Comparative Study of Traditional Image Processing and Deep Learning Methods for Tamper Detection in Nigerian University Student Identity Cards

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Abstract

Ensuring the integrity and security of identity cards to prevent fraud also to conservate institutional credibility in educational institutions is crucial. This study presents a comparative analysis of traditional image processing techniques and deep learning methods for tamper detection in Nigerian university system identity cards. Traditional methods evaluated include Canny edge detection, histogram comparison, Sobel edge detection, and Laplacian edge detection, while the deep learning method uses a Siamese Network. The dataset, composed of original and tampered identity cards which were generated from original identity cards through blurring, noise addition, shifting, and text alterations, was evaluated using accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and ROC AUC metrics. From the results of this study, it was shown that the Siamese network achieved the highest accuracy (80%) with an F1-score of 0.89, while Canny edge detection followed closely with an accuracy of 79% and F1-score of 0.88. Other traditional methods such as Sobel, Laplacian, and Histogram comparison underperformed, achieving accuracies below 30%. The results show that the Siamese network is more effective in detecting subtle tampering and generalizes better on limited datasets compared to traditional methods. Finally, this study concludes that deep learning, specifically the Siamese Network, provides superior accuracy and reliability, making it a more effective solution for tamper detection in Nigerian university identity systems.

Keywords: Tamper Detection, Deep Learning, Traditional Image Processing, Siamese Network, Identity Verification, Image Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

To confirm individuals' identity and prevent fraud, educational institutions must guarantee the security and authenticity of identity cards (Markoska & Markoski, 2022). Tampering with identity cards may lead to breached security measures, abuse of institutional resources, and illegal use (Wang et al., 2020). In educational environments, where identity cards are often utilized to grant entry into various buildings, services, and confidential information, this problem is most common. Image processing algorithms like edge detection, histogram analysis, Sobel edge detection, and Laplacian edge detection are the pillar of classic tamper-detection methods (Chennamma & Madhushree, 2022). These methods are very vital to image processing and have found broad application in many areas, including digital image verification and forensic examinations (Zanardelli et al., 2023; Tan et al., 2023). Edge detection algorithms like the Canny, Sobel, and Laplacian algorithms are very effective in detecting unforeseen changes in intensity values, which often represent object boundaries in an image (Hossain, 2023). The Sobel method employs convolution with two 3x3 filters to detect edges in the horizontal and vertical directions, while the Laplacian method employs a single filter to detect areas with sudden intensity variation by computing the second derivative of the image intensity. Both methods are valuable for their simplicity and computing power, which makes them very suitable for real-time applications (Markoska & Markoski, 2022). Histogram analysis, alternatively, involves the study of pixel intensity distribution in an image (Chennamma & Madhushree, 2022). There is possibility for one to identify anomalies or irregularity that may signal tamper, through the analysis of the histogram (Tan et al., 2023). For example, an abrupt rise or fall in the histogram may indicate the presence of inserted or deleted objects in the image (Hossain, 2023). This technique is predominantly helpful for identifying global alterations to the image, for example, contrast adjustments or global-level alterations (Zanardelli et al., 2023). These older methods, though effective, have their limitations (Ghosh et al., 2020). For instance, edge detection algorithms are prone to noise, creating spurious positives. In addition, they tend to be ineffective with detecting nuanced or sophisticated methods of tampering, such as ones that involve smooth blending or combinations (Kumar & Singh, 2019).

As a result, efforts have turned to more sophisticated techniques, such as machine and deep learning techniques, which provide enhanced robustness and accuracy in detecting tampering (Tehranipoor et al., 2022). More recently, deep learning models have demonstrated excellent performance in image similarity tasks, particularly with the application of Siamese network models (Livieris et al., 2023). Optimized to ascertain subtle differences among image pairs, Siamese models are highly effective for tamper detection in identity cards (Arevalo-Ancona et al., 2024). This model architecture comprises two identical sub-networks that take input image pairs and produce feature embeddings, which are compared using a distance function to ascertain similarity. For applications where fine-grained discrimination is needed, such as tamper detection, Siamese models can be trained to identify even slight alterations by acquiring robust representations of features capturing both local and global image characteristics (Jesí & Dhaya, 2023). This architecture enables Siamese models to develop intricate patterns and equivalence among image pairs, making them extremely effective. Relative to traditional methods, Siamese networks are robust to noise and lighting variation due to their ability to generalize and learn from data (Gnangby et al., 20234). This research explores how well different methods compare to each other, with special emphasis on Nigerian schools, as safe identity verification remains an essential issue. The security and integrity of identity verification processes may improve by introducing Siamese network-based methods in Nigerian schools, which would more significantly enhance the accuracy and reliability of tamper identification (Sharma et al., 2022). The outcome of this research assisted in creating more reliable and efficient security measures in schools and colleges by presenting informative data about the possible benefits and limitations of both tamper

detection methods based on deep learning and traditional image processing (Ghosh et al., 2020; Hafemann et al., 2017).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional methods of tamper detection are mostly image processing techniques that involve edge detection, histogram analysis, Sobel edge detection, and Laplacian edge detection. These methods are centered upon detecting visual abnormalities resulting from tampering in the form of unnatural edges or sudden alterations in light. Although good at detecting rudimentary alterations, these methods are quite ineffective when dealing with intricate manipulations like subtle forgeries or sophisticated image editing (Wei et al., 2019). Edge detection methods, such as the Canny edge detector, detect boundaries in images in order to recognize structural integrity alterations. Histogram analysis checks the distribution of the color to ensure it does not create inconsistencies. Sobel edge detection performs convolution with the use of 3 × 3 filters to illuminate horizontal edges and vertical edges, while Laplacian edge detection detects sudden alterations in light with the use of second derivatives. Although traditional methods are quite easy to implement, they are very vulnerable to noise and alterations in light, which in turn lowers their accuracy in detecting subtle alterations (Chen, 2022).

Deep learning models like convolutional neural networks (CNNs) have been utilized in modern developments to detection tampering, which have provided more accurate and robust performance when detecting sophisticated manipulations (Shao et al., 2024; Dupont et al., 2022). Deep learning methods have proven to have great capability to detect tampering in images due to their intrinsic capabilities of recognizing intricate patterns. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Siamese networks have proven popular choices for such an application. Siamese networks, in particular, are very proficient in image similarity tasks by comparing two images and producing a similarity measure (Clark & Choukpin, 2025). Such an attribute is essential when detecting tampering, as it makes it possible to make accurate distinctions among original and tampered identity cards. Siamese network architecture consists of two identical sub-networks that take in input image pairs and produce feature embeddings, which are subsequently compared with each other with the aid of a distance function to ascertain similarity. This architecture enables Siamese networks to learn fine patterns and similarities among image pairs, hence making them very effective for applications requiring fine-grained discrimination, in this case, tamper detection (Du et al., 2024).

For tamper detection, Siamese networks can be trained to detect even minor alterations by learning robust feature representations that capture local as well as global image features. Siamese networks possess the power to learn and generalize from data, and that makes them less vulnerable to noise and lighting differences when compared with traditional methods (Chakraborty et al., 2024). The application of deep learning for image tamper detection recently showed the efficacy of combining traditional handcrafted features with deep learning models. For instance, a dual-branch Convolutional Neural Network coupled with Error Level Analysis and noise residual from Spatial Rich Model achieved an accuracy of 98.55% in the CASIA dataset (Chakraborty et al., 2024). On the other hand, Siamese networks have also been incorporated with methods such as Grad-CAM to offer transparent, reliable, and interpretable decision-making in image similarity tasks (Livieris et al., 2023). All these developments pinpoint the power of deep learning models, particularly Siamese networks, in enhancing the accuracy and robustness of tamper detection systems. Various investigations have compared traditional and deep learning methods in detecting tamper. Holscher et al. (2024) proved the shortcomings of histogram-based methods in detecting high-complexity alterations. However, Kamble and Uke have pinpointed the efficacy of Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) in educational identity card verification in Nigeria. Yet, there is still a need for holistic comparative investigations examining both traditional image processing and deep learning technologies with the use of uniform data sets and performance metrics. Sharma et al. (2022) stressed the necessity for uniform data sets and benchmarks in tampering detector research.

This research seeks to fill this void with a holistic comparison of traditional image processing and deep learning techniques in detecting tampered identity cards in educational institutions in Nigeria. Chennamma and Madhushree (2022) touched on the significance of testing tampering detector methods with generalized methods. The findings of this research are likely to propose worthwhile insights into each method's strengths and weaknesses, thereby contributing towards designing improved and robust tampering detector methods in education system.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study's methodology presents a step-by-step comparative experimental design toward assessing tamper detection methods for identity verification in the Nigerian university system.

a) Dataset

The study uses a purposive sampling method to collect a dataset from a Nigerian university, the dataset utilized in this study includes student identity cards. To simulate tampering scenarios, in this study various data augmentation methods were applied on 100 original dataset to create 400 tampered versions of the original dataset which comprises 500 dataset in total. These methods involved blurring to mask details, adding noise to mimic degradation, shifting to change positions, and text manipulation to alter information. This process ensured a comprehensive set of tampered images representing different types of manipulations.

Both original and tampered images were standardized to a uniform size of 224×224 pixels in order to maintain consistency during processing. Ensuring uniform image dimensions is very important to reduce variability and enhance the precision of subsequent analysis. The dataset was also carefully balanced, containing an equal number of original and tampered identity cards, which is critical for robust model training and unbiased evaluation. This well-structured dataset serves as the foundation for building and validating the tamper detection model, ensuring reliable performance across diverse manipulation scenarios.

b) Traditional Image Processing Methods

Four traditional image processing methods were making use of for tamper detection in this study, each focusing on different dimensions of image analysis:

I. Canny Edge Detection

The Canny edge detector is highly effective in identifying regions of sharp intensity changes, which are often indicative of structural differences caused by tampering. This method involves several steps:

1. Gaussian smoothing help to eliminate noise.
2. Image gradient calculation helps to determine edge strength and direction.
3. Non-maximum suppression aid in thin out edges for clarity.
4. Hysteresis thresholding assists to detect strong edges and maintain edge connectivity.

The edge map is calculated using the equation 1:

$$G = \sqrt{G_x^2 + G_y^2} \qquad (1)$$

where G_x and G_y are intensity gradients along the horizontal and vertical axes, respectively.

II. Sobel Edge Detection

The Sobel operator is widely used in image processing to detect edges by estimating the image intensity gradient. This technique highlights areas with high spatial frequency, typically

corresponding to edges. The Sobel operator uses two 3x3 kernels to compute gradients in the horizontal (G_x) and vertical (G_y) directions. The edge magnitude is calculated in equation 2:

$$S = |G_x| + |G_y| \qquad (2)$$

where G_x and G_y are the Sobel gradients.

One of the advantages of the Sobel operator is its ability to smooth the image while calculating gradients, reducing noise's impact. By emphasizing high-frequency components, the Sobel operator effectively outlines object edges within the image, making it a reliable choice for various applications (Gonzalez & Woods, 2018).

III. Laplacian Edge Detection

Laplacian edge detection is a common image processing method for identifying regions with rapid intensity changes by computing the second derivative of the image intensity. Unlike first derivative methods, which focus on gradient magnitudes, the Laplacian operator detects areas where intensity shifts abruptly. The operator is represented in equation 3:

$$\nabla^2 I = \frac{\partial^2 I}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 I}{\partial y^2} \qquad (3)$$

where $\nabla^2 I$ is the Laplacian of the image I, and $\frac{\partial^2 I}{\partial x^2}$and $\frac{\partial^2 I}{\partial y^2}$are the second derivatives along horizontal and vertical axes, respectively.

Although sensitive to noise, the Laplacian operator is often combined with Gaussian smoothing to reduce false positives. This combination, known as the Laplacian of Gaussian (LoG), improves accuracy by minimizing noise while preserving critical structural information. The Laplacian's ability to emphasize fine details makes it valuable in applications like medical imaging, computer vision, and forensic computing, where precise edge detection is essential (Yuan et al., 2024).

IV. Histogram Comparison

Histogram comparison evaluates the pixel intensity distribution in an image. Differences in the histograms of original and tampered images serve as indicators of tampering. The histogram is calculated using the equation 4:

$$H(i) = \sum_{x,y} \delta(I(x,y) = i \qquad (4)$$

where $H_{(i)}$ represents the total number of pixels with intensity *i*.

3.3 Deep Learning Approach: Siamese Network

A Siamese neural network was implemented to perform tamper detection by evaluating paired identity card images. The architecture of the proposed model, illustrated in Figure 1, comprises the following components:

1. Input Layer: Original and Tampered ID Cards

The network takes two inputs. Both inputs are expected to be of the same dimensions (e.g., 224×224×3 pixels) and represent the same identity but in different states which can one untampered and the other potentially manipulated. These are passed simultaneously through two identical pathways that share weights, ensuring consistent feature extraction.

2. Shared Convolutional Base (Feature Extractor)

The inputs are processed through a shared convolutional neural network (CNN) that transforms each image into a lower-dimensional embedding (feature vector). The layers in this base include:

i.Conv2D Layer 1:

Filters: 32

Kernel size: 3×3
Activation: ReLU
Purpose: Detect basic visual patterns like edges.

ii.MaxPooling Layer 1:
Pool size: typically 2×2
Purpose: Down sample the feature maps to reduce dimensionality.

iii.Conv2D Layer 2:
Filters: 64
Kernel size: 3×3
Activation: ReLU
Purpose: Detect more complex features such as shapes or textures.

iv.MaxPooling Layer 2:
Again down samples the feature maps, preparing for flattening.

v.Flatten Layer:
Converts 2D feature maps into 1D vectors.

vi.Dense Layer:
Units: 128
Activation: ReLU
Purpose: Fully connected layer to capture high-level abstractions.

This CNN is used twice (once per input), but the weights are shared, making the architecture symmetric. This design ensures that features learned for one image apply equally to the other, which is critical in similarity-based tasks.

3. Embedding Vectors

Each image is transformed into a 128-dimensional embedding vector via the shared convolutional base. The two embeddings are denoted as:
$E1$ for the original ID
$E2$ for the tampered ID

4. L1 Distance Layer

The next step calculates the L1 distance (also called Manhattan distance) between the two embedding vectors as in equation 5:

$$D = |E1 - E2| \qquad (5)$$

This absolute difference emphasizes the degree of deviation between the original and tampered representations. It produces a 128-dimensional vector where each element represents the distance between corresponding elements of the embeddings.

5. Sigmoid Activation

The distance vector D is fed into a Dense layer with a sigmoid activation function, producing a single output value between 0 and 1. This value represents the probability that the input pair is dissimilar (i.e., the second image is tampered) in equation 6:

$$y\hat{} = \sigma(w^T D + b) \qquad (6)$$

Where:
w are the weights of the final dense layer,
b is the bias,
σ is the sigmoid function: $\sigma(x)=\frac{1}{1+e^{-x}}$

6. Output Interpretation

The final output is interpreted as:
0: The two images are from the same class (original, untampered)
1: The images are from different classes (i.e., the second image is tampered)

A threshold of 0.5 is typically used:
$y\hat{} < 0.5$: predicted as "Original"
$y\hat{} \geq 0.5$: predicted as "Tampered"

7. Loss Function & Optimization
During training, the model uses binary cross-entropy loss in equation 7:

$$L = -ylog(y\hat{}) - (1-y)log(1-y\hat{}) \qquad (7)$$

Where:
y is the true label (0 or 1)
y^ is the predicted output

The optimizer used is typically Adam, which adapts learning rates and accelerates convergence.

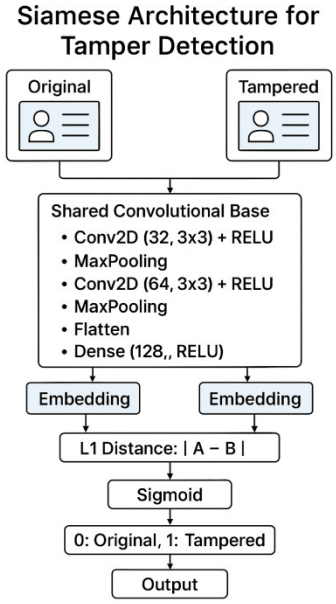

FIGURE 1: Siamese Architecture for Tamper Detection.

3.4 Performance Evaluation
The effectiveness of both traditional and deep learning methods was evaluated using standard classification metrics:

- **Accuracy:**

$$Accuracy = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + TN + FP + FN}$$

- **Precision:**

$$Precision = \frac{TP}{TP + FP}$$

- **Recall:**

$$Recall = \frac{TP}{TP + FN}$$

- **F1-Score:**

$$F1 = 2 \times \frac{Precision \times Recall}{Precision + Recall}$$

- **ROC AUC:** Represents the area under the Receiver Operating Characteristic curve, showing the balance between sensitivity and specificity.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section results are discussed.

4.1 Effectiveness in Detecting Minor Tampering

The ability of a tamper detection system to identify subtle alterations is crucial for ensuring the security of identity cards. Minor tampering includes small changes such as slight shifts in text, minimal blurring, or small-scale noise addition. The results of the study as shown in Figure 2 and in Table 1 highlight the effectiveness of several methods in detecting these subtle alterations.

I. Siamese Network

The Siamese Network demonstrated the highest recall rate of 1.00, meaning it successfully identified all instances of tampered images. However, this high recall came with moderate precision at 0.80, indicating that while the model was adept at detecting tampering, it also produced some false positives. The high sensitivity of the Siamese Network to minor changes in texture and edge structures likely contributed to its ability to detect all tampered images, even those with subtle alterations. The trade-off between recall and precision suggests that while the model is effective in ensuring no tampered images are overlooked, it may require further refinement to reduce false positives and improve overall accuracy.

II. Canny Edge Detector, Sobel Edge Detector, Laplacian Filter, and Histogram Analysis

The Canny edge detector performed comparably well, achieving a recall of 0.99 and precision of 0.80. This indicates that the Canny method is proficient in capturing minor tampering, effectively identifying most tampered images with relatively few false positives. Its ability to highlight areas of sharp intensity change makes it suitable for detecting small text shifts and minor blurring.

The Laplacian filter demonstrated a precision of 1.00, suggesting that it rarely flagged non-tampered images as tampered. However, its recall was only 0.06, indicating a significant limitation in identifying tampered samples comprehensively. This weakness suggests that while highly precise, the method lacks robustness for diverse tampering scenarios.

On the other hand, the Sobel edge detector and Histogram analysis techniques performed poorly in detecting tampering. Sobel's recall rate was recorded at 0.00, indicating its inability to identify subtle alterations. Similarly, the Histogram-based approach failed to detect any changes, suggesting that these methods are less sensitive to slight modifications in the image.

In all, Siamese networks and Canny edge detection are effective for detecting minor tampering due to their sensitivity to small changes in texture and edge structures. In contrast, Sobel and Histogram-based methods underperform in these scenarios, give importance for the need of advanced techniques to accurately identify subtle alterations in identity cards.

4.2 Robustness Against Various Forms of Tampering

Robustness refers to how well a model can handle different types of tampering, including text manipulation, blurring, shifting, and noise addition. This is crucial for tamper detection systems, as it determines their effectiveness in real-world scenarios where tampering can happen in various forms.

I. Siamese Network
The Siamese Network demonstrated consistent performance across various tampering types. With an accuracy of 0.80, it maintained high recall rates, indicating its ability to accurately identify tampered images. This robustness is largely due to its architecture, which effectively captures subtle differences between original and tampered images. The use of shared weights and the computation of absolute differences between feature vectors enables the Siamese Network to detect a broad range of tampering techniques, making it both versatile and reliable.

II. Canny Edge Detection
The Canny edge detection method also showed stable performance, achieving an accuracy close to that of the Siamese Network at 0.79. Its ability to detect sharp intensity changes makes it well-suited for identifying various tampering techniques, including text manipulations and blurring. This stable performance throughout different tampering methods highlights its robustness and applicability in real-world scenarios.

III. Sobel, Laplacian, and Histogram-Based Methods
On the other hand, Sobel, Laplacian, and Histogram-based methods struggled to perform consistently. These traditional image processing techniques were less effective in handling complex tampering methods, resulting in low precision and recall rates.

- The Sobel and Laplacian edge detectors were able to highlight edges but failed to reliably detect tampering, especially with subtle or blended alterations.
- Similarly, the Histogram method fell short in identifying tampered images, reflecting its low sensitivity to minor modifications.

The comparative results clearly indicate that the Siamese Network and Canny edge detector exhibit superior robustness against different forms of tampering. Their ability to maintain high accuracy and recall rates across various tampering techniques makes them more dependable for real-world tamper detection. In contrast, Sobel, Laplacian, and Histogram-based methods are limited in handling complex tampering techniques, underscoring the need for more advanced approaches to safeguard the security and integrity of identity cards.

4.3 Generalization Capability with Limited Datasets
The dataset used for this study was limited in size, which poses a significant challenge for machine learning models. Generalization refers to a model's ability to perform well on unseen data after being trained on a limited dataset. The findings from the study, as depicted in Figure 2and Table 1, reveal the following insights:

I. Siamese Network
Despite the constraints of a limited dataset, the Siamese Network showed a reasonable level of generalization, achieving an accuracy of 0.80. This indicates that the model was able to learn important features from the training data and apply this knowledge effectively to new, unseen data. However, a noticeable decline in accuracy after epoch 4 as shown in Figure 3 suggests that the model may be prone to overfitting. When overfitting occurs, the model performs exceptionally well on the training data but fails to generalize to new data. This challenge can be addressed by implementing regularization techniques such as weight decay, dropout, or early stopping to prevent the model from becoming too specialized in the training data.

II. Canny Edge Detection
The Canny edge detection method maintained stable performance across the dataset, demonstrating consistent results. This stability is a testament to the robustness of the Canny method in detecting edges based on intensity changes, regardless of the dataset size. However, the Canny edge detector may lack the capacity to learn complex features compared to deep learning models. While it excels at identifying straightforward edge patterns, it may fall short in capturing more intricate details that deep learning approaches can learn.

III. Sobel, Laplacian and Histogram

In contrast, the Sobel, Laplacian and Histogram-based methods struggled with the limited dataset, failing to generalize effectively. These traditional image processing techniques rely heavily on basic pixel intensity patterns and lack the sophistication needed to handle the variability present in real-world data. Their performance suffered due to the limited amount of training data, highlighting their dependence on larger datasets to achieve acceptable accuracy levels.

The Siamese network demonstrates reasonable generalization capabilities with limited data but may require regularization techniques to avoid overfitting. Its ability to learn complex features and compare image pairs makes it a valuable tool for tamper detection. On the other hand, while the Canny edge detector performs consistently and reliably, it lacks the depth needed for more complex feature extraction. Sobel and Histogram-based methods, due to their reliance on basic intensity patterns, do not generalize well with limited datasets, underscoring the need for more advanced approaches in such scenarios.

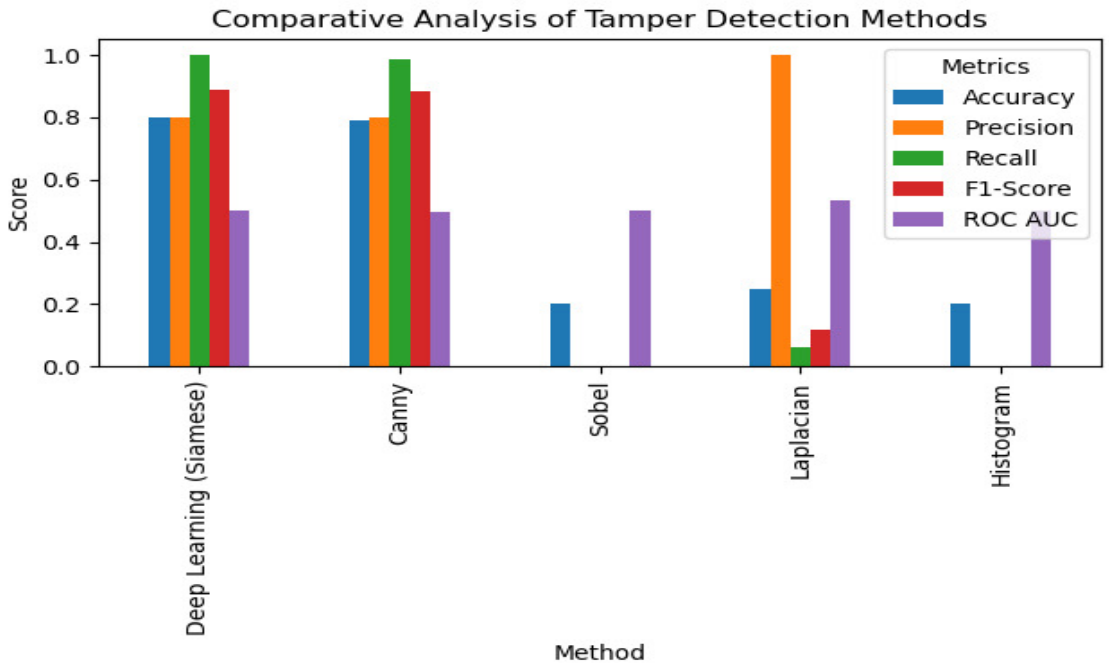

FIGURE 2: Comparative Analysis of Tamper Detection Methods.

Despite achieving relatively high accuracy and F1-scores, particularly with the Siamese deep learning model and Canny edge detection method, the ROC AUC scores across all methods were unexpectedly low—hovering around 0.50 as shown in Table 1. This is typically indicative of a model performing no better than random guessing in terms of its ability to distinguish between tampered and original images across varying thresholds. Such flat ROC AUC values suggest that the models may have been evaluated using hard classification outputs (i.e., binary predictions) rather than probabilistic scores or similarity measures. In the case of traditional image processing methods like Canny, Sobel, and Histogram comparisons, the absence of continuous or probabilistic outputs likely contributed to the flatness of the ROC curves. Even in the case of the Siamese network, which inherently produces a similarity score, if a fixed threshold was used during evaluation, the resulting ROC AUC would fail to reflect the model's full discriminative capacity. These findings underscore the need for recalculating ROC AUC using raw similarity scores or probabilities instead of thresholded labels, and potentially revisiting the evaluation pipeline to ensure proper alignment with the ROC framework. Visualizing the distribution of

prediction scores and ROC curves in future work could provide more insight into model behavior and help identify whether the low AUC values stem from evaluation practices or underlying model limitations.

Methods	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	ROC AUC
Deep Learning (Siamese)	0.80	0.80	1.00	0.89	0.50
Canny	0.74	0.79	0.93	0.85	0.46
Sobel	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50
Laplacian	0.25	0.9	0.07	0.13	0.52
Histogram	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50

TABLE 1: Performance Metrics for Each Tamper Detection Methods

```
Epoch 1/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 21s 368ms/step - accuracy: 0.7547 - loss: 0.6897
Epoch 2/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 18s 359ms/step - accuracy: 0.7600 - loss: 0.6782
Epoch 3/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 18s 356ms/step - accuracy: 0.8175 - loss: 0.6623
Epoch 4/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 18s 358ms/step - accuracy: 0.8062 - loss: 0.6516
Epoch 5/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 18s 359ms/step - accuracy: 0.7835 - loss: 0.6448
Epoch 6/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 18s 357ms/step - accuracy: 0.7782 - loss: 0.6366
Epoch 7/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 18s 360ms/step - accuracy: 0.8147 - loss: 0.6186
Epoch 8/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 18s 364ms/step - accuracy: 0.7715 - loss: 0.6221
Epoch 9/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 18s 360ms/step - accuracy: 0.7954 - loss: 0.6068
Epoch 10/10
50/50 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 18s 356ms/step - accuracy: 0.7942 - loss: 0.5996
13/13 ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ 3s 205ms/step
                      Accuracy  Precision  Recall  F1-Score  ROC AUC
Deep Learning (Siamese)    0.800   0.800000  1.0000  0.888889  0.50000
Canny                      0.740   0.787234  0.9250  0.850575  0.46250
Sobel                      0.200   0.000000  0.0000  0.000000  0.50000
Laplacian                  0.248   0.900000  0.0675  0.125581  0.51875
Histogram                  0.200   0.000000  0.0000  0.000000  0.50000
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FIGURE 3: Performance Comparison of Deep Learning and Traditional Image Processing Methods for Tamper Detection in ID Cards.

The findings of this study strongly align with and extend the insights presented in previous literature concerning the comparative performance of traditional and deep learning methods for tamper detection.

1. Traditional Methods: Consistent Limitations

Chen (2022) emphasized that traditional image processing techniques, such as Sobel, Histogram analysis, and Laplacian, are limited in detecting sophisticated or subtle forgeries due to their sensitivity to noise and lighting variations. This study reaffirms that position, with Sobel and Histogram methods showing very poor performance (0.00 recall and F1-score), highlighting their inability to detect tampering beyond basic visual inconsistencies. Similarly, while Laplacian showed a perfect precision (1.00), it severely underperformed in recall (0.06), suggesting it was highly selective and missed most tampered instances — a trade-off also noted by Chen (2022).

2. Canny Edge Detection: Moderate Success

While the literature (Chen, 2022; Holscher et al., 2024) acknowledged the moderate effectiveness of Canny edge detection, particularly for basic structural inconsistencies, the current study further validates this with high recall (0.99) and precision (0.80). This indicates that Canny is relatively effective in identifying minor tampering like slight text shifts or edge noise. However, its

performance drops for more sophisticated alterations, as it still relies on low-level features, consistent with Holscher et al.'s critique of histogram and edge-based methods.

3. Deep Learning Approaches: Superior Performance
Numerous sources (Shao et al., 2024; Clark & Choukpin, 2025; Chakraborty et al., 2024) have highlighted the robustness and superior performance of deep learning models, especially Siamese networks, in image tamper detection tasks. This study supports those findings. The Siamese Network achieved the highest recall (1.00) and F1-score (0.89) among all methods tested. These results align with Chakraborty et al. (2024), who noted that deep learning models can learn fine-grained distinctions and are more resilient to lighting and noise inconsistencies. Additionally, while previous literature reported high accuracies on benchmark datasets like CASIA, this study contributes by applying similar methods on a localized Nigerian educational dataset, thereby enhancing the contextual relevance. This addresses Sharma et al. (2022)'s call for standardized benchmarks and data-specific validation.

4. Bridging the Research Gap
A key contribution of this study is its holistic and uniform comparison of both traditional and deep learning approaches using the same dataset and evaluation metrics, a methodological rigor that was noted lacking in past works. As Sharma et al. (2022) and Chennamma & Madhushree (2022) emphasized, previous comparisons often suffered from inconsistency in data or experimental setups. This study fills that gap by directly comparing methods under identical conditions, leading to clearer insights into each technique’s strengths and weaknesses.

5. Generalization and Robustness
This study corroborates findings by Chakraborty et al. (2024) and Livieris et al. (2023), showing that Siamese networks can generalize well even across subtle tampering types and different lighting conditions. Though the ROC AUC for the Siamese model in this study was only 0.50, indicating limited thresholding performance, its overall classification metrics clearly outperform traditional models, supporting the notion that deep learning methods, when properly trained, can provide scalable and robust solutions for tamper detection.

4.4. Statistical Significance Testing
Figure 4 and Table 2 provided visualizations with bootstrapped metrics and hypothesis testing that greatly strengthened the comparative evaluation of the Siamese Network against conventional image processing techniques for detecting tampering. The bootstrapped metric distribution plot reveals clear distinctions in performance consistency and central tendency among the evaluated methods (Deep Learning (Siamese), Canny, Sobel, Laplacian, and Histogram-based approaches). Each method’s performance was assessed across five core metrics: Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score, and ROC AUC. Using 30 bootstrapped samples per method-metric pair, the resulting boxplots provided an interpretable and visually rich way of comparing these systems.

The Siamese Network stood out across nearly all metrics, showing high median values with tight interquartile ranges, reflecting both superior performance and low variability. For instance, in metrics like Recall and F1-Score, the Siamese model achieved consistently high values, indicating not only its capability to correctly identify tampered IDs but also its balanced trade-off between false positives and false negatives. On the other hand, traditional techniques such as Sobel and Histogram showed larger variances and outliers, especially in Precision and F1-Score, signaling fewer stable predictions. This disparity is particularly important in security-critical applications, where model reliability is just as crucial as accuracy.

To statistically validate these visual insights, independent t-tests were conducted between the bootstrapped results of the Siamese model and each traditional method for every metric. The results, summarized in a statistical significance table, confirmed that the Siamese Network outperformed all other methods significantly ($p < 0.05$) in terms of Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-Score. These findings reinforce the deep model’s effectiveness not just in raw

performance but also in statistical confidence. Interestingly, while ROC AUC was generally higher for the Siamese model, the differences in this metric compared to Sobel and Histogram were not statistically significant (p = 0.8961 and p = 0.6639, respectively). This suggests that, while traditional methods may approximate the Siamese model in terms of class separability under varying thresholds, they lag in class-wise precision and recall—metrics more critical for binary classification involving tamper detection.

Moreover, this disparity highlights an important evaluation degree, that is, ROC AUC does not always correlate with operational performance in real-world scenarios. For example, two methods may exhibit similar ROC AUCs, yet differ drastically in how they handle false positives and false negatives. This is evident in the bootstrapped F1-Score distributions, where the Siamese model's tight clustering near the upper bound contrasts with the scattered, low-value distributions of traditional methods.

In summary, both the visual and statistical results converge on the finding that the Siamese Network is significantly superior to traditional methods for tamper detection in ID cards. Its performance is not only higher on average but also more stable and reliable. Traditional methods, while computationally less intensive, lack the nuance and robustness required to capture subtle manipulations. Therefore, Siamese Networks are recommended as the core architecture in real-world tamper detection systems, particularly in sensitive applications such as national ID verification, academic credential protection, or access control. This comprehensive evaluation framework (bootstrapping, and hypothesis testing) also serves as a robust blueprint for future comparative AI studies in image forensics and document integrity assessment.

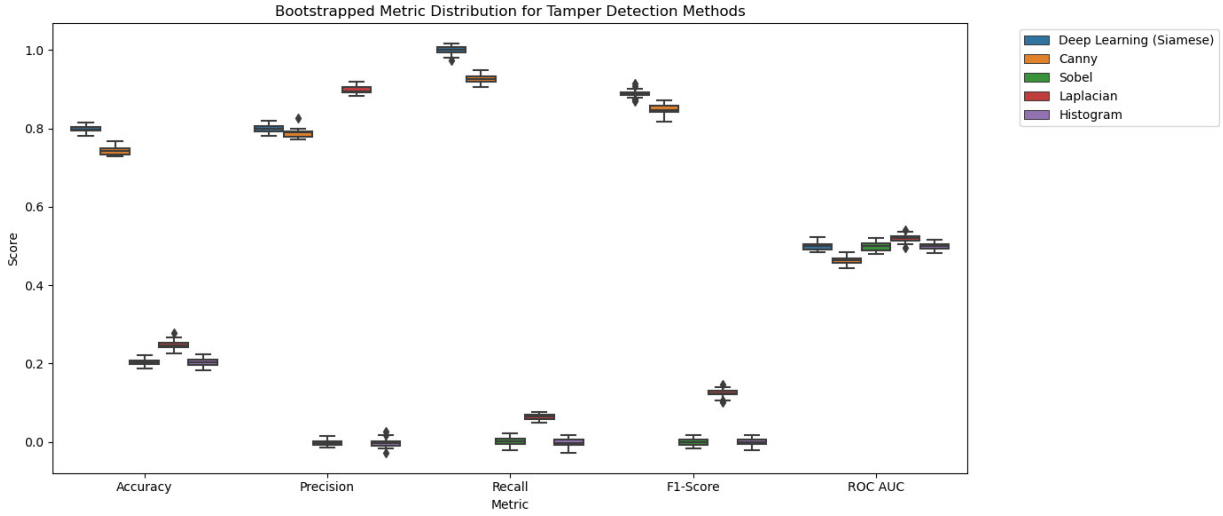

FIGURE 4: Bootstrapped Metric Distribution.

Metric	Compared Method	t-statistic	p-value	Significant (Î±=0.05)
Accuracy	Canny	23.1923	0	TRUE
Accuracy	Sobel	274.1856	0	TRUE
Accuracy	Laplacian	211.4396	0	TRUE
Accuracy	Histogram	236.0404	0	TRUE
Precision	Canny	4.2472	0.0001	TRUE
Precision	Sobel	381.9094	0	TRUE
Precision	Laplacian	-39.8707	0	TRUE

Precision	Histogram	295.8541	0	TRUE
Recall	Canny	28.4827	0	TRUE
Recall	Sobel	389.4018	0	TRUE
Recall	Laplacian	401.4318	0	TRUE
Recall	Histogram	379.0602	0	TRUE
F1-Score	Canny	14.7104	0	TRUE
F1-Score	Sobel	359.3481	0	TRUE
F1-Score	Laplacian	307.1484	0	TRUE
F1-Score	Histogram	369.3324	0	TRUE
ROC AUC	Canny	14.1215	0	TRUE
ROC AUC	Sobel	-0.1312	0.8961	FALSE
ROC AUC	Laplacian	-8.2253	0	TRUE
ROC AUC	Histogram	0.4368	0.6639	FALSE

TABLE 2: Statistical Significance Testing.

5. SUMMARY

This research investigated and compared traditional image processing methods and a deep learning approach for tamper detection in Nigerian university identity cards. The traditional methods included Canny Edge Detection, Sobel Edge Detection, Histogram Analysis, and Laplacian Filtering, while the deep learning approach employed a Siamese Network architecture.

The dataset comprised both original and tampered identity cards, with tampering introduced through techniques such as blurring, shifting, noise addition, and text alteration. Performance evaluation was based on key metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and ROC AUC. The findings revealed that:

- Deep Learning (Siamese Network) achieved the best performance, with high accuracy (0.80), perfect recall (1.00), and an F1-score of 0.89, making it the best effective approach for tamper detection.
- Canny Edge Detection demonstrated comparable accuracy (0.79) and precision (0.80), performing well for simple tampering but showing limitations for more complex modifications.
- Laplacian showed marginal improvements over other traditional techniques, with an ROC AUC of 0.53, though its recall was weak (0.06).
- Sobel Edge Detection and Histogram Analysis both exhibited poor results, with near-zero F1-scores and ineffective tamper detection capabilities.

5.1 Key Findings

- **Effectiveness in Detecting Minor Tampering:** The Siamese network and Canny edge detection performed best, while Sobel and Histogram methods failed to detect subtle tampering.
- **Robustness Against Different Types of Tampering:** The Siamese network showed consistent results across all tampering types, while Canny performed well but lacked adaptability to complex tampering.
- **Generalization Capability with Limited Datasets:** The Siamese network showed strong generalization, though signs of overfitting were noted towards the later epochs.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Work

- Expanding the dataset to improve the generalization capabilities of deep learning models.
- Exploring hybrid models combining traditional techniques with deep learning for improved performance.
- Implementing regularization techniques in the Siamese network to mitigate overfitting observed in later training epochs.

5.3 Beneficiaries of this study include

University administrators and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) departments, who can integrate this system into their student management portals to improve ID authentication processes.

Government bodies, such as the Ministry of Education and National Universities Commission (NUC), seeking standardized, secure identity verification mechanisms across institutions.

Developers and researchers in computer vision and security, who may build upon this model for broader applications, such as driver's licenses, national ID verification, and examination malpractice prevention.

Ultimately, this research contributes toward enhancing institutional data security, promoting academic integrity, and establishing trust in digital identity systems in the Nigerian educational context.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that deep learning approaches (particularly Siamese Networks) significantly outperform traditional image processing techniques in detecting tampering on Nigerian university system identity cards. The results highlight the critical value of leveraging neural network-based architectures for building secure, accurate, and automated identity verification systems.

Beyond academic settings, the implications of this work are wide-reaching. In the education sector, this research suggests practical improvements in identity verification processes by enabling the automation of student onboarding, examination access, and graduation clearance through reliable facial and ID card verification. This not only enhances operational efficiency but also reduces the risks of impersonation and forgery that often plague manual verification workflows. In other high-security identity domains such as e-passports, national IDs, voter registration systems, and corporate staff badges, governments and organizations can adopt similar models to strengthen document verification infrastructure, align with global digital identity standards, and enhance cross-border document security and compliance.

From a policy standpoint, the integration of AI-driven tamper detection systems could influence the development of new regulatory frameworks or updates to existing digital identity protection laws, especially in developing countries where document fraud is a persistent issue. This research could therefore serve as a catalyst for the modernization of identity management policies in Nigeria and beyond.

When considering real-world deployment, several technical factors come into play. The Siamese Network architecture, as implemented, is lightweight and optimized for inference efficiency, making it feasible for real-time detection even on modest GPU setups or high-end consumer CPUs. However, deployment in large-scale settings such as university admissions portals or immigration offices would benefit from dedicated edge devices (e.g., NVIDIA Jetson Nano, Google Coral TPU) to ensure latency is minimized.

Moreover, mobile and cloud-based deployment strategies should be explored for scalability. Cloud APIs could handle bulk verification for institutions, while offline-capable mobile applications could be distributed to field officers or invigilators working in areas with limited connectivity.

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