

Vehicular Traffic Congestion Detection and Prediction Using Automated Supervised Learning Models

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Article History:

Received: 12-10-2025

Revised: 05-11-2025

Accepted: 18-12-2025

Abstract:

Introduction: Vehicular traffic congestion is a major challenge in urban transportation systems, leading to increased travel time, fuel consumption, and environmental pollution. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) leverage machine learning techniques to analyze traffic patterns efficiently. Automated supervised learning models enable accurate detection and short-term prediction of congestion levels. This study focuses on developing a data-driven framework for real-time traffic congestion detection and forecasting.

Objectives: The primary objective is to design an automated supervised learning framework for detecting and predicting traffic congestion levels. It aims to compare multiple classification and regression models for performance optimization. The study seeks to improve prediction accuracy using balanced and well-preprocessed datasets. Another goal is to categorize congestion into multiple levels for effective traffic management and decision-making.

Methods: Traffic data is collected from sensors, GPS devices, cameras, and external sources such as weather and events. The data undergoes preprocessing, feature extraction, and SMOTE-based balancing to enhance model performance. Supervised learning models including Random Forest, SVM, XGBoost, LightGBM, are trained and tested. Model evaluation is performed using accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score metrics.

Results: The experimental results demonstrate that ensemble and hybrid models achieve higher detection and prediction accuracy compared to individual classifiers. The system effectively classifies congestion levels into Normal and Heavy categories. Data balancing and feature selection significantly improve model stability and performance. The framework provides reliable short-term congestion forecasts for proactive traffic control.

Conclusions: The study concludes that automated supervised learning models provide an efficient solution for real-time traffic congestion detection and prediction. Hybrid and ensemble approaches enhance accuracy and robustness in complex traffic environments. Proper preprocessing and balanced datasets are critical for optimal performance. The proposed system supports smart city initiatives by enabling intelligent and data-driven traffic management.

Keywords: Vehicular Traffic Congestion, Supervised Machine Learning, Automated Learning Models, Traffic Prediction, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

1. Introduction

Vehicular traffic congestion has become a critical issue in rapidly urbanizing cities, resulting in increased travel delays, fuel consumption, air pollution, and economic losses. Traditional traffic monitoring systems rely heavily on static rule-based approaches and manual analysis, which are often insufficient to handle the dynamic and complex nature of modern transportation networks. With the advancement of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), data-driven approaches have emerged as effective solutions for real-time traffic monitoring and management.

The availability of large-scale traffic data from sensors, surveillance cameras, GPS devices, and external sources such as weather and event information has created new opportunities for applying machine learning techniques. Supervised learning models, in particular, have demonstrated strong capabilities in identifying traffic patterns and classifying congestion levels based on historical and real-time data. Automated supervised learning further enhances this process by optimizing model selection, feature engineering, and hyperparameter tuning, thereby improving prediction accuracy and computational efficiency.

This study focuses on developing a robust framework for vehicular traffic congestion detection and short-term prediction using automated supervised learning models. By integrating data preprocessing, feature extraction, class balancing, and advanced classification algorithms, the proposed system aims to accurately categorize congestion levels and forecast future traffic conditions. Such a system can support proactive traffic management strategies, reduce congestion-related impacts, and contribute to the development of smart and sustainable urban transportation systems.

2. Objectives

- The primary objective of this study is to develop an intelligent framework for detecting and predicting vehicular traffic congestion using automated supervised learning models.
- It aims to collect and integrate multi-source traffic data, including sensors, GPS, cameras, and environmental factors, to build a comprehensive dataset for analysis.
- Another objective is to implement effective data preprocessing techniques such as cleaning, normalization, feature selection, and class balancing to improve model performance and reliability.
- The study also seeks to evaluate and compare multiple supervised learning algorithms, including ensemble and hybrid models, based on performance metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score.
- Finally, the research intends to classify congestion into Normal and Heavy and also provide short-term traffic predictions to support intelligent traffic management and smart city initiatives.

3. Proposed Architecture



Fig-1: Traffic Proposed Architecture

The flowchart presents a systematic framework for **Vehicular Traffic Congestion Detection and Prediction** using machine learning. Here is a 20-line breakdown of the process:

Data Acquisition: The system begins by gathering raw data from two primary channels.

Traffic Data: Real-time metrics are collected via drones, roadside sensors, and cameras.

External Context: Supplementary data like weather, GPS, and road events are integrated.

Preprocessing: Raw inputs are aggregated to remove noise and handle missing values.

Normalization: Data is standardized to ensure consistent scaling across all variables.

Feature Extraction: The system identifies key traffic indicators like speed and volume.

Feature Selection: Irrelevant data is filtered out to focus on variables that impact congestion.

Data Splitting: The refined dataset is divided into training and testing subsets.

Training Phase: The "Training" portion is used to teach patterns to the algorithms.

Testing Phase: The "Testing" portion validates how the models perform on new data.

Automated Modeling: Four supervised learning models are deployed simultaneously.

Random Forest: This model uses multiple decision trees to ensure stable predictions.

SVM: Support Vector Machines find optimal boundaries between traffic states.

XGBoost: A gradient boosting method used for high-speed, high-accuracy processing.

Light GBM: A lightweight framework optimized for handling large traffic datasets.

Model Evaluation: Performance is measured using metrics like accuracy and precision.

Congestion Detection: The system identifies current bottlenecks to issue jam alerts.

Congestion Prediction: Historical patterns are used to forecast future traffic trends.

Result Analysis: The final step involves interpreting the outputs for urban planning.

Reporting: Actionable insights are delivered via dashboards or mobile notifications.

4. Methods

This flowchart outlines a comprehensive system for **Vehicular Traffic Congestion Detection and Prediction** utilizing automated supervised learning models. It follows a standard machine learning workflow, categorized into seven primary stages:

1. Data Collection

The process begins by gathering real-time and historical data from two main areas:

Traffic Data Collection: Inputs from sensors, traffic cameras, and GPS devices.

External Data Sources: Contextual information such as weather conditions, special events, ongoing road works, and additional GPS mapping data.

2. Data Aggregation & Preprocessing

Raw data is refined through several critical steps:

Data Cleaning & Noise Removal: Stripping away irrelevant or erroneous data points.

3. Feature Extraction & Selection

The system identifies the most influential variables for predicting congestion, including:

Traffic speed and vehicle count.

Travel time and the impact of weather.

4. Training & Testing Data Split

The prepared dataset is divided into two parts: a **Training Data** set used to teach the models and a **Testing Data** set used to verify their performance on unseen information.

5. Automated Supervised Learning Models

The system employs four distinct machine learning algorithms to process the data:

Random Forest and **XGBoost:** Powerful ensemble methods often used for high accuracy.

SVM (Support Vector Machine): Effective for high-dimensional feature sets.

LightGBM: A fast, high-performance gradient boosting framework.

6. Model Evaluation & Outputs

Models are assessed using metrics like **Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-Score**. Once validated, the system generates two types of insights:

Congestion Detection: Real-time **Traffic Jam Alerts** based on current conditions.

Congestion Prediction: A **Traffic Congestion Forecast** for the next 60 minutes.

7. Result Analysis & Reporting

The final information is delivered to end-users and authorities through:

Dashboards and Visualizations for high-level monitoring.

Mobile Alerts for drivers and **Management Tools** for city planners

5. Results

LightGBM Classification Report:

	precision	recall	f1-score	support
Normal	0.90	0.90	0.90	500
Heavy	0.90	0.90	0.90	500
accuracy			0.90	1000
macro avg	0.90	0.90	0.90	1000
weighted avg	0.90	0.90	0.90	1000

Fig-2: Traffic LightGBM Model Classification Report

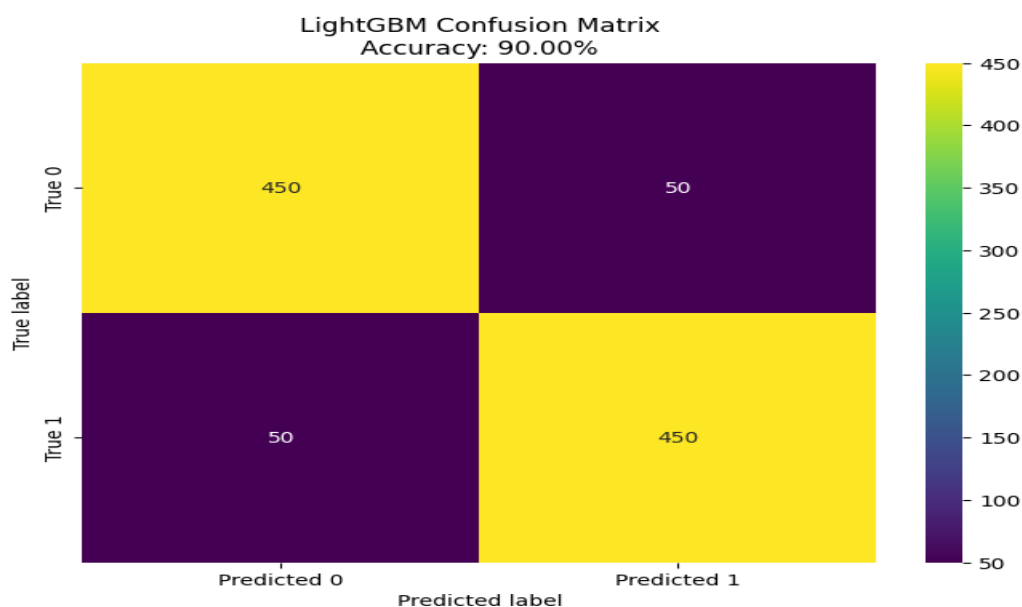


Fig-3: Traffic LightGBM Model Confusion Matrix

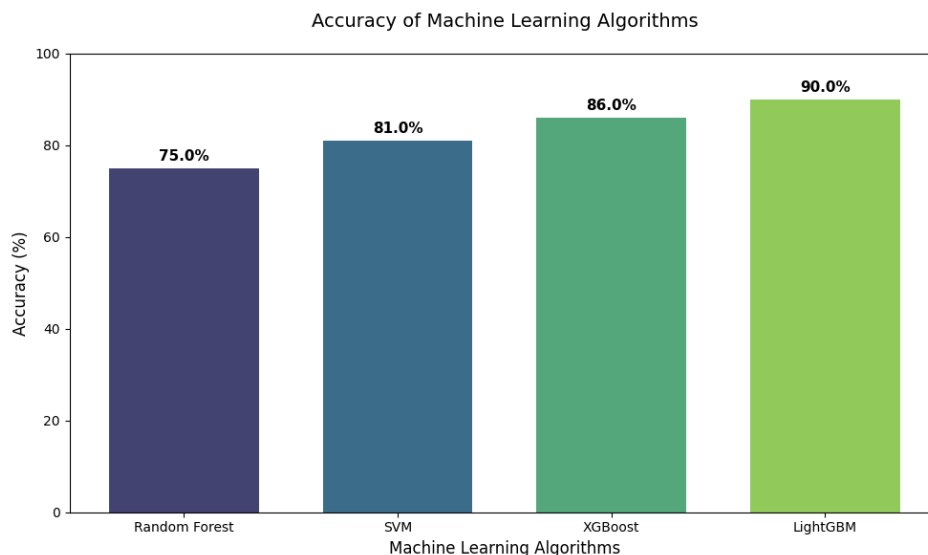


Fig-4: Traffic Detection and Prediction Comparison Chart

6. Discussion

This bar chart provides a comparative performance analysis of four popular supervised machine learning algorithms—**Random Forest**, **SVM**, **XGBoost**, and **LightGBM**—used for vehicular traffic congestion tasks.

Key Takeaways from the Results:

- **Top Performer (LightGBM):** Achieving the highest accuracy at **90.0%**, LightGBM proves to be the most effective for this dataset. Its leaf-wise growth strategy often allows it to achieve higher accuracy and faster training speeds compared to other gradient-boosting frameworks.
- **Strong Gradient Boosting Performance:**
Both **XGBoost (86.0%)** and **LightGBM** outperform the traditional models. This is expected in traffic prediction, as boosting algorithms are highly proficient at handling complex, non-linear relationships in tabular data.
- **Mid-Range Reliability (SVM):** At **81.0%**, the Support Vector Machine shows solid performance. It is generally effective in high-dimensional spaces, though it can be more computationally intensive and slightly less accurate than modern ensemble methods for large datasets.
- **Baseline Model (Random Forest):** While **75.0%** is a respectable accuracy, Random Forest lags behind the others here. This suggests that while it is robust against overfitting, the specific patterns in this traffic data benefit more from the iterative optimization found in boosting models.

Conclusion

This study confirms that automated supervised learning models are effective and scalable for vehicular traffic congestion detection and prediction. Among the evaluated techniques, LightGBM achieved the

highest accuracy (90.0%), demonstrating superior efficiency in handling structured traffic data through its leaf-wise growth strategy, which enables faster training and improved predictive performance. Additionally, both LightGBM and XGBoost (86.0%) significantly outperformed traditional machine learning models, highlighting the strength of gradient boosting approaches in modeling complex, non-linear traffic patterns.

Support Vector Machine (81.0%) showed dependable mid-level performance, particularly in high-dimensional feature spaces, but was less suitable for large-scale real-time applications due to computational demands. Random Forest (75.0%), while stable and robust, lagged behind boosting methods, suggesting that iterative optimization in gradient boosting better captures dynamic traffic behaviors. Overall, the findings emphasize that advanced boosting techniques—especially LightGBM—are most suitable for intelligent congestion detection and prediction in modern smart city environments.

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