Journal of Zhejiang University-SCIENCE A (Applied Physics & Engineering) in press
www.jzus.zju.edu.cn; www.springer.com/journal/11582
E-mail: jzus_a@zju.edu.cn

Research Article

https://doi.org/10.1631/jzus.A2300643

Road pavement performance prediction using a time series long short-term memory model

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Abstract: Intelligent maintenance of roads and highways requires accurate deterioration evaluation and performance prediction of asphalt pavement. To this end, we develop a time series long short-term memory (LSTM) model to predict key performance indicators (PIs) of pavement, namely the international roughness index (I_{RI}) and rutting depth (R_D). Subsequently, we propose a performance indicator for the pavement quality index ($P_{QI\text{-}F}$), which leverages the highway performance assessment standards method, entropy weight method, and fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method. This indicator can evaluate the overall performance condition of pavement. The data used for the model development and analysis are extracted from tests on two full-scale accelerated test tracks, called MnRoad and RIOHTRACK. Six variables are used as the predictors, including temperature, precipitation, total traffic volume, asphalt surface layer thickness, pavement age, and maintenance condition. Furthermore, wavelet denoising is performed to analyze the impact of missing or abnormal data on the LSTM model accuracy. In comparison to a traditional auto-regressive integrated moving average (ARIMAX) model, the proposed LSTM model performs better in terms of PI prediction and resiliency to noise. Finally, the overall prediction accuracy of our proposed performance indicator ($P_{QI\text{-}F}$) is 93.8%.

Key words: Asphalt pavement performance model; International roughness index (I_{RI}); Rutting depth (R_D); Long short-term memory (LSTM) model; Pavement management system

1 Introduction

The performance of road pavement should be carefully and regularly evaluated to ensure the safety and efficiency of roads and highways. For this purpose, pavement management systems have been established to monitor and collect current road information, predict future conditions, and develop strategies for the maintenance and rehabilitation of various pavement types, such as asphalt (Kay et al., 1993; Zaghloul et al., 2006; AASHTO, 2012). In these pavement management systems, performance indicators (PIs) such as the international roughness index (I_{RI}) and rutting depth (R_D) are among the major factors used to evaluate the status of asphalt pavement. Therefore, it is vital to establish reliable prediction models for these PIs and develop condition assessment models based on the predictions.

International roughness index (I_{RI}) is an indicator of pavement performance developed by the World Bank in the 1980s. It is defined as the cumulative vertical displacement caused by a quarter vehicle model driving at a speed of 80 km/h. The I_{RI} can reflect the imperfections and usage conditions of roads and highways, helping assessments of driving quality, driving safety, recommended driving speeds, and road maintenance needs (AASHTO, 2012; Sayers et al., 1986). Rutting, wherein longitudinal surface depressions form in a road, is another major concern for pavement maintenance. Thus, rutting depth (R_D) is generally used as the indicator of the severity of pavement rutting (Robbins & Tran, 2016). At present, many highway agencies across the world regard the initial values of these PIs (I_{RI} and R_D of the pavement immediately after construction) as quality assurance standards, and current PI values as indicators of whether the pavement needs maintenance or

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Received Dec. 19, 2023; Revision accepted June 2, 2024; Crosschecked

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reconstruction. Due to the importance of such PIs for evaluating pavement performance, models that can predict them have garnered significant research attention.

Table 1 Summary of the pavement PI prediction models

Authors	PIs	Modelling technique	Predictors	Goodness of fit
Al-Suleiman & Shiyab (2003)	I_{RI}	MLR	AGE	N=440, R^2=0.6-0.8
Albuquerque & Núñez (2011)	I_{RI}	MLR	CLT, TRF, PSC	N=18–27, R^2=0.87-0.94
Owolabi et al. (2012)	I_{RI}	MLR	DIS	R^2=0.78
Choi et al. (2004)	I_{RI}	BPNN	TRF, PSC	N=117, R^2=0.71
Gong et al. (2018)	R_D	BPNN	AGE, CLT, TRF, PSC	N=88, R^2=0.867
Yao et al. (2019)	R_D/I_{RI}/ S_{FC}/C_{RACK}	BPNN	AGE, TRF, PSC	R^2=0.85-0.90
Abdelaziz et al. (2020)	I_{RI}	BPNN	PI_0, AGE, DIS	N=2439, R^2=0.75
Marcelino et al. (2019)	I_{RI}	Random Forest	CLT, TRF, PSC	N=6-274, AVG M_S=0.01-0.27
Li et al. (2019)	I_{RI}	PSO	–	M_S=0.191
Choi & Do (2019)	I_{RI}/R_D/ C_{RACK}	LSTM	CLT, TRF	N=1128-5076, R^2=0.71-0.87
Dong et al. (2019)	I_{RI}	LSTM-BPNN	PI_0, CLT, TRF, PSC	N=2243, R^2=0.867
Tabatabaee et al. (2013)	I_{RI}	SVC-RNN	AGE, CLT, PSC, MT	R^2=0.98
Fang et al. (2018)	R_D	W-ARMA	–	R_E=0.01-2.83
Kaloop et al. (2020)	I_{RI}	WOPELM	PI_0, AGE, DIS, CLT, PSC	M_A=0.231

Note: I_{RI}, International Roughness Index; R_D, Rutting Depth; MLR, Multiple Linear Regression; BPNN, Back Propagation Neural Network; PSO, Particle Swarm Optimization; LSTM, Long Short-Term Memory; SVC, Support Vector Classifier; RNN, Recurrent Neural Networks; W-ARMA Wavelet-AutoRegressive Moving Average; WOPELM, Waveler-Optimally Pruned Extreme Learning Machine; CLT, Climate; TRF, Traffic; PSC, Pavement Structure and Construction; DIS, Distress; PI_0, Initial Performance Indicator; R_E, Relative Error; M_S, Mean Squared Error; M_A, Mean Absolute Error.

Various types of models have been established for the prediction of pavement PIs. These models can generally be classified into deterministic and probabilistic models (AASHTO, 2012; Justo-Silva et al., 2021; Abaza, 2016). In the deterministic category, many models are based on multiple linear regression techniques. For example, different multiple linear regression models were developed to predict I_{RI} for different pavements types across the world (Al-Suleiman & Shiyab, 2003; Albuquerque & Núñez, 2011; Owolabi et al., 2012). Although simple to construct and modify, multiple linear regression models may not accurately capture the complex relationship between pavement PIs and predicting factors. With the recent developments in artificial intelligence, researchers have begun to use machine learning methods instead of traditional regression models to predict PIs. For instance, some researchers used support vector regression (SVR) models to predict pavement performance. Li et al. (2021) combined SVR with particle swarm optimization (PSO) to improve the search efficiency and parameter

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continuity of the SVR model, resulting in accurate prediction of rutting. Also, Zhao et al. (2022) studied the impact of traffic loading on pavement performance using SVR and found significant accuracy improvement compared to traditional methods. Furthermore, Kaloop et al. (2022) adopted a hybrid wavelet-optimally-pruned extreme learning machine (ELM) model to estimate the I_{RI} of rigid pavements, resulting in better performance than several other machine learning models.

The back-propagation neural network (BPNN) algorithm has also been adopted by several researchers for pavement PI prediction (Choi et al., 2004; Gong et al., 2018; Yao et al., 2019; Abdelaziz et al., 2020). Compared to regression models, neural networks act as so-called "black boxes", with the exact relationship between the independent and predicted variables being unknown (Perez-Acebo, 2020). Moreover, conventional neural networks generally consider data as isolated points in the time domain, with causality between past and future data not being leveraged. To tackle this issue, some researchers have employed time series models for pavement performance prediction. Compared to conventional neural networks, time series models consider the PIs not as isolated data points, but as time-dependent data series, where the future is dependent upon the past. For instance, a random forest algorithm was used to develop a time series model for I_{RI} prediction after 5 and 10 years based on the Long-Term Pavement Performance (LTPP) database (Marcelino et al., 2019). Another innovative I_{RI} prediction model using the LTTP database was developed using fuzzy-trend time series forecasting and particle swarm optimization (PSO) (Li et al., 2019).

Long short-term memory (LSTM) models have also been employed for time-dependent predictions. For instance, an LSTM model adopting the recurrent neural network algorithm was developed to predict pavement deterioration based on monitoring data from the Korean National Highway Pavement Management System (Choi & Do, 2019). Additionally, a novel feature fusion LSTM-BPNN model was proposed to better capture the latent relationship between cross-sectional and time-series features through an attention mechanism (Dong et al., 2019). Recently, many advanced algorithms leveraging time series models have been proposed to improve pavement performance prediction. For example, a two-stage model was developed by Tabatabaee et al. (2013), which groups road sections with similar characteristics using a support vector classifier (SVC), and then accurately predicts the pavement performance using an RNN (recurrent neural network) based on the first-stage classification results. In another study, a wavelet autoregressive moving average model (W-ARMA) was established to reduce the influence of frequent maintenance on asphalt rutting evaluation, which filtered out noise signals caused by repair work using wavelet denoising (Fang et al., 2018).

In summary, the existing models used to predict pavement PIs can be divided into three categories: multiple linear regression models, traditional neural network models (such as BPNN), and time series models (such as RNN/LSTM). A summary of the literature on pavement PI prediction models is presented in Table 1. Since the time series models have the unique advantage of exploiting the time-dependent nature of the PIs, their predictions show the most promising results.

In this study, a time series model is developed to reliably predict pavement performance. First, data from the asphalt pavements of two major full-scale accelerated test tracks, MnRoad and RIOHTRACK, is utilized to develop a generalizable model. The temperature, precipitation, total traffic volume, asphalt surface layer thickness, pavement age, and the treatment condition on the pavement are set as predictors. Then, a long short-term memory (LSTM) model is constructed to predict the variation of PIs. The robustness of the proposed model is tested by applying wavelet denoising to the original data, investigating the influence of missing and abnormal data. In addition, the performance of the LSTM model is compared with that of a traditional autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMAX) model. Furthermore, to assess and classify the pavement performance condition, a methodology combining the highway performance assessment standards method, entropy weight method, and fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method is developed based on the predicted PIs. A comprehensive performance indicator for the pavement quality index ($P_{QI\text{-}F}$) is calculated by applying the strictest performance evaluation method among those available.

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2 Data acquisition

2.1 Acquisition of performance indicator data

To facilitate growing traffic volume and other issues, supervising agencies must improve road design, construction, and maintenance by formulating relevant technical specifications. Accordingly, it is often necessary to perform tests on pavement subjected to similar traffic loading and environmental conditions as real roads and highways, to obtain a high volume of test data in a short period. Full-scale accelerated test tracks can meet these requirements, and many countries have used them to perform tests on different scales. For our pavement performance prediction model, we use data from the mainline road research project of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnRoad) (USDOT, 2022), and the full-scale loop project of the Institute of Highway Research of the Ministry of Transport of China (RIOHTRACK) (Li et al., 2021).

The MnRoad mainline is a 3.5 mile-long (5.63 km) interstate road diverted from the parallel westbound I-94 (Interstate 94) between Albertville and Monticello, Minnesota. It consists of two driving and passing lanes carrying different traffic on identical structures. In the pavement, 27 asphalt concrete test cells were constructed in 1993, and monitored until reconstruction in 2008. More details of MnRoad, such as photos of the tracks, can be found on the official website of the project (USDOT, 2022). The RIOHTRACK was constructed in November 2015 and is located at the highway traffic test site of the Ministry of Transportation of China in Beijing. After a year of calibration, loading tests began on the track on November 28, 2016. We utilized the data of 19 main test cells from December 2016 to January 2020 in this study.

For the MnRoad sections, the PI data were collected once a year during different seasons for 15 years, while for the RIOHTRACK sections, the data were collected once a month for 38 months. PI data from these test tracks, namely the I_{RI} and the R_D, are summarized in Fig. 1. A comparison of the descriptive statistics for the PIs of the two test tracks is presented in Table 2.

From a statistical point of view, I_{RI} and R_D evolve similarly (increasing steadily with time) except for the data of I_{RI} in RIOHTRACK, which has no obvious upward trend. However, a major micro-surfacing treatment was applied to some MnRoad sections in 1999 and 2003, resulting in improved pavement performance.

2.2 Definition of predictors

The performance of asphalt pavement can be affected by climatic conditions, repeated traffic loading, and the pavement's structure. Climate mainly influences pavement in two ways: temperature variation and water penetration. Traffic loading is one of the direct causes of road damage and plays an important role in road performance. The pavement surface layer can suffer from the vertical force, horizontal force, and impact force of heavy traffic loads, and simultaneously can be affected by precipitation, erosion, and temperature changes. However, it's important to note that treatment can significantly improve pavement performance. Therefore, in this study we adopt the following eight predictors for our time series models (Choi & Do, 2019; Tabatabaee et al., 2013):

1. TEMP_AVE (℃) – the average temperature from the moment of the previous measurement until the present moment;
2. TEMP_MAX (℃) – the maximum temperature from the moment of the previous measurement until the present moment;
3. TEMP_MIN (℃) – the minimum temperature from the moment of the previous measurement until the present moment;
4. PRECIP (mm) – the total precipitation from the moment of the previous measurement until the present moment;
5. TRAFFIC (ESAL) – the total traffic load from the moment of the previous measurement until the present moment, measured using the Equivalent Single Axle Load (ESAL) (Alavi & Senn, 1999);
6. AC_thickness (mm) – the asphalt surface layer thickness;

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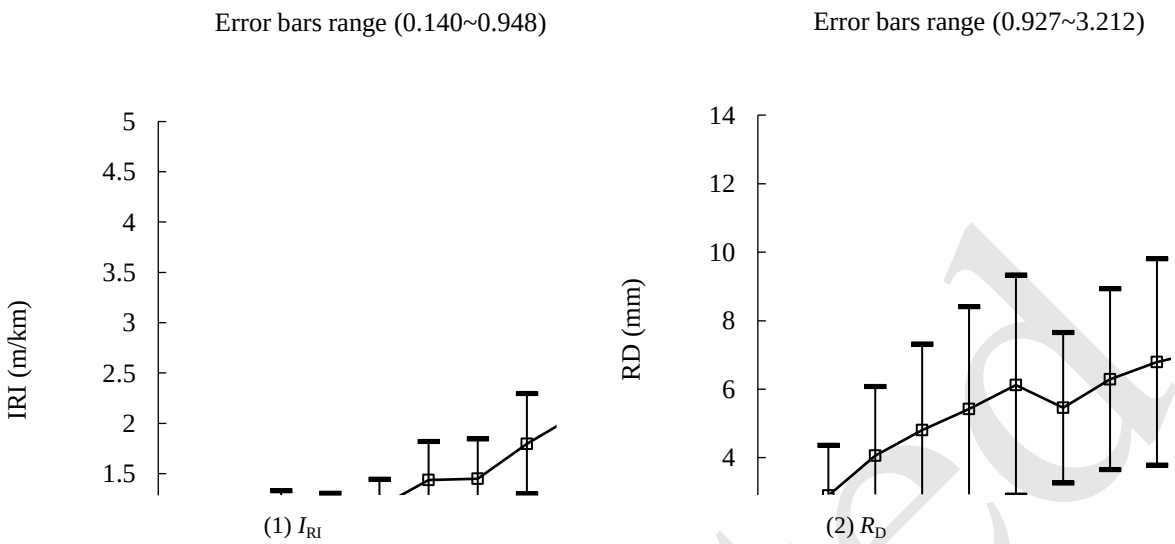
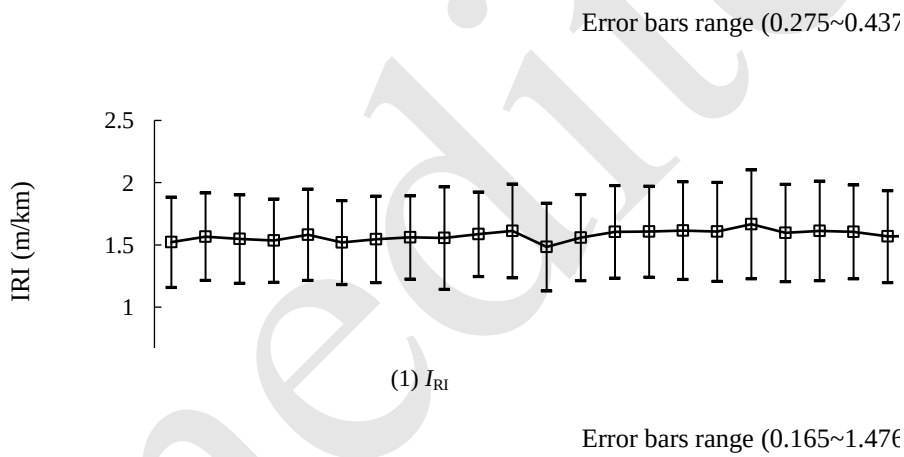


(1) I_{RI} (2) R_D

(a) MnRoad (Samples=27)



(1) I_{RI}

(2) R_D

(b) RIOHTRACK (Samples=19)

Fig. 1 PI data for pavement sections

Table 2 Statistics of PIs for the two full-scale accelerated test tracks (I_{RI}: m/km; R_D: mm)

No. of total sections		Dependent variables	Avg	Std	Min	Max
Mnroad (years × sections)	15×27	I_{RI}	1.849	0.907	0.666	5.390
		R_D	5.797	3.141	0.826	16.492

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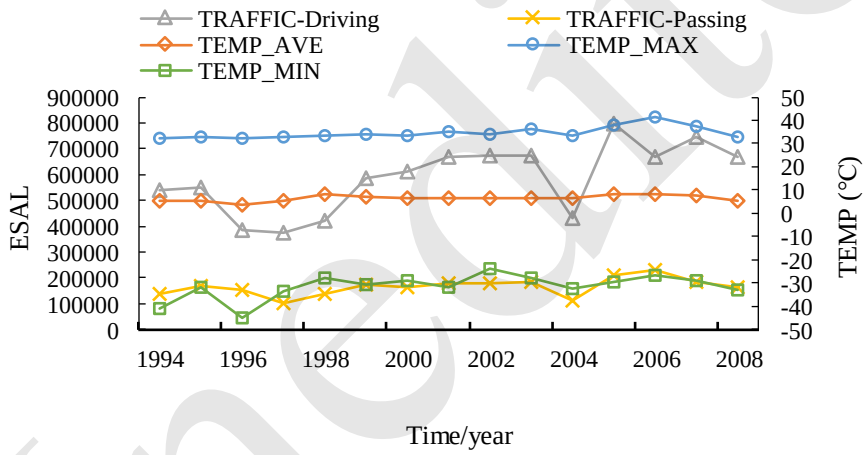
RIOHTRACK (months × sections)	37×19	I_{RI}	1.586	0.363	0.916	2.644
		R_D	4.769	1.728	1.139	9.104

7. AGE (year/month) – inspection year (for MnRoad) / month (for RIOHTRACK) minus construction year/month;

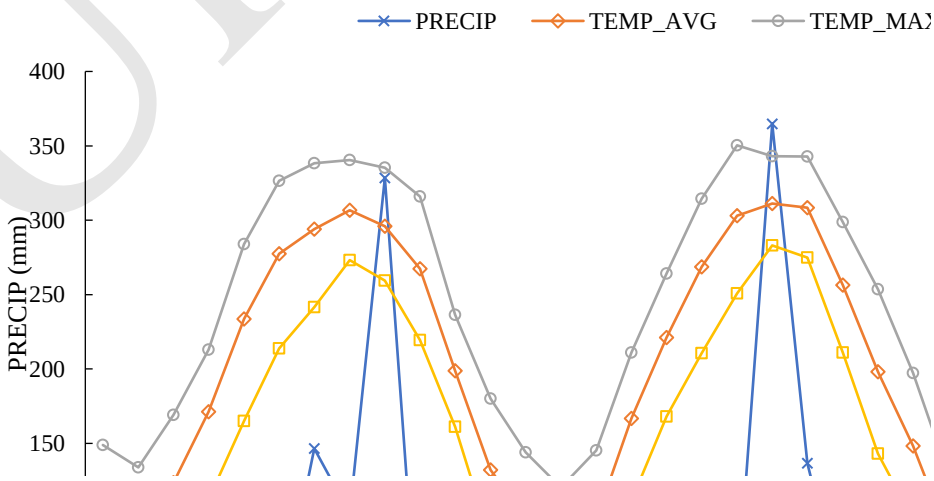
8. Treatment – a dummy variable; 1 = treatment applied this year, 0 = otherwise.

Note that the time period for the above definitions is from the beginning to the end of a specified year for MnRoad, and from the beginning to the end of a specified month for RIOHTRACK.

For MnRoad sections, some maintenance was conducted between 1993 and 2008, so the dummy variable may not be 0 during that time. But for RIOHTRACK sections, the TRAFFIC, AC-thickness, and dummy variable from the moment of the previous measurement until the present moment remained unchanged during the data collection period; therefore we do not consider these variables as predictors. Among the predictors, we show the curves of TEMP, PPRECIP, and TRAFFIC over time for the two full-scale accelerated test tracks in Fig. 2, where TRAFFIC consists of two different lanes (a driving lane and a passing lane).



(a) Mnroad



(b) RIOHTRACK

Fig. 2 Representative predictors for pavement sections

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3 Wavelet denoising of original data

Intuitively, the performance of pavement surfaces worsens over time. However, measurement errors also result in anomalous changes in PIs. Therefore, we apply wavelet denoising to the original data to reduce the noise caused by measurement error, allowing more accurate analysis of the results.

The wavelet transform is a localized analysis of temporal (or spatial) frequency that can highlight certain features of raw data. The workflow of wavelet denoising is shown in Fig. 3. In this process, the chosen wavelet algorithm, number of decomposition layers, threshold calculation algorithm, and threshold processing method all can affect the final denoising result. These factors are each discussed as follows:

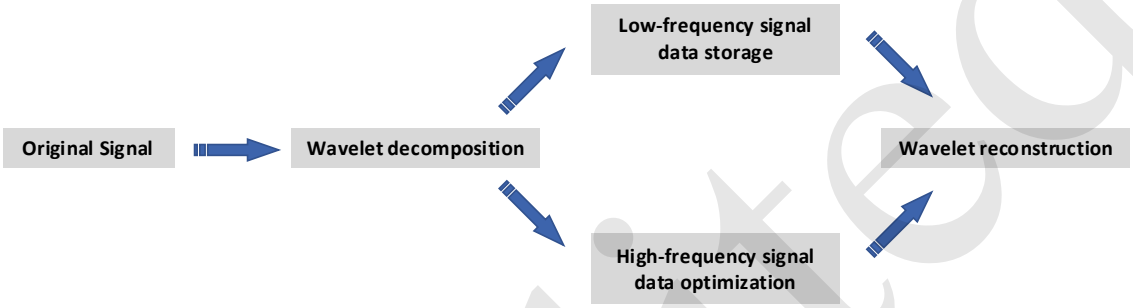

Fig. 3 Process of wavelet denoising

1. The selection of the wavelet algorithm should consider the support length, vanishing moment, symmetry, regularity, and similarity. Since different wavelet algorithms have different processing characteristics, no single wavelet algorithm can achieve the best denoising effect for all types of signals. However, the Daubechies (DB) and the Symlet (SYM) algorithms are two families of wavelet bases that generally work well for denoising (Stanke et al., 2020).

2. In wavelet decomposition, the choice of the number of decomposition layers is also impactful. As the number of decomposition layers increases, the characteristic difference between noise and real signal is more obvious, which is enables better noise filtering. On the other hand, the distortion of the reconstructed signal becomes more pronounced, which will affect the final denoised result. Therefore, an appropriate number of decomposition layers should be selected to balance these factors.

3. In the process of denoising, one must take care to not remove valid information. Thus, a threshold must be appropriately selected to minimize impact on the true signal. Commonly used algorithms for threshold calculation include rigrsure, heursure, sqtwlolg, and minimaxi (Valencia et al., 2016).

4. Following wavelet decomposition, an appropriate threshold processing method needs to be selected to denoise the data. Soft and hard threshold functions are often used for this purpose. The hard threshold function results in a denoised signal that is closer to the actual signal, but the signal will have added oscillations and spikes. In contrast, the soft threshold function results in a denoised signal with better overall continuity.

4 Methodology

4.1 ARIMAX time series model

The autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMA) model is a famous time series prediction method incorporating autoregression (AR) of lagged time series values, transformation of the data to a stationary form ("integrated" or I), and the moving average (MA) of lagged forecast errors (Box & Jenkins, 1970). An ARIMA model is specified by three parameters: p, q, and d, where p is the autoregressive term, q is the moving average term, and d is the number of subtractions applied to the lagged indicators to achieve stationary data. In this study, we adopt a revised ARIMA model that employs multiple input time series data, which we refer to as an ARIMAX model. The parameters p and q in ARIMAX are determined by the Bayesian Information Criterion (B) as shown in Eq. (1) (Schwarz, 1978):

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$$B = k \ln n - 2 \ln L \tag{1}$$

Here, k is the number of parameters, n is the number of samples, and L is the maximum likelihood function value. When B is minimized, we choose the corresponding p and q values. Fig. 4 illustrates the modelling process.

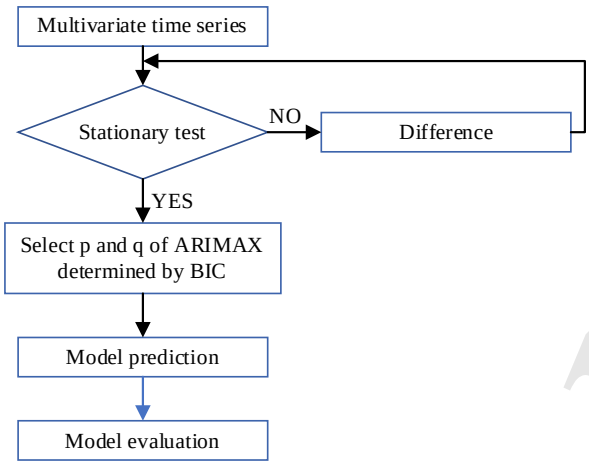

Fig. 4 Process of wavelet denoising

4.2 LSTM

Deep learning aims at developing neural networks to process or analyze various types of data in a similar manner to the human brain, such as text, audio, images, and videos (Hinton & Salakhutdinov, 2006). Among deep learning models, recurrent neural networks (RNNs) are frequently used to process time series data. Compared to backpropagation neural networks (BPNNs) and convolutional neural networks (CNNs), RNNs work by assuming that human cognition is based on experience and memory. Beyond just using present input data, these networks utilize a memory function to harness previous information.

Although RNNs are often effective in processing time series data, they can still exhibit problems of vanishing and exploding gradients, which are caused by long-term time dependence. Thus, the long short-term memory (LSTM) model was developed to solve these problems, and is currently widely used in many fields (Dong et al., 2019). A schematic of the LSTM is shown in Fig. 5. The cell state (in the orange dashed frame) is the core of the LSTM model, as it carries the information of all previous states, and facilitates corresponding operations that decide whether to discard or add information. In addition, there are gates applied to control the input and output of information; these are the forget gate (red dashed frame), input gate (green dashed frame), and output gate (blue dashed frame). The forget gate determines what information is discarded, the input gate determines what new information is added to the cell state, and the output gate determines what information to output from the cell state.

We propose an LSTM time series model for pavement PI prediction, developed using the Keras library in Python. The time series data was preprocessed according to the approach developed by Bontempi et al. (2012). In this study, we treat the time series prediction as a supervised learning task. First, the maximum and minimum values in the training dataset are used to normalize all data to values between 0 and 1. Afterwards, the time series data is transformed into supervised learning data with features and labels. The training dataset is constructed as follows: for the MnRoad sections, the input length is 1 and the output length is 1, indicating that the pavement performance during year t+1 is predicted based on the pavement performance and predictors during year t. For the RIOHTRACK sections, the input length is 5 and the output length is 2, indicating that the pavement performance during months t+1 and t+2 is predicted based on the performance and predictors of the past five months (t-4 to t months).

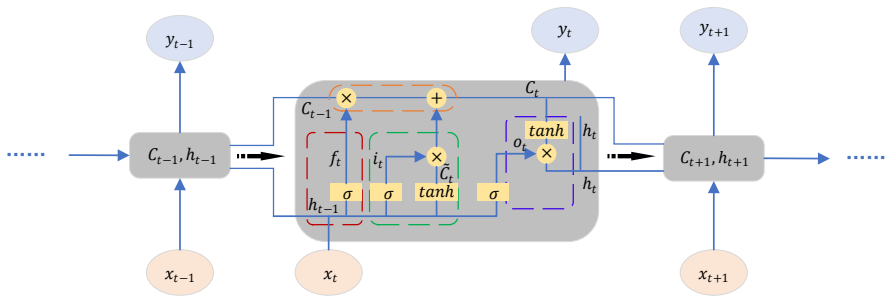

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Fig. 5 Schematic of the LSTM model

5 Results and discussion

5.1 Models evaluation

Three regression indicators are used to assess the performance of the time series models. These indicators are the mean squared error (M_S), mean absolute error (M_A), and coefficient of determination (R^2), whose formulas are given in Eqs. (2-4):

$$M_S = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}(y_i - f_i)^2 \tag{2}$$

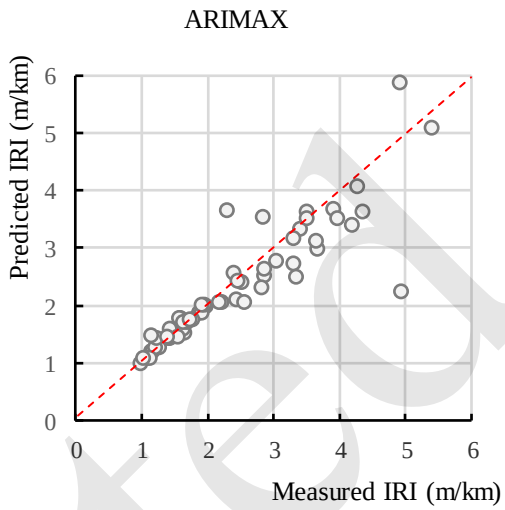
$$M_A = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}|y_i - f_i| \tag{3}$$

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N}(y_i - f_i)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{N}(y_i - \bar{y})^2} \tag{4}$$

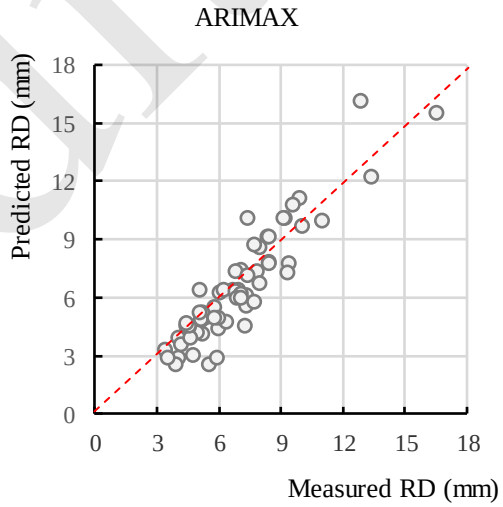
Here, N is the number of samples, y_i and f_i are the measured and predicted data, respectively, and $\bar{y}$ is the average of the measured data.

In this study, we used measured PIs of MnRoad sections from 1994 to 2007, and PIs of RIOHTRACK sections from December 2016 to November 2019 as training data for the time series models. MnRoad section data from 2008, and RIOHTRACK section data from December 2019 and January 2020 are used as the testing data.

The performance of the ARIMAX time series model is presented in Fig. 6, comparing the predicted and measured PI data. Because the predicted I_{RI} and R_D on the two roads have the same physical meanings and were within similar ranges, we combine the respective I_{RI} and R_D results across the roads. Table 3 summarizes the statistical indicators of the model performance for the MnRoad sections, the RIOHTRACK sections, and the overall datasets. We can see that the ARIMAX model has a low prediction accuracy for PIs, except for the I_{RI} of RIOHTRACK, where the R^2 is 0.924, M_S is 0.011, and M_A is 0.074. This is because the age of RIOHTRACK is young, and its I_{RI} results have no obvious upward trend (as shown in Fig. 1(b)) so it is relatively easy to predict.



(a) I_{RI}



(b) R_D

Fig. 6 Performance of the ARIMAX model for raw PI prediction

Table 3 Performance evaluation of the ARIMAX model

Datasets	PIs	Performance evaluation indicators		
		R^2	M_S	M_A
MnRoad	I_{RI}	0.375	0.541	0.511
	R_D	0.600	3.438	1.258
RIOHTRACK	I_{RI}	0.924	0.011	0.074
	R_D	0.395	1.200	0.840
Overall	I_{RI}	0.810	0.231	0.255
	R_D	0.675	2.128	1.014

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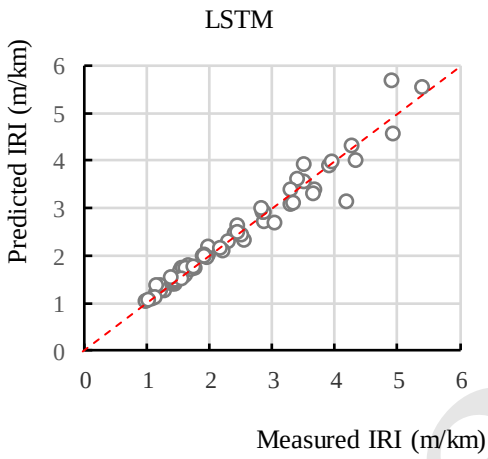
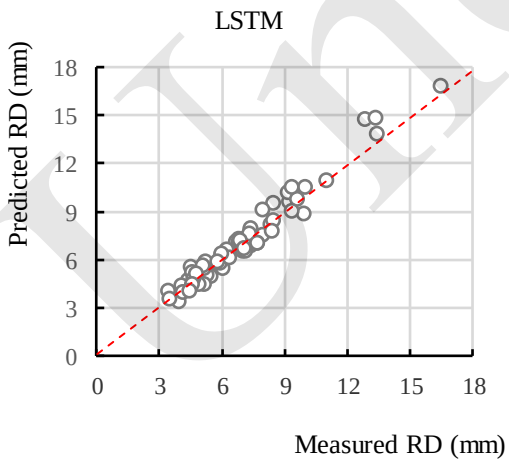
We employ a stacked LSTM model, which combines two LSTM layers for encoding sequential information from the input, and a dense layer for outputting a vector from the second LSTM layer. The size of the output vector is equivalent to the number of steps to be predicted. The M_S is used as the loss function along with Adam optimization during training. We also continuously reduce the learning rate during the training process, to take smaller steps that approach a minimum in the loss function. In training, approximately 50 epochs are required to reach convergence.



(a) I_{RI}



(b) R_D

Fig. 7 Performance of the LSTM model for raw PI prediction

Fig. 7 presents the correlation of predicted PIs with measured data using the LSTM model. Table 4 summarizes LSTM model performance evaluations across different datasets. By comparing Table 3 with Table 4, it is clear that the performance of the LSTM model is significantly better than the traditional ARIMAX model; the coefficient of determination of the LSTM model is on average 21.0% higher than that of the ARIMAX model, and the M_S and M_A of LSTM are on average 0.977 and 0.326 lower than that of the ARIMAX model, respectively. This is because the ARIMAX model assumes that variables tend to vary linearly with time, and thus has weaker prediction capability on datasets with more complex time-varying behavior. In contrast, the LSTM model is more effective at learning the correlations, collinearities, and nonlinear relationships between variables.

Table 4 Performance evaluation of the LSTM model

Datasets	PIs	Performance evaluation indicators		
		R^2	M_S	M_A
MnRoad	I_{RI}	0.878	0.105	0.235
	R_D	0.927	0.624	0.637
RIOHTRACK	I_{RI}	0.932	0.010	0.075
	R_D	0.916	0.165	0.363
Overall	I_{RI}	0.959	0.049	0.141

As shown in Fig. 1, variations in curves of the original PI data from the MnRoad and RIOHTRACK sections are discrete, indicating the presence of noise. Thus, we apply the aforementioned wavelet denoising method to first process the original data, enabling analysis of the influence of missing or abnormal data on the model accuracy.

The rigrsure algorithm and soft threshold function were adopted in the wavelet denoising procedure (Dong et al., 2019). Therefore, the main factors affecting the final denoising effect are the selection of the wavelet algorithm and the number of decomposition layers. The optimal combination of wavelet factors was obtained by conducting different trials using the Daubechies order-4 (DB4), Symlet order-4 (SYM4), and Haar wavelet algorithms, along with either 3, 4, or 5 decomposition layers. The root mean square error (R_M) and smoothness (r) are calculated according to Eqs. (5-6) to evaluate the denoising performance:

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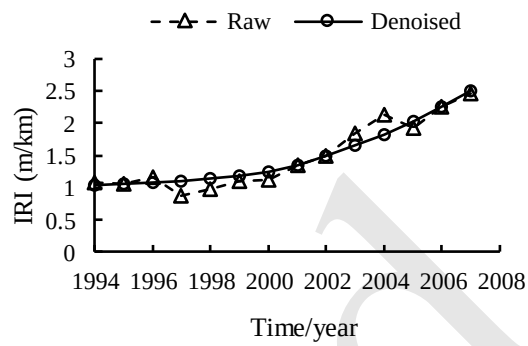
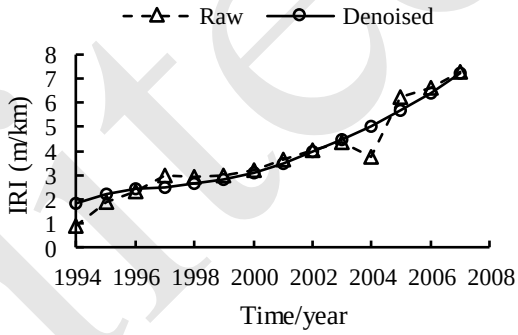
$$R_{\mathrm{M}} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}(s_i - f_i)^2} \tag{5}$$

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N-1}(f_{i+1} - f_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^{N-1}(s_{i+1} - s_i)} \tag{6}$$

where N is the number of samples, and s_i and f_i represent the original and the denoised data, respectively. The DB4 algorithm with 3 wavelet layers is selected, since it achieved the best values of root mean square error and smoothness as shown in Table 5. Fig. 8 shows the raw data of PIs from MnRoad pavement Section 1, and the data after wavelet denoising. Clearly the data becomes much smoother following denoising.



(a) I_{RI}



(b) R_{D}

Fig. 8 Comparison of measured and denoised PI values from MnRoad Section 1

Table 5 Wavelet denoising performance on the original data

Wavelet algorithm	Haar			DB4			SYM4		
Number of layers	3	4	5	3	4	5	3	4	5
R_{M}	0.525	0.886	0.886	0.378	0.413	0.435	0.397	0.428	0.445
r	0.686	0.426	0.426	0.742	0.680	0.654	0.672	0.605	0.583

After performing wavelet denoising on the original data, the ARIMAX and LSTM models are reapplied to predict pavement performance. The prediction results are summarized in Table 6. The prediction accuracy of the ARIMAX model using denoised PI data is better than when using raw data, on average increasing the determination coefficient by 9.5% and decreasing the M_{S} and M_{A} by 0.279 and 0.163, respectively. For the LSTM model, the wavelet denoising process resulted in increased R_{D} prediction accuracy, with the determination coefficient increasing by 1.4%, M_{S} decreasing by 0.097, and M_{A} decreasing by 0.098. Thus, wavelet denoising can significantly improve the accuracy of the ARIMAX model, and the LSTM model had a stronger tolerance to noise in the original data compared to the ARIMAX model.

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Table 6 Performance evaluation for denoised data

PIs	Indicators	Mnroad		RIOHTRACK		Overall	
		LSTM	ARIMAX	LSTM	ARIMAX	LSTM	ARIMAX
I_{RI}	R^2	0.841	0.801	0.952	0.951	0.950	0.938
	M_S	0.138	0.173	0.007	0.007	0.061	0.076
	M_A	0.249	0.310	0.061	0.068	0.139	0.168
R_D	R^2	0.945	0.630	0.946	0.644	0.960	0.736
	M_S	0.471	3.162	0.108	0.705	0.259	1.725
	M_A	0.527	1.032	0.274	0.594	0.379	0.776

It is worth noting that for the LSTM model, the wavelet denoising could not improve the accuracy of the I_{RI} prediction. This may be because although the wavelet denoising method can reduce the noise in the original data, it may also distort the measured data. Compared to noise, distortions in the data can have a greater impact on the prediction accuracy of the LSTM model. A comparison between the measured and predicted data for the combined dataset, using the two different models, is shown in Fig. 9. Since the proposed LSTM prediction model has a strong tolerance to noise, and because we aim to avoid distortion, the original data should be used for LSTM prediction.

5.2 Comprehensive performance indicator prediction

The proposed LSTM model accurately predicted the pavement PIs. However, it should be noted that different PIs have different measurement units and orders of magnitude, which makes it challenging to make assessments with the predicted results. In order to more easily compare the performance of different pavements, a comprehensive performance indicator – pavement quality index (P_{QI}) – is introduced, which depends on the value of each pavement PI. We calculate P_{QI} based on the predicted PIs as shown in Eq. (7):

$$\begin{gathered} P_{QI} = \omega_{RQI} \times R_{QI} + \omega_{RDI} \times R_{DI} \\ R_{QI} = \frac{100}{1+0.026e^{0.65 I_{RI}}} \\ R_{DI} = \begin{cases} 100 - R_D & R_D \le 10 \\ 90 - 3(R_D - 10) & 10 < R_D \le 40 \\ 0 & R_D > 40 \end{cases} \end{gathered} \tag{7}$$

Here, R_{QI} is the pavement riding quality index, R_{DI} is the pavement rutting depth index, and ω_{RQI} and ω_{RDI} are the weights of R_{QI} and R_{DI}, respectively.

To make the comparison more intuitive, the calculated values are converted to discrete numbers representing different performance states. Since the RIOHTRACK pavement sections in the dataset were built in 2015 and the pavement performance had not severely degraded, we only use three performance states in this study: state 1 represents the best performance condition of the pavement and state 3 is the worst condition. The classification standards are shown in Table 7.

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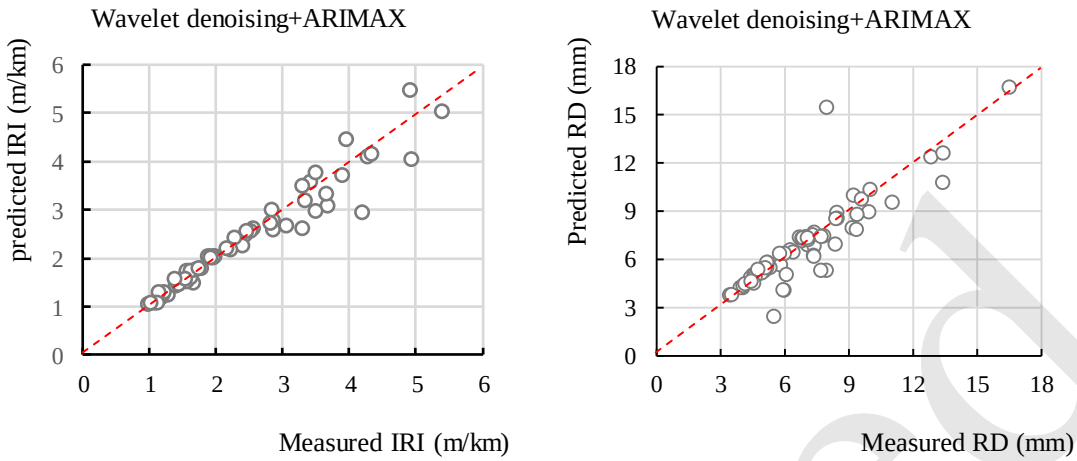
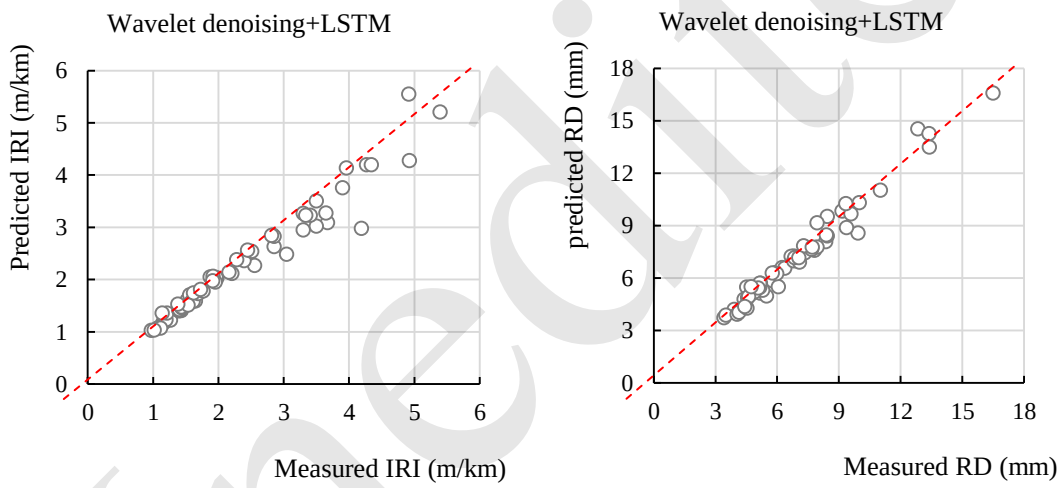


(a) ARIMAX



(b) LSTM

Fig. 9 Model performance for denoised PI prediction

Table 7 Classification standards of evaluation indicators

Evaluation indicator	1	2	3
P_{QI}	≥90	≥80, <90	<80

We utilize several different versions of P_{QI} for our analysis:

1. $P_{QI\text{-}S}$: P_{QI} is calculated according to the assessment standards method.

2. $P_{QI\text{-}E}$: P_{QI} is calculated according to the entropy weight method.

3. $P_{QI\text{-}SF}$: P_{QI} is calculated by combining the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method with the assessment standards method.

4. $P_{QI\text{-}EF}$: P_{QI} is calculated by combining the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method with the entropy weight method.

5. $P_{QI\text{-}F}$: P_{QI} is determined by applying the strictest pavement performance evaluation method above.

The measured PIs and calculated P_{QI} classifications from the training set are used to train a back-propagation (BP) neural network, and then the predicted PIs for the test set are fed into the trained network to obtain predicted P_{QI} results. Fig. 10 shows the confusion matrix of the BP prediction model, where the diagonal shows the numbers of correct predictions for the three classes. The confusion ma-

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trix shows an overall prediction accuracy of 93.8%, indicating effective comprehensive performance prediction. To identify potential causes of the incorrect predictions, the measured values and predicted values across different indicators are listed in Table 8. One can observe that incorrectly predicted P_{QI} are around the critical value of state transition for pavement sections. Another possible reason for prediction errors is the abnormal increase in I_{RI} for MnRoad sections in 2008, causing the predicted values to be lower than the measured values.

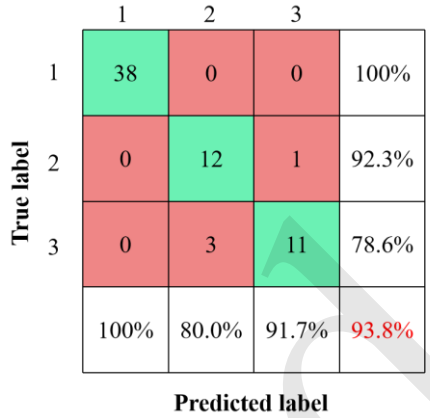

Fig. 10 Confusion matrix of the BP prediction model for comprehensive performance (accuracy in %)

Table 8 Performance evaluation for denoised data

NO.	I_{RI}	R_D	$P_{QI\text{-}S}$		$P_{QI\text{-}E}$		$P_{QI\text{-}SF}$	$P_{QI\text{-}EF}$	$P_{QI\text{-}F}$
Measured data									
1	3.67	8.35	82.50	2	86.95	2	3	1	3
2	3.65	5.16	83.71	2	89.11	2	3	1	3
3	4.19	9.20	77.95	3	84.19	2	3	1	3
4	3.41	7.36	84.69	2	88.55	2	2	1	2
Predicted data									
1	3.40	8.08	84.53	2	88.12	2	2	1	2
2	3.32	5.15	85.97	2	90.28	1	2	1	2
3	3.14	9.86	85.56	2	87.79	2	2	2	2
4	3.62	7.64	83.06	2	87.58	2	3	1	3

6 Conclusions

A method based on a time series LSTM model was developed to predict the performance indicators (PIs) of asphalt pavements (specifically I_{RI} and R_D), and a comprehensive performance indicator $P_{QI\text{-}F}$ was proposed to evaluate the condition of the pavement. The average temperature, precipitation, total traffic volume, asphalt surface layer thickness, pavement age, and treatment condition were taken as predictors, and wavelet denoising was performed on the original data to investigate the influence of missing or abnormal data on the model. The modeling and analysis were based on data from two major full-scale accelerated test tracks, MnRoad and RIOHTRACK, and the results were compared to that of a traditional ARIMAX model.

A comparative evaluation of the different models showed that the LSTM model outperforms the ARIMAX model in PI prediction. The coefficient of determination of the LSTM model is on average 21.0% higher than that of the ARIMAX model, and the M_S and M_A of LSTM are on average 0.977 and 0.326 lower than that of the ARIMAX model, respectively.

We also found that wavelet denoising can improve the prediction accuracy of the ARIMAX model, and that the LSTM model has a stronger tolerance to noise in the original data compared with the ARIMAX model. However, distorted data caused by the denoising process has a greater impact on the predic-

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tion accuracy of the LSTM model. Therefore, the LSTM model is particularly suitable for application scenarios with missing/noisy data or frequent maintenance operations.

Additionally, a novel comprehensive pavement performance indicator ($P_{\text{QI-F}}$) was proposed in this work, which combines the highway performance assessment standards method, entropy weight method, and fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method. The overall prediction accuracy of the $P_{\text{QI-F}}$ can reach as high as 93.8%. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the method in predicting pavement performance. The findings of this study may serve as a reference for more sophisticated pavement management and maintenance strategies.

Acknowledgments

This study in funded by the National Key Research and Development Program of China (No. 2021YFB2600300).

Author contributions

Jun CHEN and Chuanchuan HOU designed the research. Huan WANG and Wei GUAN processed the corresponding data. Chuanchuan HOU and Huan WANG wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Huan WANG helped to organize the manuscript. Jun CHEN revised and edited the final version.

Conflict of interest

Chuanchuan HOU, Huan WANG, Wei GUAN, and Jun CHEN declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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中文概要

题　目：基于时序长短期记忆模型的道路路面性能预测

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目　的：提出一种道路路面性能指标（国际平整度指数和车辙深度）的准确预测方法，并提出一个道路路面使用性能的综合评价指标，实现对路面综合性能的有效预测。

创新点：1. 采用两条典型足尺道路的数据发展了一个高准确率的基于时序长短期记忆模型的道路路面性能预测模型；2. 采用对路面技术参数数据进行小波降噪处理验证了所提出的模型的鲁棒性。

方　法：1.采用温度、降水量、交通量、沥青面层厚度、路龄、维修状况和初始路面技术参数作为影响变量分别建立 ARIMAX（autoregressive integrated moving average）时间序列模型和 LSTM（long short-term memory）神经网络模型对路面各项技术参数进行预测，对收集的路面技术参数数据进行小波降噪处理后再次建立模型对其进行预测，以此分析异常数据对不同模型精度的影响；2. 综合设计规范法、熵权法和模糊评价法的优点对沥青路面使用性能进行综合评价，选择对其评价最严格结果作为最终评价结果，然后将最终评价结果作为输出变量，将平整度、车辙深度和横向力系数三种路面技术参数作为输入变量，并基于 BP（back-propagation）神经网络分类模型建立路面使用性能综合评价模型；3. 基于路面使用性能综合评价模型和路面各项技术参数的预测结果得到了路面使用性能综合指标 $P_{\mathrm{QI\text{-}F}}$ 的预测状态。

结　论：1. 相对于 ARIMAX 时间序列模型，LSTM 模型在路面各项技术参数的预测方面表现明显更好，并且对原始数据中的噪声信号具有更强的容忍

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度和鲁棒性；2. 所提出的路面使用性能综合指标预测准确率较高，整体预测精度可达 93.8%。

关键词： 沥青路面性能模型；国际平整度指数；车辙深度；长短期记忆模型；路面管理系统

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