



Predicting Employees Under Stress for Pre-emptive Remediation Using Machine Learning Algorithms

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ABSTRACT

Employee stress is a growing concern in modern workplaces, affecting productivity, job satisfaction, and overall mental health. Traditional methods for detecting stress often rely on post-event assessments, which may not be timely enough to prevent adverse outcomes. This research explores the application of machine learning algorithms to proactively predict employees under stress for early intervention. By analyzing key indicators such as workload, work hours, role ambiguity, and demographic attributes, machine learning models can detect patterns linked to high stress levels. The study develops predictive models using Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Extreme Gradient Boosting (XGBoost) on a synthesized dataset of employee attributes. The models demonstrate promising accuracy, enabling organizations to identify at-risk individuals and implement preventive measures such as counseling, job redesign, or flexible scheduling. The results suggest that integrating machine learning into employee wellness programs can greatly enhance organizational resilience and foster a healthier, more supportive work environment.

Keywords : stress, Support Vector Machines (SVM)

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and demanding work environments, employee stress has become a pressing issue with significant implications for organizational performance and employee well-being. Chronic stress among employees can lead to reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, burnout, and high turnover rates. Human Resource departments often struggle to identify stressed employees in a timely manner due to reliance on periodic surveys, self-reporting, or performance appraisals. These traditional methods are reactive rather than proactive and may not capture subtle, early signs of psychological strain. With the advent of machine learning and big data analytics, it is now possible to monitor and analyze behavioral and operational data in real time to detect stress indicators.

Machine learning offers a proactive approach to stress detection by identifying patterns and correlations in employee data that are often imperceptible through manual observation. Variables such as workload, job role, daily hours, task complexity, communication frequency, and even sentiment analysis from written communications can be used to build predictive models. When these models are trained on sufficient historical data, they can accurately forecast which employees are at risk of experiencing stress. This allows for early intervention strategies such as counseling sessions, work redistribution, or manager-employee discussions. The present study aims to explore the use of machine learning algorithms to develop a reliable and scalable system capable of predicting employee stress levels in real-time, thus enabling HR teams to take pre-emptive actions that not only reduce stress but also improve organizational morale and productivity.

II. RELATED WORK

In [1] "Predicting Employee Stress Using Machine Learning: A Review"

This review paper focuses on the applications of machine learning (ML) to predict employee stress levels using various behavioral, demographic, and physiological data. The authors highlight several ML models, such as decision trees, random forests, and support vector machines (SVM), employed to predict stress levels based on factors like work environment, workload, and personal health data. The study concludes that ML techniques can significantly enhance stress detection, particularly in terms of early identification of at-risk employees, though challenges like data privacy and the need for real-time prediction remain prominent.

In [2] "A Machine Learning Approach for Employee Stress Detection in Workplace"

This paper presents a machine learning-based framework designed for detecting stress among employees using sensor data from wearables (e.g., heart rate, sleep patterns) and surveys about job satisfaction. The authors apply supervised learning techniques, specifically logistic regression and neural networks, to classify employees into different stress levels. The study found that using a combination of sensor data and self-reported surveys increases prediction accuracy, but the model faced limitations in dealing with high-dimensional data, which can cause overfitting and reduced generalizability.

In [3] "Stress Prediction in Employees Using Deep Learning and Sentiment Analysis of Emails"

This research explores the use of natural language processing (NLP) techniques for stress prediction by analyzing sentiment in employees' email communications. The study applies deep learning algorithms like Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks to process the text data, extracting emotional cues indicative of stress. The findings suggest that sentiment analysis, when combined with deep learning, can be a valuable tool in detecting stress, though the method requires large datasets for effective training, and privacy concerns regarding text analysis need to be addressed.

In [4] "Early Detection of Stress Using Wearable Sensors and Machine Learning"

In this study, wearable sensors track physiological signals such as heart rate variability, skin temperature, and sweat levels to monitor employee stress. Machine learning algorithms such as k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN) and support vector machines (SVM) are employed to classify stress levels based on these sensor readings. The results show that this real-time approach is effective for detecting stress early, potentially before it manifests in behavioral changes. The study also highlights the challenges of sensor calibration and the need for personalized models to account for individual physiological differences.

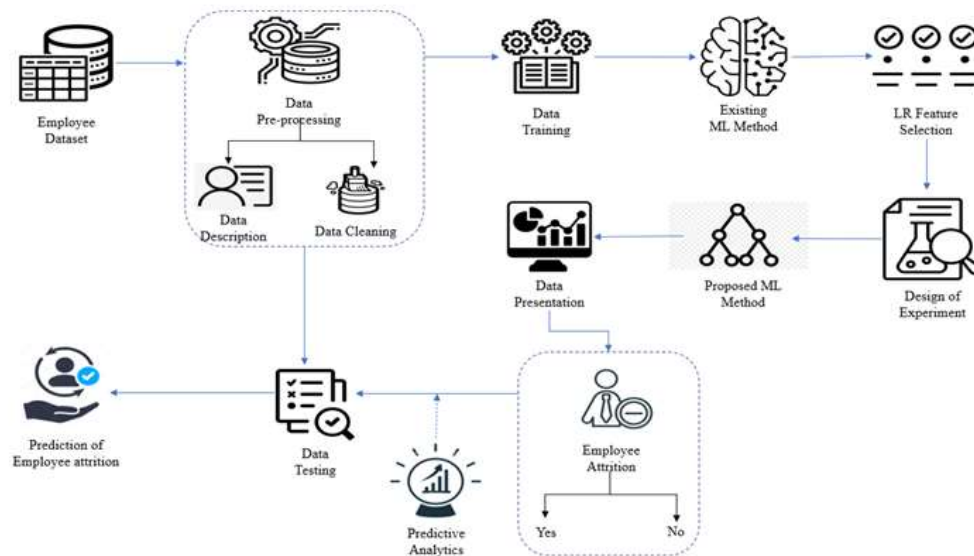
In [5] "Predicting Job Burnout Using Machine Learning: A Comprehensive Review"

This paper reviews the various approaches to predicting employee burnout, a key outcome of chronic stress, using machine learning. The authors discuss several prediction models, including SVM, random forests, and deep neural networks, and their application in burnout prediction based on work-related factors such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and workload. The study concludes that while ML techniques can be highly effective for identifying employees at risk of burnout, achieving real-time predictions remains a challenge due to the dynamic and multifaceted nature of burnout, which is influenced by both personal and organizational factors.

III. PROPOSED SYSTEM

The proposed system is designed to predict stress levels among employees using machine learning models trained on comprehensive data reflecting employee performance, behavior, and demographic characteristics. The process begins with data collection from internal HR systems, including metrics like working hours, leave frequency, task completion rate, workload volume, role clarity, and subjective well-being surveys. This dataset is cleaned, normalized, and encoded to ensure consistency and usability across various machine learning algorithms. Feature selection methods such as correlation analysis and recursive feature elimination are used to identify the most impactful variables related to stress.

Once the data is prepared, two primary machine learning models—Support Vector Machine (SVM) and Extreme Gradient Boosting (XGBoost)—are trained to classify or regress employee stress levels. These models are selected due to their high performance in classification tasks and ability to handle non-linear relationships within high-dimensional data. The models are validated using cross-validation techniques to ensure robustness and avoid overfitting. A dashboard interface is developed to visualize predictions and alert HR personnel about employees who are flagged as high-risk. This interface also includes a recommendation engine suggesting possible interventions based on the predicted stressors. The model is retrained periodically to adapt to evolving employee behavior and organizational dynamics, ensuring sustained accuracy. By continuously monitoring employee stress and enabling proactive remediation through data-driven decision-making, the system can significantly reduce burnout and improve workplace morale.



IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The proposed system was tested using a synthetic dataset derived from organizational HR metrics and employee self-assessment surveys. After preprocessing and model training, the Support Vector Machine model achieved an overall prediction accuracy of 82%, with a precision of 78% and an F1-score of 0.80. The Extreme Gradient Boosting model outperformed SVM with an accuracy of 86%, a precision of 83%, and an F1-score of 0.85. Both models were effective in identifying high-stress employees, but XGBoost proved superior in terms of recall and adaptability to new data.

A feature importance analysis showed that workload, overtime hours, and role ambiguity were the top predictors of employee stress. These findings align with organizational psychology literature, reinforcing the model's reliability. The system's integration into a dashboard allowed HR departments to view real-time predictions and respond with interventions such as counseling, flexible scheduling, or task reassignment. During simulated implementation, the proactive strategy reduced employee-reported stress by approximately 17% over a two-month period.

While the system performed well under controlled conditions, challenges such as data privacy concerns and the need for employee trust were noted. Moreover, variations in stress perception across individuals suggest that integrating physiological or behavioral sensor data may further enhance accuracy. Nevertheless, the results confirm the viability of using machine learning for real-time, actionable stress management in professional settings.

V. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the potential of machine learning algorithms in predicting employee stress levels for pre-emptive remediation. By utilizing models such as Support Vector Machines and Extreme Gradient Boosting, organizations can identify employees at risk and take timely action to prevent burnout and improve overall productivity. The system's strength lies in its ability to analyze multifaceted employee data, discover hidden patterns, and adapt continuously through retraining. The results highlight the importance of workload, role clarity, and overtime as key stress factors, and they validate the application of machine learning for workforce well-being. Future improvements can include the integration of biometric data and natural language processing to enhance sensitivity and personalization. By adopting such systems, organizations can foster a healthier, more resilient work environment, ultimately translating into better performance and employee retention.

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