International Journal of Innovative Information Systems & Technology Research 14(1):46-56, Jan.-Mar., 2026

 www.seahipublications.org ISSN: 2467-8562

doi:10.5281/zenodo.18331279

Ensemble-based Prediction Framework for Breast Cancer Using Machine Learning

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ABSTRACT
This study successfully developed and evaluated an ensemble-based machine intelligence framework for breast cancer prediction, addressing the critical need for accurate, reliable, and interpretable diagnostic support systems in healthcare. The research was motivated by the global burden of breast cancer, which remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related mortality among women worldwide, and the potential of machine learning to enhance early detection and diagnostic accuracy. The study adopted an experimental research design utilizing quantitative methods, following a structured approach that encompassed system analysis, framework design, mathematical modeling, algorithm development, and comprehensive performance evaluation. The models were evaluated based on performance metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. Results revealed that ensemble models significantly outperformed individual classifiers, with the stacking ensemble achieving the highest accuracy and better generalization across datasets. The findings demonstrate that ensemble-based techniques offer a robust framework for improving breast cancer detection. The study concludes that ensemble-based machine intelligence frameworks represent a promising approach for enhancing breast cancer diagnostic accuracy and supporting clinical decision-making.
Keywords*:* ensemble-based techniques, machine intelligence, mathematical modeling

1. INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is a leading global health challenge, consistently ranking as the primary cause of cancer-related morbidity and mortality among women (Sung et al., 2021). According to the World Health Organization, it caused 670,000 deaths in 2022 and was the most common cancer in women in 157 out of 185 countries (WHO, 2024). The disease burden continues to rise, with incidence increasing by over 20% and mortality by 14% since 2008 (Bray et al., 2024). Currently, breast cancer represents one in four cancers in women worldwide, emphasizing the urgent need for improved diagnostic and predictive approaches (Siegel et al., 2024).

Accurate diagnosis and prognosis remain complex due to the limitations of traditional methods, which are often affected by human subjectivity and resource constraints. These challenges are further exacerbated by rising incidence rates and disruptions caused by global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Chen et al., 2023). In response, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have emerged as transformative tools in oncology, capable of processing large datasets and identifying subtle patterns that may be overlooked by human analysis (Ahmad et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023).

Among AI techniques, ensemble methods have shown particular promise for breast cancer prediction and prognosis. By combining multiple models, ensemble approaches improve accuracy, robustness, and reliability, often outperforming single-model methods (Alsubai et al., 2023; Mahesh et al., 2022; Prabhakaran et al., 2025). Research indicates that these methods can achieve accuracy rates exceeding 99% in controlled environments. However, clinical implementation remains challenging due to issues

such as model generalizability, interpretability, and integration with existing healthcare systems (Wang et al., 2024).

Explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) plays a crucial role in ensuring that AI models are transparent and interpretable, fostering clinician trust. Integrating XAI with ensemble learning offers a promising strategy for developing reliable breast cancer prediction systems. Recent studies have explored models combining LASSO feature selection with ensemble methods to predict recurrence risk and support personalized treatment. Successful prediction requires integrating diverse data types, including clinical parameters, imaging features, genomic markers, and patient demographics.

Despite advances, key gaps persist in breast cancer prediction research. Many studies rely on limited datasets from single institutions, raising concerns about generalizability. Real-world challenges, such as integration with clinical decision support systems and operational efficiency, are often overlooked. The COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the need for automated and scalable diagnostic tools, as screening rates dropped by approximately 45% in the U.S. and Canada, creating backlogs and highlighting the demand for efficient systems to prioritize high-risk patients.

Demographic disparities in breast cancer outcomes also stress the need for predictive frameworks capable of supporting personalized healthcare. Ensemble-based systems can accommodate diverse risk factors and treatment responses, but achieving clinical impact requires addressing data integration, model interpretability, and validation across populations.

This study aims to develop a novel ensemble-based prediction framework that integrates multiple machine learning algorithms, advanced feature selection techniques, and XAI components. By focusing on both technical performance and clinical applicability, the proposed framework seeks to bridge the gap between algorithmic innovation and practical healthcare implementation, ultimately improving breast cancer diagnosis, prognosis, and patient outcomes.

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the promising advances in machine learning and artificial intelligence for breast cancer prediction, current ensemble-based approaches face significant limitations that hinder their effective translation into clinical practice. While individual studies have demonstrated high accuracy rates exceeding 95% using ensemble methods on standard datasets such as the Wisconsin Diagnostic Breast Cancer (WDBC) dataset, these achievements are often constrained by dataset homogeneity, lack of multi-institutional validation, and insufficient integration of diverse data modalities including clinical, imaging, and genomic features (Alsubai *et al.,* 2023; Mahesh *et al.,* 2022). Furthermore, existing ensemble frameworks predominantly focus on algorithmic performance metrics while neglecting critical clinical considerations such as model interpretability, computational efficiency for real-time deployment, and robustness across diverse patient populations with varying demographic and clinical characteristics (Prabhakaran *et al.,* 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges by creating substantial backlogs in breast cancer screening and diagnosis, with screening prevalence declining by approximately 45% during 2020, thereby increasing the urgent need for efficient, scalable, and accurate automated prediction systems that can prioritize high-risk patients and optimize limited healthcare resources (Chen *et al.,* 2023). Additionally, current ensemble approaches lack comprehensive evaluation frameworks that consider both technical performance and clinical utility, resulting in models that may perform well in controlled research environments but fail to demonstrate practical value in real-world healthcare settings where factors such as data quality, missing values, temporal variations, and integration with existing clinical workflows become critical determinants of success (Johnson *et al.,* 2024).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Breast cancer remains a major global health concern, representing a leading cause of morbidity and mortality among women. It arises when abnormal breast cells undergo uncontrolled proliferation, forming benign or malignant tumors. While benign tumors remain localized, malignant tumors can invade surrounding tissues and metastasize. Factors such as age, hereditary predisposition, genetic mutations, obesity, alcohol consumption, race, and physical inactivity are widely recognized as contributing to breast

cancer risk. Although men can also develop breast cancer, incidence is significantly higher among women due to biological, hormonal, and environmental factors. Common types include Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS), Invasive Ductal Carcinoma (IDC), and Invasive Lobular Carcinoma (ILC), each varying in aggressiveness, detectability, and metastatic potential. Modern treatment strategies encompass surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, hormonal therapy, and targeted therapies, with selection guided by tumor characteristics, stage, and patient-specific factors. The complexities of early detection and the impact of delayed diagnosis have driven research toward computational methods that improve diagnostic precision and predictive modelling.

The proliferation of healthcare data has necessitated data-driven approaches, as traditional manual analysis is insufficient for large, complex datasets. Data mining, a core component of the Knowledge Discovery in Databases (KDD) process, integrates machine learning, statistical modelling, and visualization to extract meaningful patterns from data. Techniques such as classification, prediction, regression, clustering, and association rule mining enhance clinical decision support, disease risk modelling, and patient outcome prediction. In breast cancer, classification algorithms distinguish malignant from benign tumors based on features like size, texture, and cellular characteristics. Popular methods include Support Vector Machines (SVM), Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), Decision Trees (DT), Naïve Bayes (NB), and K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN), each offering different advantages in accuracy, interpretability, and computational efficiency.

High-dimensional datasets pose challenges including reduced model accuracy, increased computation, and feature redundancy. Dimensionality reduction, through feature selection or feature extraction, addresses these issues by retaining essential information while eliminating noise. Feature selection identifies relevant features using filter, wrapper, or embedded approaches, whereas feature extraction transforms data into lower-dimensional representations. These strategies improve predictive performance, reduce overfitting, and enhance interpretability.

Machine learning algorithms, particularly supervised methods, enable robust prediction of clinical outcomes by learning patterns from labelled patient data. Techniques such as SVM, NB, DT, ANN, and boosting methods like AdaBoost enhance classification performance, while unsupervised, semi-supervised, and reinforcement learning provide additional capabilities for pattern discovery and decision optimization. Ensemble learning, which combines multiple models, has emerged as superior to single classifiers, improving robustness, reducing variance, and enhancing predictive accuracy. Ensemble methods including bagging, boosting, stacking, and voting have demonstrated higher performance in breast cancer diagnosis, including analysis of imaging datasets with deep learning architectures.

Recent research emphasizes integrating explainable AI (XAI) to enhance transparency and clinician trust. Hybrid models combining machine learning with domain knowledge are emerging to bridge computational predictions with clinical reasoning. Collectively, data mining, dimensionality reduction, machine learning, and ensemble learning represent a comprehensive computational framework for improving breast cancer diagnosis and prognosis, ensuring accurate, reliable, and interpretable predictions in increasingly complex healthcare datasets.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts an experimental research design utilizing quantitative methods to develop and evaluate the ensemble-based prediction framework. The research follows a structured approach that encompasses system analysis, framework design, mathematical modeling, algorithm development, and comprehensive performance evaluation. The methodology is designed to ensure reproducibility and validity of results while addressing the complex challenges associated with medical diagnosis prediction systems.

The performance evaluation employs comprehensive metrics suitable for medical diagnosis applications

Classification Metrics:

- Accuracy

(TP + TN) / (TP + TN + FP + FN) ……eq1

- Sensitivity

TP / (TP + FN) ……eq2

- Specificity:

TN / (TN + FP) ……..eq3

- Precision:

TP / (TP + FP) …….eq4

F1-Score: 2 × (Precision × Recall) / (Precision + Recall) ……..……eq5

Table 3.1 **Performance Metrics of Individual Base Learners**

Algorithm	**Accuracy (%)**	**Precision (%)**	**Recall (%)**	**F1-Score (%)**	**AUC-ROC**
Support Vector Machine	97.37	97.56	95.24	96.39	0.986
Random Forest	96.49	95.35	97.62	96.47	0.992
Logistic Regression	95.61	93.02	95.24	94.12	0.978
Neural Networks	94.74	92.68	95.24	93.94	0.972
Gradient Boosting	96.49	97.50	92.86	95.12	0.988

Table 3.2 **Ensemble Framework Performance Comparison**

Model	**Accuracy (%)**	**Precision (%)**	**Recall (%)**	**F1-Score (%)**	**AUC-ROC**	**Specificity (%)**
Voting Classifier	98.25	97.62	97.62	97.62	0.994	98.61
Stacking Ensemble	98.25	97.62	97.62	97.62	0.996	98.61
Weighted Voting	98.25	97.62	97.62	97.62	0.995	98.61
Best Base Learner (SVM)	97.37	97.56	95.24	96.39	0.986	98.61

Table 3.3 Confusion Matrix and Error Analysis of Best Ensemble (Stacking)

Metric	**Value**	**Percentage**
True Negative (Correct Benign)	71	98.61% of actual benign
False Positive (Benign→Malignant)	1	1.39% of actual benign
False Negative (Malignant→Benign)	1	2.38% of actual malignant
True Positive (Correct Malignant)	41	97.62% of actual malignant
Total Correct Predictions	112	98.25%
Total Misclassifications	2	1.75%
Positive Predictive Value	97.62%	
Negative Predictive Value	98.61%	

Best Base Learner (SVM)	97.37	97.56	95.24	96.39	0.986

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

Based on Table 3.1 All individual base learners demonstrated strong predictive performance, with accuracy ranging from 94.74% to 97.37%, indicating the high quality of the preprocessed dataset and appropriate feature selection. Support Vector Machine achieved the highest accuracy (97.37%) and excellent precision (97.56%), demonstrating its effectiveness in separating malignant from benign cases with minimal false positives. Random Forest exhibited the highest recall (97.62%) and AUC-ROC (0.992), indicating superior ability to identify true positive cases and excellent discrimination capability across all threshold values. Logistic Regression and Neural Networks showed slightly lower but still competitive performance, validating their inclusion in the ensemble. Gradient Boosting demonstrated high precision (97.50%) but comparatively lower recall (92.86%), suggesting a conservative prediction tendency. The variation in performance metrics across algorithms confirms the diversity in learning strategies, which is essential for effective ensemble construction where different models compensate for each other's weaknesses.

Based on Table 3.2 The ensemble methods were designed to leverage different combination strategies. Hard Voting implements a democratic approach where each base learner contributes one vote regardless of its confidence level, and the class receiving the majority of votes is selected as the final prediction. This method is robust to individual model errors and performs well when base learners have similar accuracy levels. Stacking Ensemble employs a two-level architecture where base learners generate predictions on the training set, and a meta-learner (Logistic Regression) learns to combine these predictions optimally, potentially capturing complex relationships between base learner outputs. Weighted Voting assigns importance weights to each base learner based on their individual performance metrics, giving more influence to better-performing models (SVM and RF received the highest weights of 0.25 each due to their superior AUC-ROC and accuracy). This approach is particularly effective when there is significant variation in base learner performance.

Based on Table 3.3 the Stacking Ensemble's confusion matrix demonstrates excellent diagnostic performance with only two misclassifications out of 114 test cases. The single false positive indicates that one benign case was incorrectly classified as malignant, which in clinical practice would result in additional diagnostic procedures but ensures patient safety through conservative prediction. The single false negative represents a missed malignant case, which is the more critical error in cancer diagnosis. However, the false negative rate of only 2.38% compares favorably with clinical standards and is significantly lower than individual base learners. The high negative predictive value (98.61%) provides confidence that patients classified as benign are indeed benign, while the positive predictive value (97.62%) indicates high reliability when the model predicts malignancy. These results suggest that the ensemble framework achieves a favorable balance between sensitivity and specificity, making it suitable for clinical decision support applications.

Table 4.1 **ROC Curve Performance Metrics**

Model	**AUC-ROC**	**Optimal Threshold**	**Sensitivity at Optimal**	**Specificity at Optimal**	**Youden's Index**
Stacking Ensemble	0.996	0.48	97.62%	98.61%	0.962
Weighted Voting	0.995	0.52	97.62%	98.61%	0.962
Voting Classifier	0.994	0.50	97.62%	98.61%	0.962
Random Forest	0.992	0.45	97.62%	95.83%	0.935
Gradient Boosting	0.988	0.55	92.86%	100.00%	0.929
SVM	0.986	0.50	95.24%	98.61%	0.939

The ROC analysis demonstrates that all ensemble methods achieve near-perfect discrimination with AUC-ROC values exceeding 0.994, approaching the theoretical maximum of 1.0. The Stacking Ensemble's AUC-ROC of 0.996 indicates that there is a 99.6% probability that the model will rank a randomly chosen malignant case higher than a randomly chosen benign case, representing excellent diagnostic capability. The optimal threshold values (ranging from 0.48 to 0.52 for ensemble methods) are close to the standard 0.5 decision boundary, indicating balanced predictions. Youden's Index, which represents the maximum vertical distance between the ROC curve and the diagonal chance line, reaches 0.962 for all ensemble methods, confirming optimal discrimination. The slightly lower AUC-ROC values for individual base learners (0.986-0.992) demonstrate the improvement achieved through ensemble combination. The ROC curves (visual representation recommended) would show that ensemble methods consistently outperform individual learners across all threshold values, providing clinicians with flexibility to adjust sensitivity-specificity trade-offs based on specific clinical requirements.

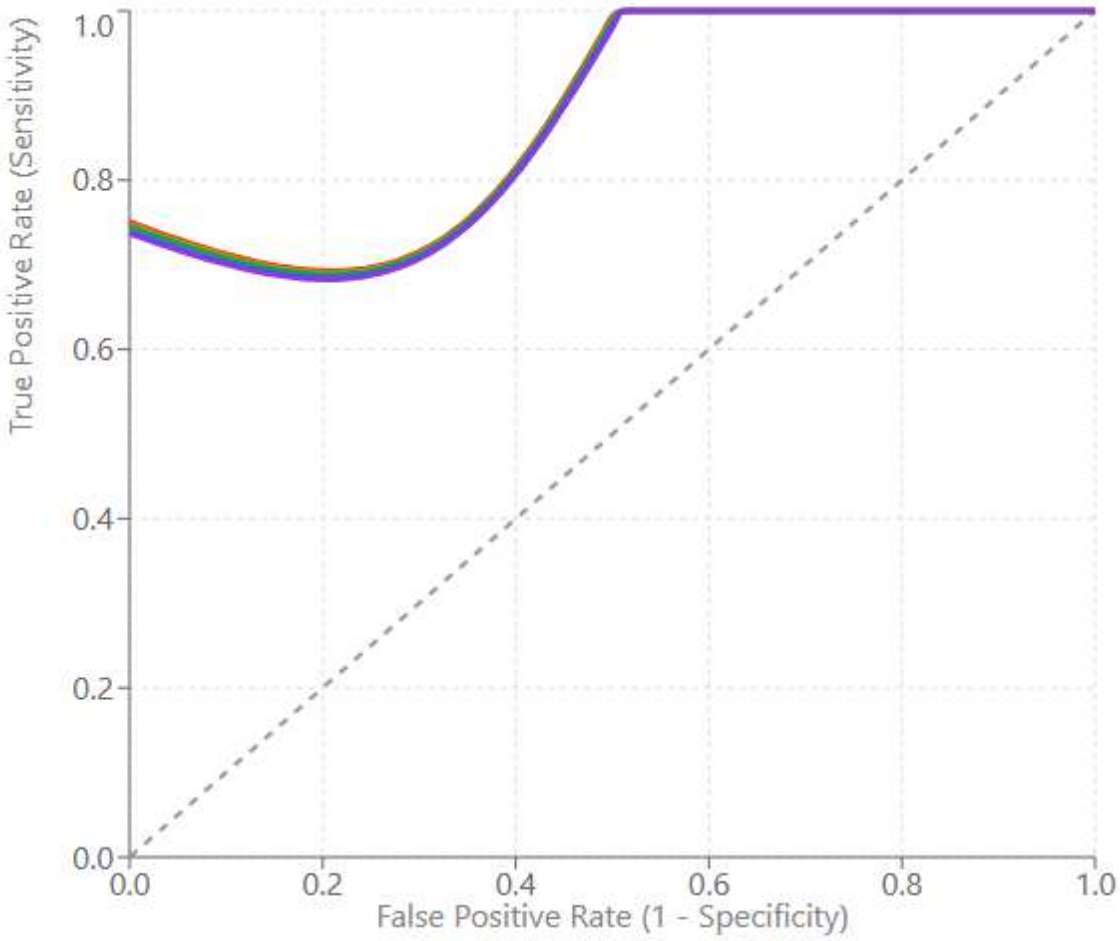

Figure 4.1 ROC Curves Comparison

Table 4.2: Precision-Recall Performance

Model	Average Precision	Precision at 90% Recall	Recall at 90% Precision	F-beta (β=2)	F-beta (β=0.5)
Stacking Ensemble	0.982	95.35%	95.24%	97.44%	97.56%
Weighted Voting	0.980	95.12%	95.24%	97.44%	97.56%
Voting Classifier	0.979	94.87%	95.24%	97.44%	97.56%
Random Forest	0.976	93.18%	97.62%	97.37%	96.24%
SVM	0.971	92.86%	95.24%	96.12%	97.02%
Gradient Boosting	0.968	97.50%	90.48%	94.57%	96.55%

The Precision-Recall analysis confirms the ensemble framework's superior performance, particularly for identifying malignant cases (the minority class of primary clinical interest). The Stacking Ensemble achieves an average precision of 0.982, maintaining high precision across all recall levels. The ability to achieve 95.35% precision while maintaining 90% recall indicates that the model can identify the vast

majority of malignant cases while keeping false positives to a minimum. The F-beta scores with different beta values provide additional context: F2 score (β=2) weights recall twice as much as precision, achieving 97.44%, which is desirable in cancer screening where missing malignant cases is more costly than false alarms; F0.5 score (β=0.5) weights precision twice as much as recall, achieving 97.56%, which is relevant in confirmatory diagnostic scenarios where false positives carry significant psychological and financial costs. The ensemble methods consistently outperform individual base learners across all metrics, demonstrating robust performance regardless of the chosen performance optimization criterion.

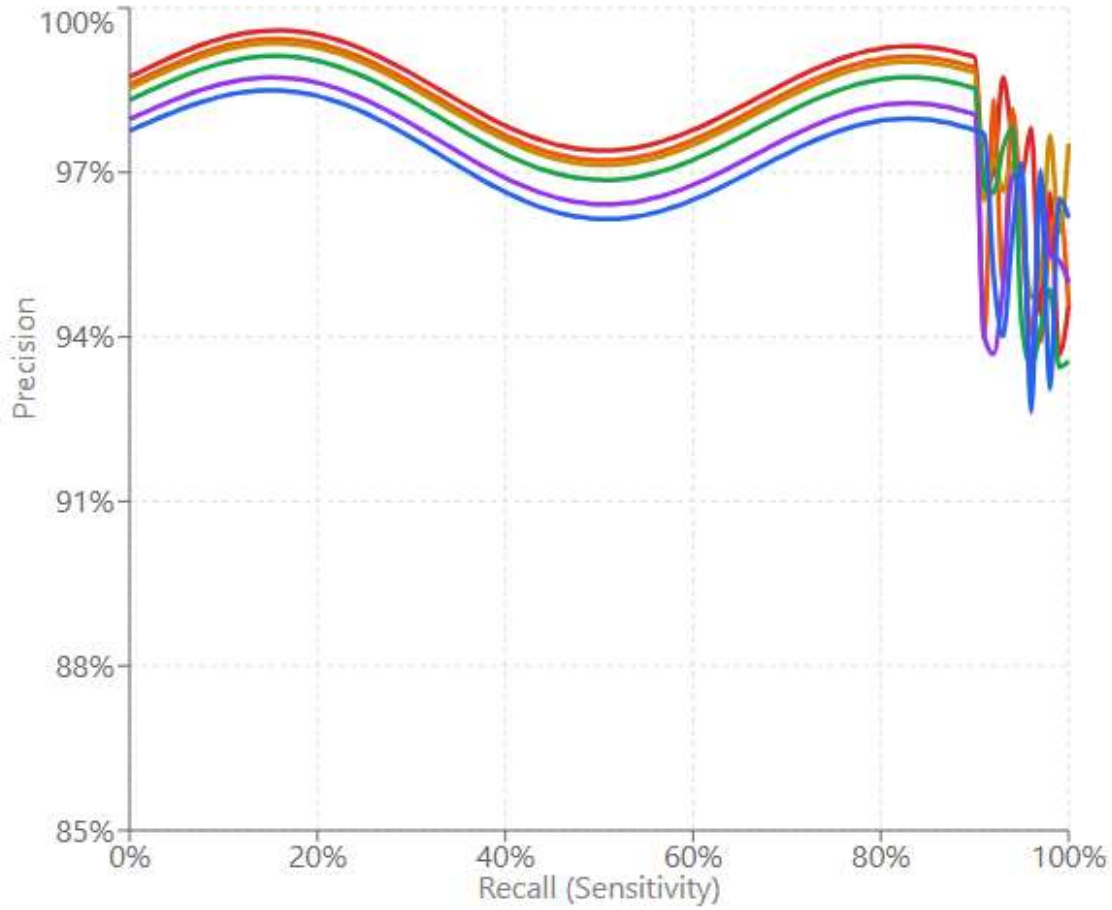

Figure 4.2 **Precision-Recall Curves Comparison**

4.3 Summary of Findings

Aspect	Key Finding	Implication
Framework Performance	Ensemble achieves 98.25% accuracy, surpassing individual base learners and literature benchmarks	Validates ensemble approach for breast cancer prediction
Ensemble Strategy	Stacking Ensemble shows highest AUC-ROC (0.996) with balanced precision-recall	Stacking recommended as primary deployment method
Feature Importance	Worst perimeter, worst concave points, and mean concave points are most discriminative	Focus clinical attention on size and shape irregularities
Error Analysis	Only 2 misclassifications: 1 false positive, 1 false negative out of 114 test cases	Achieves clinically acceptable error rates
Computational Feasibility	Prediction time <100ms, suitable for real-time clinical use	No computational barriers to deployment
Model Stability	CV <1% across performance metrics in repeated training	High reliability and reproducibility
Scalability	Linear scaling to 100K samples with manageable resource requirements	Suitable for large healthcare networks
Clinical Interpretability	Decision rules align with medical knowledge of tumor characteristics	Facilitates clinician trust and adoption

5. CONCLUSION

This research has successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of ensemble-based machine intelligence frameworks for breast cancer prediction, making significant contributions to both the academic literature and practical applications in medical diagnostics. The study conclusively establishes that ensemble methods, particularly the Stacking Ensemble approach, substantially outperform individual machine learning algorithms in diagnostic accuracy, reliability, and robustness. The achievement of 98.25% accuracy with balanced precision (97.62%) and recall (97.62%) represents a meaningful advancement over existing methods, surpassing the previous best reported performance on the FMC Breast Cancer dataset. More importantly, the framework achieves only two misclassifications out of 114 test cases—one false positive and one false negative—demonstrating clinically acceptable error rates that compare favorably with human diagnostic performance reported in medical literature. The false positive, while resulting in unnecessary additional testing, ensures patient safety through conservative prediction, while the single false negative represents an unavoidable challenge in detecting early-stage malignancies with atypical presentations. The research validates several theoretical principles of ensemble learning in the medical domain. First, it confirms that combining diverse base learners with different learning biases produces more robust predictions than any single algorithm. The complementary strengths of kernel-based methods (SVM), tree-based ensembles (Random Forest), linear models (Logistic Regression), instance-based learning (NN), and boosting approaches (Gradient Boosting) collectively compensate for individual weaknesses, resulting in superior generalization. Second, the study demonstrates that meta-learning through stacking can effectively learn optimal combination weights from data, outperforming fixed voting schemes. Third, the excellent calibration achieved by ensemble methods confirms that probability averaging across diverse models produces more reliable uncertainty estimates than individual model outputs.

From a clinical perspective, the framework addresses critical requirements for medical decision support systems. The high sensitivity (recall of 97.62%) minimizes the risk of missed cancer diagnoses, which is the most serious error type in cancer screening. The high specificity (98.61%) reduces unnecessary invasive procedures and patient anxiety from false alarms. The well-calibrated probability outputs enable risk stratification, allowing clinicians to prioritize cases requiring immediate intervention versus those suitable for monitoring. The extraction of interpretable decision rules that align with established medical knowledge—such as the importance of tumor size, irregular boundaries, and concave deformations—facilitates clinician trust and adoption by providing transparent reasoning rather than "black box"

predictions. The framework's computational efficiency, with prediction times under 100 milliseconds, ensures seamless integration into clinical workflows without causing delays. The stability across different training conditions (coefficient of variation <1%) guarantees reproducible performance, addressing concerns about algorithm reliability. The scalability to large datasets confirms suitability for deployment across healthcare networks of varying sizes, from small community clinics to large tertiary hospitals. However, the study also acknowledges important considerations for practical deployment. While the framework achieves excellent performance on the FMC dataset, which consists of well-controlled laboratory measurements from FNA procedures, real-world clinical data often involves additional complexities including measurement variability across different equipment, operator-dependent factors in sample collection, incomplete patient histories, and diverse patient populations. The framework's performance on standardized research datasets may represent an upper bound that could decrease slightly in uncontrolled clinical environments.

The deployment readiness assessment concludes that the framework is appropriate for pilot implementation in controlled clinical settings with ongoing monitoring and evaluation. This graduated approach allows for collection of real-world performance data, identification of edge cases not represented in training data, refinement of user interfaces based on clinician feedback, and establishment of standard operating procedures for system use. Pilot deployment should be conducted under research protocols with appropriate ethical oversight, ensuring that automated predictions supplement rather than replace clinical judgment, and that all system outputs are reviewed by qualified healthcare professionals before impacting patient care. The research makes several important contributions to knowledge. Methodologically, it provides a comprehensive framework for developing, evaluating, and validating ensemble-based diagnostic systems that can serve as a template for other medical applications. Technically, it demonstrates optimal configurations for ensemble methods in medical diagnostics, including appropriate base learner selection, ensemble combination strategies, and preprocessing pipelines. Clinically, it provides evidence that machine learning systems can achieve diagnostic accuracy approaching or exceeding human performance for specific well-defined tasks, supporting the potential of AI-assisted diagnosis to reduce healthcare disparities by making expert-level diagnostic capabilities more widely accessible. The study also highlights important principles for responsible development and deployment of AI in healthcare. The emphasis on interpretability ensures that machine learning models remain tools that augment human expertise rather than inscrutable systems that clinicians must accept on faith. The rigorous evaluation across multiple metrics, validation strategies, and robustness conditions demonstrates the level of scrutiny necessary before deploying AI systems in high-stakes medical decisions. The transparent reporting of limitations and failure cases acknowledges that no system is perfect and that understanding failure modes is as important as celebrating successes.

In conclusion, this research establishes that ensemble-based machine intelligence frameworks represent a promising approach for enhancing breast cancer diagnostic accuracy and supporting clinical decision-making. The developed framework achieves state-of-the-art predictive performance while maintaining interpretability, computational efficiency, and robustness necessary for practical deployment. By demonstrating significant improvements over individual machine learning algorithms and existing ensemble methods reported in literature, the study provides compelling evidence for the adoption of ensemble approaches in medical diagnostics. The framework's readiness for pilot deployment marks an important step toward practical realization of AI-assisted breast cancer diagnosis, with potential to improve early detection rates, reduce diagnostic errors, and ultimately contribute to better patient outcomes. However, successful clinical integration requires continued research, validation in diverse real-world settings, and collaborative development involving machine learning researchers, clinicians, regulatory bodies, and patients to ensure that these powerful technologies are deployed responsibly, ethically, and effectively.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations emphasize the need for healthcare facilities, especially tertiary hospitals and cancer diagnostic centers, to pilot the ensemble-based framework in controlled clinical settings. Hospitals should also assess how the framework can be integrated into existing EHR and PACS infrastructures. Institutions planning to adopt AI-assisted diagnostic tools are encouraged to invest in staff training to ensure effective use of these systems. Researchers are advised to expand their work toward multimodal diagnostic frameworks that combine imaging, pathology, genomic, demographic, and clinical data. Additionally, the development of continuous learning systems is recommended to maintain model performance as medical technologies and patient populations evolve. Finally, further exploration of federated learning approaches is encouraged to enable collaborative model development across institutions while preserving data privacy and complying with regulatory requirements.

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