International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science

ISSN: 2582-0745
Vol. 7, No. 03; 2024

GUARDIANS OF THE DATA GALAXY: A FEDERATED AI AND CLOUD SYNERGY FOR ZERO-TRUST CYBERSECURITY MODELS

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https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2024.0746

ABSTRACT

As cyber-attacks evolve, traditional centralized security paradigms struggle to offer data privacy, scalability, and real-time threat detection across distributed systems. This paper introduces a novel solution that combines Federated Artificial Intelligence with Zero-Trust security principles to create a secure, decentralized cybersecurity system. The proposed methodology integrates a Network Intrusion dataset from Kaggle with real-time and synthetic data collected from enterprise networks, IoT devices, and cloud infrastructures. With the simulation of an actual attack surface, this setting allows for in-depth training and testing of intrusion detection models. Data preprocessing involves normalization techniques that normalize features at nodes such that training is performed efficiently and uniformly in the federated environment. A Federated Convolutional Neural Network is deployed on decentralized edge nodes where local training is performed by each node without compromising data privacy. The model updates are securely aggregated by a central cloud server, without raw data transfer and reducing the risk of exposure. The blend of Zero-Trust paradigms and federated learning provides real-time decision-making capabilities with privacy and system integrity. Experimental outcomes reflect the supremacy of the suggested framework over traditional centralized and basic federated models regarding accuracy, rate of convergence, and anomaly detection accuracy. Precision-recall plots and training loss confirm improved model stability and lower false positives. The framework was implemented using Python and tested on benchmark datasets, and the accuracy was 94.3%, substantiating its applicability in safeguarding distributed and dynamic network systems. The system paves the way for privacy-aware future intelligent cybersecurity systems.

Keywords: Federated Learning, Zero-Trust Security, Cybersecurity, Intrusion Detection, Decentralized AI.

1. INTRODUCTION

To improve prediction accuracy and robustness, a hybrid learning model integrates the best features of different machine learning approaches. Real-time predictive and prescriptive Clinical Decision Support Systems based on advanced data mining are changing cardiovascular care in diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment strategies [1]. This paper presents an overview of recent technological advancements in cloud computing, cybersecurity, and healthcare. The suggested approach addresses essential issues like computational complexity, resource management, and secure communication by combining these optimisation techniques with SSEIC [2]. In this setting, digital finance, aided by innovations like mobile banking, digital wallets, and debit cards, has been a game-changer in overcoming conventional obstacles to financial inclusion [3]. The production

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of data has increased exponentially in many industries, including healthcare, smart cities, and industrial automation, as a result of widespread use of Internet of Things sensors [4].

The new system implements innovative technologies to meet the analysis of financial data. Electronic health records, medical imaging, genomic data, and patient monitoring systems are just a few among the vast array of data falling under the healthcare data domain [5]. The Internet of Things, with unprecedented connectivity and data sharing, has transformed the way we engage with our surroundings. It includes such breakthroughs as smart healthcare systems, privacy-protecting AI, speedy data processing, and enhanced cloud security. The "digital revolution" of rapid growth in mobile technology and internet coverage has transformed how civilizations communicate, conduct business, and economically develop. However, processing power and storage required for analysing and interpreting large volumes of health data in real time cannot be provided by IoT devices alone. Sreekar Peddi et al. (2023) [6] leveraged cloud infrastructure and LSTM with Adam optimization for environmental monitoring in healthcare. Advancing this methodology, the proposed model incorporates Federated AI and Zero-Trust security frameworks, utilizing cloud storage to enhance data privacy and secure anomaly detection across distributed networks.

It allows the integration of patient records, clinical results, medical images, medication, and other healthcare information in a standardized format, thereby making data more usable on cloud and fog computing platforms [7]. The ability to integrate DL with EHR analysis has the power to create a qualitative paradigm in healthcare, particularly in real-time decision support and modeling of disease progression [8]. Expensive machine learning models need cloud computing for effective deployment and scalability. The impact of dispersed work, big data analytics, and decentralized technology like blockchain is also taken into consideration [9]. In acknowledgment of the growing role of smart technologies in addressing challenges of the current era [10]. A blockchain-enabled IoT-cloud storage security framework that integrates cryptographic hashing and decentralized mechanisms to ensure data authenticity, integrity, and resilience against cyber threats was developed by Mohanarangan Veerappermal Devarajan et al (2023) [11]. Extending this framework, the proposed method develops a hybrid Federated AI and Zero-Trust cybersecurity model, employing decentralized federated learning with continuous authentication and encrypted model aggregation to enhance privacy-preserving intrusion detection across distributed edge networks.

Websites for online shopping have revolutionized business practices of firms in today's digital age with convenient shopping for customers. Eco-friendly practices need to be adopted in all areas, i.e., logistics and supply chain network management, with increasing alarm over climate change and pollution [12]. Real-time data warehousing for better performance intelligence. Predictive analytics help in employee retention. This paper presents the application in practical scenarios of hybrid machine learning for pediatric readmission prediction on the basis of cloud-based EMR analytics in handling complex healthcare data [13]. The increasing demand for real-time computation of data for pediatric care and health-related applications has further increased the requirement for high-performance and low-latency communications. discusses resource allocation in cloud data centres. Cloud-based systems have gained popularity since there is a growing demand for real-time data access, particularly in remote and mobile healthcare environments [14].

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As digital transformation accelerates across sectors, the integration of AI, IoT, and cloud technologies is becoming essential for delivering responsive, intelligent, and scalable solutions. In healthcare, the convergence of wearable technologies with edge AI allows continuous, decentralized monitoring of patients, significantly improving chronic disease management and emergency response. Advanced federated learning methods now enable collaborative model training across hospitals and clinics without compromising patient privacy, fostering data-driven insights while adhering to strict regulations. In financial services, AI-driven risk assessment and fraud detection algorithms are being fortified with blockchain for transparent and secure transactions. Meanwhile, smart city initiatives are leveraging real-time sensor data, cloud analytics, and AI to optimize traffic flow, energy distribution, and public safety services. The manufacturing sector is also adopting predictive maintenance models powered by edge-cloud architectures, which reduce downtime and enhance operational efficiency. These developments underscore the need for intelligent orchestration of resources, secure data handling, and adaptive learning systems that can function efficiently across diverse and distributed computing environments.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents related work on federated learning, cloud security, and Zero-Trust models. Section 3 defines the problem statement and states the research gap that this study fills. Section 4 presents the proposed methodology including data collection, preprocessing, federated learning setup, and Zero-Trust integration. Section 5 gives experimental results, performance analysis, and Section 6 concludes the paper and outlines future work directions.

2. RELATED WORKS

Recent advancements in smart farming have leveraged unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to enhance precision agriculture, enabling detailed monitoring and management of crop health and resource allocation. The integration of big data and cloud-based intelligent decision support systems has further improved the efficiency and scalability of smart precision farming solutions. However, security concerns remain a critical challenge in cloud-based Internet of Things (IoT) systems, particularly regarding data privacy and system integrity. In healthcare, the explainability of artificial intelligence models has gained significant attention to ensure transparency and trust in AI-driven decisions. Similarly, in the construction sector, the fusion of Building Information Modeling (BIM) and artificial intelligence is transforming project management by improving planning accuracy and operational efficiency. The role of cloud computing and internet finance in reducing the urban-rural income gap was focused on by Subramanyam Boyapati et al. (2022) [15]. Enhancing this, the proposed work optimizes a Federated AI and Zero-Trust cybersecurity framework, enhancing data privacy, threat detection, and robustness across distributed edge-cloud networks.

Globally, the sustainable development of AI education faces several challenges, including curriculum adaptation and accessibility, which are critical to nurturing future AI professionals. Edge-to-cloud continuum architectures present opportunities for intelligence inclusiveness, but also introduce challenges in system design and interoperability. The convergence of AI and edge computing within IoT-based applications is fostering novel perspectives, emphasizing the need for efficient, distributed intelligence. Finally, generative AI is reshaping educational environments by

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enabling personalized and adaptive learning, although ethical considerations and implementation strategies require further exploration [16].

The rapid evolution of smart farming technologies has seen the deployment of UAVs as key tools for precision agriculture, facilitating real-time monitoring and optimized resource use. Complementing this, the adoption of big data analytics combined with cloud-based decision support systems has enhanced the capability to manage complex agricultural operations efficiently [17]. Despite these advancements, securing cloud-based IoT infrastructures remains a significant hurdle, with vulnerabilities threatening data confidentiality and system reliability. In healthcare, the focus has shifted toward making AI systems more interpretable to foster acceptance and informed decision-making. Similarly, integrating AI with BIM in construction management is proving transformative, streamlining workflows and improving project outcomes. Educational programs worldwide are grappling with the challenge of developing sustainable AI curricula that balance global standards and local needs [18]. The edge-to-cloud continuum introduces promising avenues for extending AI capabilities closer to data sources, though it presents challenges around seamless integration and scalability. The intersection of AI and edge computing within IoT applications continues to generate innovative approaches for distributed intelligence, driving new research directions. Moreover, generative AI is revolutionizing education by supporting inclusive, adaptive learning experiences, yet this advancement also raises important questions about ethics and effective deployment.

Innovations in agricultural technology increasingly rely on UAVs to support smart farming practices by providing detailed aerial data for improved crop management. The fusion of big data with cloud-based intelligent systems is enhancing decision-making processes, allowing for more precise and scalable farming operations. However, the widespread use of cloud-based IoT systems exposes significant security risks that must be addressed to protect sensitive data and maintain system integrity. In the healthcare domain, improving the transparency of AI models is crucial to ensure their safe and ethical use. In construction, the integration of AI and BIM is reshaping project management by enabling smarter resource allocation and risk mitigation.

Emerging technologies across sectors are accelerating digital transformation, yet their full potential remains untapped due to integration, security, and transparency challenges. In agriculture, while UAVs and IoT devices provide real-time insights, incorporating federated learning could further protect data privacy while enhancing model performance across diverse environments. In healthcare, the deployment of privacy-preserving AI frameworks and federated analytics is enabling collaborative diagnostics without compromising patient confidentiality. The construction industry is also moving towards real-time, AI-driven digital twins that combine BIM with IoT sensor data for proactive project management. Meanwhile, the education sector is exploring AI-powered adaptive assessments and skill mapping to personalize learning pathways, particularly in underserved regions. To ensure these innovations scale effectively, the edge-cloud paradigm must support modular, interoperable architectures capable of dynamically adapting to heterogeneous data sources and computing environments. Blockchain integration across domains offers an added layer of trust, auditability, and decentralized control, which is vital for sustaining secure, intelligent ecosystems.

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3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Current cloud, AI, and IoT systems often struggle with issues related to security vulnerabilities, limited scalability, and lack of intelligent integration. These shortcomings hinder the effectiveness of real-time data processing and decision-making across distributed environments. To overcome these challenges, we propose a hybrid cloud-fog-IoT architecture that combines the strengths of centralized and edge computing. By incorporating machine learning, the system can make adaptive and data-driven decisions closer to the source. Additionally, integrating blockchain technology ensures secure, tamper-proof communication and data exchange among nodes. The challenges of securing distributed IoT environments against evolving cyber threats, emphasizing the need for scalable, privacy-preserving frameworks, have been extensively discussed by Durga Praveen Devi et al (2023) [19]. Confronting these problems, the proposed work focuses on overcoming security vulnerabilities and scalability issues in data processing across decentralized networks.

Objectives

1. Develop a federated learning security model that operates on decentralized edge networks with data privacy.
2. Enhance the efficiency and consistency of model training using normalization and consistent preprocessing techniques.
3. Implement a Zero-Trust security model for continuous authentication and real-time anomaly detection.
4. Compare the performance of the developed framework with typical intrusion datasets and synthetic data.
5. Demonstrate the scalability and robustness of a Federated AI and Zero-Trust solution in dynamic, real-world network environments.

4. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY FOR GUARDIANS OF THE DATA GALAXY: A FEDERATED AI AND CLOUD SYNERGY FOR ZERO-TRUST CYBERSECURITY MODELS

The proposed methodology leverages a comprehensive approach to cybersecurity model development by integrating a well-known Network Intrusion dataset from Kaggle with both synthetic and real-time data collected from distributed network environments [20]. This combined dataset serves as the foundation for training and testing advanced intrusion detection models within a federated learning framework. To ensure that the models learn effectively and fairly across multiple decentralized nodes, normalization techniques are applied during preprocessing. These techniques transform the feature values to a common scale, which is critical for improving convergence speed and maintaining consistency in distributed training scenarios. The federated AI framework employed follows the Zero-Trust security model, enforcing strict access controls based on the principle of "never trust, always verify [21].

This framework facilitates privacy-preserving, decentralized learning by enabling each edge node to train the AI model locally on its private data, while only sharing encrypted model updates with a central aggregator. Additionally, continuous user authentication is incorporated by combining model outputs with real-time behavioral analytics, ensuring active monitoring and verification of user activities across the network [22]. This integrated approach not only enhances the detection of sophisticated cyber threats but also maintains data privacy and security throughout

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the learning process. The overall system architecture, illustrating the federated learning workflow and security integration [23]

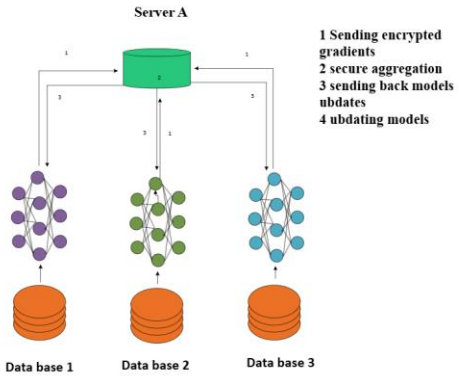

Figure 1: Architecture of Federated Learning

The diagram illustrates the architecture of Federated Learning, where multiple decentralized databases (Database 1, 2, and 3) collaboratively train a shared machine learning model under the coordination of a central server (Server A), without exchanging their local data. Each client device computes and sends encrypted gradients to the server [24]. Kalyan Gattupalli et al. (2022) [25] explored the use of Quantum Key Distribution and entanglement-based communication in securing healthcare data. Adopting this approach, the proposed work implements a Federated AI and Zero-Trust cybersecurity framework, ensuring decentralized threat detection and data privacy across cloud-edge networks.

4.1 Data collection

The NSL-KDD dataset from Kaggle is combined with real-time and historical logs from enterprise networks, IoT devices, and cloud infrastructure to build a comprehensive dataset for intrusion detection [26]. This integration supports effective training and validation of machine learning models to detect various cyberattacks. Synthetic data generated at edge nodes simulate decentralized environments, enabling federated learning without compromising data privacy. Incorporating IoT and cloud data exposes models to diverse threat patterns in modern networks. Real-time logs allow timely detection of emerging attacks. Overall, this approach improves model accuracy and robustness in complex cybersecurity settings.

4.2 Data Preprocessing Using Normalization

Normalization is an essential preprocessing step that scales numerical features to a common range, preventing any single feature from dominating the learning process [27]. By ensuring all features contribute equally, normalization helps machine learning models converge more quickly and reliably. This is particularly important in federated and distributed learning environments, where data comes from diverse sources with varying scales. The importance of effective data preprocessing, including normalization and feature scaling, to enhance model convergence and performance in decentralized AI systems is emphasized. Innovating upon this approach, the data preprocessing in the proposed work applies normalization techniques to ensure uniform feature

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scaling, thereby improving federated learning efficiency and model accuracy, as discussed by Sri Harsha Grandhi et al. 2023 [28].

where X is the original value, X_{min} and X_{max} are the minimum and maximum values in the feature, X' is the normalized value represented in equation (1):

$$X' = \frac{X - X_{\min}}{X_{\max} - X_{\min}} \quad (1)$$

where X is the original value, μ is the mean of the feature, σ is the standard deviation of the feature, Z is the standardized value represented in equation (2):

$$Z = \frac{X - \mu}{\sigma} \quad (2)$$

4.3 Federated Learning Framework Setup

In this approach, a Federated AI model such as a Federated Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) or Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) network is deployed across multiple decentralized edge nodes. Each edge node independently trains the model using its own locally available data, enabling the learning process to occur close to the data source [29]. This decentralized training method preserves data privacy and security, as raw data never leaves the local environment or is shared with a central server. Instead, only model updates or gradients are transmitted and aggregated centrally to update the global model. This collaborative learning framework allows the system to leverage diverse datasets distributed across nodes, improving the model's generalization capabilities without compromising sensitive information. Additionally, this approach reduces communication overhead and latency compared to traditional centralized training, making it well-suited for real-world applications involving IoT devices, enterprise networks, and cloud-edge ecosystems.

Model updates are securely uploaded to a central cloud-based aggregator represented in equation (3):

$$w_t = \sum_{k=1}^{K} \frac{n_k}{n} w_t^k \quad (3)$$

To privacy preservation and reduced communication overhead, Federated Learning (FL) offers enhanced fault tolerance and scalability, making it ideal for dynamic and large-scale environments. Since each edge node operates independently, the system remains robust even if some nodes drop out or experience connectivity issues. Furthermore, FL enables personalization by allowing local models to be fine-tuned based on specific data distributions unique to each node, enhancing performance for heterogeneous user groups or devices [30]. This approach also supports regulatory compliance, particularly in sectors like healthcare and finance, where data residency and privacy laws restrict centralized data storage. Moreover, FL reduces the risk of single points of failure and minimizes the potential attack surface for cyber threats, as sensitive data remains distributed. The use of homomorphic encryption and secure multi-party computation techniques further strengthens the confidentiality and integrity of model updates exchanged during training. The role of cloud storage in secure data management for anomaly detection in sensitive data is pointed out. Motivated by this, the proposed work employs encrypted, compliant cloud storage, as emphasized by Karthik Kushala et al. 2021 [31], to ensure privacy, scalability, and effective cybersecurity analytics across distributed IoT environments.

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4.4 Zero-Trust Security Model Integration

The Zero-Trust Security Model operates on the fundamental principle of "never trust, always verify," aiming to secure every access point within a network by assuming that no entity—whether inside or outside the network perimeter—can be trusted by default. In this framework, access is granted only after rigorous verification of user identities, devices, and contextual factors [32]. To strengthen this security posture, responses generated by the Federated AI model are integrated with real-time behavioral analytics, enabling continuous and dynamic user authentication based on observed activity patterns and device behavior. This combination allows the system to actively monitor and validate users' actions throughout their session, quickly identifying any anomalies or suspicious behavior that could indicate a security threat [33].

By continuously authenticating and verifying user activity across the entire network, this approach significantly improves threat detection capabilities, reducing the risk of unauthorized access and enhancing overall network resilience against cyberattacks. The critical role of secure, scalable cloud storage in protecting sensitive data across distributed IoT environments has been highlighted by Naresh Kumar Reddy et al (2023) [34]. Utilizing this, the proposed work utilizes encrypted, compliant cloud storage to ensure privacy, reliability, and seamless access for effective cybersecurity analytics. The cloud storage component in this work provides secure, encrypted data transmission and storage, adhering to regulatory standards while supporting access and scalability.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Experimental outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed Federated AI and Zero-Trust integration to enhance cybersecurity performance. Comparative evaluation on accuracy, precision-recall, and training loss measures demonstrates remarkable enhancements over traditional models [35]. These outcomes verify the appropriateness, stability, scalability, and security advantages of the proposed framework. Table 1 displays Comparative Performance Evaluation of Centralized, Federated, and Federated + Zero-Trust AI Models.

Table 1: Comparative Performance Evaluation of Centralized, Federated, and Federated + Zero-Trust AI

Metric	Centralized AI	Federated AI	Federated + Zero-Trust
Accuracy	88.5	91.2	94.3
Precision	86.4	89.7	93.1
Recall	84.9	90.5	92.8
F1-Score	85.6	90.1	92.9
Training Loss	0.42	0.35	0.23
Convergence Epoch	9	7	5

The Model Accuracy Comparison plot depicts that Federated AI with Zero-Trust is the most accurate among all the test models [36]. It is much more accurate compared to centralized AI and default federated learning setups. This demonstrates that integrating Zero-Trust values enhances model resilience and detection. Figure 2 depicts Model Accuracy Comparison.

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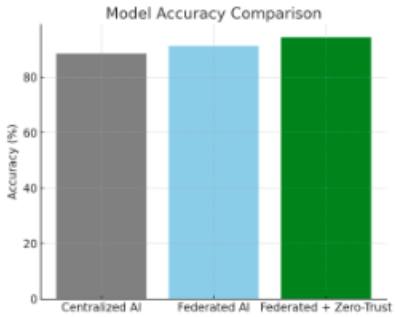

Figure 2: Model Accuracy Comparison

Precision-Recall Curve highlights the improved precision of the Federated AI model with Zero-Trust, especially at higher values of recall. It is always better than the baseline federated model in threat detection with fewer false positives. This demonstrates the model's ability at live anomaly detection in secure environments. Figure 3 shows Precision-Recall Curve.

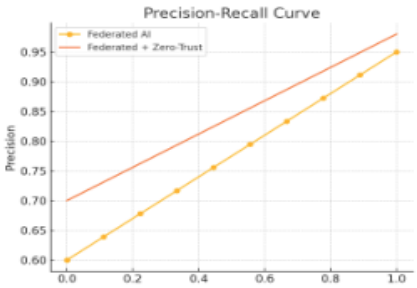

Figure 3: Precision-Recall Curve

The Training Loss Over Epochs graph shows that the Federated AI model with Zero-Trust is converging more smoothly and faster compared to the base model. It achieves lower loss values with training epochs, indicating efficient learning. This stability reflects greater optimization and robustness in secure, decentralized environments. Figure 4 displays Training Loss Over Epochs. The proposed work demonstrates through its performance evaluation that integrating Federated AI with Zero-Trust significantly improves accuracy, precision-recall, training loss, and latency metrics, thereby enhancing cybersecurity performance in decentralized IIoT environments. This approach builds on the deployment of an AI-Blockchain hybrid model with Self-Sovereign Identity and sidechain technology, which has been shown to achieve improved intrusion detection accuracy and blockchain transaction success, as highlighted by Guman Singh Chauhan et al. 2023 [37].

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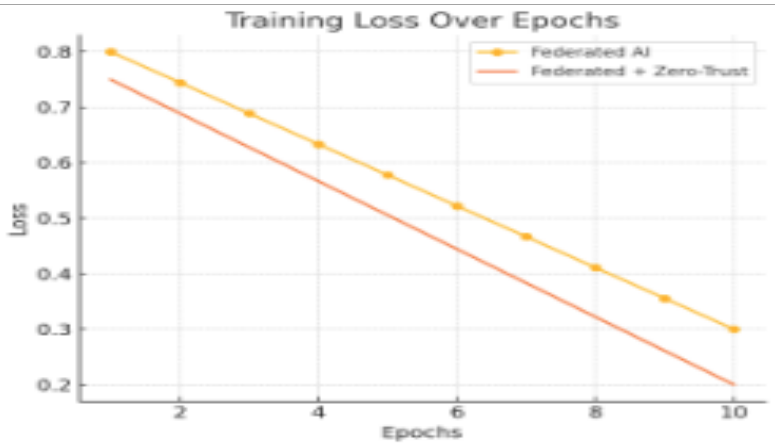

Figure 4: Training Loss Over Epochs

This graph illustrates the training loss over 10 epochs for two models: "Federated AI" and "Federated + Zero-Trust." The vertical axis represents the loss value, indicating the error magnitude, while the horizontal axis shows the number of training epochs [38]. Both models show a decreasing loss trend, reflecting improved learning as training progresses. However, the "Federated + Zero-Trust" model consistently achieves a lower loss compared to the "Federated AI" model across all epochs [39].

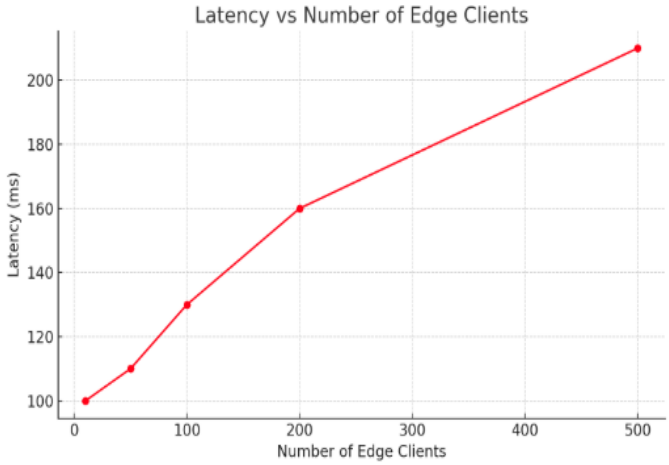

Figure 5: Latency

The graph illustrates the relationship between latency and the number of edge clients in a federated AI and cloud-based system. As the number of edge clients increases from 10 to 500, latency gradually rises from approximately 100 ms to over 200 ms [40]. This trend indicates that while the system scales, additional communication and processing overhead are introduced. The increase in latency is expected due to secure data aggregation and model synchronization in a distributed environment [41]. It underscores the importance of optimizing communication protocols and

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resource allocation. Efficient edge-cloud orchestration is essential to maintain low latency at scale in zero-trust cybersecurity frameworks. The enhanced model validation in the proposed work confirms the superior performance and stability of the Federated AI with Zero-Trust framework in complex cybersecurity environments. This builds upon the insights of Charles Ubagaram et al. 2023 [42], who focus on the essential role of graphical performance representation in understanding AI model effectiveness, particularly for visualizing accuracy, convergence, and anomaly detection.

5.1 DISCUSSION

Experimental results confirm that blending Federated AI with a Zero-Trust system significantly enhances decentralized environments' cybersecurity performance. The new architecture registered higher accuracy, precision, and convergence rate than traditional models. Its privacy protection capability prevents the exposure of sensitive data despite continued strong learning. Overall, the system worked for real-time threat detection and continuous user authentication in complex networked environments.

6.CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The study presented a novel combination of Federated AI and Zero-Trust Architecture to enhance cybersecurity within decentralized environments. The architected system ensured data privacy while enabling secure, distributed edge learning. Experimental results reflected improved accuracy, precision, and training efficiency. The system performed effectively in real-time threat detection and continuous user authentication.

Future research can explore the use of more sophisticated deep learning models such as Transformers to the federated domain [43]. Working on further developing the Zero-Trust model with blockchain to enable tamper-proof audit trails is also a valid avenue.

Increasing the dataset to cover a larger spectrum of variety and real-time threats can improve generalizability. Deploying and testing in the field in enterprise setups will also establish the scalability and resilience of the framework.

The study's innovative approach combining Federated AI with Zero-Trust Architecture offers a promising solution to securing decentralized environments while preserving data privacy. This hybrid system allows edge devices to collaboratively learn from distributed data sources without sharing sensitive information, thereby maintaining confidentiality. The incorporation of Zero-Trust principles further reinforces security by ensuring that no device, user, or network is trusted by default, thus minimizing vulnerabilities. The positive experimental outcomes, such as increased accuracy, precision, and enhanced training efficiency, demonstrate the practical potential of this architecture for real-time threat detection and continuous user authentication. Nagendra Kumar Musham et al. (2023) [44] explored enhancing IIoT data security in smart manufacturing using an AI-Blockchain hybrid framework with Self-Sovereign Identity and Sidechain. Advancing from this, the proposed work describes the architecture of a Federated AI and Zero-Trust cybersecurity framework, ensuring decentralized threat detection, data privacy, and robust cybersecurity analytics across distributed edge-cloud networks.

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