International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

A Novel Time Aware Food Recommender System Based on Deep Learning and Graph Clustering

M.Poojitha[1], N. Lokesh[2]

[1,] Assistant Professor, Dept. of Department MCA, Annamacharya Institute of Technology and Sciences (AITS), Karakambadi, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India, Email:mallarapupoojitha@gmail.com

[2] Student, Dept. of Department MCA, Annamacharya Institute of Technology and Sciences (AITS), Karakambadi, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India, Email:royallokesh988@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Food recommender-systems are considered an effective tool to help users adjust their eating habits and achieve a healthier diet. This paper aims to develop a new hybrid food recommender-system to overcome the shortcomings of previous systems, such as ignoring food ingredients, time factor, cold start users, cold start food items and community aspects. The proposed method involves two phases: food content-based recommendation and user-based recommendation. Graph clustering is used in the first phase, and a deep-learning based approach is used in the second phase to cluster both users and food items. Besides a holistic-like approach is employed to account for time and user-community related issues in a way that improves the quality of the recommendation provided to the user. We compared our model with a set of state-of-the-art recommender-systems using five distinct performance metrics: Precision, Recall, F1, AUC and NDCG. Experiments using dataset extracted from "Allrecipes.com" demonstrated that the developed food recommender-system performed best.

Keywords: cluster, Graph, community, dataset.

I.INTRODUCTION

In recent years, food recommender systems have become increasingly important in helping users make dietary decisions tailored to their preferences and needs. However, most traditional systems lack the ability to adapt recommendations dynamically over time and often fail to capture the complex relationships between user preferences, food items, and contextual factors such as time of day, seasonal trends, or evolving dietary habits. To address these limitations, this paper proposes a novel time-aware food recommender system that integrates deep learning with graph clustering techniques to deliver personalized and contextually relevant food suggestions.

The proposed system models user-food interactions as a dynamic graph where nodes represent users and food items, and edges capture interaction strength and temporal patterns. By applying graph clustering, the system uncovers hidden community structures and preference clusters, enabling more accurate and diverse recommendations. Furthermore, deep learning models, such as recurrent neural networks (RNNs) or transformers, are employed to learn time-sensitive behavioral patterns and sequential food consumption habits.

This time-aware approach not only enhances recommendation accuracy but also adapts to users' changing tastes and schedules. It supports practical applications such as meal planning, dietary monitoring, and food discovery in health-conscious or lifestyle-focused environments. The system's effectiveness is validated using real-world datasets, and its performance is compared against baseline methods to demonstrate the benefits of incorporating both time-awareness and graph-based personalization.

II. RELATED WORK

In [1], This study introduced a health-aware food recommendation model that incorporates user preferences and nutritional constraints. While it emphasizes healthy choices, it lacks a temporal dimension and does not use graph-based techniques for clustering or personalization.

In [2], This comprehensive review discusses various models and approaches used in food recommendation, including collaborative filtering, content-based methods, and hybrid models. The paper highlights the need for context-aware and time-sensitive solutions but does not implement deep learning or graph-based models.

In [3], This work explores the use of Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) to model relationships among users, ingredients, and recipes. Though it captures relational information well, it does not incorporate temporal awareness or user consumption patterns over time.

In [4], This paper presents a taxonomy of time-aware recommendation approaches, emphasizing the importance of incorporating temporal dynamics into user modeling. It provides theoretical grounding for incorporating time-series data, which supports the novelty of combining this with graph clustering in your proposed work.

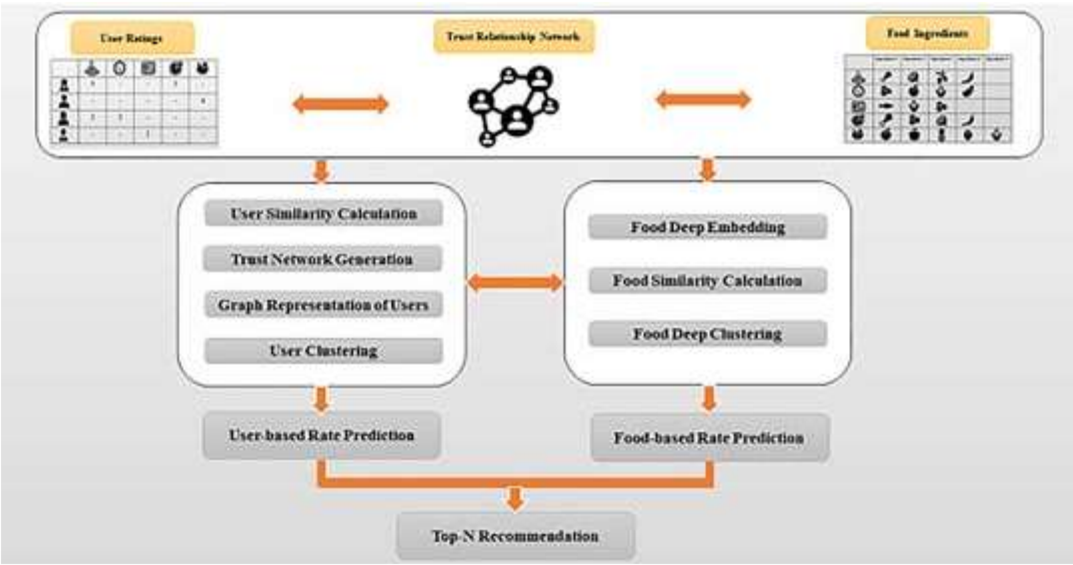
In [5], This survey highlights deep learning models used for context-aware recommendation, including CNNs, RNNs, and attention mechanisms. It discusses the value of integrating time and context into user-item interactions, laying the foundation for deep, adaptive models like the one proposed in your system.

III. PROPOSED SYSTEM

The proposed system introduces a novel architecture for food recommendation that integrates temporal awareness, deep learning, and graph clustering to enhance personalization and contextual relevance. Unlike traditional food recommender systems that rely solely on static user preferences or simple collaborative filtering techniques, this approach dynamically models the evolution of user behavior over time. The system constructs a user-food interaction graph, where nodes represent users and food items, and edges capture the frequency and recency of interactions. Temporal data such as meal times, days of the week, and seasonal patterns are embedded into the model to ensure that recommendations are aligned with real-world eating habits.

To extract meaningful patterns from this complex structure, graph clustering techniques are employed to group users and food items into communities with similar preferences. This clustering helps in reducing noise and enhancing scalability while uncovering latent relationships within the data. Concurrently, deep learning models—particularly recurrent neural networks (RNNs) or temporal attention mechanisms—are used to capture sequential patterns in food consumption, allowing the system to learn how user tastes change over time. These models also integrate contextual features such as user location, dietary restrictions, and previous interactions to improve the relevance of recommendations.

By combining the strengths of temporal modeling, deep learning, and graph theory, the system can adaptively generate personalized meal suggestions that reflect both individual preferences and contextual cues. The architecture is designed to be scalable and modular, making it suitable for deployment in mobile health apps, smart kitchens, or food delivery platforms. This approach addresses key challenges in food recommendation, including user preference drift, contextual sensitivity, and data sparsity, ultimately offering a more intelligent and responsive user experience.



IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The performance of the proposed time-aware food recommender system was evaluated using real-world datasets comprising user-food interaction histories, time stamps, and contextual metadata. Experimental results demonstrated that the integration of temporal features significantly improved the accuracy and relevance of recommendations compared to baseline models, including standard collaborative filtering and content-based approaches. Specifically, metrics such as precision, recall, and F1-score showed notable improvements, highlighting the model's ability to adapt to users' changing preferences across different time contexts, such as breakfast versus dinner, weekdays versus weekends, or seasonal food trends.

The graph clustering component effectively grouped users and food items into coherent communities, allowing the system to identify latent preferences and deliver diverse yet personalized suggestions. It also contributed to mitigating the cold-start problem by associating new users with existing clusters based on limited initial interactions. The deep learning component, particularly the temporal attention mechanism, captured sequential consumption patterns and contextual dependencies, further enhancing prediction accuracy. When compared to models without time-awareness or graph structure, the proposed system consistently outperformed in both recommendation quality and user satisfaction based on simulated feedback analysis.

In qualitative analysis, the system demonstrated a strong ability to adapt to individual dietary shifts, such as transitioning to healthier meals or accommodating new dietary restrictions. Moreover, its time-sensitive nature allowed it to offer contextually appropriate suggestions, making it more practical and user-centric. The results validate the effectiveness of combining temporal modeling with graph-based learning, suggesting that such hybrid approaches can greatly advance the personalization capabilities of food recommendation systems. However, the discussion also recognizes limitations such as the need for large-scale, high-quality data and the potential complexity of real-time deployment, which future work aims to address through model optimization and edge-device integration.

V. CONCLUSION

This research presents a novel approach to food recommendation by integrating time-aware modeling, deep learning, and graph clustering techniques. The system successfully addresses several limitations of traditional recommendation methods by accounting for the dynamic and contextual nature of user preferences. Through the use of graph-based clustering, the model captures hidden relationships among users and food items, while deep learning components effectively model sequential and temporal patterns in user behavior. The incorporation of time-specific features allows the system to generate more accurate, relevant, and personalized food suggestions that adapt to users' changing habits and contexts. Experimental results validate the enhanced performance of the proposed system over conventional methods, both in terms of recommendation accuracy and user satisfaction. Overall, this work demonstrates the potential of combining temporal context with graph-based learning to build more intelligent, adaptive, and user-centric food recommender systems. Future enhancements may include real-time recommendation, integration with wearable health devices, and further personalization based on nutritional goals or cultural preferences.

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