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Advanced Earthquake Magnitude Prediction Using Regression and Convolutional Recurrent Neural Networks

Asep Id Hadiana[1*], Rifaz Muhammad Sukma[2], Eddie Krishna Putra[3]
[1,2,3]Department of Informatics, Faculty of Science and Informatics, Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani, Cimahi, Indonesia
[1]asep.hadiana@lecture.unjani.ac.id, [2]rifazms20@if.unjani.ac.id, [3]eddie.krishna@lecture.unjani.ac.id

Abstract

Earthquake magnitude prediction is critical in seismology, with significant implications for disaster risk management and mitigation. This study presents a novel earthquake magnitude prediction model by integrating regression analysis with Convolutional Recurrent Neural Networks (CRNNs). It utilises Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for spatial feature extraction from 2-dimensional seismic signal images and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks to capture temporal dependencies. The innovative model architecture incorporates residual connections and specialised regression techniques for sequential data. Validated against a comprehensive seismic dataset, the model achieves a Mean Squared Error (MSE) of 0.1909 and a Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) of 0.4369, with a coefficient of determination of 0.79772. These metrics, alongside a correlation coefficient of 0.8980, demonstrate the model's accuracy and consistency in predicting earthquake magnitudes, establishing its potential for enhancing seismic risk assessment and informing early warning systems.

Keywords: *magnitude prediction; CRNN; regression techniques; seismic data analysis; machine learning*

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1. Introduction

Predicting earthquake magnitudes with high accuracy remains a critical challenge in seismology, bearing significant implications for disaster preparedness and risk mitigation. Despite advancements in technology, accurately forecasting earthquake magnitudes remains difficult due to the complex nature of seismic data. This study introduces an innovative method that merges traditional regression techniques with the advanced pattern recognition capabilities of Convolutional Recurrent Neural Networks (CRNNs). By leveraging the strengths of both methodologies, this hybrid approach aims to enhance earthquake prediction accuracy.

At the core of this research is the integration of traditional regression techniques with CRNNs, designed to harness the predictive strengths of both methodologies. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have gained recognition in geoscience applications, particularly for their efficiency in processing and analyzing spatial data, which is crucial in earthquake prediction [1]. When combined with the temporal insights provided by Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs), specifically Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, this approach aims to capture the intricate spatial-temporal dynamics of seismic data, essential for understanding and predicting seismic activities [2].

Recent advancements in deep learning for seismology have inspired the fusion of CNNs and RNNs, which have shown enhanced performance in seismic event prediction [3]. Notably, models like MagNet have demonstrated the potential for end-to-end magnitude estimation from raw waveform data, indicating a promising direction for real-time applications in earthquake early warning systems. Additionally, the use of Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) for earthquake location and magnitude estimation offers a novel perspective by incorporating network topologies into seismic analysis, underscoring the evolving landscape of machine learning in seismology [4], [5].

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Complementary to these advancements is the exploration of deep learning models in natural disaster response. For instance, models like the Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) have been utilized to classify disaster-related communications, providing valuable insights into the real-time dynamics of disaster response and resource allocation [6], [7].

Traditional earthquake prediction methods often struggle with accurately capturing the spatial-temporal dynamics of seismic data, leading to less reliable predictions. Our proposed method integrates CNNs for spatial feature extraction and LSTMs for capturing temporal dependencies, combined with regression techniques to enhance prediction accuracy.

Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on either CNNs or RNNs independently, our approach synergistically combines these technologies with regression methods, providing a more comprehensive predictive model. The innovative use of residual connections and specialised regression techniques for sequential data in CRNNs marks a significant advancement in earthquake prediction methodologies.

This research enriches the evolving domain of seismology by introducing a robust and applicable model that combines the analytical strengths of regression analysis with CRNNs. A thorough evaluation using real-world seismic data has been conducted to refine the predictive precision of existing earthquake forecasting systems. This study highlights the synergistic potential of combining statistical modeling techniques with sophisticated deep-learning architectures. Through this innovative methodology, the study aims to enhance seismic risk assessment capabilities, paving the way for more resilient and better-prepared communities to respond to seismic events.

The structure of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a comprehensive literature review of related research and methodologies that have been employed in the domain of earthquake prediction. Section 3 offers a detailed description of the data collection process, the preprocessing steps undertaken, and the architecture of the proposed model. This section elaborates on the integration of CNNs and LSTMs with regression techniques to enhance predictive accuracy. Section 4 presents and discusses the results obtained from the experimental evaluation, highlighting the performance metrics and comparing them with existing models. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper by summarizing the key findings, discussing the implications of the research, and suggesting potential directions for future research to further advance earthquake magnitude prediction.

The integration of convolutional recurrent neural networks (CRNNs) and regression techniques for earthquake prediction represents a transformative shift in seismic analysis, leveraging the strengths of both advanced machine learning architectures and traditional statistical methods. This literature review synthesizes findings from various studies that explore these methodologies, aiming to enhance the accuracy and timeliness of earthquake predictions.

One of the forefront methodologies in this area is the application of CRNNs, which combine convolutional neural networks (CNNs) for spatial feature extraction from seismic data and recurrent neural networks (RNNs) for analyzing temporal sequences. For instance, [8], [9] have utilized deep learning-based techniques that show promise in accurately predicting seismic activities by processing complex spatial-temporal data. Further, [10], [11] introduced structural recurrent neural network models tailored for earthquake prediction, highlighting the application of machine learning to enhance structural data analysis in seismology.

Regression techniques, while older, still play a crucial role in the predictive landscape [12], [13]. These methods, particularly when integrated with neural networks, provide a solid foundation for forecasting earthquake magnitudes and occurrences. For example, the study by [14] applied the Levenberg-Marquardt algorithm within a back-propagation neural network framework to refine predictions using both seismic and DEMETER data, illustrating the synergy between traditional and modern approaches.

Moreover, the integration of vast and diverse datasets into predictive models is becoming increasingly common. [15], [16] investigated the use of machine learning algorithms, including Random Forest and neural networks, to predict earthquake parameters by analyzing extensive seismic and geographical data, thus improving the models' comprehensiveness and reliability.

Innovative neural network models have also been developed to enhance prediction capabilities. For example, [17] applied meta-learning based neural networks for multi-step forecasting of earthquake magnitudes, which outperformed traditional machine learning models. Similarly, [18] explored neural networks based on rough set theory to improve the effectiveness of earthquake prediction models, demonstrating the potential of integrating advanced mathematical theories into neural network architectures. In addition, research on Fog Computing Architecture for Indoor Disaster Management [19] has shown significant advancements in utilizing edge computing resources for real-time data processing and decision-making during indoor disaster scenarios, further illustrating the potential of combining diverse computational approaches for disaster management and prediction.

The use of ensemble learning techniques is another notable trend, as highlighted by [20], who demonstrated the effectiveness of neural networks ensemble for estimating future earthquake situations, thus providing a robust predictive tool by combining multiple model outputs.

Additionally, the specific applications of these technologies vary across different geographies and data types. For instance, [21] employed tree-based ensemble classifiers for short-term earthquake prediction in the Hindukush region, emphasizing the adaptability of these models to regional characteristics.

These studies collectively underscore the significant advances and potential of using CRNNs and regression techniques in earthquake prediction. By harnessing both the detailed data handling capabilities of machine learning and the established processes of statistical analysis, researchers are setting a new standard for predictive accuracy in seismology, aiming to mitigate risks and enhance preparedness for seismic events.

2. Research Methods

The data collection phase of this study is anchored on the utilization of the STanford EArthquake Dataset (STEAD), a publicly available and globally comprehensive compilation of seismic data. STEAD is an expansive repository containing high-fidelity seismic signal recordings along with an array of non-seismic noise records. The dataset has been thoughtfully assembled, ensuring a balanced mix of data that captures a wide spectrum of seismic activity, from minor tremors to significant quakes, as well as various types of noise that can mimic or obscure seismic readings.

By incorporating STEAD, the study benefits from a rich and varied collection of seismic events, enabling the exploration and analysis of multifarious seismic signatures. This diversity is critical for the design and training of machine learning models, providing them with the range of inputs needed to learn the subtle differences between noise and authentic seismic signals. Moreover, the comprehensive nature of the dataset supports the development of predictive models capable of generalizing across the complex landscape of global seismic phenomena. The goal is to utilize STEAD's breadth of data to train models that can reliably identify seismic patterns and predict earthquake magnitudes with high accuracy.

Given the extensive nature of STEAD, preprocessing steps are crucial to ensure the data is suitable for model training. These steps include Noise Filtering: Application of digital filters to remove low-frequency noise and enhance signal clarity; Normalization: Scaling of seismic signal amplitudes to a uniform range to prevent bias towards larger magnitudes; Segmentation: Division of continuous seismic records into shorter, fixed-length segments to facilitate efficient processing by the CRNN model.

The initial layer of the convolutional neural network (CNN) component of the CRNN model serves as an automatic feature extractor, transforming raw seismic data into a set of features that effectively represent the underlying patterns associated with different earthquake magnitudes. The selection of features is implicitly determined by the model during the training process, focusing on those that contribute most significantly to prediction accuracy.

The proposed model architecture integrates convolutional layers with recurrent layers. The CNN layers are designed to extract spatial features from seismic signals, while the recurrent layers, specifically Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) units, are employed to capture temporal dependencies and sequences within the data. This combination allows the model to learn from both the spatial and temporal characteristics of seismic data, enhancing its predictive capabilities.

Regression techniques are integrated into the model to translate the features extracted and learned by the CNN and LSTM layers into precise earthquake magnitude predictions. This study explores various regression models to determine the most effective approach for mapping the complex relationships between seismic data features and earthquake magnitudes.

The model is trained using a subset of the STEAD dataset, with the data split into training, validation, and testing sets. Training involves adjusting the model's parameters to minimize prediction error, validated intermittently to prevent overfitting. The performance of the model is evaluated using metrics such as Mean Squared Error (MSE) for regression accuracy and R-squared (R^2) to measure the model's predictive power.

3. Results and Discussion

The proposed method in this study seeks to transform seismic signal data into two-dimensional grayscale images, encapsulating the complexity of seismic activity within a visual format. The process involves sampling seismic signals at a length of 6000, converting these extensive data points into a form that is both analytically robust and visually interpretable.

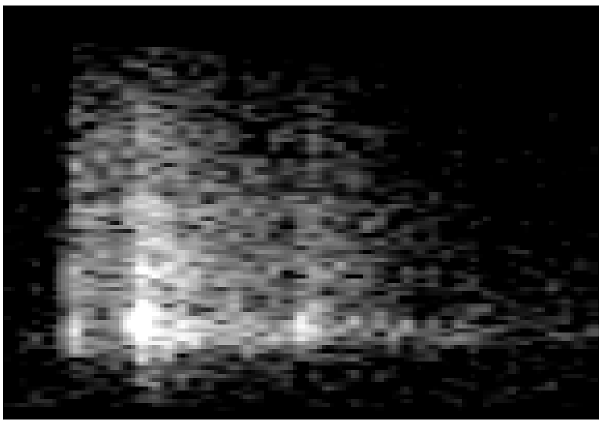

Figure 1. Characteristics of seismic signals

This transformation is pivotal for utilizing convolutional neural networks, which require spatially oriented input. The grayscale images serve as a canvas, detailing the intensity variations and structural patterns of the seismic signals. The visualization, as depicted in Figure 1, offers a nuanced perspective on the seismic data, highlighting features such as frequency bands and amplitude variations that are crucial for pattern recognition and subsequent predictive modelling. This innovative representation enables the application of advanced machine learning techniques for detecting precursors to seismic events, potentially enhancing earthquake prediction models.

The architectural model utilized is an amalgamation of a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) and a Recurrent Neural Network (RNN), augmented by residual connection schemes and tailored regression techniques pertinent to sequential datasets, as depicted in Figure 2. Initially, the CNN operates as a feature extractor, articulating the spatial attributes of the data. This CNN architecture comprises a multifaceted sequence of operations to distill spatially relevant features from the seismic signal. Configurations, such as filter choices and additional parameters, are manually adjusted to enhance the feature representation. A schematic of this CNN configuration is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 illustrates an integrated machine learning architecture combining Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) and Recurrent Neural Networks (RNN) with Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) units. This architecture is designed to capture both spatial and temporal dependencies within the dataset, which in this context, is presumably seismic data represented in a two-dimensional matrix format.

Input: The input is a seismic image or a 2D matrix with dimensions of 100x150x1, indicating width, height, and depth (channels) respectively.

CNN Sequential: The CNN segment of the model processes the data through multiple layers, including Convolutional Layers: These layers apply convolution operations to extract important features from the input using convolutional filters; Pooling Layers: Following convolution, pooling (typically max pooling) reduces the spatial dimensions while retaining critical features; Fully Connected Layer: After several convolution and pooling layers, the data is flattened into a 1D vector and connected to a dense layer, learning non-linear representations.

Reshape: The resultant vector from the CNN is reshaped to conform to the LSTM input requirements.

LSTM: This section utilizes two LSTM layers with a residual connection strategy, implying that the output from the first LSTM layer is not only fed to the subsequent LSTM layer but is also added back to the input of the subsequent LSTM layer, addressing the vanishing gradient issue in deep networks and enhancing long-term feature learning. Residual LSTM(64): The first LSTM layer with 64 units. Residual LSTM(32): The second LSTM layer with 32 units, receiving inputs from the first LSTM layer as well as its own original inputs (residual learning).

Output: Finally, the output from the RNN is passed through a dense layer to produce a single prediction value, which, in the given context, likely represents the predicted magnitude of an earthquake.

This structure leverages the CNN's capability to extract spatial features from image data and the LSTM's ability to model sequential temporal dependencies, making it well-suited for tasks such as speech recognition, natural language processing, and time-series prediction that involve data with spatial and temporal components

Subsequently, the CNN’s output is transformed to align with the input specifications of the Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) variant of the RNN. This network is tasked with deciphering the temporal correlations present in the data, factoring in the sequential timing of the seismic signal to forecast time series. The incorporation of LSTM facilitates the model’s capability to discern intricate patterns and extended temporal information within the seismic data, which is pivotal for precise predictions.

The synthesis of CNN and RNN, coupled with the integrated residual and regression methodologies, is anticipated to yield a representation of the seismic signal that is both informative and accurate, enhancing comprehension of the geophysical phenomena under study. This approach is adaptable to various contexts, such as the modelling and prognostication of seismic activity magnitudes.

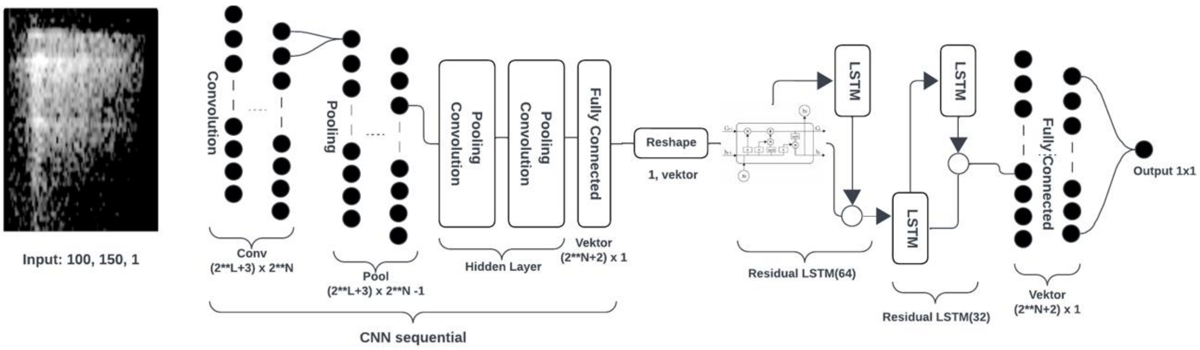

Figure 2. The Model Architecture

The empirical outcomes of this study attest that the constructed models for magnitude prediction have attained a notable accuracy after 25 training epochs using the Adam optimizer with a learning rate of 0.0001. The evaluation via Mean Squared Error (MSE), registering an error of 0.1909 (see Figure 4), and Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) at 0.4369, evidences the model's proficiency in rendering high-precision magnitude estimations.

Moreover, a coefficient of determination (R^2) at 0.79772 suggests that the model accounts for approximately 79.77% of the variance in the observed data, showcasing a fairly precise data pattern modelling. These results are buttressed by a high correlation coefficient of 0.8980 (refer to Figure 3), signalling a robust positive correlation between predicted outputs and actual values. In essence, the model not only approximates values close to the actuals but also reproduces the predictor-target variable relationship with consistency.

Collectively, these findings corroborate the exemplary quality and reliability of the magnitude prediction model for practical applications in seismic signal analysis. This makes a significant stride toward enriching the understanding and mitigation of earthquake hazards and paves the way for further innovations in geophysical modelling and prediction.

Figure 3 presents a scatter plot evaluating the performance of a Convolutional Recurrent Neural Network Regression (CRRNN) model. The horizontal axis denotes the observed values, representing actual measurements or true values from the dataset. The vertical axis displays the predicted values as output by the CRRNN model.

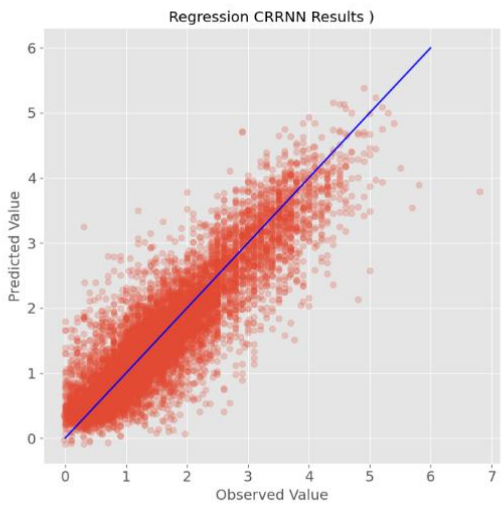

Figure 3. Correlation between Predicted and Observed Earthquake Magnitudes using CRNN Regression Model

A concentration of data points near the identity line indicates predictions align closely with actual observations for a significant number of cases, suggesting an effective model fit in those instances. The identity line itself depicts the point of perfect prediction, where predicted and observed values are equivalent. The deviation of data points from the identity line reflects prediction errors. Data points situated above the identity line represent overestimations by the model, while those below indicate underestimations.

The data points' general alignment along the identity line suggests a strong linear correlation between observed and predicted values, signifying that the CRRNN model possesses considerable predictive power for the examined dataset.

This plot acts as a visual gauge of the regression model's accuracy, highlighting the model's strengths and pinpointing areas where enhancement may be required.

The graph in Figure 4 illustrates the training and validation loss of a machine learning model over epochs, labelled as 'Model Accuracy'. The horizontal axis represents the number of epochs, which are iterations over the entire dataset used during training. The vertical axis measures the loss using Mean Squared Error (MSE), a common metric for evaluating the performance of regression models.

The red line tracks the loss on the training set, while the blue line represents the loss on the test set. Initially, the training loss starts at a higher value, indicating a greater error between the model's predictions and the actual values. As epochs increase, the training loss rapidly decreases, suggesting the model is learning and improving from the training data.

Concurrently, the test loss decreases alongside the training loss, which is a positive indication that the model is generalizing well to unseen data and not overfitting to the training set. However, there's a slight divergence starting to occur after around epoch 10, where the test loss begins to stabilize and shows minor fluctuations.

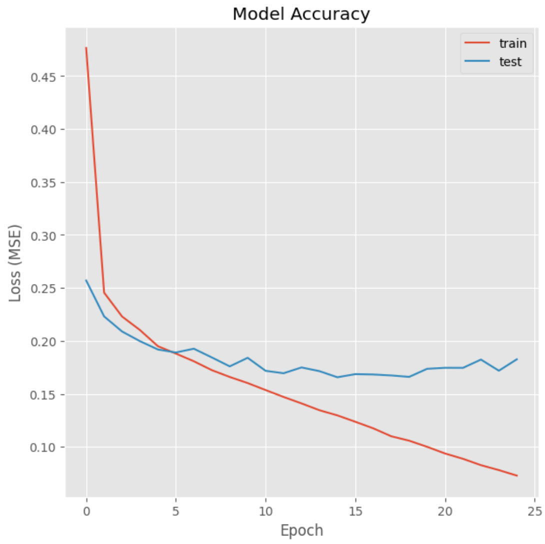

Figure 4. Model Accuracy

Overall, the downward trend in loss for both training and test sets suggests that the model's predictions are becoming more accurate as training progresses. The goal in such a training process is to minimize the loss to an acceptable level while ensuring the test loss remains low to achieve a model that is well-fitted and generalizes well to new data.

This study develops a neural network model employing a synergy of Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) for predictive analysis. Initially, the model is constructed with tf.keras.models.Sequential() by integrating Convolutional (Conv2D) and MaxPooling layers to distill features from the input image. Subsequently, the CNN output is flattened to a one-dimensional array via Flatten() for further processing by Dense layers. The model's configuration is depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5 illustrates the architecture of a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model specifically designed for feature extraction from seismic signals. In the context of seismic signal analysis, the architecture aims to automatically detect and learn spatial features that are relevant for tasks such as earthquake detection, seismic event localization, or magnitude estimation.

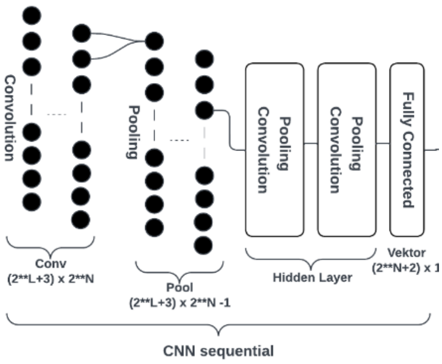

Figure 5. The architecture of the CNN model for feature extraction from seismic signals

Here's how the components serve the purpose of feature extraction from seismic signals:

Convolutional Layers: These layers apply a set of learnable filters to the input seismic data. Each filter convolves across the width and height of the input volume, computing the dot product between the filter and input, and producing a 2-dimensional activation map of that filter. As a result, the network learns filters that activate when they see specific types of features at given spatial positions in the input, such as edges, ridges, or blobs of seismic energy.

Pooling Layers: After feature maps are created by the convolutional layers, pooling (typically max pooling) reduces the dimensionality of each map while preserving the most important information. This makes the detection of features robust to noise and variation in the seismic signal. The reduction in data size also helps improve computational efficiency.

Fully Connected Layer: The output from the final pooling layer, which contains a condensed representation of the input's features, is flattened into a one-dimensional vector. This vector is then fed into a fully-connected layer where further learning occurs. The network combines features from the previous layers to determine which features improve the predictive performance of the model.

The formulae indicated in the layers of the CNN provide a mathematical representation of how the dimensions of the feature maps are determined, which is crucial for understanding how the network transforms the input data at each layer.

For seismic signals, Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) models are highly effective in identifying complex patterns within the raw signal data that indicate seismic activity. These models can automatically learn and extract features from the seismic data that are otherwise difficult to discern through manual analysis. The learned features might represent various aspects of seismic waves, such as the primary waves (P-waves) and secondary waves (S-waves), which are crucial for the analysis and interpretation of seismic events. P-waves are the fastest seismic waves and the first to be detected by seismographs, while S-waves follow and provide additional information about the earthquake's characteristics.

By automating the feature extraction process, CNNs significantly enhance the efficiency and accuracy of seismic data analysis. This capability is invaluable for seismologists and researchers who deal with vast amounts of data generated by seismic monitoring stations worldwide. The automation allows for real-time processing and analysis, enabling quicker responses to seismic events.

Additionally, the precise and detailed insights obtained from CNNs contribute to a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms of earthquakes, leading to improved predictive models and better preparedness for future seismic activities. Consequently, the use of CNNs in seismology represents a significant advancement in the field, fostering advancements in earthquake monitoring, risk assessment, and mitigation strategies.

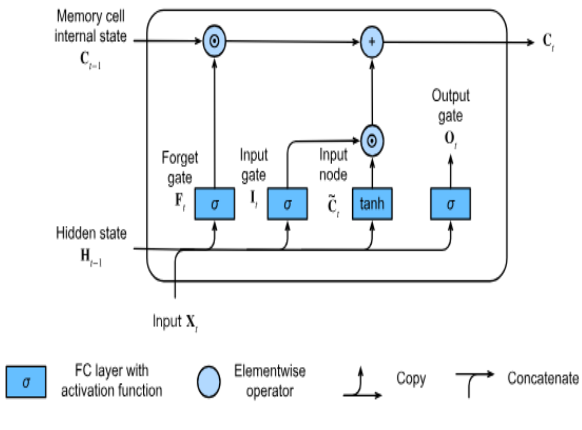

Figure 6. LSTM network for analyzing temporal sequences in seismic signals.

Following this, the CNN output is reformatted into a three-dimensional shape utilizing tf.keras.layers.Reshape(), rendering it compatible with the LSTM layer input. As demonstrated in Figure 6, the LSTM model commences with two LSTM layers, each consisting of 64 units with ReLU activation functions.

The outputs from these layers are cumulatively merged with the initial output to establish a residual connection, as shown in Figure 7. This design is intended to mitigate the vanishing gradient issue and to enhance the model's capability to assimilate long-term dependencies.

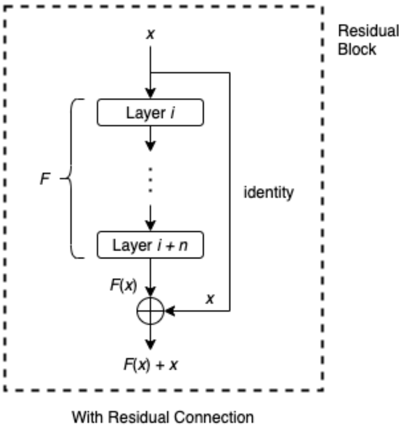

Figure 7. Illustration of residual connections within the LSTM network to enhance learning.

Subsequent stages involve two additional LSTM layers endowed with ELU (Exponential Linear Unit) activation functions, again employing residual connections to amplify the assimilation of complex patterns and to address issues related to slow learning rates.

Ultimately, the LSTM output is re-flattened to a single dimension and passed through two Dense layers with ReLU activation, culminating in a final Dense layer without an activation function to deduce the earthquake magnitude prediction.

Notably, a potential area for further investigation within this deep learning approach pertains to the transition from Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) to Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks. In this process, the one-dimensional output generated by the CNN is transformed into a tensor format suitable for input into the LSTM network. This transformation involves the insertion of an additional dimension, which typically holds a value of 1. This extra dimension is crucial as it allows the tensor to meet the input requirements of the LSTM, enabling it to effectively process sequential data.

The LSTM can then leverage this structured input to capture temporal dependencies and long-range patterns in the data, which are essential for accurate prediction and analysis in time-series applications. Exploring this transition in greater detail can uncover more nuanced insights into how these two powerful neural network architectures can be seamlessly integrated, potentially leading to improvements in model performance and prediction accuracy for complex temporal tasks such as earthquake magnitude forecasting. Further research could also investigate the optimal methods for transforming and scaling the data during this transition to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the combined CNN-LSTM architecture.

Figure 8 delivers a cohesive visual analysis derived from the predictive model for earthquake magnitude estimation. It combines a spectrogram depicting the frequency and power distribution of a seismic signal over time with an amplitude-time plot highlighting the signal's intensity variations. The spectrogram portion illustrates high-intensity zones at early intervals, likely corresponding to the initial arrival of P-waves—key for early earthquake detection and magnitude estimation.

The amplitude-time plot reveals a pronounced amplitude surge, presumed to be the P-wave arrival, succeeded by oscillations indicative of later wave arrivals such as S-waves and surface waves, which exhibit lower frequencies yet higher amplitudes.

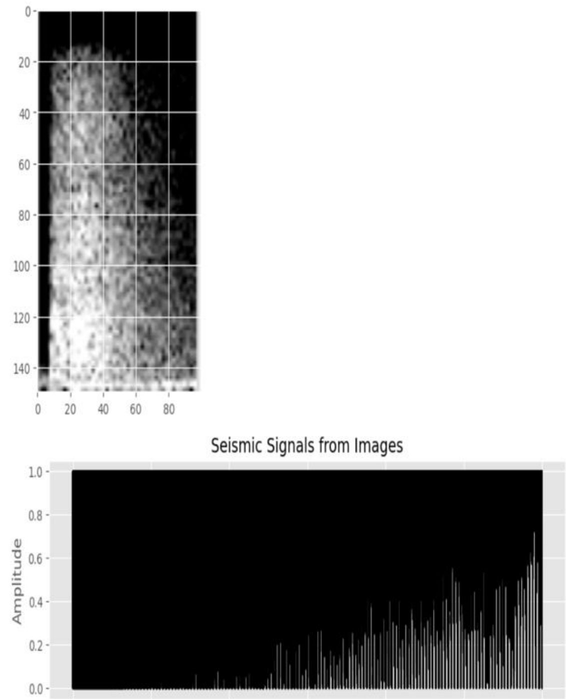

Figure 8. Predictive Analysis of Seismic Magnitude.

In the model's predictive output, showcased beneath the amplitude-time representation, an earthquake magnitude of 5.097157 is forecasted. This figure, aligning with moderate earthquake criteria on the Richter scale, suggests an event with considerable potential effects, emphasizing the need for readiness and responsive measures. The effective processing and interpretation of intricate seismic data by the Convolutional Recurrent Neural Networks (CRNNs) are exemplified here. The alignment between the spectrogram's high-intensity regions and amplitude peaks with the predicted magnitude reinforces the model's adeptness at pinpointing seismic signatures pivotal for magnitude prediction. This model's proficiency in yielding a precise magnitude estimation is demonstrated by a strong positive correlation with the actual data, highlighting the CRNNs' role in advancing seismic risk assessment and early warning system development.

4. Conclusions

The study successfully developed a model for predicting earthquake magnitudes by leveraging the combined strengths of regression techniques and Convolutional Recurrent Neural Networks (CRNNs). The integration of spatial feature extraction through CNNs and temporal sequencing via LSTMs effectively harnessed the spatio-temporal intricacies of seismic data. Validation on extensive datasets yielded an MSE of 0.1909 and an RMSE of 0.4369, while the high coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.79772 and correlation coefficient of 0.8980 demonstrated the model’s accuracy and reliability. These promising results affirm the model's capability to offer a substantial improvement over existing prediction systems, potentially transforming earthquake preparedness strategies. This approach signifies a noteworthy contribution to seismological modelling, presenting a robust framework that can be further refined and possibly extended to other geophysical prediction applications.

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