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Quadcopter Stabilization using Neural Network Model from Collected Data of PID Controller

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Abstract

There are a lot of methods for the stabilization of quadcopters and the newest are based on AI. A neural network is a simplified model that imitates the human brain's processes. In the research paper, we present a neural network control model for quadcopter stabilization. A single hidden layer network model was estimated to investigate the dynamics of the UAV. A control system with a classical PID controller was used to train the neural network model. This method is used for examining how the neural network imitates the stabilization of the quadcopter in real flight mode. The novelty of the work was to design of small size 3 layers NN model that runs in real-time in a quadcopter. The PID and machine learning controllers' operation results were compared to each other and shown in the experiment.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; control system; quadrotor; neural network; unmanned aerial vehicle

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, quadrotors (UAV, quadcopter) emerged widely in commercial and army areas [1, 2, 3]. There are many applications of quadcopter UAVs, such as life-saving operations, surveillance, aerial photography for mapping, an inspection of power lines, traffic monitoring in city areas, crop monitoring and spraying, border patrol, search operations for missing persons and natural disasters [4, 5, 6, 7].

Most quadcopters apply the classical control method, so they are driven by proportional-integral-derivative-PID



controllers [1-10]. PID controller method and its usability in different systems are well described in many research papers [1-10]. There are several other algorithms that control quadcopters, such as LQR, Backstepping, Sliding mode, Linearized Feedback, Fuzzy logic, Optimal, L1, H ∞ , and Adaptive control. A quadcopter control algorithm is compared in [11-15]. Researchers search for more advantageous methods of control, like artificial intelligence algorithms, for example, neural network controllers. Compared to the classical approach, the main advantage of a neural network is the controller's nonlinear character. In this research work, the back-propagation neural network has been used to learn the integrated quadcopter dynamics model. The neural network was trained by a control system with a classical PID controller [16, 17, 18, 19].

In machine learning like supervised learning, each training sample is a pair consisting of input data in our case the angles of the quadcopter, and the desired output data in our case the rotational speed of the propeller. After training based on collected data, the controller is expected to make correct predictions for untrained data.

2. MATHEMATICAL MODEL OF QUADROTOR

This part presents the mathematical model of the quadcopter.

2.1. Quadcopter model

The quadcopter has a "CROSS type" flying configuration (Fig. 1), with two opposite motors rotating CW and the other two motors rotating CCW to equilibrium the torque [20, 21]. The three angles, such as roll, yaw, pitch, and push-up operations, are controlled by modifying the thrusts of the motors using a PWM signal to give the necessary output. Consider a quadcopter UAV with six DOF, and the dynamic of the quadcopter can be separated into two subsystems which include a translational subsystem and a rotational subsystem [20-24].

The quadcopter must be provided with a good inertial measuring sensor to obtain the necessary measurements. This sensor gives the angular rates and accelerations that can be used to calculate velocities and angles [6]. We examine an inertial field and a body-fixed field whose origin is in the center of mass of the quadcopter, as shown in Fig. 1



Figure 1. Quadcopter field.

2.2. Quadcopter equations

Using the Newton-Euler method [23, 24] the rotational formulas of motion are generated in the body field shown in equation (1).

$$J\dot{\omega} + \omega \times J\omega + M_g = M_b \tag{1}$$



Here, J-quadcopter's diagonal inertia matrix, ω -angular velocities, M_g -gyroscopic moments due to motors inertia, and M_b -moments acting on the quadcopter. Overall moments acting on the quadcopter become:

$$M_{b} = \begin{vmatrix} lU_{2} \\ lU_{3} \\ lU_{4} \end{vmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} lK_{f}(\omega_{1}^{2} - \omega_{3}^{2}) \\ lK_{f}(\omega_{2}^{2} - \omega_{4}^{2}) \\ K_{m}(\omega_{1}^{2} - \omega_{2}^{2} + \omega_{3}^{2} - \omega_{4}^{2}) \end{bmatrix}$$
(2)

Here K_f and K_m are the aerodynamic force and moments constant, respectively, ω_i is the angular velocity of *the i-th* motor. Each motor produces a moment M_i in the opposite direction to the direction of rotation of the corresponding rotor *i* and provides an upwards thrust force F_i . Substituting formula (2) into the rotational formula of motion (1), the following relation can be formulated:

$$\begin{bmatrix} I_{xx} & 0 & 0\\ 0 & I_{yy} & 0\\ 0 & 0 & I_{zz} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \ddot{\varphi}\\ \ddot{\theta}\\ \ddot{\psi} \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} \dot{\phi}\\ \dot{\phi}\\ \dot{\phi} \end{bmatrix} \times \begin{bmatrix} I_{xx} & 0 & 0\\ 0 & I_{yy} & 0\\ 0 & 0 & I_{zz} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \dot{\phi}\\ \dot{\phi}\\ \dot{\phi} \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} \dot{\phi}\\ \dot{\phi}\\ \dot{\phi} \end{bmatrix} \times \begin{bmatrix} 0\\ 0\\ J_r\omega_r \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} lU_2\\ lU_3\\ U_4 \end{bmatrix}$$
(3)

Rewriting the last formula to get the angular accelerations in terms of the other variables:

$$\ddot{\varphi} = \frac{l}{l_{xx}} U_2 - \frac{J_r}{l_{xx}} \dot{\theta} \omega_r + \frac{l_{yy}}{l_{xx}} \dot{\psi} \dot{\theta} - \frac{l_{zz}}{l_{xx}} \dot{\theta} \dot{\psi}$$
(4)

$$\ddot{\theta} = \frac{l}{l_{yy}} U_3 - \frac{J_r}{l_{yy}} \dot{\varphi} \omega_r + \frac{l_{zz}}{l_{yy}} \dot{\varphi} \dot{\theta} - \frac{J_{xx}}{l_{yy}} \dot{\theta} \dot{\psi}$$
(5)

$$\ddot{\psi} = \frac{1}{I_{ZZ}} U_4 - \frac{I_{XX}}{I_{ZZ}} \dot{\theta} \varphi + \frac{I_{YY}}{I_{ZZ}} \dot{\varphi} \dot{\theta}$$
(6)

Based on Newton's second law the quadcopter translation formulas of motion are derived, and they are obtained from the Earth's inertial field:

$$m\ddot{r} = \begin{bmatrix} 0\\0\\mg \end{bmatrix} + RF_b \tag{7}$$

Here m -a mass of UAV, $r = [x \ y \ z]^T$ aerial vehicle's distance from the inertial field, F_b -nongravitational forces acting on the aerial vehicle in the body field and g-gravitational acceleration. Insert that into the translational formula of motion (7) and expanding the terms, we obtain:

$$m\begin{bmatrix} \ddot{x}\\ \ddot{y}\\ \ddot{z}\end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0\\ 0\\ mg \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} c\psi c\theta & c\psi s\varphi s\theta & s\varphi s\psi + c\varphi c\psi s\theta \\ c\theta s\psi & c\theta c\psi + s\varphi s\psi s\theta & c\varphi s\psi s\theta - c\psi s\theta \\ -s\theta & c\theta s\varphi & c\varphi c\theta \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0\\ 0\\ -U_1 \end{bmatrix}$$
(8)

To get the accelerations in terms of the other variables we rewrite formula (8).

$$\ddot{x} = \frac{-U_1}{m} (\sin \varphi \sin \psi + \cos \varphi \cos \psi \sin \theta)$$
(9)

$$\ddot{y} = \frac{-U_1}{m} (\cos\varphi\sin\psi\sin\theta - \cos\psi\sin\varphi)$$
(10)

$$\ddot{z} = g - \frac{-u_1}{m} (\cos\varphi\cos\theta) \tag{11}$$

Obviously that the translational subsystem is underactuated as it is related on both the rotational state variables and the translational ones. Further we define the state vectors x_1 to x_{12} which are projected to degrees of freedom of the quadcopter in the following state space form:

$$X = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 & x_2 & x_3 & x_4 & x_5 & x_6 & x_7 & x_8 & x_9 & x_{10} & x_{11} & x_{12} \\ \phi & \dot{\phi} & \theta & \dot{\theta} & \psi & \dot{\psi} & z & \dot{z} & x & \dot{x} & y & \dot{y} \end{bmatrix}^T$$
$$\dot{x_1} = \dot{\phi} = x_2$$

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$$\begin{aligned} \dot{x_2} &= \ddot{\varphi} = x_4 x_6 a_1 - x_4 \omega_r a_2 + b_1 U_2 \\ \dot{x_3} &= \dot{\theta} = x_4 \\ \dot{x_4} &= \ddot{\theta} = x_2 x_6 a_3 + x_2 \omega_r a_4 + b_2 U_3 \\ \dot{x_5} &= \dot{\psi} = x_2 \\ \dot{x_6} &= \ddot{\psi} = x_2 x_4 a_5 + b_3 U_4 \\ \dot{x_7} &= \dot{z} = x_8 \\ \dot{x_8} &= \ddot{z} = g - \frac{U_1}{m} (\cos x_1 \cos x_3) \\ \dot{x_9} &= \dot{x} = x_{10} \\ \dot{x_{10}} &= \ddot{x} = \frac{-U_1}{m} (\sin x_1 \sin x_5 + \cos x_1 \sin x_3 \cos x_5) \\ \dot{x_{11}} &= \dot{y} = x_{12} \\ \dot{x_{12}} &= \ddot{y} = \frac{U_1}{m} (\sin x_1 \cos x_5 - \cos x_1 \sin x_3 \sin x_5) \end{aligned}$$
(12)

For stabilization of quadcopter using PID control, we use yaw, pitch, and roll angles data collected from the IMU sensor.

3. CLASSICAL PID CONTROL SYSTEM

The PID is a control system with a closed loop that is broadly used in commercial control systems and various other applications demanding continuously modulated control [10-20]. A PID control method continuously estimates an error value e(t) as the difference between the reference set (SP) value and a measured process value (PV) and takes a correction based on proportional, integral, and derivative terms.

$$e(t) = SP - PV(t) \tag{13}$$

$$u(t) = K_p e_{(t)} + K_i \int_0^T e_{(\tau)} d\tau + K_d \frac{de(t)}{dt}$$
(14)

In the above equation, K_{p^-} proportional, K_i - integral and K_d , - derivative coefficients with positive values.

3.1. Roll angle correction formula

$$R_{er,roll} = x_1 - S_{roll} \tag{15}$$

 $R_{er, roll}$ - roll angle error

 x_1 - roll angle measured by IMU

 S_{roll} - set point of roll angle

$$R_{err,roll} = K_{i,roll} * R_{er,roll} \tag{16}$$

 $R_{err, roll}$ - accumulated error of roll angle

 $K_{i,roll}$ - integral coefficient of roll angle

$$U_{roll} = K_{p,roll} * R_{er,roll} + R_{err,roll} + K_{i,roll} * (R_{er,roll} + R_{d,err,roll})$$
(17)

 $R_{d.err,roll}$ - previous error of roll angle

 U_{roll} - correction value of roll angle

3.2. Pitch angle correction formula

$$R_{er,pitch} = x_3 - S_{pitc} \tag{18}$$

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 $R_{er, pitch}$ – pitch angle error

 x_3 – pitch angle measured by IMU

 S_{pitch} – set point of pitch angle

$$R_{ear,pitch} = K_{i,pitch} * R_{er,pitch}$$
(19)

 $R_{ear, pitch}$ – accumulated error of pitch angle

 $K_{i, pitch}$ – integral coefficient of pitch angle

$$U_{pitch} = K_{p,pitch} * R_{er,pitch} + R_{err,pitch} + K_{i,pitch} * (R_{er,pitch} + R_{d,err,pitch})$$
(20)

 $R_{d.err, pitch}$ – previous error of pitch angle

Pitch-correction value of pitch angle

3.3. Yaw angle correction formula

$$R_{er,yaw} = x_5 - S_{yaw} \tag{21}$$

 $R_{er, yaw}$ – yaw angle error

 x_5 – yaw angle measured by IMU

 S_{aw} – set point of pitch angle

$$R_{err,yaw} = K_{i,yaw} * R_{er,yaw}$$
(22)

 $R_{ear, yaw}$ – accumulated error of yaw angle

 $K_{i, yaw}$ – integral coefficient of yaw angle

$$U_{yaw} = K_{p,yaw} * R_{er,yaw} + R_{err,yaw} + K_{i,yaw} * (R_{er,yaw} + R_{d,err,yaw})$$
(23)

 $R_{d. err, yaw}$ – previous error of yaw angle

 U_{yaw} - correction value of yaw angle

The electronic speed controller operates in the range of 800-2000 PWM. However, we limited the PWM output value to a maximum of 1700 and a minimum of 1300. The throttle value of PWM is set to w_0 =1500. The following formulas estimate the rotation speed of each motor:

$$w_1 = PWM_1 = \omega + U_{pitch} + U_{roll} - U_{yaw}$$
(24)

$$w_2 = PWM_2 = \omega + U_{pitch} - U_{roll} + U_{yaw}$$
⁽²⁵⁾

$$w_3 = PWM_3 = \omega - U_{pitch} - U_{roll} - U_{yaw}$$
⁽²⁶⁾

$$w_4 = PWM_4 = \omega - U_{pitch} + U_{roll} + U_{yaw}$$
⁽²⁷⁾

4. DESIGN OF PROPOSED NEURAL NETWORK MODEL

The main idea to use a neural network for controlling the quadcopter was based on the demand to deal with large indeterminate parameter estimates and wind disturbances [9]. Using neural networks can be one possible method to design such dynamics. The Universal Approximation Theorem tells us that Neural Networks has a kind of universality; their architecture gives them to design highly nonlinear functions [10]. Furthermore, neural networks can produce general models that can operate on data other than the observed data. However, it is not clear whether the proposed NN-based model can be used to control the



system or whether the trained dynamics represent the system more accurately than the trained data.

4.1. Proposed Neural Network Model

In this work, three-layer NNs are expressed, an input layer, hidden layer, and output layer. The structure of the NN is shown in Figure 2, in which the first layer is the input layer that takes the current state - input of the model. Before training the input layer was assigned with random weights $\theta_{i,j}^{(1)}$ and added bias b^{1} . The second layer has ten hidden neurons with random weights $\theta_{i,j}^{(2)}$ and added bias, b^{2} . The sigmoid activation function is used in our model. Each of N activation units computes the inner product of the weights. The output layer has four neurons which represent the speed of each motor.



Figure 2. Neural network model.

The matrix representation of the model is shown below.

$$\begin{bmatrix} b^{1} \\ x_{1} \\ x_{2} \\ x_{3} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} b^{(2)} \\ a_{1}^{(2)} \\ a_{2}^{(2)} \\ \vdots \\ \vdots \\ a_{10}^{(2)} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} h_{\theta}(x)_{1} \\ h_{\theta}(x)_{2} \\ h_{\theta}(x)_{3} \\ h_{\theta}(x)_{4} \end{bmatrix}$$

Hidden layer neurons can be estimated by the following equation (1-7).

$$a_i^2 = g(\theta^T x) \tag{28}$$

$$z = \theta^T x = \theta_0 + \theta_1 x_1 + \theta_2 x_2 + \cdots$$
(29)

$$a_i^2 = g(z) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z}} = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-\theta^T x}}$$
(30)

The sigmoid function transforms any real number to the interval (0, 1).

$$a_{1}^{(2)} = g(\theta_{10}^{(1)}b^{1} + \theta_{11}^{(1)}x_{1} + \theta_{12}^{(1)}x_{2} + \theta_{13}^{(1)}x_{3})$$

$$a_{2}^{(2)} = g(\theta_{20}^{(1)}b^{1} + \theta_{21}^{(1)}x_{1} + \theta_{22}^{(1)}x_{2} + \theta_{23}^{(1)}x_{3})$$

$$a_{n}^{(2)} = g(\theta_{n0}^{(1)}b^{1} + \theta_{n1}^{(1)}x_{1} + \theta_{n2}^{(1)}x_{2} + \theta_{n3}^{(1)}x_{3})$$
(31)

where, n = [1:10]



Output neurons calculated by the following formulas:

$$h_{\theta}(x)_{1} = a_{1}^{(3)} = w_{1} = g\left(\theta_{10}^{(2)}b^{2} + \theta_{11}^{(2)}a_{1}^{(2)} + \theta_{12}^{(2)}a_{2}^{(2)} + \theta_{13}^{(2)}a_{3}^{(2)} + \dots + \theta_{110}^{(2)}a_{10}^{(2)}\right)$$

$$h_{\theta}(x)_{2} = a_{2}^{(3)} = w_{2} = g\left(\theta_{20}^{(2)}b^{2} + \theta_{21}^{(2)}a_{1}^{(2)} + \theta_{22}^{(2)}a_{2}^{(2)} + \theta_{23}^{(2)}a_{3}^{(2)} + \dots + \theta_{210}^{(2)}a_{10}^{(2)}\right)$$

$$h_{\theta}(x)_{3} = a_{3}^{(3)} = w_{3} = g\left(\theta_{30}^{(2)}b^{2} + \theta_{31}^{(2)}a_{1}^{(2)} + \theta_{32}^{(2)}a_{2}^{(2)} + \theta_{33}^{(2)}a_{3}^{(2)} + \dots + \theta_{310}^{(2)}a_{10}^{(2)}\right)$$

$$h_{\theta}(x)_{4} = a_{4}^{(3)} = w_{4} = g\left(\theta_{40}^{(2)}b^{2} + \theta_{41}^{(2)}a_{1}^{(2)} + \theta_{42}^{(2)}a_{2}^{(2)} + \theta_{43}^{(2)}a_{3}^{(2)} + \dots + \theta_{410}^{(2)}a_{10}^{(2)}\right)$$
(32)

Here:

 x_n – inputs $a_i^{(j)}$ - activation unit i of layer j

 $\theta_i^{(j)}$ - the value of the weight in *i* to convert from layer *j* to layer *j* + 1

4.2. Cost Function

Our goal is to determine each layer's weight $\theta_{i,}^{(Jl)}$ parameters. Proper determination of these parameters requires that the difference between the prediction function $h_{\theta}(x)_i$ and the output value y^i be kept to a minimum. The Y^i is the rotation speed of the motor collected from PID control to train the neural network.

$$loss = h_{\theta}(x^{(l)}) - y^{l} \tag{33}$$

The neural network cost function $J(\theta)$ is defined by equation (34).

$$J(\theta) = -\frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^{m} \sum_{k=1}^{K} \left[y_k^i \log\left(\left(h_\theta(x^{(i)}) \right)_k \right) + (1 - y_k^{(i)}) \log\left(1 - \left(h_\theta(x^{(i)}) \right)_k \right) \right]$$
(34)

Here, *k* is the number of output units.

The cost function determines the difference between the hypothesis function value and the output value.

The main idea of the concept of the learning process is to determine the minimum of the cost function $J(\theta)$ ($min_{\theta}J(\theta)$). We take a partial derivative from the evaluation function to determine the minimum. We use the "back propagation" algorithm to calculate this partial derivative. First, we calculate the difference $\delta^{(L)}$ between the output value $y^{(t)}$ and the assumed output value $a^{(L)}$ (9).

$$\delta^{(L)} = a^{(L)} - y^{(t)} \tag{35}$$

Subsequently, the difference between each layer is calculated by the following formula.

$$\delta^{(l-1)}, \delta^{(l-2)}, \dots, \delta^{(2)}$$

$$\delta^{(l)} = \left((\theta^l)^T \delta^{(l+1)} \right) * a^{(l)} * (1 - a^{(l)})$$
(36)

From this we can calculate the partial derivatives.

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_{i,j}^{(l)}} J(\theta) = a_j^{(l)} \delta_i^{(l+1)}$$
(37)

Updating weight $\theta_{i,i}^{(l)}$ parameters by the following formula.

$$\theta_{i,j}^{(l)} \coloneqq \theta_{i,j}^{(l)} - \alpha \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_{i,j}^{(l)}} J(\theta)$$
(38)

Here, α is the learning rate.

We updated weight parameters until the cost function reached the minimum value.



5. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

The test environment is shown below. The quadcopter is placed on the metal sphere that moves in three degrees of freedom. The quadcopter is equipped with frame F450, has four brushless motors with 1000KV, and uses 30A ESC. The total mass of the quadcopter is 900 grams. To collect data for training, we flew and recorded the states (x_1 -roll, x_2 -pitch, x_3 -yaw angles) as input data and four propeller rotation speeds (w_1 , w_2 , w_3 , w_4) as output data. The experimental environment is shown in Figure 3. We collected 7000 data to develop a neural network model. The collected data is split into three parts: 70% for training, 20% for evaluation, and 10% for tests.



Figure 3. Test environment of the quadcopter.

The neural network model was trained using MATLAB. Some network parameters are set as follows: learning rate (0.001), without regularization factor, iteration (9M), a number of layers, and a number of neurons in the hidden layer. Before training the neural network, we follow a few data pre-processing steps.

We do not provide position as inputs; instead, we provide angles (degree units) as inputs to the neural network. The rotational speed of the rotor or PWM value is given in intervals between 800 to 2000. We scale (13) the observed outputs (rotational speed - PWM value) such that each of them has a value in intervals between 0 to 1.

$$y_i = \left(\frac{w_i - 700}{2000}\right) \tag{39}$$

This ensures that the neural network gives equal weightage to the collected value.

We gave an external influence on the drone and recorded the angles of the drone, as shown in Fig. 4.



Figure 4. Drone angles are changed by external influence

Figures 5a, 5b, 5c, and 5d show the rotational speed of each motor due to the change in angle. Rotational speed dependence on the change in angle is drawn in blue color, and the



rotational speed of the motor is learned through the neural network model shown by the orange color.





(c)





(a) -first, (b)-second, (c)-third, (d)-fourth motor rotation speed w1 compared with learned rotation speed w1p



In the second test, we changed the number of nodes in the hidden layer. Depending on the number of nodes in the hidden layer, the dynamic design of the drone will change. We change the nodes to 3, 10, and 20 to determine the value of the cost function. Figure 6 shows changes in cost function value depending on nodes number.



Figure 6. Dependence of Cost function value and node numbers.

6. CONCLUSION

The experimental results presented in the research work have shown that a neural controller can be used for the stabilization of a quadcopter. Implementing such control in the concrete flying object should enhance the object's stability, as the neural controller better mimics with control when noisy excitations are given into its inputs. In the PID control, three coefficients are used for each angle adjustment, and nine coefficients are needed to control the quadcopter. The NN with three neurons in the hidden layer requires 28 coefficients to control the quadcopter. With the increased number of hidden neurons, the number of the coefficient increased drastically. The choice of a number of hidden layers and hidden layer neurons depends on controller memory and the speed of the processor. In the next research step, we will analyze another neural network mixed with a reinforcement learning model.

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