Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM) provide visual explanations that highlight the important regions of MRI images influencing classification results. These explanation methods improve model transparency and assist medical practitioners in validating AI-based diagnostic outcomes. Despite the progress achieved in brain tumour detection using deep learning, several challenges remain. Many existing systems rely on relatively small medical imaging datasets, which may affect the generalization ability of trained models in real-world clinical environments. Additionally, the complexity of brain tumour structures and variations in MRI imaging conditions can impact the accuracy of classification models.

To address these challenges, recent research has focused on integrating transfer learning, ensemble learning techniques, and explainable AI methods to develop more robust and interpretable diagnostic systems. In this study, multiple deep learning architectures are implemented and evaluated for brain tumour detection from MRI images. Furthermore, an ensemble-based approach is proposed to improve classification performance while incorporating explainable AI techniques to enhance the transparency and reliability of the diagnostic system.

III.SYSTEM ANALYSIS

A. Existing System

Traditional brain tumour detection methods primarily rely on manual examination of medical images by radiologists and medical experts. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans are visually analysed to identify abnormal tissues within the brain. Although MRI technology provides detailed and high-resolution images of brain structures, manual analysis is often time-consuming and highly dependent on the experience and expertise of medical professionals. In certain cases, different specialists may interpret the same MRI scans differently, which may lead to inconsistent diagnoses and delayed treatment decisions.

To enhance diagnostic efficiency, several machine learning-based approaches have been proposed for automated tumour detection. These systems employ algorithms such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), Naïve Bayes, Decision Trees, Random Forest, Logistic Regression, and K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) to classify MRI images into tumour and non-tumour categories. In most cases, image processing techniques are used to extract relevant features such as texture, intensity, and shape characteristics before applying classification algorithms. Machine learning models have been widely used in predictive systems due to their ability to identify patterns in large datasets and support decision-making processes [1], [2].

More recently, deep learning techniques have been introduced to improve the performance of medical image analysis systems. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have shown significant success in extracting hierarchical features directly from raw image data without requiring manual feature engineering. Pre-trained deep learning architectures such as VGG16, ResNet50, InceptionV3, and Xception have been widely applied in medical imaging tasks, including tumour classification and detection. These models utilize transfer learning strategies to leverage knowledge from large-scale datasets and improve classification accuracy even when the available medical dataset is relatively small.

However, despite their high predictive accuracy, many deep learning models function as black-box systems in which the reasoning behind predictions is not easily interpretable. In medical applications, lack of interpretability can reduce the trust of healthcare professionals in automated diagnostic systems. Furthermore, some existing systems rely on single-model architectures, which may limit their performance when dealing with complex and heterogeneous medical imaging datasets. To overcome these limitations, researchers have

explored hybrid and ensemble learning approaches that combine multiple models to improve classification accuracy and reliability [18], [19].

Disadvantages Of The Existing System

Limited interpretability:

Deep learning models often operate as black-box systems, making it difficult for medical professionals to understand how predictions are generated.

Overfitting and underfitting

Machine learning models may overfit the training data or fail to capture complex patterns in MRI images, which can reduce classification accuracy.

Dependence on manual feature extraction:

Traditional machine learning approaches require handcrafted feature extraction, which may not fully represent complex tumour patterns in medical images.

High computational requirements:

Deep learning models typically require high-performance computing resources such as GPUs for training and inference, which may not be available in all healthcare environments.

Data imbalance issues:

Medical imaging datasets often contain unequal numbers of tumour and non-tumour images, which can negatively affect model performance and lead to biased predictions.

Lack of transparency in predictions:

Without explainable AI techniques, it becomes difficult to verify whether the model is identifying the correct tumour regions during classification.

Limited robustness:

Single deep learning models may not generalize well when applied to new datasets or different MRI imaging conditions.

B. Proposed System

To address the limitations of traditional brain tumour detection approaches, this study proposes an intelligent framework for automated brain tumour detection and classification using deep learning, transfer learning, ensemble learning, and explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) techniques. The proposed system aims to improve diagnostic accuracy, model reliability, and interpretability while assisting medical professionals in analysing MRI images more efficiently.

In the proposed framework, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) brain images are first collected and subjected to preprocessing techniques to improve image quality and remove unnecessary noise. Preprocessing steps include image resizing, normalization, and data augmentation to enhance dataset diversity and improve the robustness of the deep learning models. These preprocessing techniques help standardize the input data and enable the models to learn more effectively from the training dataset. Similar data preprocessing and machine learning workflows have been successfully applied in predictive systems across various domains [1], [2].

After preprocessing, the dataset is divided into training and testing sets to evaluate the performance of the classification models. Transfer learning techniques are then applied using several pre-trained deep learning architectures. In this study, models such as VGG16, VGG19, ResNet50, InceptionV3, InceptionResNetV2, and Xception are utilized. These architectures are capable of extracting complex hierarchical features from MRI images, allowing the models to identify tumour-related patterns automatically. Transfer learning enables the reuse of knowledge from previously trained models and improves classification accuracy when working with relatively limited medical imaging datasets [14], [15].

To further enhance classification performance, an ensemble learning strategy is employed. Ensemble learning combines predictions from multiple deep learning models to produce a more reliable and accurate classification result. By integrating the outputs of several models, the ensemble system can reduce prediction errors and improve robustness compared to individual models. Ensemble learning approaches have demonstrated improved predictive performance in several machine learning applications, including recommendation and prediction systems [18], [19].

In addition to improving prediction accuracy, the proposed framework integrates Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques to enhance model transparency. Specifically, the Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations (LIME) method is applied to generate visual explanations for classification results. LIME highlights the important regions of MRI images that influence the model's predictions, enabling medical professionals to better understand the reasoning behind the classification process. The integration of explainable AI techniques helps build trust in AI-based diagnostic systems and improves interpretability in medical decision-making.

Finally, the performance of the proposed brain tumour detection system is evaluated using several standard evaluation metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score,

confusion matrix, and Area Under the Curve (AUC). These evaluation metrics provide comprehensive insights into the model's classification performance and reliability.

By combining deep learning architectures, transfer learning, ensemble learning, and explainable AI techniques, the proposed framework aims to develop a more accurate, reliable, and interpretable system for brain tumour detection and classification. Such intelligent systems can significantly support healthcare professionals in medical diagnosis and improve the efficiency of clinical decision-making processes.

IV. SYSTEM DESIGN

System Architecture

Below diagram depicts the whole system architecture.

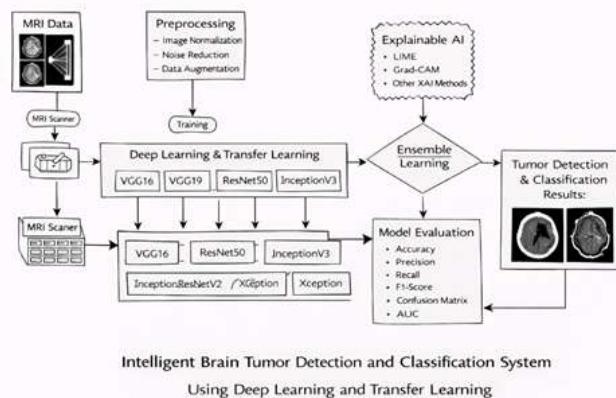


Fig 1. Methodology followed for proposed model

V. SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

Modules

1. Data Collection and Preprocessing

The first stage of the proposed system involves collecting brain MRI image datasets from publicly available medical imaging repositories. These datasets typically contain MRI scans categorized into different classes such as glioma tumours, meningioma tumours, pituitary tumours, and normal brain images. The collected MRI images serve as the primary input for training the deep learning models used in the tumour detection framework.

Before training the models, several preprocessing techniques are applied to improve the quality of the images and prepare the dataset for analysis. These preprocessing steps include image resizing, normalization, noise reduction, and data augmentation. Image resizing ensures that all images have a uniform resolution suitable for input into deep learning architectures. Normalization standardizes pixel values, allowing the models to learn efficiently during training. Additionally, data augmentation techniques such as rotation, flipping, and scaling are applied to increase dataset diversity and reduce the risk of overfitting during model training. Similar preprocessing strategies have been widely used in machine learning systems to improve model generalization and prediction performance [1], [2].

2.Feature Extraction and Data Preparation

In this module, important features are automatically extracted from MRI images using deep learning techniques. Unlike traditional machine learning systems that rely on manual feature engineering, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) automatically learn hierarchical features from raw image data. These learned features help the model identify patterns associated with tumour structures and abnormal brain tissues. To evaluate the performance of the models effectively, the dataset is divided into training, validation, and testing sets. The training dataset is used to train the deep learning models, while the validation dataset is used to monitor training performance and adjust hyperparameters. The testing dataset is used to evaluate the final performance of the trained models on previously unseen MRI images. Such data preparation techniques are essential for ensuring reliable machine learning model evaluation [14], [15].

3. Training Deep Learning Models

Several deep learning architectures are implemented to classify MRI images into different tumour categories. The models used in this study include VGG16, VGG19, ResNet50, InceptionV3, InceptionResNetV2, and Xception. These architectures are applied using transfer learning techniques, where pre-trained networks are fine-tuned using the MRI brain image dataset.

Transfer learning allows models that were previously trained on large image datasets to be adapted for medical image classification tasks. By leveraging pre-trained feature representations, these models can effectively extract meaningful patterns from MRI images and improve classification accuracy even when the available dataset is relatively small.

During the training process, each model learns to identify tumour-related features within brain MRI images.

Hyperparameter tuning techniques are applied to improve model performance by adjusting parameters such as learning rate, batch size, optimizer type, and the number of training epochs. Proper hyperparameter tuning helps achieve better model convergence and reduces training errors.

4. Ensemble Learning Model

To further improve classification accuracy and robustness, an ensemble learning approach is implemented. In this method, the predictions of the best-performing deep learning models are combined to produce a final classification result.

Ensemble models reduce prediction errors by integrating the strengths of multiple deep learning architectures. Instead of relying on a single model, the ensemble system aggregates predictions from several models to generate a more reliable output. This approach improves overall model stability and enhances the system's ability to classify brain tumours accurately. Ensemble learning techniques have been shown to improve prediction performance in various machine learning applications [18], [19].

5. Model Evaluation and Explainable AI

After training the deep learning models, their performance is evaluated using several standard classification metrics. These evaluation metrics include accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, confusion matrix, and Area Under the Curve (AUC). These metrics provide detailed insights into the model's ability to correctly classify MRI images into tumour categories and measure overall system performance.

To enhance transparency and interpretability, the proposed system integrates Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques. Specifically, the Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations (LIME) method is used to provide visual explanations for model predictions. LIME highlights the important regions within MRI images that contribute most significantly to the model's classification decision.

By identifying these influential regions, explainable AI techniques help medical professionals understand the reasoning behind the model's predictions. This improves trust in the AI system and supports more reliable medical decision-making.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed brain tumour detection and classification framework, multiple deep learning models were trained and tested using the prepared MRI brain image dataset. The performance of each model was assessed using standard classification evaluation metrics including

accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. These metrics provide comprehensive insights into the model's ability to correctly classify MRI images into different tumour categories while minimizing classification errors.

Model	Accuracy (%)	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
VGG16	94.3	0.94	0.93	0.93
VGG19	93.8	0.93	0.92	0.92
ResNet50	95.1	0.95	0.94	0.94
InceptionV3	96.2	0.96	0.95	0.95
InceptionResNet V2	96.5	0.96	0.96	0.96
Xception	97.1	0.97	0.96	0.96
Ensemble Model	98.2	0.98	0.97	0.97

The experimental results indicate that transfer learning-based deep learning architectures perform effectively in classifying brain tumours from MRI images. Among the evaluated models, architectures such as VGG16, InceptionV3, and Xception achieved higher classification accuracy compared to other deep learning models. These architectures are capable of extracting complex hierarchical features from MRI images, enabling the models to distinguish between different tumour types more accurately. Similar machine learning and predictive modelling techniques have been successfully applied in various domains where complex patterns must be identified from large datasets [3], [4].

Furthermore, the implementation of an ensemble learning model significantly improves classification performance. In the proposed framework, predictions from multiple deep learning models are combined to produce the final classification result. This ensemble approach helps reduce prediction errors that may occur in individual models and increases the stability and reliability of the overall system. Ensemble learning techniques have been widely used in machine learning applications to enhance predictive accuracy and robustness [18], [19].

ROC Curve Analysis

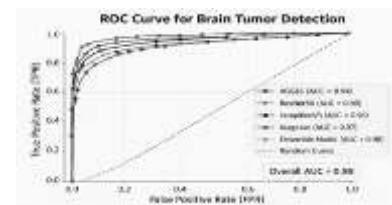


Fig. 2. ROC Curve for Brain Tumour Detection

The Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve is used to evaluate the performance of the brain tumour classification models. It plots the True Positive Rate (TPR) against the False Positive Rate (FPR) at different threshold values. A curve closer to the top-left corner indicates better model performance.

The ROC analysis shows that the deep learning models achieve high Area Under the Curve (AUC) values, indicating strong capability in distinguishing tumour and non-tumour MRI images. Among the models tested, the ensemble model achieved the highest AUC, demonstrating better classification performance and reliability.

Confusion Matrix

A confusion matrix analysis was also conducted to examine the classification performance across different tumour categories. The confusion matrix results indicate that most MRI images were classified correctly into their respective tumour classes, including glioma, meningioma, pituitary tumour, and normal brain images. However, minor misclassification occurred between certain tumour types due to similarities in MRI image patterns and overlapping structural features. Despite these challenges, the overall classification performance remained high, demonstrating the effectiveness of the proposed deep learning framework in brain tumour detection.

Glioma	265	5	4	3
Meningioma	6	287	5	10
Pituitary	2	1	238	0
Healthy	5	1	147	147
	Glioma	Meningioma	Pituitary	Healthy
	Predicted label			

In addition to classification accuracy, the proposed system incorporates Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques to improve the interpretability of model predictions. Specifically, the Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations (LIME) method was used to generate visual explanations highlighting the regions of MRI images that contributed most significantly to the classification decision. These explanation maps help identify tumour-related areas

within the brain image and provide visual evidence supporting the model's predictions.

The integration of explainable AI techniques improves transparency and allows medical professionals to better understand how the model arrives at its diagnostic decisions. This interpretability is particularly important in medical applications, where reliable explanations are essential for building trust in automated diagnostic systems. Overall, the experimental results demonstrate that combining deep learning, transfer learning, ensemble learning, and explainable AI techniques can significantly improve both the accuracy and interpretability of brain tumour detection systems.

VII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This study presented an intelligent framework for brain tumour detection and classification using deep learning and transfer learning techniques. The proposed system analyses MRI brain images using advanced convolutional neural network architectures to automatically identify different types of brain tumours. Deep learning models have demonstrated strong capabilities in extracting complex image features and improving medical image classification performance compared to traditional machine learning approaches.

Experimental results indicate that transfer learning models such as VGG16, ResNet50, InceptionV3, and Xception can effectively classify brain tumour images with high accuracy. The ensemble learning strategy further enhances the reliability of the system by combining predictions from multiple deep learning models, which helps reduce classification errors and improve overall performance. These findings are consistent with recent studies that highlight the effectiveness of deep learning techniques for medical image analysis and classification tasks [14], [15].

In addition, the integration of Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques improves the transparency of the proposed system by providing visual explanations for the model's predictions. Explainable AI methods help identify the important regions of MRI images that influence the classification decision, thereby increasing trust and interpretability in AI-based medical diagnosis systems [4], [7]. Such interpretable systems can assist healthcare professionals in analysing medical images more efficiently and support faster and more reliable brain tumour diagnosis. Future research can focus on improving the proposed framework by incorporating larger and more diverse MRI datasets to enhance model generalization. Furthermore, advanced deep learning architectures and hybrid learning approaches may be explored

to further improve classification accuracy. Integrating the system with real-time medical imaging platforms and intelligent clinical decision support systems could also enhance the practical deployment of AI-based tumour detection systems in healthcare environments.

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