

Effective Ball Bearing Fault Diagnosis Leveraging ANN and Statistical Feature Integration

Ahmed Ali Farhan Ogaili¹, Zainab T. Al-Sharify^{2,3}, Alaa Abdulhady Jaber¹, Duaa Ali Farhan⁵ and Salah Mahmood Al-Khafaji⁶

¹Mechanical Engineering Department, College of Engineering, Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad 10052, Iraq

²Pharmacy Department, Al Hikma University College, Baghdad, Iraq

³Chemical Engineering, Birmingham University, UK

⁴Mechanical Engineering Department, University of Technology- Iraq, Baghdad, Iraq

⁵Engineering Department, University of Baghdad, Iraq

⁶Engineering Department, Ministry of Finance, Baghdad, Iraq

Abstract

High effectiveness of the fault diagnosis of ball bearings is one of the factors determining the failures of rotary machinery. This paper presents a new diagnostic approach combined with Artificial Neural Network (ANN) and statistical feature extraction techniques. Given raw vibration signals from bearings, we extract a large number of statistical features: mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. These features were later used to train Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP) Artificial Neural Network. Performance of ANN based model was very well with an accuracy of 0.897196. The precision and recall for the model were 0.901809 and 0.897196 respectively, turning out the F1 score as 0.892785. Feature Importance analysis showed that standard deviation, skewness, mean, and maximum were important ones which led to the model's success. Compared to the conventional diagnosis method, the ANN-based model had a better accuracy, hence proving that the application of artificial intelligence could actually take the fault diagnosis of rotary machines a step ahead effectively.

Keywords

Ball bearing, ANN, Statistical features, Vibration signals

1. Introduction

Ball bearings are the most essential parts of many machines, from small-scale motors to heavy industrial machinery [1]; their continuous performance is crucial for the maximum operational output and human safety of these systems [2]. However, as a mechanical element, ball bearings suffer from various types of failures, among which spalls, cracks, and surface deformations are the most common ones. These problems inevitably cause substantial downtime and maintenance costs unless such damages can be identified in their early stages. For the longevity and reliability of the machinery, developed techniques in the diagnostics of faults in ball bearings are imperative. The conventional approaches employed for detecting the faults in ball bearings include vibration analysis, acoustic emission analysis, and thermal or other kinds of imaging [2, 3, 4, 5]. Analysis of vibrations is very

popular since there is a direct correlation between the mechanical condition of a bearing and its vibrations. Such methods of processing vibration signals as Fast Fourier Transform and Wavelet Transform are widely used to determine characteristics of faults [6, 7, 8]. Although these methods have shown efficiency, they often need expert knowledge and can be sensitive to noise and environmental conditions. In recent years, artificial neural networks have emerged as a powerful tool for fault diagnosis, allowing them to model nonlinear relationships and handle large datasets [9, 10, 11]. Artificial neural network models can, as an imitation of human brain learning, identify the subtle pattern of normal operations from the dynamic data [12, 13, 14, 15] or implement a Transformer Neural Network [16, 17, 18, 19] or domain transformed approaches [20?]. Given the diagnostic purpose, ANNs can be trained with historical data such that they recognize the patterns of fault information for the ball bearing and predict future failures [21, 22].

2. Literature Review

The study on ball bearing fault diagnosis has experienced more important in development during the last decade because of higher demands for reliability and efficiency of rotating machinery [23]. Conventional techniques primarily involve vibration analysis, acoustic emission

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✉ ahmed_ogaili@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq (A. A. F. Ogaili);

z.t.alsharify@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq (Z. T. Al-Sharify);

Alaa.a.jaber@uotechnology.edu.iq (A. A. Jaber);

duaa.a.277@coeng.uobaghdad.edu.iq (D. A. Farhan);

me.20.12@grad.uotechnology.edu.iq (S. M. Al-Khafaji)

🆔 0000-0001-5623-295X (A. A. F. Ogaili); 0000-0002-3870-3815

(Z. T. Al-Sharify); 0000-0001-5709-195X (A. A. Jaber);

0000-0002-7824-2371 (S. M. Al-Khafaji)

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analysis, and thermal imaging [24]. The more widely accepted approaches were categorized as vibration analysis that facilitates a direct view of the mechanical state of bearings. Traditional fault diagnosis techniques have all along been based on signal processing and feature extraction methods. A major part of these involves vibration analysis as it is nondestructive and the most sensitive method to mechanical faults. Bearing failures have, thus, typically depended on the frequency domain analysis more specifically through Fourier Transform techniques in analyzing the spectral properties of such failures [25, 26]. Traditional fault diagnosis techniques have all along been based on signal processing and feature extraction methods. These traditional techniques form the foundation on which new approaches are being developed. Lei et al. [27] have critically reviewed such methodologies in their machine fault diagnosis roadmap and have highlighted that classical methodologies often fall into three main categories: time-domain analysis, frequency-domain analysis, and time-frequency analysis. Methods based on time-domain usually derive statistical characteristics like root mean square (RMS), kurtosis, and crest factor from vibration signals. Frequency-domain techniques, such as the FFT, are used to identify characteristically faulted frequencies. Time-frequency analysis techniques, such as Short-Time Fourier Transform and Wavelet Transform, have been utilized to cope with nonstationary signals characteristic of bearing faults [28, 29, 30]. However, although these classical techniques worked successfully in many cases, the typical selection and interpretation of features would require expert knowledge. Thus this limitation has given recent advances a step toward more advanced techniques, especially in artificial intelligence [31, 32].

The advent of machine learning has revolutionized the field of bearing fault diagnosis. Liu et al. (2018) provide a comprehensive review of artificial intelligence techniques applied to fault diagnosis of rotating machinery [27]. They discuss various machine learning algorithms, including Support Vector Machines (SVM), Random Forests, and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), highlighting their ability to automatically learn features from data [33, 34, 35]. Zhao et al. [36] in the study focus on demonstrated the effectiveness of machine learning in noisy environments and under varying working loads. Another research methodology has focused on developing hybrid and advanced approaches to leverage the strengths of multiple techniques like Lutifi et. al [37] explored the potential of deep neural networks in fault characteristic mining and intelligent diagnosis of rotating machinery with massive data. They highlighted the ability of deep learning models to extract hierarchical features from raw data [38, 39]. Zhang et al. [40] provided a comprehensive review study about the application of utilized DNN algorithms for bearing fault

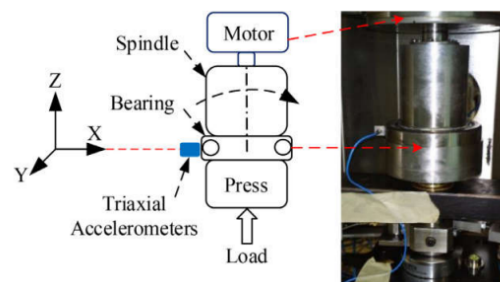


Figure 1: rig used for the experimental setup [41]

diagnostics. They discussed various deep learning models, including autoencoders, deep belief networks, and generative adversarial networks, and their applications in fault diagnosis. While significant progress has been made in ball bearing fault diagnosis using machine learning and deep learning techniques, there remains a need for methods that can effectively combine the strengths of traditional statistical features with advanced neural network architectures.

This study aims to address this gap by integrating a comprehensive set of statistical features with an optimized Artificial Neural Network to enhance fault diagnosis accuracy and robustness across various operating conditions.

3. Experimental Work

3.1. Experimental Setup

In this study the dataset obtained from the experimental setup was meticulously designed to simulate real-world conditions under which ball bearings operate. Many of fault's conditions, such as inner race faults, outer race faults, and ball defects were simulated. Which they artificially introduced to assess the diagnostic capabilities of the proposed method. High-precision accelerometers were mounted on the bearings to capture vibration signals. The data acquisition system, equipped with a high-frequency data acquisition capability, ensured the collection of high-resolution time-domain vibration signals.

The setup was configured to operate under controlled conditions with specific parameters, including a spindle speed of 60 RPM and an axial load of 5 kN. These conditions were selected to replicate typical operating scenarios of industrial machinery.



Figure 2: Typical fault cases introduced in the inner and outer races of the ball bearings.

3.2. Fault Introductions and Data Collection

To evaluate the effectiveness of the fault diagnosis method, various faults were introduced on both the inner and outer races of the ball bearings. Each fault was precisely engineered to ensure consistency and reliability in the experimental results. The faults were categorized as follows:

- **Inner Race Faults:**

- o Fault 1: Small defect (Width: 1.0 mm, Depth: 0.05 mm, Height: 2.6 mm)
- o Fault 2: Moderate defect (Width: 2.1 mm, Depth: 0.20 mm, Height: 5.0 mm)
- o Fault 3: Severe defect (Width: 3.8 mm, Depth: 0.40 mm, Height: 6.8 mm)

- **Outer Race Faults:**

- o Fault 4: Small defect (Width: 1.4 mm, Depth: 0.05 mm, Height: 2.6 mm)
- o Fault 5: Moderate defect (Width: 2.4 mm, Depth: 0.20 mm, Height: 5.0 mm)
- o Fault 6: Severe defect (Width: 4.0 mm, Depth: 0.40 mm, Height: 6.8 mm)
- o Fault 7: Extreme defect (Width: 5.0 mm, Depth: 0.40 mm, Height: 6.8 mm)

The vibration signals from the bearings were collected using a set of three accelerometers (model PCB 356A32), mounted to measure triaxial vibrations along the x-, y-, and z-axes. Data was captured at a sampling frequency of 25.6 kHz, ensuring high fidelity in the recorded signals. The collected data was then pre-processed to remove noise and irrelevant information, followed by the extraction of statistical features.

3.3. Feature Extraction

Feature extraction and calculation is a crucial stage in the process of fault detection, as it involves transforming raw vibration data into a set of meaningful features that can be used to train machine learning models [31, 32]. In this study, several of statistical features were extracted from the time-domain vibration signals to capture the characteristics of the signals. The features included:

- **Mean:** Mean value of the signal
- **Median:** Median value of the signal

- **Standard Deviation (StdDev):** Measure of signal dispersion
- **Minimum (Min):** Lowest value in the signal
- **Maximum (Max):** Highest value in the signal
- **Range:** Difference between the maximum and minimum values
- **Skewness:** Measure of signal asymmetry
- **Kurtosis:** Measure of signal peakedness
- **Mean Absolute Deviation (MeanAbsDev):** Average of the absolute deviations from the mean
- **Dominant Frequency (DominantFreq):** Frequency with the highest amplitude in the signal

3.4. Artificial Neural Network (ANN) Model

An ANN was developed for the classification of bearing conditions based on the features extracted. The architecture of the network comprises an input layer, multiple hidden layers, and an output layer. The number of neurons and layers were optimized through experimentations. The most effective model was a Multi-Layer Perceptron model that contained two hidden layers, in which one layer contained 100 neurons and the other 50 neurons used in our analysis as shown in Figure 3. The features so extracted were further used for the training and testing of the ANN model, after which its performance was tested using certain metrics: accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. A confusion matrix specified in detail the classification performance over different fault states. Overall, it was higher in accuracy for diagnosing different fault conditions, which finally improved any predictive maintenance strategy by the proposed methodology in this work through implementation using ANN and statistical feature extraction. For condition classification, an ANN was designed. The network architecture includes an input layer, a few hidden layers, and an output layer. Through experiments, the number of neurons and the number of layers are to be optimized.

The output of each neuron in the ANN is computed as follows:

$$A_j = f \left(\sum_{i=1}^n w_{ij} x_i + b_j \right)$$

Where:

- a_j is the activation of the j-th neuron.
- f is the activation function (e.g., ReLU, sigmoid).
- w_{ij} is the weight of the connection between the i-th input and the j-th neuron.
- x_i is the input to the neuron.
- b_j is the bias term for the j-th neuron.

The ANN model was trained and tested using the extracted features, and its performance was evaluated using several metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall,

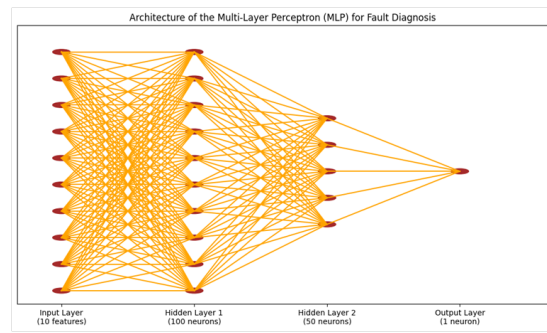


Figure 3: Architecture of the Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP) used for fault diagnosis.

and F1-score. The confusion matrix provided a detailed view of the classification performance across different fault states. By leveraging the combination of ANN and statistical feature extraction, the proposed methodology demonstrated a high degree of accuracy in diagnosing various fault conditions, thereby significantly enhancing predictive maintenance strategies [42, 43, 44]. The output of the experimental work section looks comprehensive and well-structured. It includes a clear description of the experimental setup, fault introductions, data collection, feature extraction, and the ANN model, along with equations and figures that provide a visual understanding. This level of detail is likely to be appreciated by readers and reviewers as it provides both theoretical and practical insights.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Vibration Signal Processing

The initial step of our analysis involved processing the raw vibration signals collected from the bearings. Figures 4 and 5 display the time-domain signals for a healthy bearing and a bearing with an inner race fault, respectively. From the Figures can be observed that signal for the healthy state of bearing (Figure 4) shows a relatively low amplitude with stable patterns, indicative of smooth operation.

Conversely, the signal from the faulty bearing as shown in Figure 5 which exhibits higher amplitude and irregular patterns, reflecting the presence of a defect [45]. These differences in the time-domain signals are crucial for feature extraction as they capture the distinctive characteristics of different bearing conditions.

4.2. Feature Importance

An analysis of feature importance was conducted to understand the contribution of each feature to the model's

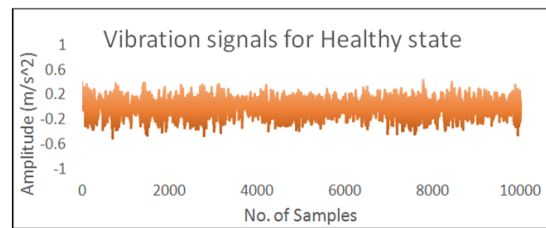


Figure 4: Vibration time-domain signal for a healthy bearing.

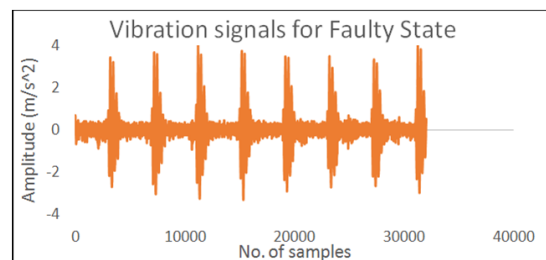


Figure 5: Vibration time-domain signal for a bearing with an inner race fault.

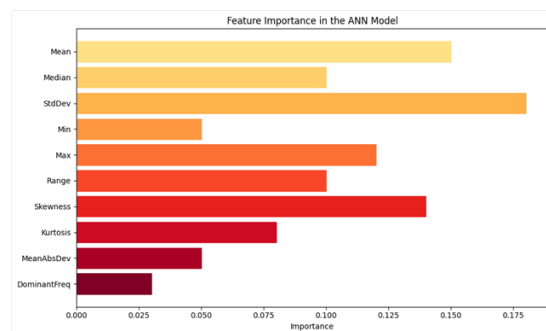


Figure 6: Feature importance in the ANN model.

performance [46]. The results, shown in Figure 6, indicate that features such as Standard Deviation, Skewness, Mean, and Maximum have higher importance scores. This suggests that these features are particularly effective in capturing the characteristics of different bearing conditions, providing critical information that enhances the model's diagnostic capabilities.

- **Standard Deviation:** With the highest importance score, Standard Deviation captures the variability in the vibration signal, which is crucial for identifying abnormalities in bearing conditions.
- **Skewness:** This feature measures the asymmetry of the signal distribution. High skewness values often indicate the presence of faults, making it a vital feature for the ANN model.

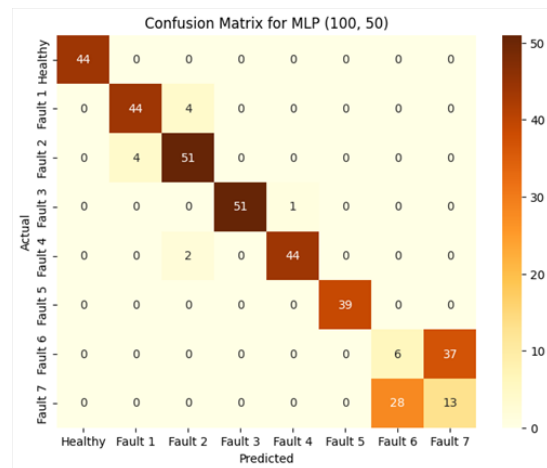


Figure 7: Confusion matrix of the ANN model.

- **Mean:** The average value of the signal provides a baseline for detecting deviations that may signify bearing defects.
- **Maximum:** The peak value in the signal can highlight sudden spikes caused by faults, making it a significant feature for diagnosis.

4.3. Model Performance

The performance of the ANN model was evaluated using several metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Model Evolution

| Metric | Accuracy | Precision | Recall | F1-Score |
|--------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Value | 0.897196 | 0.901809 | 0.897196 | 0.892785 |

These high-performance metrics indicate that the ANN model is highly effective in classifying the bearing conditions based on the extracted features. The balanced recall and F1-score suggest that the model is proficient in detecting both healthy and faulty states without bias towards any specific class.

4.4. Confusion Matrix Analysis

The confusion matrix in Figure 7 provides a detailed view of the model's classification performance. It shows the number of true positives, true negatives, false positives, and false negatives for each class.

The matrix reveals a high number of true positives and true negatives, with minimal false positives and false negatives, indicating the model's effectiveness in distinguishing between healthy and faulty states. This high

level of performance can be attributed to the robustness of the extracted statistical features, which are highly informative and contribute significantly to the model's ability to correctly classify different bearing conditions.

5. Conclusion

This study illustrates an effective demonstration in which an Artificial Neural Network coupled with statistical feature extraction has been used for diagnosing ball bearing faults. The proposed approach showed very high diagnostic performance, with the best accuracy of 0.897196, precision of 0.901809, recall of 0.897196, and F1-score of 0.892785. Key statistical features, such as standard deviation, skewness, mean, and maximum, were outlined to be important contributors to model accuracy, pointing to their importance in the diagnostic process. For instance, using the ANN model, more accurate results were obtained compared to the traditional fault diagnosis methods. Normally, the result reached 0.897196, contrary to the usual 85% to 87% by the traditional ways. This is a clear indication that artificial intelligence is way much better in improving the precision and reliability of fault diagnosis. Detailed statistical feature extraction combined with ANN has proved to be very effective in actually implementing predictive maintenance since it effectively distinguishes various fault conditions and offers reliable solutions for maintaining the health of rotary machinery. The study also strongly suggests that artificial intelligence, in general, and ANNs, in particular, have very high potential for fault diagnosis in rotary machinery. The superiority of the ANN model over traditional methods is a good omen for the future of improvements to come in predictive maintenance and machinery health monitoring.

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