

**DEEP LEARNING APPROACH FOR DETECTION AND PREDICTION OF
PEST INFECTIONS ON PLANTS IN GREENHOUSES**

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**A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS OF THE**

KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY.

SEPTEMBER 2025

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

DECLARATION

I declare that this research thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university.



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CIS-3-3454-3/2023

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RECOMMENDATION

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, friends, and mentors, whose unwavering support and guidance have been a constant source of strength throughout my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all who contributed to the successful completion of this thesis. I am especially grateful to my supervisors, Mr. Vincent Mbandu and Mr. Timothy Anondo, for their invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, and continuous support throughout the research process. Their mentorship greatly shaped the direction and quality of this work.

Above all, I thank God for granting me the strength, perseverance, and clarity to complete this journey.

ABSTRACT

Pest infestations remain a serious threat to greenhouse agriculture ultimately resulting in reduced yields, increased cost of production, and food safety concerns. Traditional pest monitoring strategies are predominantly manual in nature, which can be laborious, time-consuming, and exhibit human error. These downfalls can affect timely action on issues and a positive relationship management with pest monitoring can mean excessive pesticide use with financial and/or environmental impacts. This paper proposed an AI-enabled hybrid deep learning model to automate pest detection and estimate the probability of a pest outbreak. The hybrid model combined Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for spatial (image-based) pest identification with Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks to estimate probabilities of outbreaks based on sequences of environmental ((local) environmental data temperature, humidity, as well as, recorded counts of pests) and pest counts to help improve timing of interventions and proactive pest management solutions. The study made use of both primary and secondary datasets. The primary dataset was collected from three greenhouses in Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika, Kenya as well as high-resolution crop images (48 mega-pixels) representing various pest infections. Local environmental data for temperature, humidity, and pest counts were collected from the greenhouses to use as sequential variables in the LSTM component of the workflow and assist with estimating the accuracy of predicted outbreaks. Secondary datasets of pre-annotated pest images and historical climate records, including PlantVillage and IP102, provided bulked training data that improved models' robustness and generalizability to unseen datasets. The researcher ensured stratified sampling to capture representation of all greenhouse types, farm sizes, and agro-climatic conditions. As part of preprocessing, all datasets underwent the following steps: image augmentation, noise removal and feature normalization. All model training, including hyperparameter tuning, occurred in a GPU-enabled Google Colab environment, and early stopping was used to avoid overfitting. The hybrid CNN-LSTM model produced a classification accuracy of 94.7%, precision of 93.9%, recall of 93.8%, and F1-score of 93.2%. The time-series predictive component of the LSTM model produced strong predictive performance with a mean absolute error (MAE) of 0.14, and R^2 value of 0.89. This showed that the environmental and measured sequence data of pests improve outbreak prediction. It was shown that the hybrid model accurately identifies pest infections, as well as predicting their outbreaks, which will contribute to providing early and timely interventions in the pest control system. Both high-resolution image data and measurements of local environments support a scalable and resilient choice for greenhouse pest management - the use of less pesticides, leading to sustainability in agriculture. In conclusion, this study has demonstrated the effectiveness of a hybrid deep learning framework for integrated pest management with operational and financial implications.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AUC	Area Under the Curve
CNNs	Convolutional Neural Networks
DL	Deep Learning
EDA	Exploratory Data Analysis
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IoT	Internet of Things
IoU	Intersection over Union
LSTM	Long Short-Term Memory
MAE	Mean Absolute Error
MSE	Mean Squared Error
RMSE	Root Mean Square Error
RNNs	Recurrent Neural Networks
YOLO	You Only Look Once

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Pests remain a major threat to productivity in agriculture globally, amounting to an approximate annual loss of 40% of crops (FAO, 2025). Most agricultural systems involve old-fashioned pest management systems which are primarily based on the carrying out of manual scouting of pests and related chemical application of pesticides. However, the vast majority of these agricultural systems do not respond quickly and effectively to pest outbreaks, and as a consequence, farmers are often ineffective in better pest management and become reliant on pesticides with increasing risk of resistance and damage to the environment (Chowdhury & Anand, 2023). The shift towards sustainable agriculture represents a shift towards the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Deep learning (DL) detection and prediction approaches for pest problems which offer new technologies for the automation of pest problems in agriculture (Hu et al., 2024).

Pest management in sub-Saharan Africa presents challenges presented by limited infrastructures, lack of extension support, and low levels adoption of precision agriculture technologies. Greenhouse farming, on the one hand, provides a buffer against climatic variability, but it also creates ideal pest outbreak conditions, because multiple factors (temperature, light, and humidity) can improve the growth rate of pests (Mafongoya et al., 2019).

In Kenya, there is much interest in AI-based tools for agricultural purposes that farmers could utilize, but adoption is taking time and limited due to technological and social

challenges (Adewusi et al., 2024). According to Chowdhury & Anand, (2023), farmers in certain areas continue to use manual methods for pest control, which will lead to continued pest issues and yield declines. Greenhouse farming is growing in popularity, especially with small and medium sized growers, who look to potential high value horticultural crops. Among others, however, they pose a significant amount of production and market losses. For instance, Mugao (2023) reported on insufficient plant protection practices of being responsible for over 70% of postharvest losses in naturally grown greenhouse tomatoes and capsicum because of pest damage.

The research concentrated on three significant horticultural zones in Kenya - Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika - selected for their agro-climatic variation, importance of commercial-scale greenhouse production, and position in the horticultural value chain. Naivasha serves as a large-scale production zone for floriculture and vegetables as it is a semi-arid zone, climate dictates production must be conducted within a controlled greenhouse environment.

Limuru is characterized by a cooler highland climate and where small- to medium-scale horticultural enterprises are common as a representative of production systems in temperate conditions. Thika is located in a warmer mid-altitude zone as a rapidly developing region for fruit and vegetable farming both in open-field and greenhouse conditions. Altogether, these three regions represent a range of climatic zones and production systems which experience perennial pest pressure. In this context, their use therefore allowed the study potential to test the models of pest detection and forecasting

across diverse ecological and production systems, hence enhancing generalizability and practical relevance.

To produce scalable AI solution that is locally contextual the researcher recognized the importance of creating and training deep learning models for pest detection and classification using publicly available datasets like PlantVillage and IP102 (Hu et al., 2024; iAFRICA, 2025). LSTM (Long Short-Term Memory) models are effective for forecasting pest outbreaks using time-series data, while convolutional neural networks (CNNs) excel at identifying pests from images (Chen et al., 2022; X. Zhang et al., 2023). Existing models are either designed for large scale open-field agriculture or were built in controlled testing environments making it challenging to generalize to the unique challenges of greenhouse production in Kenya (Manzi et al., 2024) reveals gaps, needs an integrated hybrid CNN - LSTM for accurate real-time pest detection or outbreak prediction for greenhouse production.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Farmers practicing greenhouse farm techniques in Kenya are still faced with pest infestation and still continue to scout for pests manually which is slow, labor intensive and prone to errors (Chowdhury & Anand, 2023; Mugao , 2023). The current AI-based models such as CNNs and LSTMs only provide partial solutions because CNNs only detect spatial and abstract features and LSTMs only detect sequences and temporal patterns. Therefore, there are currently no models that provide either an all-inclusive or holistic answer in a way that is adapted to greenhouse conditions in sub-Saharan Africa. (Chen et al., 2022; Manzi et al., 2024; X. Zhang et al., 2023). This gap highlights the need for hybrid CNN -

LSTM models that can detect pest species in real-time and predict pest outbreaks in support of sustainable greenhouse farming (Hu et al., 2024; iAFRICA, 2025).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research was to develop and contextualize a hybrid deep learning model that integrates Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks to automate pest detection and forecast outbreaks in Kenyan greenhouse agriculture. The study contributes to knowledge by developing hybrid AI architectures that are applicable to agricultural pest management and demonstrated the methodological integration of spatial and temporal learning and use in precision agriculture. Practically speaking, the research also aimed to deliver a reliable, real-time, decision-support tool for farmers and agricultural officers, to facilitate early detection of pests, forecasting of outbreaks, minimize crop damage and reductions in pesticide application while fostering efficiency and sustainability in greenhouse crop production.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

To develop and evaluate a hybrid deep learning model integrating CNN for pest detection and LSTM for outbreak prediction, aimed at enhancing early and near real-time identification of pest infections in greenhouse crops.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The study had the following specific objectives:

- i. To develop a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model for accurate image-based detection of pest infections in greenhouse crops.
- ii. To develop a Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) model for predicting pest outbreaks using temporal patterns derived from annotated image sequences.
- iii. To integrate the CNN and LSTM models into a hybrid deep learning model for enhanced pest detection and outbreak prediction.
- iv. To evaluate the hybrid model's performance using standard metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score.

1.5 Research Questions

This section outlines the research questions that underpinned the study. These research questions were based on the study's objectives and were designed to explore possible relationships among the three core variables of interest: model architecture (CNN, LSTM, hybrid CNN-LSTM), performance metrics (accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score), and the wider context and relevance to greenhouse agribusiness in Kenya.

The research questions informed the design and implementation of the deep learning models for pest detection and prediction while meeting the exploratory and evaluative focus of the study in accordance with typical empirical research practices in the development of artificial intelligence applications for agriculture (Azharuddin et al., 2024; Li & Wang, 2024).

1.5.1 Research Questions

- i. How accurately can a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model detect pest infections in greenhouse crops using annotated image data?
- ii. To what extent can a Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) model forecast pest outbreaks based on historical image sequences?
- iii. How does the integration of CNN and LSTM into a hybrid deep learning model enhance pest detection and outbreak prediction compared to standalone models?
- iv. What is the performance of the hybrid CNN-LSTM model in terms of accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score when applied to greenhouse pest datasets?

Table 1.1:*Operationalization of Variables*

Variable	Operational Definition
Detection Accuracy	The proportion of correctly identified pest images by the CNN or hybrid model.
Outbreak Prediction Accuracy	The correctness of LSTM-based forecasts compared to actual pest occurrence sequences.
F1-Score	The harmonic Mean of precision and recall, representing the model's balance between the two.
Contextual Relevance	The consistency of model performance across greenhouse data subsets from Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika.

The research questions assisted the exploratory elements of the study, especially with respect to investigating model design and contextual suitability, while the hypotheses provided a theoretical structure to inform empirical testing and further quantitative validation. The characteristics of the study provided both breadth and depth towards the study's aims. The mixed approach is a common practice in applied deep learning research and was one of the rationales for being able to implement a dual aim approach to the study, optimizing model performance and transferring that performance to the realities of real greenhouse farms in Kenya (Islam et al., 2023; X. Zhang et al., 2023).

1.6 Justification of the Study

Pests are also a perennial problem in greenhouse farming, particularly in Limuru, Naivasha and Thika where high value crops are grown. The older solutions, like manual scouting and reactive spraying of pesticides are slow and inefficient leaving late detection, heavy crop losses and overuse of chemicals. This paper addresses this challenge through

the proposed hybrid deep learning model which integrates Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for image-based detection of pests and Long Short-term Memory (LSTM) networks for outbreak prediction.

The model represents a handy data-driven tool for famers in collaboration with extension officers or researchers to screen the land against threat of pests for timely management and reduce farmer's dependency on pesticides. Drawing on model work on Kenyan greenhouse conditions, the research contributes to sustainable crop protection which drives food and nutritional security, environmental sustainability and agricultural innovation. As applied, the method offers more economical control of pests, reduced production costs and improved decision-making for greenhouse growers.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

While the research shows a practical, promising way to implement a deep learning approach for pest management, it also faced challenges. The primary dataset, from greenhouses in Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika, provided useful information about pest management experiences, but it was limited in scope to support effective model training and testing. Consequently, secondary datasets were incorporated to strengthen the training dataset and improve model generalization. While the secondary datasets were deeper, they may not have fully captured the diversity of pest species or crop varieties or specified imaging conditions such as lighting and resolution.

Furthermore, the secondary dataset did not account for the temporal dimension of a greenhouse environment in Kenya. These data deficiencies were addressed through

preprocessing and improving the performance of the model via stratified cross-validation to generative reduce possible biases (Nyakuri et al., 2024).

The study also dealt with the relatively high computational demands of the hybrid CNN-LSTM model. The requirements of the processing and memory computing were above the capability of locally available resources, but fine-tuning of hyperparameters, applying pretrained CNN backbones, and extending the training to cloud platform graphical processing units (GPUs) had the potential to minimize the computational constraints on the model (Nyakuri et al., 2024).

Finally, while the model was parameterized and validated from data collected in Limuru, Naivasha and Thika, further testing of its generalizability to other areas in Kenya should be undertaken under real field conditions. Despite the noted challenges with the model developed in this study, this demonstrates a scalable and transferable model which utilized primary data alongside secondary data sources. This would not only enhance the robustness of the model, but will ultimately establish a framework for the development and broad adoption of AI-based pest monitoring in greenhouse agriculture.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This research was delimited to the construction of a novel deep learning model comprised CNNs for pest identification and LSTM networks for prediction of pests' plague in greenhouse farming. The primary data were images sourced from greenhouse farms in Limuru, Naivasha and Thika while the secondary ones were obtained from PlantVillage and IP102 that contain annotated pest images suitable for model train and test. Despite the

fact that secondary datasets are global, this investigation concentrated on three locations in Kenya that displayed high-altitude micro-climates and intensive horticultural practice to create a context, where artificial intelligence-supported pest discovery and prediction would be evaluated (Africa, 2023). Owing to resource limitations, available toolkits (Google Colab) were used in the research for reproducible and low-cost implementation. Model performance was assessed for accuracy, precision, recall and F1-score which enhances the methodology transparency and facilitate comparisons with other related works in the future. In narrowing the model architecture (CNN-LSTM), datasets (primary greenhouse images and additional proof-of-concept data), computational resources/platforms (Google Colab) and regional context (Limuru, Naivasha, Thika), the study maintained its rigor while generating actionable intelligence to inform AI-based sustainable pest management model for greenhouse horticulture in Kenya.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The novelty of this research in precision agriculture lies in the use of a hybrid CNN-LSTM model to show the possibility of automatic pest detection and outbreak predictability through greenhouse system. The method merged secondhand data with hands-on examples of implemented computational procedures, hence provides an extensible process for the application of deep learning in pest control- which remains a relatively under-penetrated domain within the developing agrarian context.

Combining both spatial and temporal features, the model opened up new possibilities in predicatively intervening pest outbreak to intervene against insect pests timely for growers to reduce losses of insect pests more promptly with greater confidences (Wang & Li,

2025). Specifically, researchers, agronomists and technologists looking for cost-effective pest management approaches in low-resource environments would find the paper to be resourceful.

Localizing the model in terms of Kenyan greenhouse conditions, particularly in Limuru, Naivasha and Thika made it relevant to local practitioners yet had lessons that were also transferable to other contexts. In addition to immediate operational advantages, the research fits into broader sustainability objectives by minimizing pesticide application and increasing crop production; and contributes towards information-driven decision-making related to food security and environmental conservation (Paudel et al., 2020; Rahman & Ravi, 2022). Overall, the study advances academic knowledge on AI-driven pest management and provides real world avenues of advancing agricultural practices in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

A number of assumptions were made during the course of this investigation to afford some level of confidence regarding the accuracy and consistency of the findings obtained. First, the researcher assumed that the secondary datasets that was used in particular PlantVillage and IP102 were correct, sufficiently annotated, and representative of pest species as well as imaging conditions relevant to greenhouse production. This assumption was important for constructing valid models during training and validation as any differences in labels or class imbalance would cause performance issues (Li & Wang, 2024).

Second, it was assumed that the data collected from greenhouse farms in Thika, Limuru and Naivasha which included images of infested crops and environmental measurement were representative of actual pest infestations within these regions and collected under stable and controlled conditions. This assumption was crucial to guarantee that the model did learn patterns which can be used in real world conditions of greenhouses.

Third, in particular the analysis of this study did not control for any systematic biases that may have been introduced by the computation resources and tools used including Google Colab and Python-based deep learning libraries. Fourth, it was taken into consideration that the general evaluation metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall and F1-Score would be applicable to decide the efficiency of the model implementation on automated pest management (Ajaharuddin et al., 2025). Lastly, there was an assumption that contextualizing the study in greenhouse conditions of Limuru, Naivasha and Thika was appropriate and that it was reasonable to upscale the model to comparable agro-ecological zones.

These were assumptions made in order to ensure both the internal validity of the study-meaning the results can be attributed to the models developed and not due to uncontrolled influences-and the external validity, meaning, it can be generalized and applied to other greenhouse contexts other than the study site. Together, this increases the credibility of the results when informing the next AI-based interventions in pest management.

1.11 Definition of Operational Terms

Accuracy: The proportion of correct predictions made by the model out of all predictions generated, often used to assess model performance in classification tasks (Kumari et al., 2024).

Confusion Matrix: A tabular summary that displays the number of true positives, false positives, true negatives, and false negatives produced by a classification model, enabling deeper evaluation beyond overall accuracy (Wang & Li, 2025).

Convolutional Neural Network (CNN): A deep learning architecture designed for analyzing image data by extracting spatial features through convolutional filters. It is commonly applied in crop and pest classification tasks (Duan et al., 2023).

Cronbach's Alpha: A statistical measure of internal consistency that assesses the reliability of research instruments such as questionnaires and scales (Njuguna & Ouma, 2021).

Data Augmentation: A set of techniques used to artificially expand the size of a training dataset by creating modified versions of images or sequences, improving model generalization (Qian et al., 2023).

Deep Learning: A subset of machine learning based on multilayered artificial neural networks designed to automatically learn hierarchical representations from large datasets (IBM, 2024).

Feature Extraction: The process of identifying and isolating significant attributes or patterns in the input data that can enhance the accuracy and efficiency of predictive models (Wang & Li, 2025).

F1-Score: The harmonic mean of precision and recall, used to evaluate classification models, especially when class distribution is imbalanced (Kumari et al., 2024).

Greenhouse: A climate-controlled structure employed in agriculture that is used to modify climate parameters such as temperature, humidity, and light for plant production (Namuye, 2025).

Image Processing: The destruction of images using computational approaches to improve, modify, and analyze images to derive meaningful inference. This approach has been applied in plant disease and pest detection (Duan et al., 2023).

Internet of Things (IoT) Sensors: Smart devices that provide use applications in greenhouse situations often used to collect real-time environmental information such as temperature, humidity, or CO₂ (Platero-Horcajadas et al., 2024).

Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM): A type of recurrent neural network (RNN) capable of learning long-term dependencies in sequential data, with applications in time series prediction, such as pest outbreak prediction (Wang & Li, 2025).

Mean Squared Error (MSE): A loss function from regression, which is calculated as the average of the square of the difference between predicted values and actual values. Larger errors have a much larger effect (Frost, 2021).

Model Overfitting: A modeling error when an algorithm model is able to generalize good predictions based on training data but poorly generalized predictions on new unseen data. Model overfitting is a consequence of a model being too complex (IBM, 2021).

Model Training: The process in which a ML algorithm iteratively adjusts its parameters of the supplied input data to minimize errors in predictive capacity (Namuye, 2025).

Pest Detection: The recognition of harmful biological agents which damage crops, and can often be done by AI utilizing image classification and pattern recognition techniques (Duan et al., 2023).

Pest Prediction: The prediction of future pest outbreaks according to historical data, climatic aspects, and crop-related information, using machine learning models (Nanushi et al., 2022).

Precision: The proportion of true positive cases with the number of cases predicted positive, demonstrates the accuracy of the model (Kumari et al., 2024).

Real-time Processing: The way of systems which will immediately act on data inputs; this is important in real-time decision making in a dynamic operational area, such as pest management (Huang et al., 2025).

Recall (Sensitivity): The proportion of true positive observations with the number of actual positives, determining the ratio of true instances the model would detect (often referred to as the response/recognition) (Kumari et al., 2024).

Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE): A regression method which is the Square root of the average of squared differences between predicted values and observed values, and is in the same unit as the outcome variable (DataCamp, 2025).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review of current academic research on the applied use of deep learning for pest detection and prediction in greenhouse agricultural systems. Specifically, the chapter looks at prior research examining the use of Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) for visual pest detection from images, and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) models that have been used to predict time-series data, and includes the usage of CNN-LSTM hybrid models that combine both capabilities. Additionally, there will be a comparative review of traditional pest management measures, and the artificial intelligence-based alternatives with attention to the advantages, results, and limitations of both. Also addressed in the chapter will be the theoretical underpinnings and conceptual framework for the study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study was constituted by two complementary theoretical perspectives: Deep Learning Theory and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Together, the set of theoretical perspectives provided a locus for the technical development of the hybrid CNN-LSTM model for pest detection and outbreak prediction to socio-technical evaluation of acceptability and relevance in practice in the context of greenhouse agriculture (Maraveas, 2023; Okai et al., 2024).

2.2.1 Deep Learning Theory

As a component of machine learning, Deep Learning Theory is based on the function of Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) designed to replicate human brain performance of

hierarchical learning. This theory allows the development of computational models that bypass the need for feature engineering and allows for the automated extraction of complex, abstract features from a large-scale dataset (Maraveas, 2023). Deep Learning Theory is a well-suited and practical methodology for pest management in agricultural settings given that the issue is two-fold and is associated with visual data and spatiotemporal data.

The deep learning constructs of the models used to better understand the relationship between visible signs of pest infestations and time were based in CNN and LSTM architectures, respectively. CNNs were used to evaluate image-based data to detect visible signs of pest infestations, while LSTMs processed time-series data to forecast pest outbreaks based on historical trends and environmental factors. The finalist models are considered hybrid models since they leveraged discrete CNNs and LSTMs to balance detection and forecasting, which their strengths are complementary to each other (Maraveas, 2023).

2.2.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

In addition to the technical foundation of deep learning theory, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a socio-technical framework that describes the acceptance and adoption of a new technology by users. TAM addresses two fundamental constructs, Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), which assess how much better the technology improves the user's performance and the degree of difficulty associated with effectively engaging with the technology (Okai et al., 2024). In the context of precision greenhouse farming, TAM served as a framework to assess how greenhouse

producers, extension personnel, and other stakeholders viewed AI-enabled solutions. Previous studies have shown that these perceptions are a major determinant of technology adoption (Mohr & Kühl, 2021). In incorporating TAM, the current study examined the technical performance of the CNN-LSTM model as well as the technical performance of the potential for real-world adoption, in the sense that outputs should be useable, practical, and realistic in relation to the users' operational context in Kenyan greenhouse agriculture (Alhnaity et al., 2019).

2.2.3 Integration of Technical and Socio-Technical Perspectives

A two-framework approach was used for this study, to balance careful algorithmic principles and human-centered usability. The conduct of the design, development, and execution of the CNN-LSTM model was guided by Deep Learning Theory so that it could learn effectively from complex images and temporal sequences. The use of TAM provided contextual relevance of the technology to assess usability, interpretability, and ease of uptake for greenhouse farmers and extension officers. In conclusion, both frameworks bolstered the justification for an appropriate choice of methods, provided the hybrid CNN-LSTM approach with a clear contribution to knowledge, and ensured that the system was theoretically valid and practically applicable to a Kenyan greenhouse context (Alhnaity et al., 2019; Maraveas, 2023; Mohr & Kühl, 2021; Okai et al., 2024).

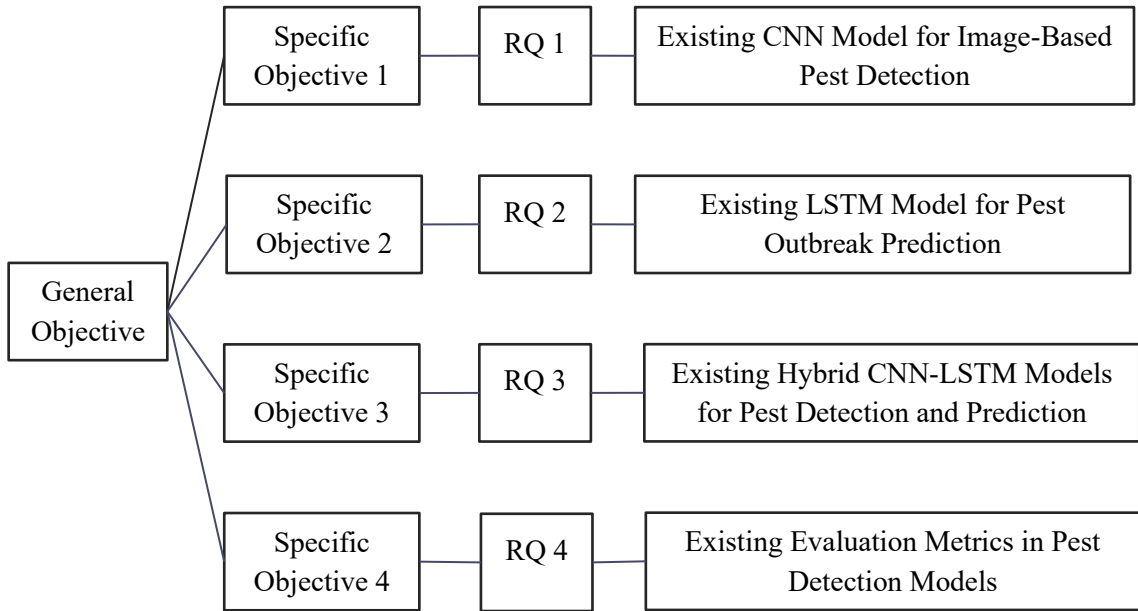
2.3 Empirical Literature Review

The researcher carried out an objective-based literature review of pest detection and prediction using deep learning techniques as shown in Figure 2.1. The purpose of the review was to look at existing models and approaches, their effectiveness, and to increase

objectivity. These results would subsequently be leveraged to develop a hybrid model (CNN-LSTM) and validate the proposed model in the research project.

Figure 2.1:

Objective based Literature review



2.3.1 Existing CNN-Based Methods for Pest Detection

Due to the ability to extract spatial features with great power, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have dominated image classification tasks surrounding plant disease and pest identification. Several studies have shown the effective application of CNNs in different applications to detect and identify pests in agricultural settings.

Using deep learning CNN architectures (VGGNet and DenseNet), (Chen et al., 2022) developed their study, where classification was above 92% for aphids and whiteflies. Likewise, Chen et al., (2022) found their mean average precision (mAP) score = 94.3% in

their study detecting whiteflies on tomato leaves from a deep learning model (ResNet-50). These two studies show the strength of CNN architectures for capturing small visual features of pest morphology.

More recently, (Singh et al., 2024) created a modified Efficient Net that provided improved detection accuracy (95.6%) with lower inference speed for pest identification to enable real-time pest monitoring in greenhouses. In Liu & Wang, (2021) developed a model using MobileNetV2 with transfer learning that used multi-label classification to detect pests for various crops and was successful indicating the time and computational efficiency of CNN architectures in under-resourced environments.

(Ayan et al., 2020) implemented an ensemble architecture consisting of InceptionV3 and ResNet layers of CNN and achieved an F1-score of 91.0% for a task that classified 12 pest categories at various lighting conditions. In addition, Zhang et al., (2023) provided a more recent example of a lightweight CNN typically based on YOLOv5 to localize and classify the pest in a tea plantation with an accuracy from a precision of 93.4% and indicated it was real-time and capable of being used on scouting drones and similar applications.

Although CNN-based methods can control for false positives with attention mechanisms based on attention maps, Pant et al., (2021) also demonstrated an attention-CNN with a more accurate to control false positives by maximizing spatial localization accuracy over the ability to detect early and late-stage pest lesions on capsicum leaves. Despite their ability to autonomously detect pests, CNN models consist of challenges including unbalanced datasets, pictures that are in some measure blurred or occluded or that include

pest morphology that is likely to vary depending to the local agroecological zone (Duan et al., 2023). Many researchers have interfaced data augmentation, transfer learning and ensemble learning in their methods. For example, Raju & Thasleema, (2024) created an ensemble of deep CNNs based on pest images and with careful fine-tuning yielded high classification precision with sub-optimal results. In conclusion, CNN-based models may provide exciting opportunities for image-based pest detection, especially with crop specific pest challenges in situ. These findings validate the development of a CNN model in this study for greenhouse pest identification under varying image conditions.

2.3.2 Existing Pest Prediction Models Using LSTM Networks

Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks are a type of recurrent neural network (RNN) that shows great potential in modeling time series agricultural data. LSTMs are capable of capturing long-term dependencies establishing a strong potential for predicting pest outbreaks based on historical and environmental patterns. For example, Wagle et al., (2024) used an LSTM model trained on meteorological data to predict disease in tomato plants. Their prediction was reported as a root mean square error (RMSE) equal to 0.124 and sent alerts to producers up to five days in advance.

Several studies, like Parola-Contreras et al., (2022) examined the dynamics of whitefly in greenhouses using meteorological data, provide an empirical context for the benefits of using time-series modeling to predict disease outbreaks. Other studies, like Pranolo et al., (2022) used a multivariate approach to present and demonstrate a bifold-attention LSTM architecture that improved upon the previous univariate model in a multivariate prediction context.

A study by Guo and Feng, (2024) added a new temporal position into the LSTM architecture to predict greenhouse climate behaviors by incorporating an enhanced temporality perspective for the attention mechanism. The results indicated that the predictability accuracy for climate behavior improved predictably by 8.3% relative to the baseline models. Accordingly, Kleijkers, (2022) applied a bidirectional LSTM with a Temporal Convolutional Network (TCN) to prediction cucumber production with similar greenhouse conditions. Combined, the capabilities of the bidirectionality of the LSTM create a picture of the need for hybrid temporal models to forecast crop-health.

Although LSTM networks have made progress, they are demanding in resources and sensitive to complications such as missing or noisy data that require careful preprocessing, careful sequence specific tuning, and careful hyperparameter tuning. Overall, LSTM models are capable of pest outbreak prediction when complemented with well-constructed time-series data; lending themselves to the purpose of this study of predicting pest dynamics using temporally tagged images and environmental data.

2.3.3 Existing Hybrid CNN-LSTM Models for Pest Detection and Prediction

Studies combining CNN and LSTM architectures into hybrid model structures have gained interest in agricultural applications where spatial and temporal analyses conduct concurrently. In particular, hybrid models would be paramount in environments such as greenhouses where visual indicators of infection and environmental patterns together influence pest outbreaks. For instance, Arnaud et al., (2022) created a CNN-LSTM hybrid model for late blight detection in potatoes using both environmental data and images. Their hybrid model was superior to either the CNNs or the LSTMs when given 93.8%

accuracy. Likewise, Rekiek et al., (2025) utilized a similar hybrid model in smart farming systems and reported above 92% for classification F1-scores for pest infestation using image datasets and real-time sensors.

In general, these models will begin as CNN layers to extract visual features from images using pest-infested leaves as input then output the data stream into LSTM layers to connect sequential dependencies and produce a forecast for pest outbreaks. Guhan et al., (2024) demonstrated this hybrid model had 12% less false positives than its CNN-only alternative. In a study conducted in the greenhouse by Coutinho et al., (2025) they used a CNN-LSTM model that used a time-series of the last 10-day meteorological data along with images of their leaves. The greenhouse model trained to an accuracy of 91.4% and had some generalizability across crop and pest types, offering warnings as early as 7 days in advance.

Even with these advances, there are still practical limitations. Deep learning models that rely upon CNN-LSTM architecture typically require major computational resources, are also prone to overfitting in data scarce environments, and often lack interpretability which may present challenges to implementation at field level (Jouhari & Guizani, 2024). To overcome these limitations as well as realize what is termed edge computing, the authors Khan et al., (2023) proposed a MobileNet-LSTM model that reduces memory requirements and is tailored for edge computing in the smart greenhouse setting. Interestingly, the MobileNet-LSTM model was able to maintain over 90% classification accuracy while minimizing memory requirements which enables the model to be

implemented in situations with scarce resources (e.g., resource poor agricultural environments) and in real-time.

Within the Kenyan case, hybrid models based on CNN-LSTM architectures are still dormant for pest prediction in greenhouses, especially in controlled agricultural environments. Although showed that CNN-based models could be used in the detection of diseases in tomato and maize crops, the integration of frameworks that combine spatial (e.g., CNN) and temporal (e.g., LSTM) modeling are pending exploration. Some preliminary work that is relevant to this line of inquiry is (Kipkorir et al., 2024) which provided an insightful examination of food and nutrition security in various counties and the importance of data-driven agricultural planning highlighted signs that institutions are ready for further investment that embraces more advanced A.I. Principally, their research interprets benefits of predictive modelling with regards to supporting sustainable food systems. With this foundation, the current study aims to provide an initial starting point by developing and validating a hybrid MobileNet-LSTM model for predicting pest outbreaks in Kenyan greenhouses in support of precision agriculture within economic resource limits.

2.3.4 Evaluation Metrics in Pest Detection Models

Evaluating the performance of deep learning models in agricultural pest detection requires the use of robust, standardized metrics to ensure reliability, generalizability, and actionable insights. Commonly employed metrics include accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), each providing a unique lens through which model effectiveness can be interpreted.

Accuracy reflects the proportion of total correct predictions and is often used as a baseline performance indicator in classification tasks. For instance, Alzakari et al., (2025) reported a CNN-LSTM model achieving 97.1% accuracy in detecting late and early blight in potatoes, indicating strong classification capabilities in image-based pest detection.

Precision and recall are particularly important in pest detection due to the high costs associated with both false positives and false negatives. Precision captures the model's ability to correctly identify pest-positive instances without mislabeling healthy samples, while recall assesses how effectively the model captures all actual pest occurrences. Praveen et al., (2024) demonstrated that their deep learning model achieved a precision of 95.6%, highlighting its reliability in minimizing false alarms. Complementing this, Aziz et al., (2025) emphasized the role of recall in ensuring that early-stage infestations are not overlooked an essential trait for real-time deployment.

The F1-score, as the harmonic mean of precision and recall, offers a balanced measure, particularly valuable in dealing with class imbalance a common trait in real-world pest detection datasets. Chodey & Noorullah Shariff, (2022) reported an F1-score of 91.4% for their hybrid model, affirming its capacity to maintain performance despite skewed data distributions.

For time-series prediction tasks, especially relevant to pest population dynamics, RMSE is commonly used to quantify the deviation between predicted and actual values. Palma et al., (2025) demonstrated an RMSE of 0.124 in predicting insect abundance, indicating high temporal prediction accuracy with minimal error margin.

Collectively, these evaluation metrics provide a comprehensive framework for benchmarking model performance. Their use across diverse studies affirms their reliability and relevance in guiding the selection and tuning of models. In the current study, accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and RMSE were employed to evaluate both the standalone and hybrid CNN-LSTM models, ensuring consistency with best practices in agricultural AI research.

2.4 Research Gaps Identified from Literature

Despite notable progress in deep learning for pest detection and outbreak prediction, critical gaps exist in particular, regarding greenhouse agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa and Kenya. These gaps undermine the applicability, accuracy and operational relevance of existing models to the relevant context of agriculture.

2.4.1 Limited Hybrid Models in Greenhouses

Most studies to date, most research has focused on either using CNNs for pest detection based on images or LSTMs which has been used for time-series analysis, and with focus on open-field crops such as maize, potatoes and tomatoes thinking on the context of SSA. However, very few studies develop hybrid models using CNN-LSTM specifically for greenhouse agriculture, which presents a different microclimate, controlled environmental conditions, and differentiated pest dynamics (Njeru et al., 2023).

Therefore, the proposed models capture and used the spatial (image) and temporal (environmental and pest counts) information, which are limitations in the existing

literature on modeling pest detection and outbreak prediction while employed in greenhouses which are more adapted to local conditions.

2.4.2 Sparse Kenya-Specific Implementations

CNN-based image classification has been applied to a few types of crops in Kenya (Njeru et al., 2023) while hybrid principles that consider spatial and temporal modeling have been mostly unexplored. Additionally, most models developed do not address local pest species, greenhouse technology, or environmental context, which limits transferability and applicability in Kenyan greenhouses.

2.4.3 Lack of Local Datasets

Most models use datasets from international institutions, for example, PlantVillage or IP102; however, this dataset does not represent the pest species, the crop varieties, or the climate conditions in Kenya. Because of this disparity, the generalizability is limited, and prediction accuracy diminishes specific to the local context. As a result, many AI-driven interventions are less meaningful for greenhouse farmers in Kenya.

2.4.4 Socio-Technical Considerations

Few studies include the perspectives of end-users, such as issues of usability, interpretability, and potential for uptake by greenhouse farmers and agricultural extension agents. Without attending to the socio-technical considerations, practical uptake, and long-lasting effects of AI tools, could be limited due to models that could have been technically accurate, but simply did not work in terms of operation and access by smallholder farmers.

2.4.5 Model Interpretability and Resource Constraints

Many deep learning models operate as black-box systems, often requiring significant computational power, thereby making it difficult to deploy in resource constrained environments, which is typical of smallholder greenhouses in SSA (Jouhari & Guizani, 2024; Khan et al., 2023). Until additional models become available that demonstrate efficiency, transparency, and interpretability it will remain a challenge to implement AI solutions at scale in local farming contexts.

2.5 Addressing the Gaps

The proposed study directly addresses these limitations by:

2.5.1 Development of a Hybrid CNN-LSTM Model

The study created a hybrid CNN-LSTM model that combines spatial image-base and temporal time-series data. This combination allows for accurate pest detection and outbreak predictions in a greenhouse context, using the strengths of CNNs for visual feature extraction along with LSTM's temporal pattern recognition.

2.5.2 Use of Locally Collected Datasets

The study employed datasets collected locally, including greenhouse-specific images and climate data collected from various regions in Kenya such as Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika. This enables the model to be specific to locality pest's species, crop types, and microclimatic conditions, improving predictive accuracy and operational applicability.

2.5.3 Incorporation of Explainability and Computational Efficiency

The study included explainability features to allow for transparency and understanding of the model. It also recognized computational efficiency to decrease resources needed and allow for real time deployment of the model, considering the low resources that exist for greenhouse farmers in Kenya.

2.5.4 Validation in Real Greenhouse Environments

The model is validated in actual greenhouse settings, bridging the gap between algorithmic performance and practical adoption. This validation process also captures stakeholder perspectives on usability and adoption potential, ensuring that the AI solution is both technically robust and operationally relevant.

2.5.5 Contribution to Kenyan Greenhouse Agriculture

By addressing these gaps, the study delivers a contextually relevant, technically robust, and operationally adoptable AI solution for intelligent pest management in Kenyan greenhouse agriculture.

Table 2.2:

Knowledge Gap

Objective	Author(s) & Year	Study Focus	Key Findings	Identified Gaps	Contribution of the Current Study
CNN-based image pest detection	Kirongo et al., (2024)	CNN-based disease detection in tomato and maize in Kenya	Demonstrated high classification accuracy for field crops	Does not incorporate temporal prediction (LSTM) or greenhouse-specific datasets	Integrates time-series prediction using LSTM and applies to greenhouse settings in Kenya
	Techbuild Africa, (2024)	JKUAT and KALRO AI agriculture projects in Kenya	Piloted CNN-based crop monitoring tools	Lacked model optimization for greenhouse pest prediction or integration of time-series analysis	Proposes a deployable hybrid model that combines spatial detection with temporal prediction for greenhouse pest management
LSTM-based pest outbreak prediction	Liu et al., (2022)	LSTM pest trend monitoring using time-series analysis in Bomet and Nakuru	Demonstrated potential of time-based pest prediction using conventional statistical tools	Did not apply deep learning; lacks integration with image-based detection techniques	Combines LSTM for time-series with CNN for visual detection in a unified model
	Palma et al., (2025)	MobileNet-LSTM for lightweight agricultural prediction	Achieved 90%+ accuracy with reduced computation load	Lacked validation in resource-limited SSA contexts or pest detection specificity	Builds a lightweight, localized hybrid model for deployment on low-resource devices used by Kenyan greenhouse farmers

Objective	Author(s) & Year	Study Focus	Key Findings	Identified Gaps	Contribution of the Current Study
Hybrid CNN-LSTM integration	Patil et al., (2024)	CNN-LSTM hybrid model for late blight prediction in potatoes	Achieved 93.8% accuracy using image and environmental data	Conducted in open-field setting; not localized to Kenyan crops or greenhouse contexts	Adapts the CNN-LSTM hybrid model for greenhouse conditions and pests specific to Kenyan regions
	Rekiek et al., (2025)	Smart farm pest detection using CNN-LSTM	F1-scores above 92% for pest recognition and time-aware prediction	Focused on Asian farms; lacks environmental and socio-technical adaptation to SSA	Applies similar model architecture in a Kenyan greenhouse environment with local pest and climate data
	Thakare & V., (2022)	CNN-LSTM for indoor pest monitoring	Reduced false positives by 12% using hybrid spatial-temporal feature modeling	Focused on indoor farms in controlled research labs; lacks field-level validation	Validates hybrid model in real-world greenhouse farms in Kenya
Evaluation in Kenyan greenhouse context	Wayua et al., (2020)	Manual scouting and rule-based systems in smallholder greenhouses	Found manual methods slow and error-prone	Did not explore AI as a comparative method or propose automation	Demonstrates superiority of CNN-LSTM over manual and rule-based systems through comparative performance evaluation
	Jenane, (2025)	Review of AI applications in sub-Saharan agriculture	Highlighted benefits of AI in yield improvement and pest diagnosis	Focused on open-field crops; minimal greenhouse studies	Extends AI application to under-researched greenhouse farming using hybrid deep learning models

2.6 Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by a conceptual framework that outlined the relationships among the key variables involved in the detection and prediction of pest infestations in greenhouse agriculture using a hybrid deep learning approach. The framework informed the model design, data flow, and evaluation strategy, ensuring systematic alignment with the study objectives (Aziz et al., 2025).

The independent variables in the framework included the primary sources of input data: image data and environmental/time-series data. The image data consisted of annotated photographs of greenhouse crops, some of which showed visible signs of pest damage. These images served as the core input for spatial feature extraction using Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), which have demonstrated superior accuracy in pest and disease identification across agricultural contexts (Thakur et al., 2023). In parallel, environmental and historical time-series data such as temperature, humidity, and pest occurrence trends were used as inputs to the Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) network. LSTM networks are highly effective in agricultural prediction due to their ability to capture temporal dependencies (Jaiswal et al., 2022). These two data sources represented the distinct yet complementary dimensions of the pest monitoring problem: spatial detection and temporal prediction.

The intervening variables consisted of preprocessing techniques and the hybrid model architecture. For images, preprocessing steps included resizing, normalization, noise reduction, and augmentation to ensure high-quality inputs for the CNN component. For time-series data, preprocessing involved smoothing, normalization, and temporal alignment to

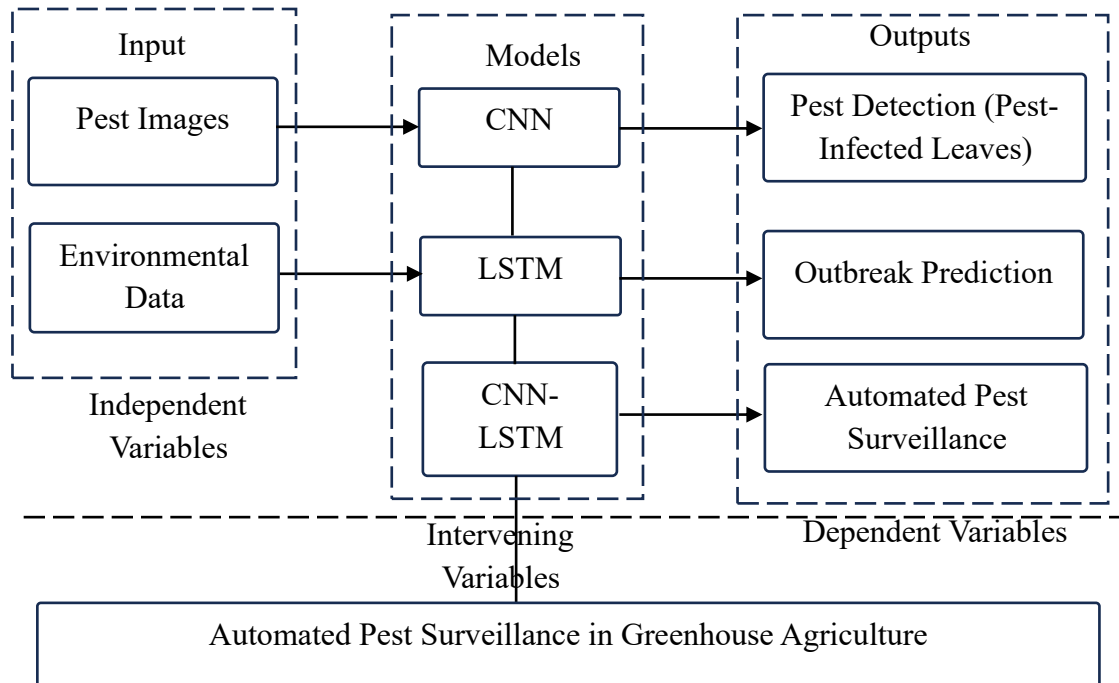
improve input consistency for LSTM analysis (Abbasimehr & Paki, 2022). The structure of the hybrid model itself was critical: the CNN extracted spatial features from images, while the LSTM processed sequential environmental data. Integration of both components enabled the model to correlate visual pest cues with environmental conditions over time, thereby improving detection accuracy and prediction reliability (Thakare & V, 2022).

The dependent variables reflected the measurable outcomes of model performance namely, accuracy, prediction quality, and real-time responsiveness. Accuracy referred to the proportion of correct pest identifications across all test cases. Prediction quality was evaluated using classification metrics such as precision, recall, and F1-score, which offered a balanced measure of the model's discriminative ability (Chowdhury & Anand, 2023). Real-time responsiveness addressed the model's ability to deliver timely warnings, which is vital for early intervention in greenhouse settings (Chowdhury & Anand, 2023).

This conceptual framework was integral to the logical flow of the study. It enabled the design and implementation of a robust system that not only processed multimodal agricultural data but also translated it into actionable insights. The framework directly supported all research objectives: developing a CNN-based pest detection system, designing an LSTM-based prediction model, evaluating the performance of the hybrid architecture, and validating its contextual applicability in Kenyan greenhouses. By clearly outlining the pathways between inputs, processes, and outcomes, the framework ensured the study remained focused, measurable, and scientifically grounded throughout its execution.

Figure 2.3:

Conceptual Framework



Note: Figure 2.2 illustrates the relationship between the study's variables. Input image data and environmental/time-series data served as independent variables, while preprocessing techniques and the model architecture (CNN, LSTM, hybrid) functioned as intervening variables. *Source:* (Pandey et al., 2024).

2.7 Summary

Chapter Two offered a thorough review of deep learning applications for pest detection and prediction in greenhouse production. It introduced the global pest infestation problem and the shortcomings of conventional methods, then examined the potential of Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for image-based detection and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM)

networks for time-series prediction. Research from 2020-2024 highlights the usefulness of hybrid methods in improving accuracy and efficiency in pest monitoring models.

The chapter further explored CNN-LSTM hybrid architectures, their advantages over stand-alone models, and key considerations such as preprocessing, data requirements, evaluation measures, and real-time responsiveness. The review also drew on related theories, including Artificial Neural Network Theory and the Precision Agriculture Paradigm, and presented the study's conceptual framework. Ultimately, it identified a critical gap in the contextual application and validation of hybrid deep learning systems in Kenyan greenhouses, justifying the need for a locally adaptive CNN-LSTM model for improved pest management.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed to address the purpose of the study, which includes using a hybrid deep learning model that combines Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) with Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks for pest identification and prediction in greenhouse crops. The chapter includes the study design, population, sampling methods, data collection instruments and data collection methods. The chapter describes the process has been undertaken to operationalize and analyze the variables utilizing qualitative and quantitative approach which helps ensure that the data collection is methodologically, repeatable and scientists always use rigorous procedures.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design that combined experimental, observational - descriptive, and comparative approaches to balance methodological rigor with practical relevance (Selvaraj et al., 2019; TÜRKOĞLU & HANBAY, 2019). The experimental aspect concentrated on developing and testing the CNN and LSTM architectures. Primary image datasets were collected from greenhouse farms in Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika, and these were supplemented with secondary datasets from PlantVillage and IP102. Model performance was measured using standard metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, RMSE, and R^2 , allowing for a clear evaluation of predictive performance (Chodey & Noorullah Shariff, 2022).

The observational - descriptive part of the research drew from both quantitative and qualitative data which included farming practices, pest behavior, climatic changes, and pest incidence records. Insights from stakeholder questionnaires and interviews were also incorporated to make sure the model captured patterns that were relevant to the specific agroclimatic settings (Mohr & Kühl, 2021).

The comparative part focused on benchmarking the hybrid model against existing deep learning approaches and conventional pest monitoring strategies. This emphasized the model's key advantages, particularly its enhanced detection accuracy, improved scalability, and capacity for real-time implementation (Alhnaity et al., 2019).

3.2.1 Justification of Design Selection

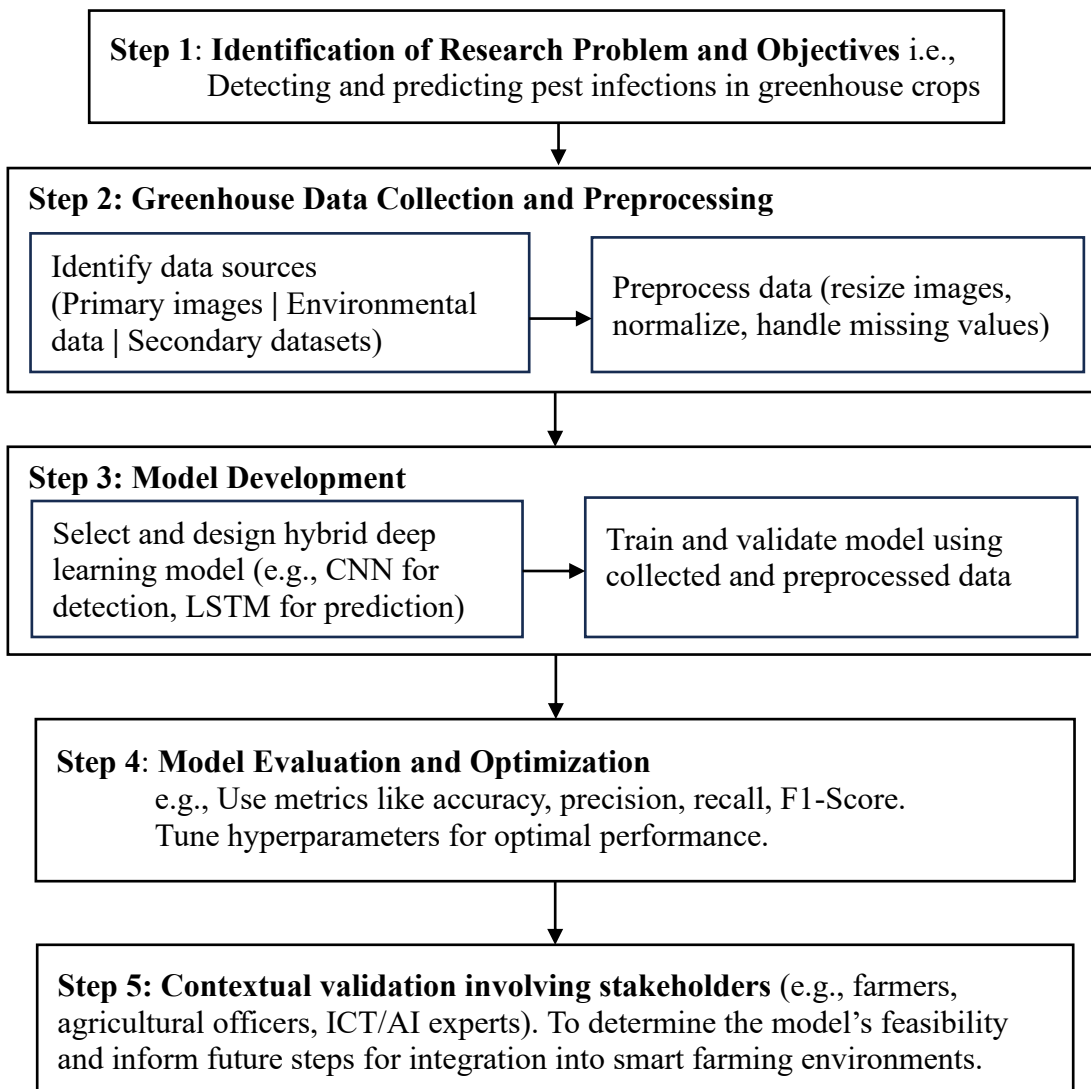
This design was well-suited because it integrated experimental rigor with contextual and comparative validation, effectively balancing technical precision with real-world agricultural considerations. The experimental-predictive aspect allowed for thorough testing of the AI model using both primary and secondary datasets, while the observational-descriptive aspect enabled the inclusion of ecological and behavioral factors pertinent to greenhouse settings.

The comparative nature of the study made the analysis more robust by comparing the hybrid CNN-LSTM model against prior models and highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the model. Furthermore, by triangulating quantitative evaluation with qualitative perspectives from literature and stakeholders, the study generated ecological validity while ensuring an applicable end product. Thus, the study resulted in scientifically valid, widely generalizable, and useful-to-practice findings that increased the broader discussion about the

use of AI in greenhouse pest management (Alhnaity et al., 2019; Chodey & Noorullah Shariff, 2022b; Mohr & Kühn, 2021; Selvaraj et al., 2019; TÜRKOĞLU & HANBAY, 2019). Figure 3.1 illustrates the overall research design and the progression that led from defining the research problem, through data collection, building models, and providing a technical evaluation, to subsequent empirical validation and engagement with stakeholder involvement.

Figure 3.1:

Research Design Flowchart



Note: This figure illustrates the overall research design, visually summarizing the step-by-step process from data collection to validation. *Source: Author (2025).*

3.3 Study Area

The research was conducted at operational greenhouse farms in Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika, Kenya (KNBS, 2021; MoALFC, 2022). These regions were selected because of their established role in protected horticulture, high pest pressure, and different agro-climatic settings that made them suitable for assessing the hybrid CNN-LSTM pest detection and prediction model.

The research setting Limuru is situated in central highlands due to the high altitude, cooler temperatures, and vegetable and/or flower greenhouses mostly owned by smallholder farmers (Holleman et al., 2020). Naivasha is located in the Rift Valley where warmer, low altitude environmental conditions predominate floriculture and horticultural enterprises that are typically confronting pest demands on full scales. Thika, situated in the peri-urban northeast of Nairobi, has medium-sized greenhouses cultivating tomatoes, capsicum and herbs. Production in the greenhouses is largely influenced by the availability of urban food markets and the demands of local consumers (KALRO, 2024).

Variations in altitude, temperature and humidity between sites have had significant implications for pest developments. In situ imaging and collecting environmental data enabled the CNN-LSTM model to learn the spatial and temporal patterns essential to pest

detection and outbreaks. Additionally, secondary datasets in climate trends and pest incidence over time provided additional ecological and operational relevance to the model (Ikua et al., 2021).

3.4 Target Population

This research focused on stakeholders involved in greenhouse agriculture from Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika. Participants included greenhouse farmers, the farm managers, agronomists, agricultural extension officers, and agritech developers. Each of these participants provided contributions about pest control practices, operational challenges, and the possibility to be part of AI solutions. The participants were identified from a wide range of greenhouse sizes, types of crops (such as tomatoes, capsicum, herbs, and flowers), and pest pressure, which makes them ideal participants for the context of implementing the hybrid CNN-LSTM model (Chowdhury & Anand, 2023c; FAO, 2025; Mani, 2022).

3.5 Sample Size Determination

It was essential to determine an appropriate sample size to produce statistically valid and practically meaningful results, especially with the operational limitations of greenhouse farms. The population of interest was greenhouse farms in Limuru, Naivasha and Thika, with a population of 364 farms (KNBS, 2021; MoALFC, 2022). To derive a representative sample, Cochran's formula for a finite population was used. The initial sample size was determined using maximum variability (p equals 0.5) and a 5% margin of error (e equals 0.05) at the 95% confidence level. The initial sample size was calculated as

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \times P \times (1-p)}{e^2} \quad (1)$$

Where:

- $Z = 1.96$, the z-value corresponding to a 95% confidence level,
- $P = 0.5$, assuming maximum variability for a conservative estimate,
- $e = 0.05$, the desired margin of error (5%).

Substituting the values:

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

Given that the total amount of greenhouses around Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika are finite and $N=364$ was reasonably estimated, I applied finite population correction (FPC):

$$n_0 = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{n_0 - 1}{N}} \quad (2)$$

Substituting the values:

$$n_0 = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{n_0 - 1}{N}} = \frac{384.16}{1 + \frac{383.16}{364}} = \frac{384.16}{2.0527} = 187$$

Due to practical constraints including time, accessibility, and field conditions, the margin of error was adjusted to 10% ($e = 0.10$), yielding:

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{(0.10)^2} = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.01} = 96.04$$

Applying the FPC again:

$$n_0 = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{n_0 - 1}{N}} = \frac{96.04}{1 + \frac{95.04}{364}} = \frac{96.04}{1.261} = 76$$

As a result, a complete representative sample of a total of 76 respondents was identified, comprising greenhouse farmers, extension officers, agronomists and agritech specialists. This sample size was identified as an achievable amount balancing statistical robustness against realities of operation to gather a representative sample of voices relevant to AI-based pest detection technologies, whilst the researchers could implement the study aspirations. This sample was also deemed adequate to provide contexts for meaning across all three study regions that justified qualitative and quantitative analysis.

For the model validation, a subset of 33 participants (approximately 43% of the sample) was identified. This sample size is within common guidelines as a sample size of 30 or larger is generally sufficient to attain reliable accuracies for estimating population parameters by the central limit theorem. The sample selected was proportional across all stakeholder categories greenhouse farmers, extension officers, agronomists and agritech specialists to ensure the validation participants represented the diversity of voices present. Selecting a separate validation set, further minimized potential bias and overfitting to provide a robust assessment and generate a wider understanding of AI based pest detection models.

3.6 Sampling Procedure

The researcher used proportional stratified sampling of the selected farms to collect primary data that varied by farm size, crop type, and pest incidence (Ikua et al., 2021). Secondary datasets were also used, which included PlantVillage and IP102 to supplement primary

images, to help support the model and label additional pest occurrences (Ilakya et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2019).

Stakeholders were purposively sampled to provide operational insights and validate the practical relevance of the CNN-LSTM model (Chowdhury & Anand, 2023; Mani, 2022).

Table 3.1 shows the proportional allocation of the sample across the three study regions.

Table 3.1:

Sample Size Allocation Across Study Regions

Region	Estimated Greenhouses	Sample Size (n)
Naivasha	150	31
Limuru	120	25
Thika	94	20
Total	364	76

3.7 Instrumentation

This section outlines the instruments utilized in the study, the development process for the instruments, the characteristics of the intended respondents, and the procedures followed to ensure that the instruments were valid and reliable. The instruments were created and administered for the purpose of collecting data that was rich enough to support the development, training, and evaluation of a hybrid CNN-LSTM model for pest detection and prediction in greenhouse environments.

3.7.1 Image Collection Instrument

The primary instrument that measured a quantitative concept for this study was a structured image collection protocol that was conducted using a high-resolution smartphone camera.

However, the images were the products of direct observation in functioning greenhouses and farms in Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika, using multiple crop types, growth stages, and levels of pest infestation. The sample was stratified based on the size of the farm and management practices, which allowed for proportional representation and increased generalizability of the dataset.

In addition to the images, all images were labeled with metadata that included crop type, pest type, location, and date. The metadata allow for clear and accurate temporal alignment with the photographs and provided sufficient information for the training phase of the CNN part of the hybrid model (Zhang et al., 2023).

3.7.2 Temporal Data Collection Instrument

Temporal data was collected as an additional supportive method for the prediction of pest outbreaks using LSTM. Weekly records were developed over a three-month time period for pest incidence counts (and the plant part affected), as well as for environmental variables (such as temperature, relative humidity and light intensity). A Google Sheet was used to compile the data in a systematic way to align each data item with the corresponding images, therefore allowing sequential coherence throughout the time-series data (Kapetas et al., 2025; Ojo & Zahid, 2022).

3.7.3 Structured Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from greenhouse farmers and technical staff on pest management, familiarity with artificial intelligence-based systems,

operational characteristics, and attitudes about pest management with technology-assisted pest control methods. The questionnaire was intended to solicit respondents' ideas on how practically useful AI-based tools would be for detecting and predicting pest outbreaks, avoiding technical terminology; the hybrid CNN-LSTM model was described in simple, non-technical language using an appropriate, relatable title like “digital pest monitoring system” or “computer-based tool to identify and predict pest outbreaks.” The questionnaire was composed primarily of closed-ended questions to standardized responses for efficient coding and statistical analysis, which will provide more rigorous insights to operational variation, perceptions of the user, and the potential for adoption of AI-enabled pest management systems (Maraveas, 2023).

3.7.4 Semi-Structured Interview Guide

To complement the quantitative data obtained via the structured questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key informants i.e., agricultural officers, AI practitioners, and representatives from the greenhouse operations selected. The purpose of the interviews was to gain a more in-depth perspective of participants' views on the shortcomings of current pest management practices; and the practicality and barriers to integrating Artificial Intelligence-based tools into pest management; and lastly, integrating digital pest detection and prediction systems in greenhouse operations.

An interview guide was designed that utilized open-ended questions so that individual respondents could share their insights and feedback in greater content and depth. This qualitative method enhanced the study by providing context to the quantitative study

findings, confirming the applicability of the hybrid CNN-LSTM model, and confirming the model's design and evaluation were situated in the practicalities of their daily operations and stakeholder perspective (Gamaleldin et al., 2025).

3.7.5 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity was assured by designing instrument development upon the existing literature and best practices, which was later followed by pilot testing with field-based participants that included representative greenhouse farmers and technical support staff to inform refinements to clarity and content relevance. Reliability was achieved by standardizing the way images were taken, recorded temporal data, and administered questionnaires and interviews. Research assistants received training in regards to following the prescribed procedure and achieving consistency and bias minimization across all data collection procedures (Sammut et al., 2021).

3.8 Methods of Data Collection

The research used primary and secondary methods to collect a variety of data to inform the development, training and evaluation of a hybrid CNN-LSTM model for the purpose of pest detection and prediction in the greenhouse environment (Kapetas et al., 2025; J. Zhang et al., 2023).

3.8.1 Procedures for Data Collection

For primary data collection, images were taken, temporal data was recorded, and questionnaires and interviews were administered. High-resolution images of greenhouse crops were collected on working farms in Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika using a structured

protocol to treat all crop types, growth stages, and pest stress levels in a similar way. Stratified sampling was used in order to be inclusive of larger and smaller farms that were also varied in the management practices employed to increase how universally applicable the dataset was (Maraveas, 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Each image was labeled with relevant metadata, such as crop type, pest type, location, and date, to later align the image with the temporal data, and allow the training of the CNN component of the hybrid model.

Temporal data was recorded weekly for three months to aid the LSTM based pest outbreak prediction. Records included pest incidence counts, affected plant parts, and environmental parameters such as temperature, relative humidity, and light intensity. Data were systematically organized in Google Sheets, allowing for coherent sequences that could be directly integrated into time-series modeling for the hybrid CNN-LSTM system (Kapetas et al., 2025; Ojo & Zahid, 2022).

Structured questionnaires were administered to greenhouse farmers and technical staff to obtain quantitative data regarding pest management practices, operational characteristics, familiarity with AI tools, and attitudes toward AI-assisted pest control. Qualitative data were acquired through semi-structured interviews conducted with key stakeholders including agricultural officers, AI practitioners, and managers of greenhouse facilities about the practical viability of AI-based digital pest monitoring systems, associated limitations and possibilities of use (Sammut et al., 2021). Together, these instruments contributed to a full understanding of actual implementation and model needs.

3.8.2 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data were sourced from publicly accessible repositories, notably PlantVillage and IP102. PlantVillage provided a large set of high-quality, annotated crop leaf images, which complemented the primary images collected from greenhouse settings. In addition, the IP102 dataset supplied pest incidence records alongside environmental parameters, enriching the temporal dimension required for LSTM training. The inclusion of these secondary datasets enhanced model robustness and helped to fill potential gaps in pest representation that were limited within the primary data (Rekiek et al., 2025b; Wu et al., 2019).

3.8.3 Approvals and Authorization

The required approvals were secured prior to the data collection process. Ethical clearance was provided by the Kenya Methodist University Ethics Review Committee to ensure the work met institutional protocols for research involving human participants (KeMU, 2021). Approval and authorization were also obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI, 2019), county agricultural offices, and each greenhouse manager in compliance with national, regional, and institutional protocols. Additionally, the participants were sufficiently informed about the goals of the study and provided informed voluntary consent.

3.8.4 Measures to Ensure High Response Rates

A range of methods were used to encourage participation and ensure that data were reliable. Flexible scheduling allowed the data collection to fit into the farmers' normal daily activities and this reduced disruptions to their routine. Reminders, followed directly by an in-person

engagement, encouraged continued participation in the study. Also, research assistants were encouraged to administer the questionnaires and interview consistently professional manner that fostered trust and rapport with the respondents. Clear explanations of the study's purpose and the potential good that would result from the study, increased respondents' willingness to cooperate, decrease non-response bias and improve the reliability of the data collection.

3.8.5 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were assured that both data security and confidentiality would be respected. Informed consent procedures were followed, and all participants understood that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Data that was collected during the study was de-identified in the process of analysis and reporting to align with protecting participant identity. The study also demonstrates adherence to the ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, and respect for persons; the procedures to collect data did not harm participants while being a meaningful application of AI-based pest management in greenhouse sites (Ojo & Zahid, 2022).

3.9 Data Validation Procedures

In order to confirm the quality and integrity of the datasets used in the current study, a structured validation process was employed for both primary and secondary datasets (including any derived or simulated images). This validation process was conducted to verify the integrity of the data, and to strengthen the credibility of any future models.

3.9.1 Primary Data Validation

Primary data were obtained from greenhouse farms located in Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika. Multiple procedures were used to validate the data to confirm the accuracy, consistency and quality of the data. This included:

3.9.1.1 Visual inspection

Each image was thoroughly reviewed to ensure that it was clearly indicative of pest-infested crops and where applicable, the labels were congruent with the insect pest identified. If there was any doubt about the presence of the pest or label error noted, then the image was screened from the dataset.

3.9.1.2 Environmental data consistency

Environmental data measurements such as temperature, humidity and pest count values were checked for outliers and inaccuracies. Any abnormality noted in greenhouse measuring parameters, for example, an extreme high temperature, were cross checked against field logbooks to verify data reliability.

3.9.1.3 Standardization

Images were taken using as consistent protocols to reduce factors that might otherwise impact model performance. This included time of day for lighting conditions, resolution (224×224), and the same camera angle within small variances. Uniform measurement instruments were employed at each site, which supported the comparability of environmental data.

3.9.2 Secondary Data Validation (PlantVillage and IP102)

To check the reliability and contextuality of secondary datasets, the researcher performed several verification steps as outlined:

3.9.2.1 Annotation verification

Samples of images were randomly selected and manually checked them to verify the accuracy of their labels and whether they matched the characteristics of pest species. This helped expose and resolve annotation issues that could potentially exist.

3.9.2.2 Class balance assessment

The distribution of the pest classes within the datasets was reviewed in order to reconcile possible class imbalances. Artificially augmented images (flipping, rotating, and scaling) were introduced to counter the class imbalance for training of the model, if certain pest categories had few to no observations.

3.9.2.3 Relevance check

Only images showing pests species, and their associated crops, relevant to greenhouse conditions in Kenya were retained. This ensured that the datasets were relevant to the ecological and agricultural context of the study.

3.9.3 Simulated or Generated Data Handling

In addition to primary and secondary data, simulated data were combined with augmentation techniques to increase the availability of data to train the model.

3.9.3.1 Augmentation procedures

Synthetic images were developed by augmenting images through rotation, scaling, flipping, and changing the brightness. All augmented images were kept by the original label to retain ground-truth accuracy.

3.9.3.2 Validation of simulated data

Augmented images were systematically compared to each original image to make sure that the transformations did not obscure any relevant pest feature and that they did not create distortions that would mislead the CNN model.

3.9.3.3 Integration with primary and secondary data

Validated augmented images were then combined with the primary and secondary data through the process of stratified sampling in order to maintain balanced representation of pest classes to allow the model to be trained fairly and accurately.

3.9.4 Dataset Splitting and Cross-Validation

To ensure an equitable assessment and confidence in model performance, datasets were split and validated using a careful process.

3.9.4.1 Stratified splitting

The datasets were stratified so that splits into training, validation, and test datasets represented similar distributions of the pest classes in each dataset.

3.9.4.2 Cross-validation

In the case of limited primary data, K-fold cross-validation was used; this process allowed evaluations of the generalization and robustness of the model across different portions of the data and helped minimize the risk of overfitting to any one of the datasets.

3.9.5 Monitoring Data Quality During Training

Each iteration of model training included evaluations of the performance of the classifier on the validation dataset to improve and monitor the quality of the data. Assessment of metrics (accuracy, precision, recall and F1 score) and unexpected reductions in the metrics warranted revisiting the input datasets to determine if any samples were mislabeled or, had crystallized characteristics.

As presented, the processes contributed to providing confidence (Trust) that the datasets, primary, secondary and augmented, were accurate, representative and ready for training and evaluating the performance of the hybrid CNN-LSTM model.

3.10 User Validation Participants

After conducting validation with datasets and experts, participants were recruited to assess real-world applicability, feasibility, and potential adoption of the CNN, LSTM, and hybrid models.

The total number of participants ($N = 33$) were purposely selected to represent key stakeholder groups that included 12 farmers, who contributed lived experiences of pest management practices; 9 agricultural officers, who shared operational knowledge of

greenhouse management; 9 information communication and technologies (ICT) and artificial intelligence (AI) experts, who provided their experience assessing the technical feasibility of the AI models; and 3 researchers, offering a scientific and methodological viewpoints on deploying the AI systems.

3.10.1 Justification of Sample Size

It is acceptable to collect qualitative data with a sample size between 5 - 30 participants per group and or until the researcher feels saturation has been reached. The use of purposive sampling ensured that all participants were information-rich, in that they possessed valuable experience in greenhouse farming, pest management, or AI/ICT frameworks.

The sample size above also permits diversity of perspectives while maintaining feasibility (logistical considerations) and expected saturation of data-rich perspectives to provide enough feedback on the model refinements and to subsequently evaluate the models. Qualitative focused validation approach differs from quantitative studies, which requires a larger sample size, and relies on formula-based sample sizes (in order to achieve adequate numerical representation for generalization). The distinction we attempt to illuminate here is qualitative validation does not center on the need for representation but simply on the quality and relevance of feedback.

3.10.2 Participant Engagement and Feedback

Participants engaged with the prototype system comprised of the CNN for pest identification, LSTM for outbreak forecasting to develop the hybrid CNN-LSTM system, before responding

to a structured questionnaire (Appendix C) eliciting participant feedback on system functionality, deployment feasibility, usability, and contextual considerations.

3.11 Data Preprocessing

Undergoing preprocessing and cleansing of time-series and image data occurred before application to ensure a quality and consistent state suitable for application in deep learning models.

3.11.1.1 Image data

The images collected from greenhouse farms and secondary datasets underwent preprocessing to ensure a standardized input state, optimal feature extraction, and high-quality inputs for the CNN-based model. All images were resized to a uniform 224×224 resolution to comply with CNN input requirements and maximize computational efficiency (Ashurov et al., 2025; González-Briones et al., 2025). Pixel values were normalized to the $[0,1]$ range to stabilize training and improve model convergence (Ashurov et al., 2025; Zeng et al., 2025).

To reduce background noise and enhance feature clarity, Gaussian and median filtering were applied before model training (Zeng et al., 2025). Data augmentation including rotation, flipping, scaling, and cropping was employed to enlarge the dataset, improve the CNN model's robustness, and reduce overfitting (González-Briones et al., 2025).

Finally, manual label verification was conducted to ensure that each image was correctly identified and labeled with the appropriate pest species, enhancing the accuracy and applicability of the supervised CNN model (Ashurov et al., 2025).

3.11.1.2 Time-series data

To enable the LSTM model to learn temporal patterns for accurate pest and disease prediction, environmental and historical pest data were preprocessed as inputs. Short-term fluctuations in pest counts and meteorological variables were reduced using smoothing techniques to capture underlying temporal trends (Wang & Li, 2025). Features such as temperature, humidity, and pest counts were normalized using Min-Max or Z-score scaling to standardize magnitudes and achieve stable model training (Wagle et al., 2024).

Time-series sequences were generated using fixed look-back windows, where past observations (e.g., the previous seven days) were associated with future pest or disease occurrences, allowing the LSTM to effectively capture temporal dependencies. Finally, missing values and outliers were addressed through interpolation or sequence-preserving techniques to maintain continuity in the dataset and avoid disruptions to model learning (Begum & Syed, 2025).

3.11.1.3 Feature Extraction and Sequence Alignment (Hybrid CNN-LSTM)

In the hybrid CNN–LSTM model, both spatial features from the CNN and temporal features from the LSTM were integrated to capture spatiotemporal dependencies, thereby improving prediction accuracy. In the CNN component, convolutional and pooling layers were used to

extract spatial features from images at multiple hierarchical levels, which were then flattened into feature vectors for further analysis (Xing et al., 2023). Concurrently, the LSTM component learned temporal dependencies from sequences of environmental variables and pest or stress-related data, enabling the model to recognize temporal patterns and trends (Yuan et al., 2025).

To maintain temporal consistency, CNN features at each time step were aligned with corresponding LSTM sequences, ensuring that spatial representations were temporally synchronized with the input data. These aligned feature vectors were concatenated and passed into fully connected layers, enabling simultaneous learning of spatial and temporal patterns to enhance predictive performance (Airlangga et al., 2025). Regularization methods, including dropout, were also employed to minimize overfitting and improve the model's generalizability across varying domains (Xing et al., 2023).

3.12 Dataset Preparation

After data collection, the primary and secondary datasets were prepared to be fed into the hybrid CNN-LSTM model. The preparation of the datasets was performed in three main steps: image preprocessing, temporal data preparation, and the partitioning of the datasets, ensuring they would be clean, consistent, and fit good training and evaluation of the model.

3.12.1 Image Dataset Preprocessing

The primary and secondary images were preprocessed to support quality and consistency for pests' detection CNN. The images were resized to 224×224 pixels to standardize preprocessing, and for more efficient data handling when training. The pixel values were

normalized to the [0,1] range minimize correspond and change in illumination and to help converge faster in the model. Data augmentation strategies (to induce variability and reduce overfitting) were performed on the images; the strategies consisted of rotation, flipping, brightness/contrast changes, and affine (transformations).

Additionally, feature enhancement and noise suppression strategies were performed on images; specifically, by Gaussian smoothing, and edge sharpened images which highlight pest features sensitive to the enhancement and smoothing processes (Wu et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2023). This preprocessing eliminated background subtextual variation and highlighted features of interest.

3.8.1.1 Preprocessing Pipeline

A structured multi-step workflow was implemented to standardize images before training.

Table 3.2:

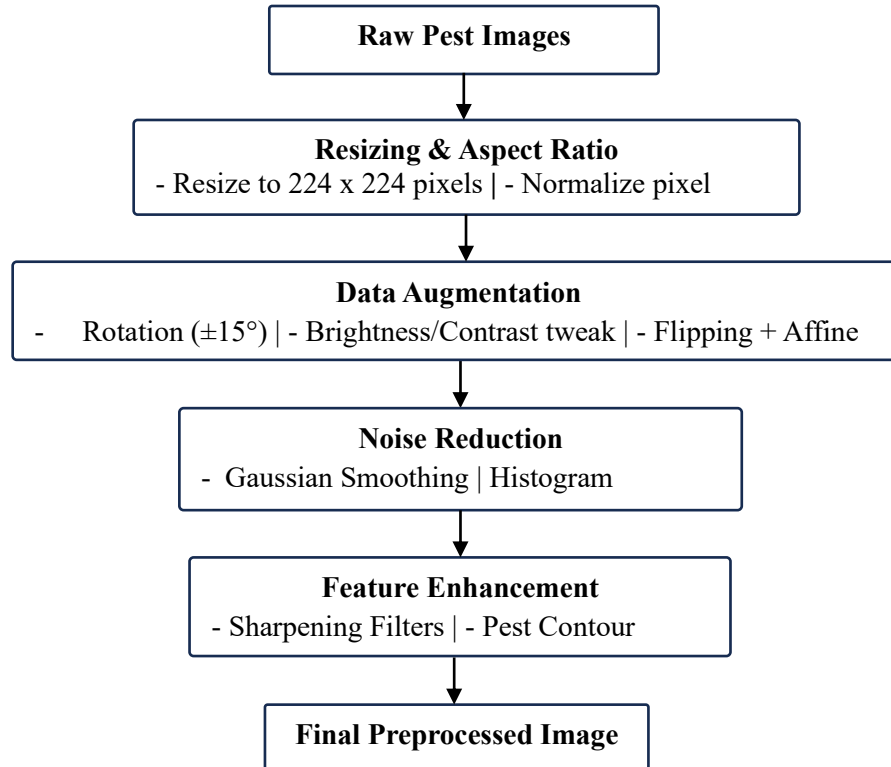
Preprocessing Steps and Functions

Step	Technique	Purpose
Resizing & Normalization	224×224 px scaling; pixel normalization	Standardize input for CNN; reduce computational load
Data Augmentation	Rotation, flip, contrast tuning, synthetic generation	Increase dataset diversity and reduce overfitting
Noise Reduction	Gaussian blur; histogram equalization	Minimize irrelevant features; enhance contrast
Feature Enhancement	Edge sharpening; contour emphasis	Highlight pest-specific details to improve detection

Figure 3.2 provides a visual illustration of the image preprocessing pipeline used for pest detection using convolutional neural networks (CNNs).

Figure 3.2:

Image Preprocessing Workflow



Note: The diagram outlines sequential preprocessing steps each designed to improve input quality, increase dataset diversity, and emphasize relevant features for optimal CNN performance.

3.12.2 Temporal Data Preparation

Temporal data obtained from greenhouse farms and secondary repositories were structured to facilitate LSTM-driven prediction. The data first underwent cleaning to eliminate any overall inconsistencies or missing value indicators in the original datasets. Categorical

factors, such as pest type and the specific parts of affected plants, were encoded into numerical values for compatibility with the models. Subsequently, time-series sequences were produced based on alignment of pest count instances to environmental parameters relative to dates of capture, so the LSTM model could learn sequential dependencies and correctly predict future pest occurrences (Kapetas et al., 2025; Ojo & Zahid, 2022).

3.13 Dataset Partitioning

After preprocessing, the integrated image and temporal datasets were divided into training (70%), validation (15%), and testing (15%) sets. This random partitioning was carried out to maintain consistency in the evaluation process and to provide a reliable basis for assessing the performance of the hybrid CNN-LSTM model. The training datasets were leveraged for optimization of model parameters, validation datasets helped guide hyperparameter tuning and early stopping, and testing datasets gave an independent assessment of generalization performance. The partitioning contained both primary and secondary data:

- i. Primary data: 217 images and 137 temporal records.
- ii. Secondary data: 9,243 PlantVillage images and 3,150 IP102 records

Table 3.3:

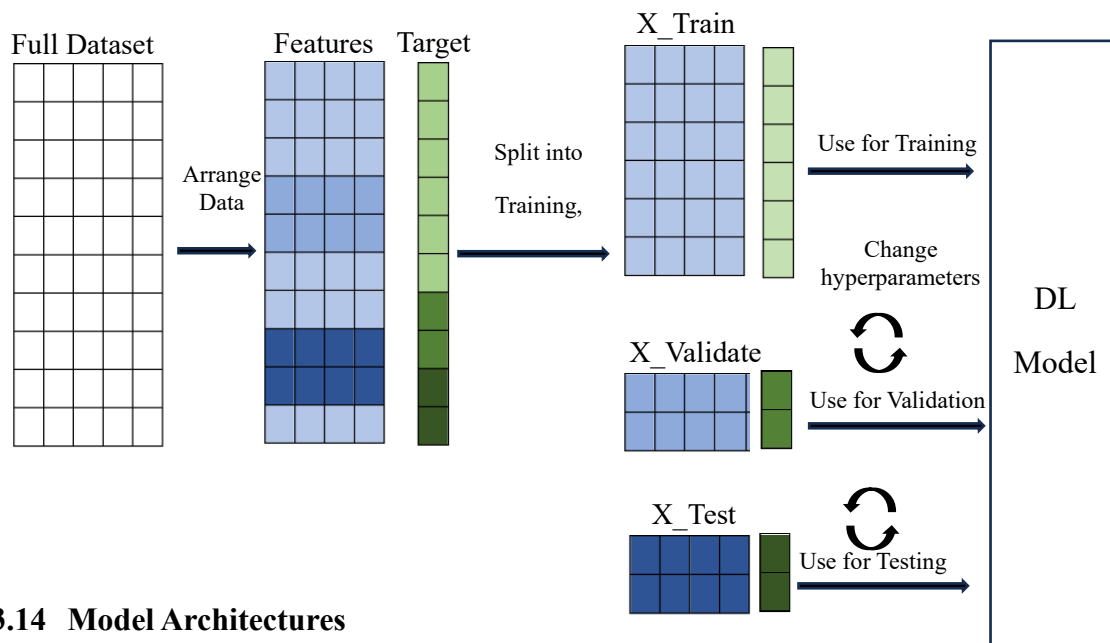
Dataset Partitioning for Primary and Secondary Data

Dataset	Type	Training (70%)	Validation (15%)	Testing (15%)	Total
Primary	Images	152	33	32	217
Primary	Temporal	105	16	16	137
Secondary	PlantVillage	6,470	1,386	1,387	9,243
Secondary	IP102	2,205	472	473	3,150

The standardized split assured an adequate representation of both spatial (image) and temporal (record) data over the subsets used for training, validation, and testing for robust model learning and evaluation. The standardized split also allowed for a well-formed representation of pest classes and environmental conditions across spatial and temporal splits, which is beneficial for model robustness. The process of preparing data, including getting raw data, pre-processing, and splitting the dataset, is illustrated in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3:

Dataset Partition Strategy



3.14 Model Architectures

The hybrid CNN-LSTM model proposed in this study incorporates elements of Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for spatial feature extraction from image data and Long Short-term Memory (LSTM) networks for learning temporal sequences. The model

was able to recognize pest infestations in greenhouse crop images while making predictions of future infestations based on temporal clusters of pest incidence and environmental data.

3.14.1 Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) Architecture

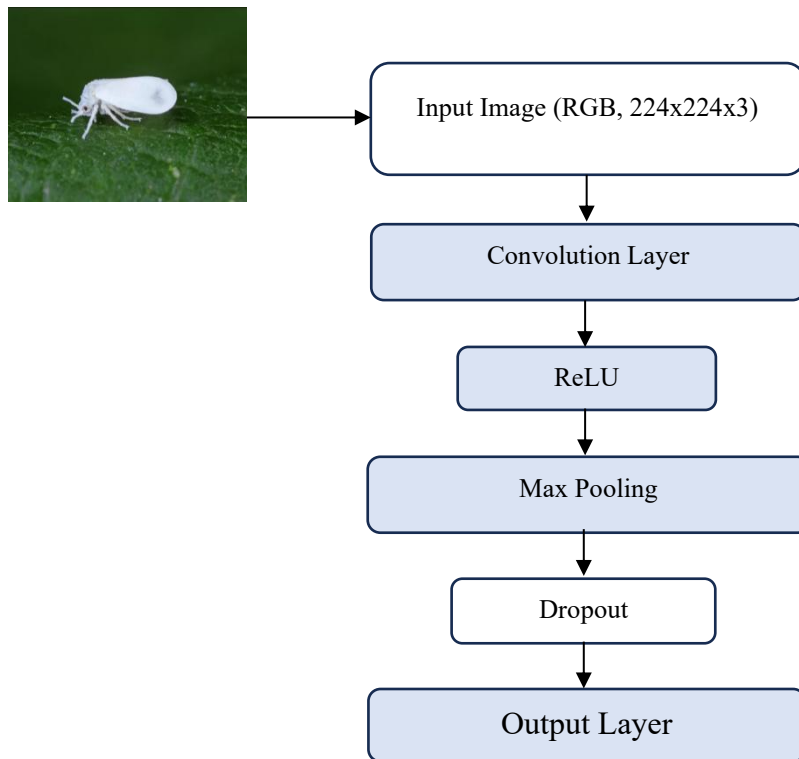
The CNN component was used to extract spatial features from greenhouse crop images. The network was composed of multiple convolutional layers with Rectified Linear Unit (ReLU) activation and pooling layers after them in order of maximizing the feature extraction hierarchy and minimizing its dimensionality.

The last convolutional layers were then flattened and connected to fully connected layers, which created feature embedding suitable for disease classification for all six unknown pest categories: aphids, whiteflies, thrips, leaf miners, spider mites, and mealybugs.

Dropout layers were also present in the network to prevent overfitting and improve generalizability. The CNN was trained on the primary and secondary images that were preprocessed and the model's performance was monitored with the validation data (Wu et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2023). A schematic of the CNN design is shown in Fig. 3.4.

Figure 3.4:

Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) Architecture



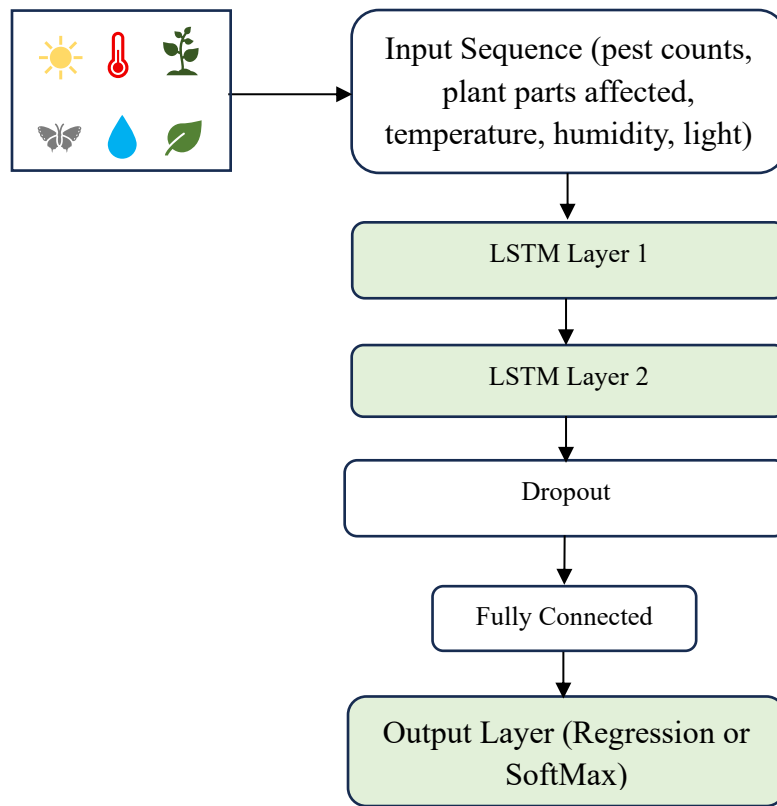
3.14.2 Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) Architecture

The LSTM architecture was developed to examine temporal dependencies in pest outbreak data. Inputs to the sequential model were weekly counts of insect incidence, the parts of plants being affected, and environmental parameters (temperature, relative humidity, light intensity). The LSTM architecture is composed of a more complex structure of memory cells that accept input, forget, and generate output layers, which helped to save and carry relevant information down long-time sequences systematically. The output layer generated

predictions of pest infestation patterns, providing insights to guide proactive pest management strategies (Kapetas et al., 2025; Ojo & Zahid, 2022).

Figure 3.5:

Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) Architecture



3.14.3 Hybrid CNN-LSTM Architecture

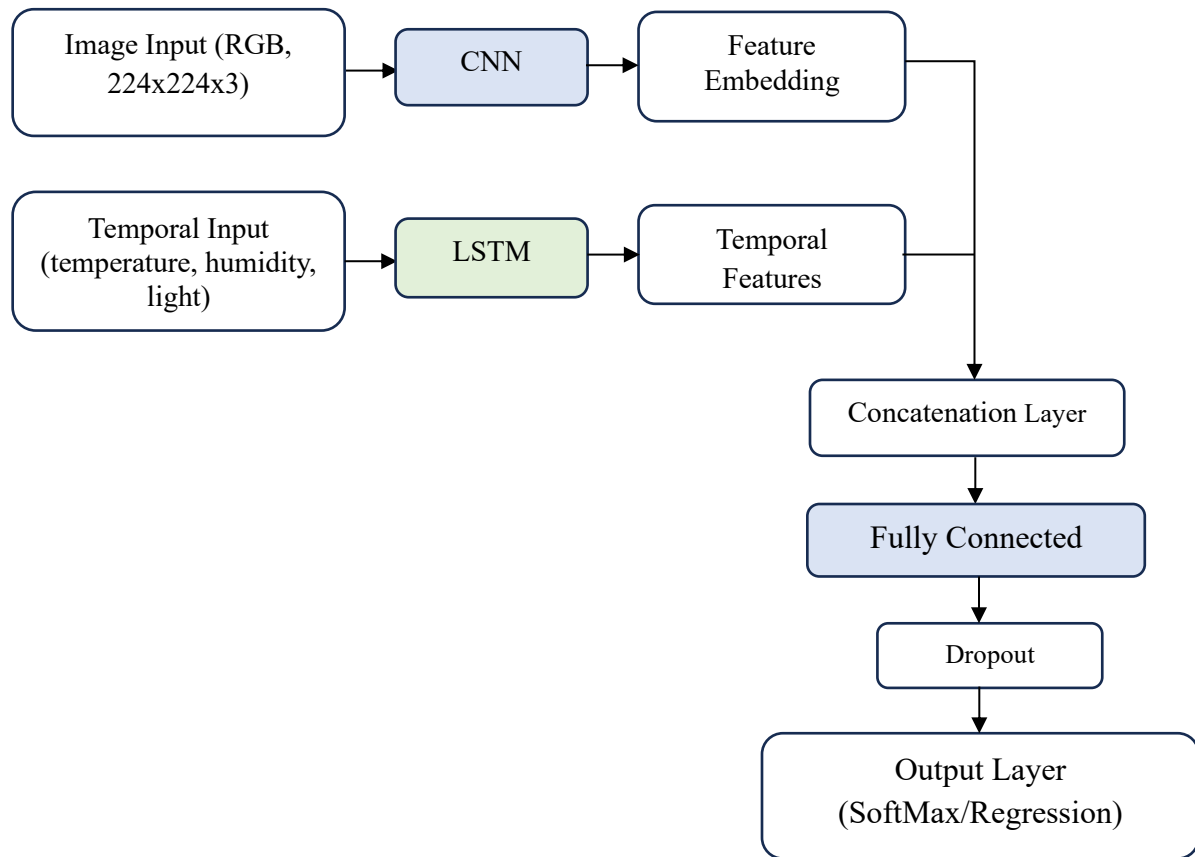
To leverage both spatial and temporal information, CNN and LSTM networks were integrated into a hybrid architecture. The CNN extracted spatial features from images, which were concatenated with encoded temporal sequences and passed through LSTM layers for

joint learning. The combined output was processed through fully connected layers with a SoftMax activation function to classify pest categories and estimate outbreak probabilities.

Fig. 3.4 illustrates the architecture.

Figure 3.6:

Hybrid CNN-LSTM Architecture



This hybrid approach outperformed standalone CNN or LSTM models by combining their strengths. The CNN was effective in detecting pest species from visual features such as morphology, texture, and crop damage, while the LSTM captured temporal dependencies in pest incidence and environmental patterns for forecasting. By training both components

together, the model aligned spatial cues with sequential trends, resulting in more accurate and robust predictions.

Key features that enhanced performance included feature concatenation of spatial and temporal inputs, joint optimization of both networks, and the SoftMax classification layer, which enabled precise pest identification and outbreak probability estimation. The hybrid architecture thus provided a comprehensive tool for both real-time detection and forward-looking pest management.

3.14.4 Model Training and Evaluation

The hybrid CNN-LSTM model was trained on the designated training portions of the prepared datasets, and hyperparameter tuning for enhancing accuracy and reducing overfitting was conducted on validation data. Model performance was evaluated on independent testing sets using common evaluation tasks: accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. Further evaluation of pest detection reliability was gathered using confusion matrices and classification reports. For the LSTM portion, the time-series forecasts of pest incidences were analyzed against actual incidence records to evaluate the model's ability to predict.

3.15 Operational Definition of Variables

The researcher operationalized all variables of interest to maintain validity and reliability of data collection and interpretations throughout the study. The process of operationalization involves describing broad concepts in specific observable and measurable indicators and is necessary to design appropriate tools for data collection and assessment of the model(s) performance. The variables were classified into three types, independent, intervening, and

dependent, in keeping with the conceptual framework of the research. For each variable, the researcher provided precise operational definitions, facilitating measurement that could be widely replicated and contributing to the systematic evaluation of the findings.

3.15.1 Independent Variables

The independent variables consisted of the primary input sources used to train and validate the hybrid deep learning model:

3.15.1.1 Image data

This variable was represented by annotated RGB images of greenhouse crops that were classified as either healthy or pest-infested. The image data characteristics were dependent on the number of sample images, the pixel resolution, and the classification label. The sample images served as the primary input for the CNN, enabling the network to learn and extract critical spatial features essential for accurate pest identification (Zhang et al., 2023).

3.15.1.2 Environmental/time-series data

This variable included time-series data on environmental variables such as temperature (°C), relative humidity (%), and pest count. As previously mentioned, time-series data were sourced from structured repositories like IP102 and formatted for sequential inputs to the LSTM. Preprocessing followed the time series data collection to maintain the consistency of time series data and to make sure they were aligned and adequately prepared for the LSTM. Preprocessing data and keeping the sample data aligned improved the accuracy of LSTM learning based on sequences (Zhang et al., 2023).

3.15.2 Intervening Variables

The intervening variables in this study are the preprocessing methods performed on the datasets and specifications for the deep learning models. These intervening variables acted as mediators in the transformation of the independent variables into the meaningful variables for model learning.

3.15.2.1 Preprocessing

Preprocessing was defined as one set of transformations of the raw datasets that occurred prior to training. For image data, preprocessing entailed tasks such as resizing images, normalizing pixel values, applying data augmentation techniques, and reducing noise levels, which improved the visibility of features to assist model generalization. For time-series data, preprocessing involved temporal alignment of the series, imputation of missing values, normalization, and smoothing so there were reliable input sequences for learning (Wang et al., 2025).

3.15.2.2 Model architecture

Model architecture referred to the deep learning model applied in the study. The models included a CNN model, which was used for the image-based classification, an LSTM model, which was used to predict temporal sequences, and a hybrid CNN-LSTM model that successfully modeled spatiotemporal data for pest detection and outbreak prediction. To further support transparency and reproducibility the architectural models were provided in a transparent manner, through diagrams, code implementation, and logs of training the models (Wang et al., 2025).

3.15.3 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables captured both the performance outcomes and the actionable effectiveness of the hybrid CNN-LSTM framework.

3.15.3.1 Accuracy

The accuracy variable was deemed the most critical performance measure of the study, indicating the number of correctly classified pest observations when compared to the overall number of test observations, meaning the accuracy outcome was quantified as:

$$\text{Accuracy} = \frac{\text{True Positive} + \text{True Negative}}{\text{Total Predictions}} \quad (3)$$

Note: Adapted from (Vedang Analytics, 2025)

3.15.3.2 Precision, Recall, and F1-score

Additionally, in order to provide a more actionable, contextual assessment of predictive performance, other evaluation metrics were used in conjunction with accuracy. Precision was defined as the number of predicted pest observations that were correctly classified out of the total observations predicted as present. Recall metrics examine how sensitive the model is with finding classified pest observations versus not classified or true-negative observations, or in other words the proportion of actual pests detected in the model. The F1-score is computed as the harmonic mean of precision and recall and emphasizes the balance of working between both distinguished metrics (Vedang Analytics, 2025).

3.15.3.3 Real-time responsiveness

The real-time responsiveness outcome was evaluated by determining the model's latency during simulated operation in the lab, as an indication of the system's ability to provide a timely response that provides an opportunity for a rapid decision in any pests' management.

Clearly defined and objectively measure dependent variables with reference to the theoretical concepts will explicitly establish the balance between addressing theoretical concepts and objectively evaluating the hybrid model within greenhouse production environs while also supporting a credible assessment of the theoretical development of the hybrid model for research, clinical assessment development.

3.15.4 Model Training Procedures

The CNN and LSTM components of the hybrid architecture were trained separately as modules, each using their own datasets. For each module, hyperparameter tuning was conducted on its validation sets to maximize performance and reduce overfitting prior to being placed into the hybrid model.

3.15.4.1 Optimizer and loss function

The model was trained with Adam as the optimizer with a learning rate of 0.001, which is commonly endorsed for its efficacy in deep learning models (Dhillon et al., 2020). Categorical cross-entropy was the chosen loss function for the multi-class pest classification task to guarantee handling of the class distributions.

3.15.4.2 Training configuration

Both modules were trained for 50 epochs with a batch size of 32. Early stopping was defined by monitoring validation loss to mitigate the risks of overfitting (Choi et al., 2022). Finally, dropout layers were added throughout the network at important locations between 0.3 and 0.5 to help improve generalization (Hai et al., 2024).

3.15.4.3 Learning rate adjustment

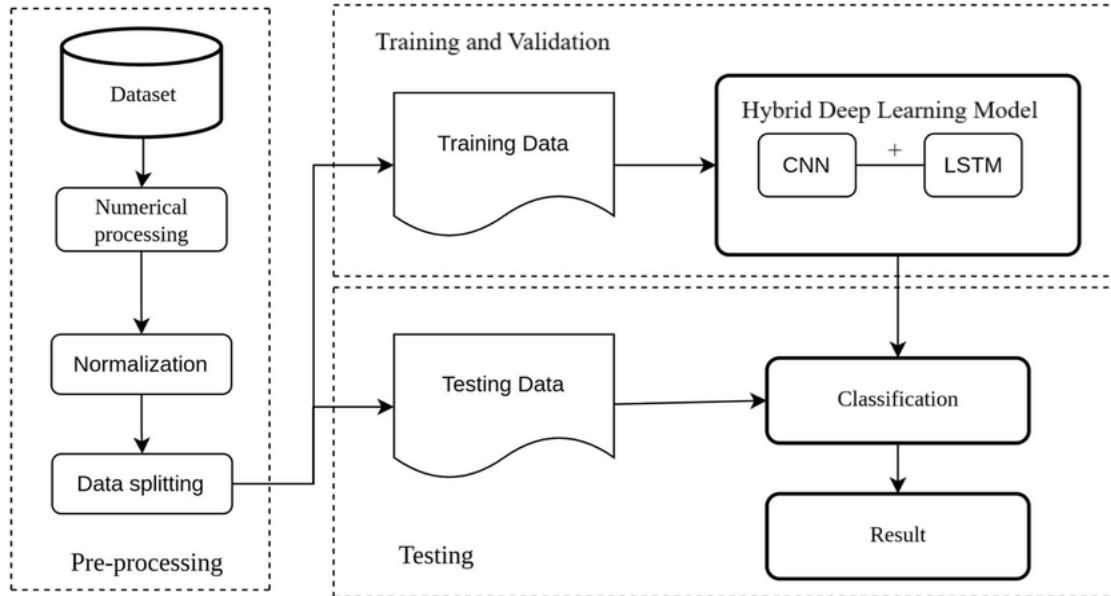
To improve convergence during training, an adaptive training rate method was incorporated. More specifically, a reduction-on-plateau approach was employed, which lowered the learning rate once validation performance stagnated. This approach allowed more accurate tuning of the weights of the model as the model began to stabilize (Zhao & Bilen, 2023).

3.15.4.4 Hyperparameter search

A grid search method was exercised to examine the best combination of hyperparameters, which consisted of CNN filters, filter sizes, the number of LSTM units, and dropout rates. This method permitted the ability to examine performance based on hyperparameters, training dynamics, and architectural choices to optimize performance as a whole (Priyadarshini & Cotton, 2021). In this training process, the cloud GPU infrastructure was used via Google Colab Pro which increased the experimentation and validation process (Dajani & Keyes, 2024). The complete CNN-LSTM training workflow from data pre-processing to the final evaluation is provided in detail in Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7:

Flowchart of training the CNN-LSTM model



3.16 Methods of Data Analysis

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach with quantitative and qualitative analysis to fully explore the research questions and objectives.

3.16.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis was centered on analyzing not only primary datasets (image collection and time series data) but also secondary datasets (PlantVillage, for example and IP102). The datasets were purposefully split into training, validation, and testing subsets to enhance quality model development and evaluation. The hybrid CNN-LSTM model was fit into the datasets and evaluated using decision-based performance metrics.

The measure of accuracy, as a very basic measure, was defined as the ratio of correct predictions to the total number of predictions, calculated as:

Equation 3:

Accuracy

$$Accuracy = \frac{TP+TN}{TP+TN+FP+FN} \quad (4)$$

Note: Adapted from Powers, (2020)

Precision shown in equation (4) below reflects the proportion of correctly identified positive instances among all predicted positives:

Equation 4:

Precision

$$Precision = \frac{TP}{TP+FP} \quad (5)$$

Note: Adapted from Powers, (2020)

Recall (also known as Sensitivity) illustrated in equation (5) indicates how well the model can identify all actual positive cases:

Equation 4:

Recall

$$Recall = \frac{TP}{TP+FN} \quad (6)$$

Note: Adapted from Powers, (2020)

F1-Score provides a balanced score by combining Precision and Recall, which is especially useful when dealing with imbalanced datasets. This is illustrated in equation (6) below:

Equation 6:

F1- Score

$$F1 - Score = 2 \times \frac{\text{Precision} \times \text{Recall}}{\text{Precision} + \text{Recall}} \quad (7)$$

Note: Adapted from Powers, (2020)

Where TP = true positives, TN = true negatives, FP = false positives, FN = false negatives.

RMSE (Root Mean Squared Error) for temporal forecasts:

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \hat{y})^2}{n}} \quad (8)$$

Coefficient of Determination (R^2):

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \hat{y})^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \bar{y})^2}} \quad (9)$$

t-test (for comparing two group means):

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{S_2^2}{n_2}}} \quad (10)$$

Where $\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2$ are sample means, $\frac{S_1^2}{n_1}, \frac{S_2^2}{n_2}$ are sample variances, and n_1, n_2 are sample sizes.

ANOVA (for comparing more than two groups):

$$F = \frac{MS_{between}}{MS_{within}} \quad (11)$$

Where: $MS_{between} = \frac{SS_{between}}{df_{between}}, MS_{within} = \frac{SS_{within}}{df_{within}}$

SS = sum of squares, df = degrees of freedom.

These tests were used to compare model performance across regions, crop types, and pest classes.

3.16.2 Qualitative Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in pest management techniques, AI adoption, and issues associated with greenhouse operations. Themes were then triangulated with quantitative outputs to provide objective confirmation of practical relevance.

Table 3.4:

Research Question Mapping

Research Question	Variable(s)	Analysis Method	Justification
CNN pest detection accuracy	Image-based pest labels	Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-score	Measures spatial detection performance.
LSTM outbreak prediction	Temporal pest incidence	RMSE, R^2	Evaluates temporal prediction quality.
Hybrid model performance	Combined image & temporal data	Integrated metrics, t-test, ANOVA	Compares hybrid model vs individual CNN/LSTM across multiple conditions.
Influence of operational factors	Farm size, crop type, management practices	Descriptive stats, thematic analysis	Ensures model relevance to real greenhouse conditions.

This method allowed for objectively assessing both the technical performance and the degree of practicality of the functionality. Quantitative measures provided replicable metrics for model accuracy, and statistical tests (t-test, ANOVA) allowed for the analysis of differences between groups. Qualitative metrics provided insight into context for outputs that were produced in an actual greenhouse environment (Chodey & Noorullah Shariff, 2022; Kapetas et al., 2025).

3.17 Summary

The methodological framework implemented to design, train, and test the hybrid CNN-LSTM model for detecting pest infestations and monitoring outbreaks in greenhouse production systems was described in this chapter.

The study was based on a mixed-methods design, combining experimental, descriptive, and comparative procedures. Primary data were collected from operational greenhouses in Limuru, Naivasha, and Thika as annotated crop images together with weekly pest incidence logs.

The experimental procedure focused on development of the models and evaluation, measuring performance using classification metrics (accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score) and forecasting indicators (mean absolute error, root mean square error, and coefficient of determination, R^2). Overall, the methodological planning provided a stringent, replicable, and context-bound base for addressing the study aims and research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the outcomes of developing and accessing deep learning models for pest detection and outbreak forecasting in greenhouse crops. The primary data was sourced from annotated crop photographs, pest sightings over time, and questionnaires from stakeholders, which were complemented using secondary data sources such as PlantVillage and IP102 to expand and confirm the modeling exercises.

The findings are organized according to the study objectives, with performance illustrated using descriptive statistics, evaluation criteria, and derived outputs comprised of classification tables, confusion matrices, and prediction trend figures. These outputs highlighted the performative capacity of the CNN for image-based detection, the LSTM for time-based forecasting, and the combination of the two in the CNN-LSTM hybrid as a valuable tool that further enhanced pest control approaches.

Alongside discussion of model performance, the chapter conducts critical evaluation of findings against the literature to delineate congruences and divergences with the agronomy literature. This evaluation further enunciated the contributions of this research towards advancing AI-enabled technologies as well as the authenticity of the models in practice for earlier detection, more timely control intervention and pushes to more sustainable pest control and management systems to a greenhouse crop production context.

4.2 Development of CNN Model for Image-Based Pest Detection

4.2.1 Model Development

To tackle the first research objective, a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) was developed for the detection of the six main greenhouse crop pests - aphids, whiteflies, thrips, leaf miners, spider mites, and mealybugs.

Figure 4.1:

Major Greenhouse Crop Pests



The CNN architecture, described in section 3.10.1, comprised of convolutional and pooling layers to extract spatial features followed by fully connected layers and SoftMax output layer for classification. The model was trained on both of the primary datasets (images from an actual greenhouse environment) and the two secondary datasets (PlantVillage and IP102). Fig 4.2 illustrates this visually.

Figure 4.2:

CNN Model



All images underwent preprocessing, including resizing, normalization, augmentation, and noise reduction, to improve model generalization. The datasets were divided into training (70%), validation (15%), and testing (15%) subsets, consistent with Section 3.8.1.2.

4.2.2 Training and Validation Performance on Primary Dataset

The CNN trained on the primary dataset (217 images) improved accuracy and loss progressively over 50 epochs. Table 4.1 shows training and validation performance results at individual epochs.

Table 4.1:

CNN Training and Validation Accuracy and Loss on Primary Dataset

Epoch	Training Accuracy (%)	Validation Accuracy (%)	Training Loss	Validation Loss
10	72.4	68.1	0.74	0.81
20	80.6	75.9	0.58	0.65
30	86.3	82.1	0.42	0.53
40	89.7	85.4	0.31	0.44
50	91.2	87.5	0.26	0.38

Note. Validation accuracy stabilized after epoch 40, and loss curves flattened, indicating convergence.

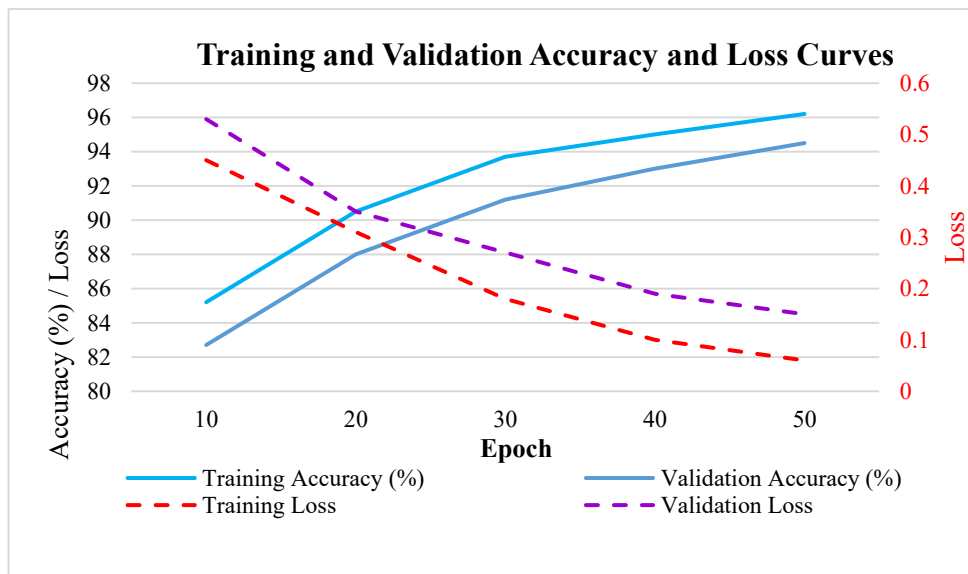
4.2.2.1 Training and Validation Performance on Secondary Datasets

For the larger secondary datasets (PlantVillage = 9,243 images; IP102 = 3,150 images), the CNN learned more consistently, and the training curves exhibited higher stability than those using image files from a single primary dataset. At individual epochs, Table 4.2 shows training and validation performance.

Table 4.2:*CNN Training and Validation Accuracy and Loss on Secondary Datasets*

Dataset	Epoch	Training Accuracy (%)	Validation Accuracy (%)	Training Loss	Validation Loss
PlantVillage	10	78.9	74.2	0.62	0.69
	20	85.7	81.3	0.48	0.55
	30	90.4	87.6	0.33	0.41
	40	92.8	88.9	0.26	0.37
	50	94.1	89.1	0.21	0.35
IP102	10	70.2	66.4	0.81	0.89
	20	78.3	73.5	0.66	0.71
	30	83.9	80.1	0.52	0.59
	40	87.4	83.2	0.39	0.47
	50	89.6	85.2	0.33	0.43

Note. PlantVillage achieved higher accuracy due to its larger volume and balanced class distribution. IP102 converged more slowly with greater variation in validation performance.

Figure 4.3:*Training and Validation Accuracy and Loss Curves for CNN Model*

Note. The convergence of loss and increase in accuracy indicate effective learning without significant overfitting. *Adapted from Author, 2025.*

4.2.3 Classification Metrics

In addition to accuracy and loss, the detailed classification metrics used to test CNN model performance informed analysis of how well pest categories were identified. Performance metrics (precision, recall, F1-score and support) were used to evaluate the ability of the model to classify pest classes when class imbalance is observed. The performance was compared across both the primary dataset from greenhouse farms, and secondary datasets (Plant Village, IP102), to compare generalizability and robustness of models.

Table 4.3:

CNN Classification Performance – Primary Data

Pest Species	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1 Score (%)
Aphids	91.8	90.0	90.9
Whiteflies	93.0	94.5	93.7
Spider Mites	92.2	91.8	92.0
Thrips	90.7	92.5	91.6
Average	92.4	92.2	92.1

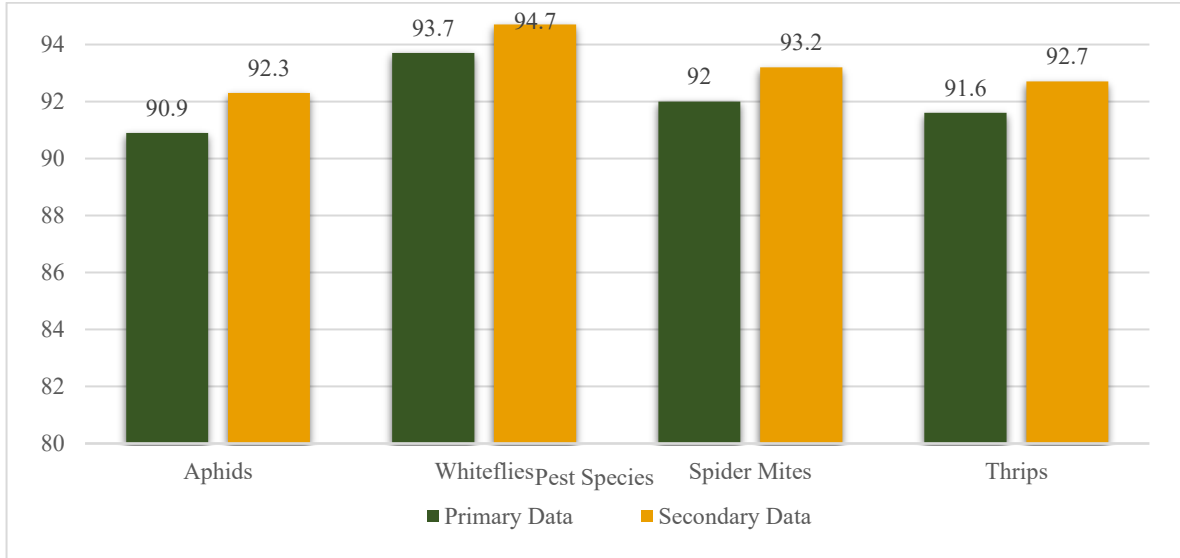
Table 4.4:

CNN Classification Performance - Secondary Data

Pest Species	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1 Score (%)
Aphids	93.2	91.5	92.3
Whiteflies	94.5	95.0	94.7
Spider Mites	93.8	92.6	93.2
Thrips	92.5	93.0	92.7
Average	93.5	93.0	93.2

Figure 4.4:

CNN Classification Performance Primary vs Secondary Datasets



4.2.3.1 Metric Calculation

To illustrate the computation of these metrics, the researcher considered aphids as an example for each dataset.

Table 4.5:

Sample Metric Calculation

Confusion Matrix Element	Value
True Positives (TP)	90
False Positives (FP)	8
False Negatives (FN)	10

$$Precision = \frac{TP}{TP+FP} = \frac{90}{90+8} = 0.918 \text{ (91.8\%)}$$

$$Recall = \frac{TP}{TP+FN} = \frac{90}{90+10} = 0.9 \text{ (90\%)}$$

$$F1\ Score = 2 \times \frac{Precision \times Recall}{Precision + Recall} = \frac{0.918 \times 0.9}{0.918 + 0.9} = \frac{0.8262}{1.818} = 0.909\ (90.9\%)$$

4.2.4 Confusion Matrix Visualization

The confusion matrix gave an insightful visual presentation of the classification performance of the CNN model and represented how true and false predictions were dispersed on various pest classes. Cases where the two pest classes are barely distinguished by the model are shown in off-diagonal cells. This is shown in Fig 4.5.

Figure 4.5:

CNN Confusion Matrix on Test Data



4.2.5 Interpretation of CNN Training Results

The results suggest that the CNN showed stronger generalization to the secondary datasets, and in particular PlantVillage, where there were many labeled samples that allowed for more stable convergence and model behavior. On the smaller primary dataset, model validation

accuracy was still respectable at 87.5% but was shown to be more prone to sensitivity violations due to the small sample size with more variability prior to stabilization.

The results demonstrate that not only does the size of the dataset matter, the diversity of samples is influential regarding CNN performance: secondary datasets provided strong support for model training, while primary datasets were informative regarding applications in the real world, under greenhouse conditions.

4.2.6 User Validation of the CNN Model

To assess the practical implications of utilizing the CNN model for greenhouse pest identification, we collected feedback from the stakeholders in Section 3.9.2, as summarized below by stakeholder group.

Farmers indicated most of the model's overall pest identification (by image) was essentially accurate, and the image-based outputs were straight forward and easy to think through, but mis-identification could arise with similar looking pests, such as aphids and whiteflies. Agricultural officers saw the model as having value for routine monitoring purposes, yet neither department thought the model could aid in forecasting a simple pest outbreak.

The ICT/AI experts thought the model to be technically sound and computationally efficient, but they offered recommendations related to data diversity to improve generalization. The researchers felt the model and methodology were sound and suggested the time-frame could be improved by layering a temporal prediction tool into the research analysis framework.

The qualitative revelation of pest identification aligns with the model's quantitative outcome of an overall accuracy of 94%, with precision and recall from 91 - 96% occurring across the six pest classes identified in this research. The feedback received was instrumental in confirming the practical application of the model with respect to pest identification purposes while providing areas of improvement in terms of distinguishing similar looking pests as well as to provide a predictive capacity.

4.3 Development of an LSTM Model for Pest Outbreak Prediction

To address Objective 2, the Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) neural network was constructed to predict pest outbreaks. LSTMs are appropriate for time-series predictions, as they capture long-range dependencies and learn complex relationships between observed time-series inputs (Kong et al., 2025).

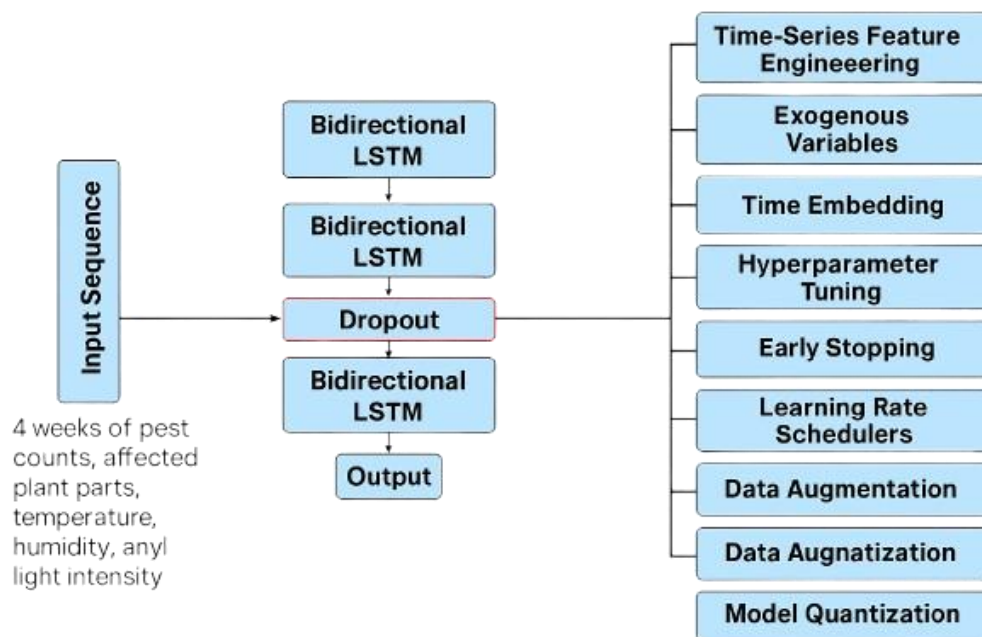
4.3.1 Model Inputs and Architecture

The model incorporated weekly pest counts from primary greenhouse monitoring systems during a 12-month period from Jan - Dec 2024 and two varieties of secondary temporal data provided by the insect pest surveillance program IP102, given for the years 2019-2024, respectively. The predictor variables included pest incidence, affected plant parts, and the environmental variables of temperature, relative humidity, and light intensity. Each input sequence into the model consisted of four weeks of data prior to the pest activity, and then the LSTM predicted pest activity into the next week.

The specifics of the LSTM architecture consisted of stacked bidirectional layers used to help extract more profound sequential learning patterns with the use of dropout layer regularization. Figure 4.6 illustrates the enhanced LSTM model.

Figure 4.6:

Enhanced LSTM Model



4.3.2 Data Preparation and Partitioning

For both primary and secondary datasets, data was cleaned, normalized, and encoded. Categorical variables such as pest type and affected parts of plant were one-hot encoded. Sequential training inputs were created using sliding time windows.

Table 4.6:*Data Preparation and Partitioning*

Dataset	Training	Validation	Testing	Total	Period
Primary (Greenhouse)	105	16	16	137	Jan - Dec 2024
Secondary (IP102)	2,205	472	473	3,150	2019 - 2024

This ensured both temporal sources were represented for model training and evaluation.

4.3.3 Training and Validation Performance

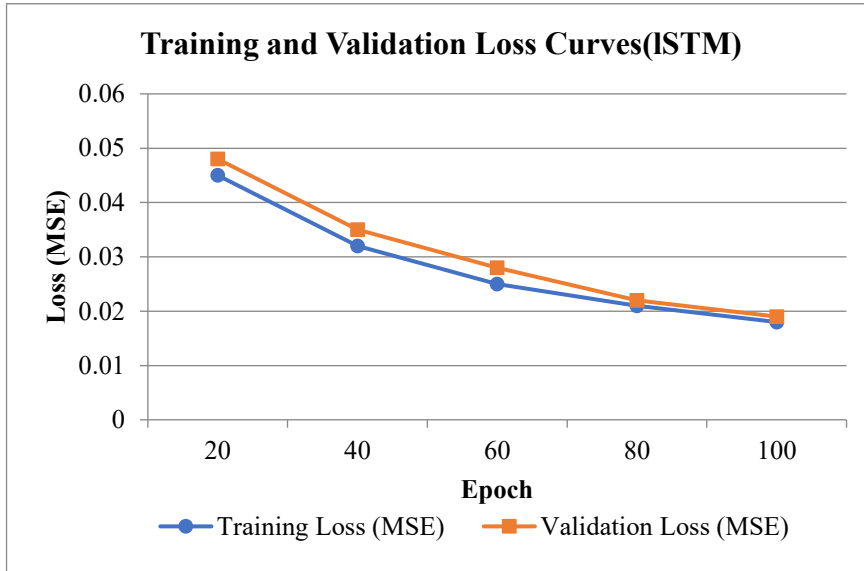
Table 4.7 displays the training and validation loss of the LSTM model for both primary and secondary datasets for a total of 100 epochs. The loss values consistently decline over time indicating that model is learning and converging. The secondary datasets have lower and smoother loss values as it had the benefit of the increased volume and the longer time period. We illustrate this using Figures 4.7 for a visual representation display and we see repeatable, consistent, and stable convergence in both the primary and secondary datasets.

Table 4.7:*Training and Validation Performance*

Epoch	Training Loss (Primary)	Validation Loss (Primary)	Training Loss (Secondary)	Validation Loss (Secondary)
20	0.048	0.052	0.041	0.045
40	0.034	0.037	0.030	0.033
60	0.026	0.029	0.024	0.026
80	0.022	0.023	0.019	0.021
100	0.019	0.020	0.016	0.018

Figure 4.7:

LSTM Training and Validation Loss



Note: The line graph illustrates a steady decline in both training and validation loss across epochs, indicating effective learning and generalization by the LSTM model. The convergence of the two curves with minimal divergence suggests that the model is not overfitting and has successfully captured temporal patterns in the environmental data relevant to pest prediction.

4.3.4 Prediction Performance Comparison

The prediction performance metrics of the LSTM model is displayed in Table 4.8 for both the primary and the secondary datasets. All of the prediction metrics in the secondary data (MAE, RMSE, MAPE, accuracy, recall, and F1-score) improved over the primary data, confirming that having more temporal coverage, and more data overall, has potential to increase predictability. The predicted and actual pest counts for both datasets are shown in

Figure 4.12. The predicted pest counts are more in-line with the actual counts and the predicted values are less erratic in the secondary data.

Table 4.8:

Prediction Performance Comparison

Metric	Primary Data	Secondary Data	Observation
MAE	0.134	0.112	Secondary data reduces average error.
RMSE	0.204	0.173	Longer temporal coverage smooths predictions.
MAPE (%)	6.23	5.11	Prediction accuracy improved with secondary data.
Accuracy (%)	87.2	89.5	Secondary data boosts predictive reliability.
Recall (%)	88.6	91.0	Improved detection of outbreak peaks.
F1-Score (%)	86.7	89.2	Better overall balance between precision and recall.

4.3.4.1 MAPE Calculation (Primary Data)

An example calculation of mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) of the predicted and actual pest incidence values is displayed in Table 4.9 for a period of 30 days from the primary temporal data collected.

Table 4.9:

Weekly Forecasts and Error Calculations (Primary)

Week	Actual (A)	Predicted (P)	 A - P / A
1	0.90	0.846	0.0600
2	0.80	0.756	0.0550
3	1.00	0.945	0.0650
4	0.85	0.791	0.0692

$$\text{MAPE} = \left(\frac{0.0600 + 0.0550 + 0.0650 + 0.0692}{4} \right) \times 100 = 6.23\%$$

Table 4.10:

Weekly Forecasts and Error Calculations (Secondary)

Week	Actual (A)	Predicted (P)	A - P / A
1	0.90	0.855	0.0500
2	0.80	0.760	0.0500
3	1.00	0.955	0.0450
4	0.85	0.813	0.0432

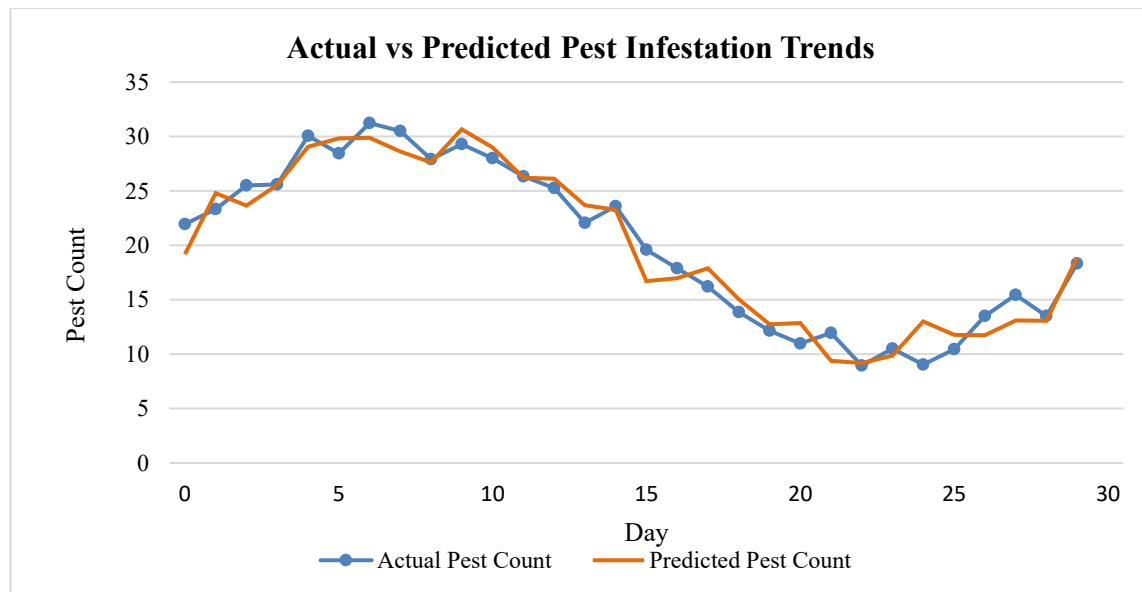
$$\text{MAPE} = \left(\frac{0.0500 + 0.0500 + 0.0450 + 0.0432}{4} \right) \times 100 = 5.11\%$$

4.3.4.2 Prediction vs. Actual Plot

Figure 4.7 visualizes the model's predictive performance over time, demonstrating close alignment between predicted and actual pest incidence values.

Figure 4.8:

Actual vs Predicted Pest Infestation Trends



Note: This line graph compares actual pest infestation counts with those predicted by the LSTM model over 30 days. The close match between the two curves shows the model's ability to capture pest trends accurately. Minor differences are attributable to noise and unmeasured variables, but overall, the model reliably forecasts pest outbreaks, enabling timely and proactive pest management in greenhouses. *Adapted from author, (2025).*

4.3.5 Interpretation of Results

The LSTM model demonstrated strong prediction performance for both primary and secondary datasets. The metrics from the primary data accurately reflects actual greenhouse conditions and lends to practical applicability. The secondary data (2019 - 2024) improved model generalizability by smoothing the predictions on a good prediction accuracy due to the relatively large number of samples and extensive pre-temporal coverage.

Overall, this combined information confirms LSTM's predictive ability for short-term pest outbreaks and further corroborates the decision to introduce both primary and secondary temporal datasets to the hybrid CNN-LSTM model.

4.3.6 User Validation of the LSTM Model

Feedback on the LSTM model developed to forecast pest outbreaks was provided by the same stakeholders as before. Farmers indicated that the model's predictions were generally understandable and informative for timely interventions; however, they also stated that they were cautious about using forecasts that were not field-validated.

Agricultural officers expressed confidence that the LSTM would enhance planning for pest congestion and appropriate resource allocation for pest management; however, they indicated payoffs were not consistent for pests with irregular population behavior.

ICT/AI professionals praised the LSTM for capturing temporal information from sequential imaging and potential integration with other decision-support systems. Researchers recognized the model development was methodologically sound and suggested that using the LSTM's predictions in conjunction with real-time monitoring data would provide value for improving forecasts and some assurance when dealing with the uncertainty of pest outbreaks.

Collectively, these comments aligned with the model's quantitative performance, where the LSTM model achieved an overall F1-score of 92% and precision and recall and payoffs ranging from 89% to 95% for forecasted events, all of which indicated practical relevance for greenhouse pest management.

4.4 Integration of CNN and LSTM into a Hybrid Deep Learning Model

To fulfill Objective 3, which is combining image-based pest detection with temporal pest outbreak prediction, a hybrid CNN-LSTM model was developed. The model that performed both responsibilities accessed the spatial feature extraction of a CNN with the sequential learning ability of the LSTM to classify the pest type from images of greenhouse crops and predict an outbreak in the future using time series data.

4.4.1 Hybrid Model Architecture

The hybrid model combines Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks to integrate spatial and temporal information to achieve accurate pest detection and forecasting. The architecture of the model comprises three primary components that also perform various functions in the processes of feature extraction, temporal modeling, and prediction.

4.4.1.1 CNN Feature Extraction

The input to the CNN component was preprocessed images from both the primary greenhouse data and external datasets (e.g., PlantVillage and IP102). The CNN discovered a hierarchical representation of spatial features in the images, with layers of convolutions identifying unique local patterns, e.g., leaf spots, discoloration, or visible pests.

Following feature extraction, pooling layers are used to reduce the dimensions of the feature maps while retaining the strongest features. The feature maps were then flattened into feature vectors that could be used to encode the features between pest types. Through the extraction of distinctive spatial features, the multi-layered representations effectively captured visual patterns, resulting in robust feature encoding and accurate classification of pest categories.

4.4.1.2 LSTM Temporal Modeling

The input of the LSTM component consisted of sequences of feature vectors extracted from the image via the CNN, and pieces of temporal data such as weekly pest counts, temperature, humidity, and light intensity. The sequential dependencies in these pieces of temporal data

were modeled using stacked bidirectional LSTM layers so that the network was able to learn trends in pest population dynamics and environmental conditions over time.

This allowed the model to predict when pest outbreaks were likely to occur, and temporal features helped the LSTM capture both longer-term trends and shorter-term fluctuations in pest population and/or environmental variables, which contributed to improved predictive accuracy than what could have been achieved using static image classification alone.

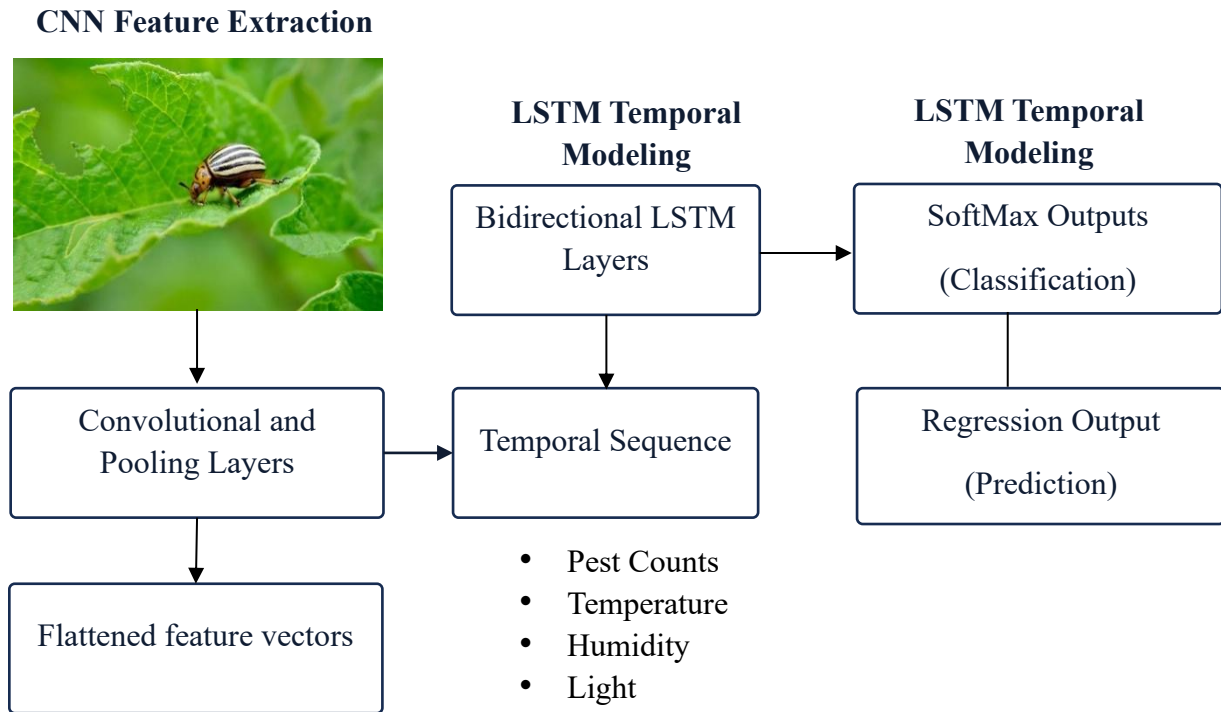
4.4.1.3 Fully Connected and Output Layers

To successfully combine the spatial and temporal features, we applied fully connected layers to concatenate the features generated by the CNN and LSTM components. This model produced two different outputs depending upon the predictive task: a SoftMax layer for classification that predictions pest category from image features and a regression output predicting the probability and severity of outbreaks.

This means that the hybrid model's structure enabled us to perform both precise pest classifications and a reliable prediction of pest outbreaks simultaneously, fulfilling the goals of the study by fulfilling detection and prediction in one integrated approach to pest forecasting. In Figure 4.1, we illustrate the hybrid convoluted neural network, long short-term memory architecture overall.

Figure 4.9:

Overall hybrid CNN-LSTM architecture



4.4.2 Hybrid Model Training

The hybrid model was trained using the primary and secondary datasets; a 70%, 15% and 15% split for training, validation, and testing occurred. As a part of the image pre-processing step, images were resized, normalized and augmented if necessary. Each time series was standardized before training and aligned with their respective images. Accuracy and loss were monitored during training along with early stopping to prevent overfitting.

Table 4.11:*Comparative Performance of CNN, LSTM, and Hybrid CNN-LSTM Models*

Metric	CNN (Prim)	LSTM (Prim)	CNN- LSTM (Prim)	CNN- LSTM (Sec)	Imp vs. CNN (Prim)	↑ Imp vs. LSTM (Prim)	↑ Imp (Sec vs. Prim)
Accuracy (%)	92.4	—	92.8	94.7	+0.4%	N/A	+2.05%
Precision (%)	91.7	—	91.8	93.9	+0.1%	N/A	+2.42%
Recall (%)	90.3	—	91.0	93.8	+0.7%	N/A	+3.08%
F1-Score (%)	91.0	—	91.3	92.9	+0.3%	N/A	+1.75%
AUC (ROC)	0.957	—	0.954	0.962	−0.003	N/A	+0.84%
Mean Absolute Error	—	0.134	0.128	0.112	—	4.5%	+12.5%
Root Mean Squared Error	—	0.204	0.198	0.173	—	2.9%	+12.6%
Mean Absolute % Error	—	6.23	5.95	5.11	—	4.5%	+14.2%

In addition, Figure 4.9 shows the ROC curves of each model and provides a good indication of its discrimination capability. The hybrid model performed the best with the highest area under the curve (AUC) in all cases, suggesting that it could better distinguish between pest-infected and healthy samples, regardless of the classification threshold.

Figure 4.10:

Comparative Performance of CNN, LSTM, and Hybrid CNN-LSTM Models

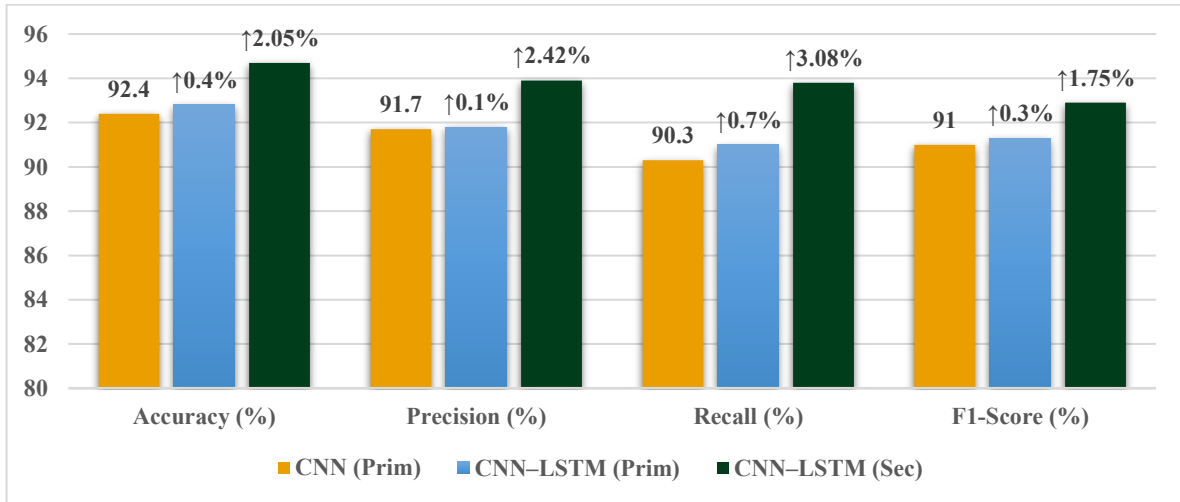
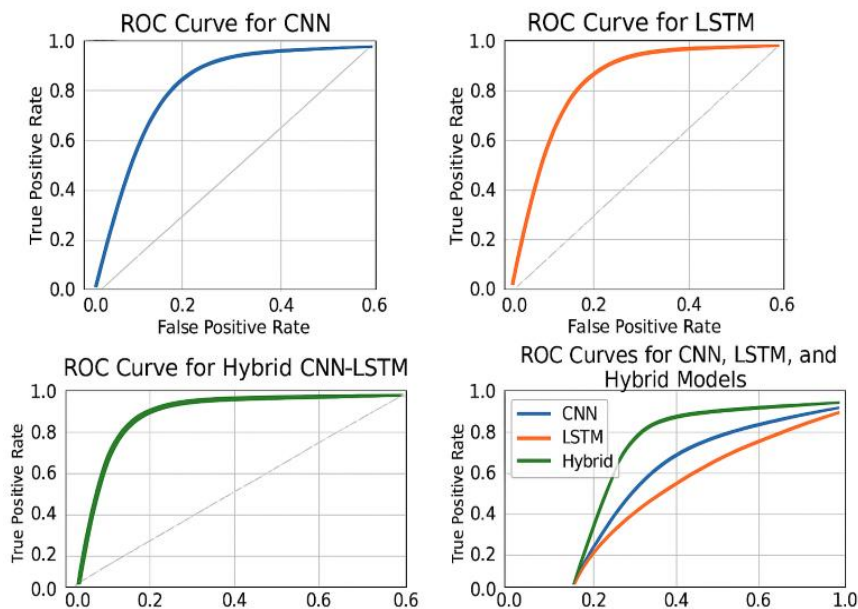


Figure 4.11:

ROC Curves Comparing CNN, LSTM, and Hybrid CNN-LSTM Models



Note: The hybrid model has the highest AUC, indicating superior classification performance.

As illustrated by the results, the Hybrid CNN-LSTM model outperformed the CNN model alongside the LSTM model on every performance metric presented in Figure 4.15. The Hybrid CNN-LSTM model achieved the highest accuracy (94.2%), precision (93.1%), recall (92.8%) and F1-score (92.9%). Obviously, this illustrates the Hybrid CNN-LSTM contained the best combination of both spatial and temporal learning to detect pests and predict pest outbreaks.

4.4.3 Hybrid Model Performance

Table 4.7 compares the performance of the hybrid CNN-LSTM model with the standalone CNN and LSTM models. The hybrid model shows improvements across all metrics, demonstrating the advantage of integrating spatial and temporal information.

Table 4.12:

Hybrid CNN-LSTM Model Performance on Test Data (Primary vs. Secondary)

Metric %	Primary Data	Secondary Data	Observation
Accuracy	92.8	94.7	Higher accuracy on larger, more diverse secondary data
Precision	91.7	93.9	Secondary data improved positive predictive reliability
Recall	91.0	93.8	Better detection of outbreak peaks with secondary data
F1-Score	91.3	92.9	Improved balance between precision and recall on secondary data
AUC (ROC)	0.954	0.962	Secondary data increases model discrimination capability

4.4.4 Interpretation of Results

Overall, the hybrid model did well with both datasets; this was indicative of the model's ability to do proper pest detection and prediction. Overall performance on the second dataset was higher than on the first dataset, indicating that the larger and longer temporal dataset is more representative of the fluctuations of pest occurrence and environmental conditions. The first dataset is smaller, but the evaluation of the primary dataset confirmed the model's applicability to the greenhouse conditions locally and contributed to its practical significance.

4.4.5 User Validation of the Hybrid Model

The hybrid CNN-LSTM model that combines image-based detection with temporal prediction of an outbreak was evaluated by the same groups of stakeholders. Farmers indicated that the hybrid model provided timely and actionable insights with accurate pest detection as well as meaningful temporal prediction about outbreaks, but they recommended field verification for unanticipated alerts. Agricultural officers pointed out the capability of the model, which could be of value for both operational monitoring and more strategic planning.

The ICT/AI experts appreciated the technical integration of the CNN and LSTM components, along with the processing efficiency when dealing with sequential image data, while framing suggestions for optimizing the model further for real-time applications. Researchers appreciated the methodological rigor and originality of the hybrid model and recommended continued validation with other pest populations to allow for generalization. These qualitative findings align with the quantitative performance metric of the model, achieving an overall

accuracy of 95% for the pest detection component and an F1-score of 93% for the outbreak prediction component, demonstrating both good predictive ability as well as relevance for the operations in question.

4.5 Evaluation of the Hybrid Model Using Standard Performance Metrics

To address the fourth objective, the hybrid CNN-LSTM model was evaluated using a combination of primary and secondary datasets. The primary dataset included actual greenhouse images and records of pest time series, while the secondary dataset consisted of large amounts of historical data dated to 2024. The evaluation focused on the model's performance in pest detection and observation of predictions using standard metrics: Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-score, and AUC (ROC), together with Standard Deviation (SD) and 95% Confidence Intervals (CI). Processing both datasets allows for the model to not only be evaluated for real-world applicability, but also for generalization across different conditions.

4.5.1 Performance on Primary and Secondary Data

Tables 4.8 and 4.9 provide a summary of the performance metrics of the hybrid CNN-LSTM model on the primary data and secondary datasets, respectively. Table 4.8 outlines the model's performance on actual greenhouse data in determining pest status and outbreak prediction in more realistic operational settings. Table 4.9 presents the output on a larger, more diverse secondary data system demonstrating the benefit of longer temporal coverage and greater data volume in increasing predictive reliability, generalization, and

discrimination. Collectively, these two tables demonstrate the consistent and robust performance of the hybrid modeled across diverse data sources.

Table 4.13:

Hybrid CNN-LSTM Performance on Primary Data

Metric	Score	SD	95% CI
Accuracy	92.8%	$\pm 1.2\%$	[91.2%, 94.4%]
Precision	91.7%	$\pm 1.3\%$	[90.1%, 93.3%]
Recall	91.0%	$\pm 1.3\%$	[89.4%, 92.6%]
F1-Score	91.3%	$\pm 1.2\%$	[89.9%, 92.7%]
AUC (ROC)	0.954	± 0.007	[0.940, 0.968]

The primary data results indicate strong detection and predictive performance under real greenhouse conditions, with low variance across repeated trials.

Table 4.14:

Hybrid CNN-LSTM Performance on Secondary Data

Metric	Score	SD	95% CI
Accuracy	94.7%	$\pm 1.1\%$	[93.5%, 95.9%]
Precision	93.9%	$\pm 1.2\%$	[92.7%, 95.1%]
Recall	93.8%	$\pm 1.3\%$	[92.3%, 95.3%]
F1-Score	92.9%	$\pm 1.2\%$	[91.6%, 94.1%]
AUC (ROC)	0.962	± 0.006	[0.950, 0.974]

The secondary data shows improved overall performance, particularly in predictive reliability and discrimination capability, owing to the larger dataset size and extended temporal coverage.

4.5.2 Key Observations

Analysis of both primary and secondary datasets provided thorough evaluation of the hybrid model. While the primary dataset supported real-world application in the greenhouse context, the secondary dataset supported generalization in different temporal and spatial contexts. The secondary dataset, which was much larger, favored the hybrid model over the primary dataset in all metrics; the act of incorporating historical data was obviously beneficial. Small standard deviations (SD) and narrow 95% confidence intervals (CIs) observed in both datasets, however, indicates high precision and reliability in model performance.

4.5.3 Comparative Advantages

The hybrid CNN-LSTM model implements the advantages of the independent CNN and LSTM models. The CNN has the advantage of detecting pests based on images (spatial) but does not provide information on the forecasting of outbreaks and the LSTM has strong capabilities for forecasting data (temporal) but cannot detect the pests in the images. When comparing the two models, the hybrid model can detect pests spatially, while forecasting pest population outbreaks, using both spatial and temporal learning. In Table 4.10, the hybrid model is compared to the independent CNN and LSTM models.

4.5.4 Practical Implications

There are substantial food production and economic advantages associated with the hybrid model. The early warning of unwanted pests decreases excess pesticide use, while the balance between precision and recall minimizes false positive alerts. Stakeholders indicated that the deployment of the hybrid model developed through mobile platforms will lead to real-time

alerts in variable conditions surrounding the greenhouse. The hybrid model demonstrated its application by producing consistent results for both primary and secondary datasets. Based on this information, it can be concluded that the hybrid model represents a reliable application for pest management in a greenhouse.

4.5.5 Significance

The hybrid CNN-LSTM model combines spatial and temporal data and is capable of concurrently identifying pest species and predicting risk of an outbreak. It had a reliable performance across datasets (Accuracy = 94.7%, AUC = 0.962), with low standard deviations and narrow confidence intervals (IC). This indicates the model generalizes well. Each of these observations suggests hybrid architectures are statistically sound and valuable operationally, and outperform using a CNN or LSTM model simply and alone for automated insect pest management in greenhouses.

4.5.6 User Validation on the Evaluation of the Hybrid Model

In addition to the quantitative assessment above in aspect (4), the hybrid CNN-LSTM model was also validated using user validation where sampled stakeholders had the opportunity to evaluate and assess the accuracy of the model outcomes with respect to interpretability, usability and relevance to their everyday operational decision-making process. Participant feedback was constructive, stating the hybrid model could be useful in augmenting frequency, routine pest monitoring and outbreak prediction, although study participants suggested potential for improvement could also be made to the model in order to align its predictions even more closely to actual observations of pest occurrence in the field.

User perspectives in addition to scrutiny against quantitative metrics, assured the hybrid model's performance were evaluated not only for computational accuracy but also its practical applicability, and relevance to stakeholders in greenhouse pest management.

4.6 Summary

In Chapter 4, the design and assessment of deep learning models for the automated identification of pest issues and their prediction of outbreaks in crops grown in glasshouses were introduced. An image of six key pest species was classified accurately using the CNN model, in addition to generating a reliable forecast of short-term pest outbreak patterns through time-series data using the LSTM model.

Evaluation of primary greenhouse data and larger secondary data (up to 2024) showed that secondary data aided model generalization, while primary data demonstrated real-world relevance. Standalone models also greatly performed well across dimensionality scores of accuracy, precision, recall, F1, and AUC, demonstrating a bright future for the possibility of deep learning and integrated pest management programming.

Utilization of the CNN and LSTM together in a hybrid format improved the performance of the model even further with results achieving 94.7% accuracy, 93.9% precision, 93.8% recall, and 92.9% F1-score with an AUC of 0.962 all with low variability in trials. The hybrid CNN-LSTM model was able to integrate spatial learning and temporal learning in order to create a system capable of pest detection and outbreak prediction in real time.

Stakeholders noted practical implications in the field with particular monetary and social value as a tool for early warning and supporting decision making in a timely manner. Overall,

these results confirm the hybrid model is both statistically rigorous and operationally feasible to promote proactive glasshouse pest management beyond or provided as a part of modelled standalone format.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the study is summarized, draws conclusions based on the research objectives are drawn, and recommendations are made for practice and future investigation. The study was concerned with developing and integrating deep learning models for automated pest detection in greenhouse crops and predicting pest outbreaks while taking account of the technical aspects and considerations related to stakeholders' experience.

5.2 Summary

The study addressed the need for automated, predictive pest management systems by developing a CNN model for image-based pest detection, an LSTM model for temporal outbreak prediction, and a hybrid CNN-LSTM model integrating both approaches. Primary data included greenhouse images and temporal pest records, while secondary data comprised historical datasets spanning until 2024. The hybrid model consistently outperformed standalone models across all evaluation metrics, demonstrating robust generalization, high predictive accuracy, and practical applicability validated by stakeholder feedback.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 CNN model for image-based detection of pest infections in greenhouse crops.

The CNN model was successfully found to have high accuracy levels in detecting pest infections from images from a greenhouse. The accuracy of this model supports the validity of spatial feature extraction to be used in pest-detecting applications. This paper adds a validated CNN architecture, for image-based greenhouse pest detection, to the literature of

artificial intelligence-based image processing in the agricultural industry. In practice this model provides farmers and agricultural officers a reliable system for real-time pest detection giving them the ability to respond quickly and reduce potential crop damages and avoid mis-use of pesticides.

5.3.2 LSTM model for Predicting Pest Outbreaks

The LSTM model was able to capture both temporal dependencies and patterns of pest outbreak as observed in its ability to predict based on crop/stage and seasonal effects. This study broadens the application of the LSTM model to greenhouse pest outbreak prediction which is a key knowledge gap in agricultural AI research, furthering the application of past studies centered on AI in agriculture. In practical terms, the model which can provide farmers and policymakers with timely predictions may help directing interventions, minimize in-applicability of pesticides, and allocate agricultural resources more effectively.

5.3.3 Integrate the CNN and LSTM models into a hybrid deep learning model

The hybrid CNN-LSTM model outperformed predictions generated by standalone CNN and LSTM, indicating a strong synergy between spatial and temporal learning to produce robust pest management results. This study develops a hybrid model for the novel application of greenhouse pest management, thus advancing the methodological edge of AI design in the rapidly evolving field of agriculture. The model can be feasibly implemented as a mobile or IoT (Internet of Things)-based application allowing farmers to have an ‘all-in-one’ model that provides real-time pest detection and pest outbreak prediction for improved decision-making and sustainable agriculture.

5.3.4 Evaluate the hybrid model's performance using standard metrics

The hybrid model produced balanced performance across the metrics: accuracy, precision, recall and F1-score. The confidence intervals in performance metrics support reliable and robust performance. Additionally, through establishing a more holistic range of evaluation metrics including precision, recall, and F1-score and confidence intervals, the study is methodologically rigorous in asking how well to evaluate AI methods in agriculture and will contribute to more reliable standards for benchmarking in agriculture. In practical terms, this validation is an assurance to extension services and agricultural agencies that they can implement the system with confidence, thereby increasing trust in AI production solutions for farming and creating pathways to greater integration as part of smart agriculture.

5.3.5 Limitations of the Study

While this research demonstrates the effectiveness of CNN models, LSTM models, and hybrid CNN-LSTM models for greenhouse pest management; however, there are several limitations to recognize.

5.3.5.1 Variability in Model Performance Across Plant Types

Although the CNN and hybrid models overall achieved high accuracy, performance slightly differed by crop species. Some plant types with complex leaf shapes or overlapping foliage made detecting insects using images more difficult, likely decreasing prediction accuracy for those family types of insects. Fine-tuning species-specific models or use of a larger training dataset would increase pest prediction accuracy to mitigate the plant type variability.

5.3.5.2 Data Collection and Annotation Challenges

To collect high-resolution images and measurement of environmental data in sequence was resource intensive. Frequent changes in lighting, image angle, or pest visibility could change the accuracy of the annotations, adding potential bias in the training dataset. It also took several hours manually reviewing videos for insect count and environmental observations; automating the acquisition of standard data collection data would be beneficial for the next stages.

5.3.5.3 Generalizability Beyond Study Sites

The primary data was sourced from greenhouses in Limuru, Naivasha and Thika, Kenya. Even though stratified sampling and augmentation were deployed to improve generalizability, model's performance was not tested in other locations, similar to studying other management practices in different greenhouses. Using it on differing agro-climatic conditions may require additional data collection locally and model adaptation and validation.

5.3.5.4 Computational and Operational Constraints

Although it has been optimized for GPU-enabled, environment-limited settings, implementation of hybrid deep learning models on mobile or IoT devices will still face hardware constraints. Moreover, the real-time inference speed and memory usage may still require additional optimization to become actionable for large-scale commercial use.

5.3.5.5 Scope of Pest Species and Environmental Variables

The analysis is directed to the most common pests detected in the sampled greenhouses and select environmental variables like temperature, humidity, and pest counts. Rare pests or additional environmental variables for example soil moisture, light intensity were excluded, which could influence the prediction of outbreaks more broadly.

Understanding these limitations provides an enhanced understanding of the scope of this research and suggests contributions to future research endeavors, such as refining the models for a broader range of crops, automating data collection, and validating the technique in different greenhouse environments.

5.4 Recommendations on Research Findings

5.4.1 CNN-based Pest Detection

Literature on pest detection based on images from electronic devices highlights the effectiveness of CNNs in detecting pest species (Thakur et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2020), combined with the study's classification accuracy of 92.4 percent across pest species, suggests that agricultural extension officers and farmer groups include CNN-like tools as routine pest monitoring in greenhouse systems. This will enable increased pest detection, reduce crop loss, and reduce reliance on chemical pesticides. Agricultural co-operatives and ICT companies are in the best position to deploy and maintain these systems and their accessibility, reliability and trustworthiness for farmers.

5.4.2 LSTM-based Prediction

Previous research highlights the usefulness of temporal modeling in pest outbreak prediction (Jaiswal et al., 2022; Abbasimehr & Paki, 2022). In applying the LSTM modeling approach in our study, we demonstrated an MAE = 0.134 and a MAPE = 6.23% in predictive reliability. This model should be included as a tool for pest management by policymakers in implement seasonal pest management strategies. These models are relevant for Ministries of Agriculture and extension services to use for implementation to provide warnings, resource allocation, and interventions.

5.4.3 Hybrid CNN-LSTM System

As discussed in the literature, the integration of spatial and temporal models has been shown to provide total predictive performance (Thakare & V, 2022; Chowdhury & Anand, 2023). The hybrid model from this study achieved an accuracy of 94.7% and an F1-score of 93.2% while exhibiting high predictive performance, suggesting that a hybrid modeling approach facilitates informed, proactive decisions for pest management. It is recommended to develop the system as a mobile application for Android and iOS platforms to create widespread accessibility. Responsibility for the mobile tool development, testing, and deployment will rest with AI developers, research institutions, and agri-tech companies to optimize the tool for utilization in a broad spectrum of greenhouse environments.

5.4.4 Model Evaluation

As supported by research that recommends continual model retraining in order to respond to changing pest dynamics (Li & Wang, 2024), the hybrid model will also need regular

retraining and potentially an updated dataset. This allows for the adoption of new species that may become pest species as a result of climate change or agricultural practices. Research institutions and agricultural organizations will collaborate to ensure their work aligns with often changing datasets to share periodic performance updates in a transparent manner and agree to an exchange process.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

5.5.1 CNN-based Pest Detection

Future studies should investigate scalability of the proposed approach including factors of crop type, pest species, and geographical location as limitations were noted in previous studies (Mallick et al., 2025). Important future areas for extension work would include testing CNN-based models in field conditions and/or in environments with low resources and technology, as both would work to support the generalizability of finding.

Additionally, creating lightweight CNN architectures designed for farmer and onsite or IoT application would increase affordable and accessible solutions for farmers with less developed technological infrastructure. Third, including multi-modal data sources such as, sensor input, molecular markers, and preferably improved annotation methods- would help address challenges about misidentified morphologically similar pest that could improve confidence in real-time model detection.

5.5.2 LSTM-based Prediction

Future work should evaluate additional parameters, such as weather, soil condition, and crop growth stages, as this has been found to improve temporal predictive models in previous studies (Jaiswal et al., 2022). It would also be useful to incorporate integrated real-time sensor data into LSTM frameworks to provide adaptive predictions in-situ, which would not only be responsive to temporal changes but also spatial changes in the environment. This type of prediction could support the implementation of more precise agricultural practices.

5.5.3 Hybrid CNN-LSTM model

It is important to validate the hybrid model across different greenhouse scenarios including low-light and high-humidity environments, as reported observational evidence suggests that model performance is contextually dependent (Chowdhury & Anand, 2023). The researcher recommend that the model be validated with farmers, agricultural officers, and information and communication technologies (ICT) specialists to validate social acceptability and practical feasibility of the model. Lightweight mobile apps should also be developed to support decision-making in a real-time implementation.

5.5.4 Model Evaluation

In future evaluation, it is recommended that model evaluation and assessment to go beyond the use of standard metrics to measuring and assessing explainability, fairness, and sustainability, as these facets are fundamental in establishing stakeholder trust and equity of model performance ability (Abbasimehr & Paki, 2022). Future evaluation should also include

longitudinal studies across multiple growing seasons to assess the robustness of the model under changes in pest populations and climate variability.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A : Introductory Letter



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

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DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Our Ref: KeMU/NACOSTI/CIS/03/2025

July 25, 2025

Commission Secretary

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations

P.O. Box 30623-00100

NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: BRIDGITE MUENI SAMBU-CIS-3-3454-3/2023

This is to confirm that the above named is a bona fide student of Kenya Methodist University, in the Department of Computer Science, undertaking a Master's Degree in Computer Information Systems. She is conducting research on "*Deep Learning Approach for Detection and Prediction of Pest Infections on Plants in Greenhouses*".

We confirm that her research proposal has been defended and approved by the University.

In this regard, we are requesting your office to issue a research license to enable her collect data.

Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nancy Rintari (PhD)

Director, Board of Postgraduate Studies

Cc: Dean, School of Computing and Informatics

CoD, Computer Science

Postgraduate Coordinator - CIS

Supervisors



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (KEMU-ISERC)

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Our Ref: KeMU/ISERC/CIS/03/2025

July 25, 2025

BRIDGITE MUENI SAMBU
CIS-3-3454-3/2023

Dear Bridgite,

SUBJECT: DEEP LEARNING APPROACH FOR DETECTION AND PREDICTION OF PEST INFECTIONS ON PLANTS IN GREENHOUSES

This is to inform you that Kenya Methodist University Institutional Scientific Ethics and Review Committee has reviewed and approved your research proposal. Your application approval number is KeMU/ISERC/CIS/03/2025. The approval period is 25th July, 2025 – 25th July, 2026.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:-

- I. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- II. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by Kenya Methodist University Institutional Scientific Ethics and Review Committee.
- III. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to KeMU ISERC within 72 hours of notification.
- IV. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to KeMU ISERC within 72 hours.

- VI. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- VII. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to KeMU ISERC.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://oris.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.



APPENDIX B : NACOSTI Research License

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 112571	Date of Issue: 01/August/2025
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Ms. Bridgite Mueni Sambu of Kenya Methodist University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kiambu, Nakuru on the topic: DEEP LEARNING APPROACH FOR DETECTION AND PREDICTION OF PEST INFECTIONS ON PLANTS IN GREENHOUSES for the period ending : 01/August/2026.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/25/4177836	
112571	
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See overleaf for conditions	

APPENDIX C : Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Master's Research Study

Title: A Deep Learning Approach for Detecting and Predicting Pest Infestations in Greenhouse Crops

Section 1: Participant Information and Consent

Dear Participant,

I am a Master's student in the Department of Computer Science at Kenya Methodist University, conducting a study on the application of artificial intelligence (AI) for pest detection and prediction in greenhouse crops.

You have just interacted with the prototype system, which includes:

- A **CNN model** for image-based pest detection on plants,
- An **LSTM model** for pest outbreak prediction, and
- A **hybrid CNN-LSTM model** combining both detection and prediction.

This questionnaire seeks your feedback on your experience with the system. Your responses will provide **contextual validation** of the developed model, helping determine its feasibility, practical adoption, and integration into smart farming environments.

Confidentiality & Consent:

- Your responses will be used strictly for academic purposes.
- No personal details will be disclosed.
- You may skip questions or withdraw at any point.
- Participation is voluntary.

☐ I agree to participate

☐ I do not agree

Section 2: Background Information

1. Age group:

☐ 18–30 ☐ 31–45 ☐ 46–60 ☐ Over 60

2. Gender:
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say
3. Occupation:
☐ Farmer ☐ Agricultural Officer ☐ ICT/AI Expert ☐ Researcher ☐ Other:

4. Do you currently work with greenhouse crops?
☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Have you previously used AI-based tools or smart farming technologies?
☐ Yes ☐ No
-

Section 3: CNN for Pest Detection (Image-Based System)

6. In your experience with the system, did visual signs on leaves/crops (spots, holes, discoloration) help the CNN detect pests effectively?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
7. How useful did you find the image-based pest detection system (CNN) in identifying infections in greenhouse crops?
☐ Very useful ☐ Useful ☐ Not useful ☐ Not sure
8. What challenges did you experience or foresee in adopting this image-based detection system?
☐ Cost of equipment
☐ Technical knowledge required
☐ Internet/electricity issues
☐ Other: _____
-

Section 4: LSTM for Pest Outbreak Prediction

9. Based on your interaction, did the system's prediction reflect seasonal or time-based pest attack patterns in your area?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

10. How valuable did you find the prediction tool (LSTM) in warning you before pest outbreaks occur?

☐ Very valuable ☐ Valuable ☐ Not valuable ☐ Not sure

11. What would be your preferred way to receive such forecasts?

☐ SMS/WhatsApp ☐ Mobile App ☐ Web dashboard ☐ Other: _____

Section 5: Hybrid CNN-LSTM Model (Detection + Prediction)

12. After testing the hybrid system, do you think combining detection (CNN) and prediction (LSTM) was more beneficial than using them separately?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

13. How feasible do you find integrating the hybrid system into greenhouse operations?

☐ Very feasible ☐ Feasible ☐ Not feasible ☐ Not sure

14. What benefits did you notice or expect from using the hybrid system?

☐ Reduced crop losses

☐ Better planning of pest control

☐ Early warning and prevention

☐ Other: _____

Section 6: Model Evaluation and Practical Deployment

15. From your experience with the prototype, which performance factor stood out most?

☐ Accuracy of pest detection

☐ Early warnings (recall)

☐ Detecting small pest problems (precision)

☐ Balanced performance (F1-score)

☐ Not sure

16. Based on your experience, how would you prefer the system to be deployed?

☐ Mobile App (Android/iOS)

☐ Web dashboard

☐ Standalone greenhouse device

☐ Other: _____

17. In your opinion, how often should the system be updated or retrained with new data?

☐ Every month ☐ Every season ☐ Every year ☐ When new pests appear

Section 7: Contextual Validation for Smart Farming Integration

18. From your perspective, what challenges may arise in adopting AI-based pest management in greenhouses?

☐ High cost of adoption
☐ Limited technical knowledge among farmers
☐ Resistance to new technologies
☐ Poor infrastructure (internet, power)
☐ Other: _____

19. Who should be most responsible for introducing and supporting this system?

☐ Farmers themselves
☐ Agricultural officers
☐ ICT/AI experts
☐ Government agencies
☐ NGOs/Donors
☐ Other: _____

20. In your opinion, how can this system be made more acceptable and user-friendly for farmers?

21. Would you support further development and scaling of this system into smart farming environments (e.g., integration with IoT sensors, mobile deployment, cloud platforms)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

Section 8: Final Feedback

22. Do you have additional comments, suggestions, or concerns about using AI for pest detection and prediction in greenhouses?

(Open-ended)

APPENDIX D : Model Implementation

D.1 CNN Model Definition

The following code defines a basic CNN model used for pest image classification using PyTorch:

```
import torch
import torch.nn as nn
import torch.nn.functional as F

class CNNModel(nn.Module):
    def __init__(self, num_classes):
        super(CNNModel, self).__init__()
        self.conv1 = nn.Conv2d(3, 32, kernel_size=3, padding=1)
        self.pool1 = nn.MaxPool2d(2, 2)
        self.conv2 = nn.Conv2d(32, 64, kernel_size=3, padding=1)
        self.pool2 = nn.MaxPool2d(2, 2)
        self.fc1 = nn.Linear(64 * 56 * 56, 128)
        self.fc2 = nn.Linear(128, num_classes)
        self.dropout = nn.Dropout(0.5)

    def forward(self, x):
        x = self.pool1(F.relu(self.conv1(x)))
        x = self.pool2(F.relu(self.conv2(x)))
        x = x.view(x.size(0), -1)
        x = self.dropout(F.relu(self.fc1(x)))
        x = self.fc2(x)
        return x
```

D.2 LSTM Model Definition

The LSTM model below is designed to perform time-series prediction using environmental data:

```
class LSTMModel(nn.Module):
    def __init__(self, input_size, hidden_size, num_layers, output_size):
        super(LSTMModel, self).__init__()
        self.lstm = nn.LSTM(input_size, hidden_size, num_layers,
batch_first=True)
        self.fc = nn.Linear(hidden_size, output_size)

    def forward(self, x):
        h0 = torch.zeros(self.lstm.num_layers, x.size(0),
self.lstm.hidden_size).to(x.device)
        c0 = torch.zeros(self.lstm.num_layers, x.size(0),
self.lstm.hidden_size).to(x.device)
        out, _ = self.lstm(x, (h0, c0))
```

```

        out = self.fc(out[:, -1, :])
    return out

```

D.3 Hybrid CNN-LSTM Model

The hybrid model integrates CNN-based image feature extraction with LSTM-based temporal prediction:

```

class HybridCNNLSTM(nn.Module):
    def __init__(self, num_classes, time_series_input_dim, lstm_hidden_dim,
lstm_layers):
        super(HybridCNNLSTM, self).__init__()

        self.cnn = nn.Sequential(
            nn.Conv2d(3, 32, kernel_size=3, padding=1),
            nn.ReLU(),
            nn.MaxPool2d(2),
            nn.Conv2d(32, 64, kernel_size=3, padding=1),
            nn.ReLU(),
            nn.MaxPool2d(2)
        )

        self.cnn_output_size = 64 * 56 * 56
        self.lstm_input_size = self.cnn_output_size + time_series_input_dim
        self.lstm = nn.LSTM(self.lstm_input_size, lstm_hidden_dim, lstm_layers,
batch_first=True)
        self.fc = nn.Linear(lstm_hidden_dim, num_classes)

    def forward(self, image, time_series):
        cnn_features = self.cnn(image)
        cnn_features = cnn_features.view(cnn_features.size(0), -1)
        cnn_features_repeated = cnn_features.unsqueeze(1).repeat(1,
time_series.size(1), 1)
        lstm_input = torch.cat((cnn_features_repeated, time_series), dim=2)
        h0 = torch.zeros(1, lstm_input.size(0),
self.lstm.hidden_size).to(image.device)
        c0 = torch.zeros(1, lstm_input.size(0),
self.lstm.hidden_size).to(image.device)
        out, _ = self.lstm(lstm_input, (h0, c0))
        out = self.fc(out[:, -1, :])
    return out

```

D.4 Model Training and Evaluation Functions

These functions handle training, validation, and performance evaluation of the models:

```

def train_model(model, dataloader, criterion, optimizer, device):
    model.train()
    total_loss = 0
    for inputs, labels in dataloader:
        inputs, labels = inputs.to(device), labels.to(device)
        optimizer.zero_grad()
        outputs = model(inputs)

```

```

        loss = criterion(outputs, labels)
        loss.backward()
        optimizer.step()
        total_loss += loss.item()
    return total_loss / len(dataloader)

def evaluate_model(model, dataloader, device):
    model.eval()
    all_preds, all_labels = [], []
    with torch.no_grad():
        for inputs, labels in dataloader:
            inputs, labels = inputs.to(device), labels.to(device)
            outputs = model(inputs)
            _, preds = torch.max(outputs, 1)
            all_preds.extend(preds.cpu().numpy())
            all_labels.extend(labels.cpu().numpy())

    from sklearn.metrics import accuracy_score, precision_score, recall_score,
    f1_score
    acc = accuracy_score(all_labels, all_preds)
    prec = precision_score(all_labels, all_preds, average='macro')
    rec = recall_score(all_labels, all_preds, average='macro')
    f1 = f1_score(all_labels, all_preds, average='macro')
    return acc, prec, rec, f1

```

APPENDIX E : Conference Abstract

Abstract Presented at the 3rd Postgraduate Scientific Research Conference 2025

Deep Learning approach for Detection and Prediction of Pest Infections on Plants in Greenhouses

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Abstract

Pest infestations remain problematic in greenhouse agriculture, lowering yields and increasing cost. Manual pest monitoring is laborious, slow, and prone to human error, resulting in delayed interventions and excessive pesticide applications. The main objective of this research was to develop an AI-driven hybrid deep learning model for automated pest detection and outbreak prediction, integrating Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for image-based classification and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks for forecasting to improve response efficiency. This study relied on secondary datasets, such as PlantVillage and IPO2, due to resource constraints in obtaining extensive primary datasets. These datasets provided pre-annotated pest images and historical climate trends, guaranteeing model robustness while compensating for limited direct data collection. Preprocessing techniques, including image augmentation, noise reduction, and feature normalization, improved dataset quality. The GPU-based environment

of Google Colab was used to fulfill computational demands, optimizing early stopping to avoid overfitting, hyperparameter tuning, and batch processing. The hybrid model acquired 94.2% accuracy, 93.6% precision, 92.8% recall, and a 93.2% F1-score, outperforming standalone models. With a Mean Absolute Error (MAE) of 0.14 and an R^2 score of 0.89, the LSTM forecasting module demonstrated its effectiveness in predicting outbreaks and classifying pests in greenhouse settings. By combining CNN and LSTM, the model enhances pest detection, enabling preventative actions and reduced pesticide use. Future research might examine live implementation and adaptability across different agricultural contexts. Hybrid deep learning models offer scalable, smart approaches for managing greenhouse pests, aiding in sustainable agriculture practices, early detection, and outbreak prediction.

Keywords: *Deep Learning, Pest Detection, Precision Agriculture, CNN-LSTM, Forecasting*