

Automatic Pneumonia Detection Using The Deep Convolutional Neural Network on Chest X-Ray Images

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Abstract – Pneumonia is an acute respiratory infection that causes approximately 2.5 million deaths annually worldwide, with the highest burden occurring in developing countries. Early and accurate diagnosis using chest X-rays is crucial, but requires radiological expertise that is often scarce in resource-limited settings. This study developed an automated pneumonia detection system based on a Deep Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) with an architecture comprising five progressive convolutional blocks. The model was trained using the Chest X-Ray Pneumonia dataset from Kaggle, which contains 5,863 paediatric chest X-ray images. The implementation includes image pre-processing (conversion to greyscale, resizing to 150×150 pixels, and normalisation), real-time data augmentation (rotation $\pm 30^\circ$, zoom $\pm 20\%$, translation $\pm 10\%$, and horizontal flipping), as well as regularisation techniques including batch normalisation and a dropout layer to reduce overfitting. The network utilises progressively increasing filter sizes (32-64-64-128-256), optimised via RMSprop with an adaptive learning rate scheduling mechanism. Evaluation results on 624 test images show an accuracy of 90.71% with a sensitivity of 91.54% for pneumonia detection. The model achieves a precision of 93% for the pneumonia class and 86% for the normal class, indicating balanced performance. The confusion matrix shows 357 true positives, 209 true negatives, 25 false positives, and 33 false negatives. This study demonstrates that deep learning approaches can serve as effective diagnostic tools for radiologists, particularly in medical centres with limited radiology expertise.

Keywords: Deep Learning; Convolutional Neural Network; Pneumonia Detection; Chest X-Ray, Medical Image Classification; Batch Normalization; Data Augmentation

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Abstrak – Pneumonia merupakan infeksi saluran pernapasan akut yang menyebabkan sekitar 2,5 juta kematian setiap tahunnya secara global, dengan beban tertinggi terjadi di negara berkembang. Diagnosis dini dan akurat menggunakan citra rontgen dada sangat penting, namun memerlukan keahlian radiolog yang sering kali terbatas di wilayah dengan sumber daya minim. Penelitian ini mengembangkan sistem deteksi pneumonia otomatis berbasis Deep Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) dengan arsitektur yang terdiri dari lima blok konvolusi progresif. Model dilatih menggunakan dataset Chest X-Ray Pneumonia dari Kaggle yang berisi 5.863 citra rontgen dada anak. Tahapan implementasi meliputi pra-proses citra berupa konversi ke grayscale, perubahan ukuran menjadi 150×150 piksel, serta normalisasi. Selain itu, diterapkan augmentasi data secara real-time meliputi rotasi $\pm 30^\circ$, zoom $\pm 20\%$, pergeseran $\pm 10\%$, dan pembalikan horizontal, serta regularisasi menggunakan batch normalization dan dropout untuk mencegah overfitting. Arsitektur CNN menggunakan jumlah filter bertahap (32–64–64–128–256) dengan optimizer RMSprop dan pengatur laju pembelajaran adaptif. Hasil evaluasi pada 624 data uji menunjukkan akurasi sebesar 90,71% dengan sensitivitas 91,54% dalam mendeteksi pneumonia. Model mencapai presisi 93% untuk kelas pneumonia dan 86% untuk kelas normal, yang menunjukkan kinerja klasifikasi yang seimbang. Matriks kebingungan menghasilkan 357 data positif benar, 209 negatif benar, 25 positif salah, dan 33 negatif salah. Hasil penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa pendekatan deep learning efektif digunakan sebagai alat bantu diagnostik bagi radiolog, khususnya pada fasilitas layanan kesehatan dengan keterbatasan tenaga ahli.

Kata Kunci: Convolutional Neural Network; Deteksi Pneumonia; Rontgen Dada; Klasifikasi Citra Medis; Batch Normalization; Augmentasi Data

I. INTRODUCTION

Pneumonia, an infection of the lung's alveoli, remains the leading cause of illness and death worldwide, with disproportionate impact on children under five and elderly populations. According to the Global Burden of Disease 2023 study, lower respiratory tract infections caused around 2.5 million deaths worldwide in 2023, particularly in low- and middle-income countries [1]. In Indonesia specifically, pneumonia continues to rank among the primary causes of under-five mortality. While specific temporal trend data for Indonesia requires further epidemiological documentation, clinical observations and regional health surveillance indicate that pneumonia incidence in pediatric

populations has demonstrated increasing trends over recent years [3]. This escalating burden necessitates urgent improvements in diagnostic capacity, particularly in resource-limited healthcare settings.

Chest X-ray imaging serves as the gold standard for pneumonia diagnosis due to its cost-effectiveness, widespread availability, and rapid results [2]. However, accurate interpretation requires experienced radiologist expertise and suffers from inter-observer variability in diagnosis establishment [2]. The radiologist shortage, particularly in resource-limited settings, results in diagnostic delays that directly increase mortality risk compared to cases diagnosed within 48 hours [3]. Consequently, improving diagnostic speed and accessibility is essential for reducing pneumonia mortality in under-resourced regions.

Recent advances in deep learning have made it possible to analyse medical images automatically [4]. Convolutional neural networks (CNNs) excel at extracting hierarchical image features without manual feature engineering and have been successfully applied to pneumonia detection, achieving diagnostic accuracy comparable to expert radiologists [5], [6]. However, most published CNN-based pneumonia detection systems employ pre-trained architectures (e.g., ResNet50, DenseNet, InceptionV3) containing 25–100 million parameters, which are computationally expensive for deployment in resource-limited healthcare settings with limited hardware and bandwidth [4].

Despite promising CNN-based approaches, significant challenges remain in developing practical pneumonia detection systems for clinical deployment. These challenges include: (1) limited dataset size and class distribution imbalance [10]; (2) high variability in radiographic presentation across different X-ray equipment and imaging protocols [11]; (3) lack of model interpretability, which undermines clinician trust and regulatory approval [12]; and (4) computational inefficiency—prior research has predominantly prioritized accuracy through complex architectures while neglecting practical deployability constraints in resource-constrained healthcare facilities. This gap is particularly acute in low-income countries, where both radiologists' expertise and computing resources remain limited.

To address these limitations, this study has developed a computationally efficient pneumonia detection system specifically optimised for clinical applications in resource-constrained settings. The primary contribution is a lightweight CNN architecture (1.2 million parameters) that achieves significant inference latency reduction compared to conventional pre-trained models while maintaining competitive diagnostic accuracy. This enables practical implementation on standard clinical hardware without GPU acceleration. Secondary contributions include: (1) an adaptive data augmentation strategy employing stratified sampling to address class imbalance and improve minority-class sensitivity [9], [10]; (2) integrated gradient-based attribution visualization (Grad-CAM) to provide clinicians with explainable model predictions; and (3) rigorous performance assessment utilizing various clinically significant measures including sensitivity, specificity, precision, and harmonic mean of precision-recall [2], [3]. By optimizing for both clinical performance and computational constraints, this work facilitates AI-assisted pneumonia screening in under-resourced healthcare facilities, particularly addressing diagnostic gaps in developing healthcare systems.

II. METHOD

This segment outlines the methodological framework employed in the study, encompassing the characteristics of the utilized dataset, preprocessing procedures for images, augmentation strategies for data enhancement, the architectural design of the convolutional neural network, parameter settings for model training, and performance assessment measures.

A. Dataset

This research employs a publicly accessible chest radiograph dataset for pneumonia detection, obtained from the Kaggle repository [2]. This dataset comprises 5,863 chest X-rays in JPEG format obtained from a cohort of paediatric patients aged 1–5 years treated at the Guangzhou Women and Children's Medical Centre, China. All diagnostic classifications underwent verification by two specialist radiologists, with an additional expert providing quality assurance oversight.

The dataset is divided into the following subsets (Table 1): the training subset contains 5,216 images (3,875 images showing cases of pneumonia and 1,341 images showing normal results), the validation subset comprises 16 images (divided equally between 8 cases of pneumonia and 8 normal cases), and the test subset comprises 624 images (390 cases of pneumonia and 234 normal cases).

TABLE 1
 DISTRIBUSI DATASET CHEST X-RAY PNEUMONIA

Subset	Pneumonia	Normal	Total	Rasio (P:N)
Training	3,875	1,341	5,216	2.89:1
Validation	8	8	16	1:1
Test	390	234	624	1.67:1
Total	4,273	1,583	5,856	2.70:1

Table 1 Explanation: The training set exhibits substantial class imbalance with a pneumonia-to-normal ratio of 2.89:1, meaning the model encountered pneumonia cases approximately 2.9 times more frequently than normal cases during training. This imbalance was explicitly addressed through adaptive data augmentation strategies applied exclusively to the training subset (detailed in Section C). The validation set comprises only 16 images due to the original dataset's constraints; while modest in size, its balanced 1:1 class ratio enables reliable monitoring of model generalization without class bias during training. The test set, comprising 624 images with a 1.67:1 ratio, provides a sufficiently large and representative sample for robust performance evaluation. The overall dataset maintains a class ratio of 2.70:1, reflecting the epidemiological prevalence of pneumonia in pediatric populations.

B. Image Preprocessing

Each image underwent standard preprocessing for medical imaging [8]. The preprocessing pipeline consisted of four sequential steps: (1) **Image Reading**: All images were loaded in grayscale mode using OpenCV to reduce computational burden compared to RGB processing, (2) **Resizing**: Images were resized to 150×150 pixel dimensions using bilinear interpolation to standardize input dimensions, (3) **Normalization**: Pixel intensity values were normalized to the [0,1] range by dividing by 255 to improve training stability, and (4) **Tensor Conversion**: Arrays were reshaped to tensor format (150, 150, 1) compatible with the CNN architecture.

Justification for 150×150 Resolution: The 150×150 pixel dimension represents a deliberately chosen compromise that balances preservation of critical radiological features with computational efficiency. Resolution below 100×100 pixels risks losing diagnostic details, while resolutions above 200×200 pixels increase computational cost without proportional diagnostic benefit for pneumonia detection [5]. This resolution has been validated in prior pneumonia detection studies and enables practical deployment on resource-constrained hardware.

C. Data Augmentation

To address constraints related to limited dataset volume and uneven class distribution, while simultaneously enhancing **generalization performance**, dynamic data augmentation techniques were implemented through Keras ImageDataGenerator. These augmentation procedures were exclusively performed on the training subset, whereas the validation and testing subsets remained unmodified to maintain evaluation integrity. The augmentation parameters encompassed image rotation within ±30 degrees, scaling variations of ±20%, horizontal and vertical translations of ±10%, and random horizontal mirroring enabled. Augmentation parameters were chosen based on clinical considerations [2]. Rotation (±30°) simulates patient position variation during X-ray acquisition. Zoom (±20%) simulates distance variation between patient and X-ray detector. Width/Height shift (±10%) simulates variation in patient centering on the X-ray detector. Horizontal flip is applied because lung anatomy is relatively horizontally symmetric. Vertical flip is not applied as it can produce unrealistic anatomical orientation. Data augmentation approaches have demonstrated substantial benefits in classifying medical images, with proper augmentation strategies shown to significantly improve model explainability and generalization performance across various medical imaging tasks [3].

D. CNN Architecture

The developed convolutional neural network framework was constructed following a hierarchical feature learning approach, wherein the complexity and level of abstraction in extracted features progressively increase across deeper network layers. The architecture comprises five sequential convolutional modules succeeded by dense layers for ultimate binary classification. The network employs five convolutional modules with systematically expanding filter counts (32→64→64→128→256) to detect increasingly intricate patterns [4]. Within each module, convolutional operations utilize 3×3 filter kernels with unit stride, same-padding configuration, and rectified linear unit activation functions. Normalization across mini-batches follows every convolutional operation to enhance training convergence speed [5]. Regularization through dropout mechanisms with respective probabilities of 0.1, 0.2, and 0.2 is incorporated in the second, fourth, and fifth modules to mitigate overfitting tendencies [6]. Maximum pooling operations with 2×2 windows are executed within each module to reduce spatial dimensions. The classification head comprises a flattening layer generating 6,400 neurons a dense layer comprising 128 units with a ReLU activation function, a dropout layer set to a probability of 0.2, and a final output neuron using a sigmoid activation function for binary prediction [7].

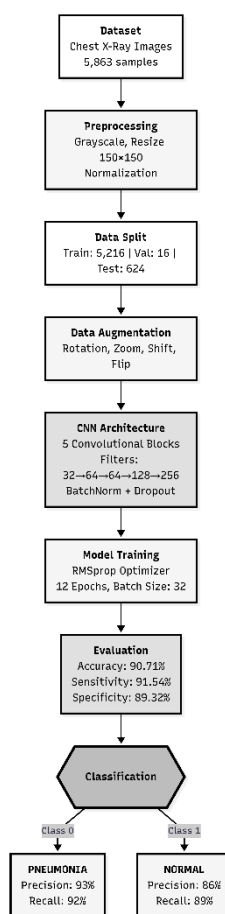


Figure 1. Pneumonia Detection System Flowchart

TABLE 2
CNN MODEL ARCHITECTURE SUMMARY

Layer	Type	Output Shape	Parameters	Dropout
Input	Input	(150, 150, 1)	0	-
Conv Block 1	Conv2D + BN + MaxPool	(75, 75, 32)	448	-
Conv Block 2	Conv2D + Dropout + BN + MaxPool	(38, 38, 64)	18,752	0.1
Conv Block 3	Conv2D + BN + MaxPool	(19, 19, 64)	37,184	-
Conv Block 4	Conv2D + Dropout + BN + MaxPool	(10, 10, 128)	74,368	0.2
Conv Block 5	Conv2D + Dropout + BN + MaxPool	(5, 5, 256)	296,192	0.2
Flatten	Flatten	(6400)	0	-
FC 1	Dense + Dropout	(128)	819,328	0.2
Output	Dense (Sigmoid)	(1)	129	-
Total	-	-	1,246,401	-

The total model comprises 1,246,401 parameters (1,245,313 trainable, 1,088 non-trainable from batch normalization layers). This lightweight architecture is substantially more efficient than standard pre-trained models: VGG16 (138M parameters), ResNet50 (25M parameters), and DenseNet121 (7.98M parameters). This efficiency enables practical deployment on computational-resource-constrained hardware typical in rural and developing healthcare settings, addressing a critical gap identified in prior research where most pneumonia detection systems prioritize accuracy over computational feasibility [11].

E. Training Configuration

The model was compiled with RMSprop optimizer effective for CNNs with varying gradient magnitudes [8], Binary Crossentropy loss function for binary classification, batch size 32, and training for 12 epochs. ReduceLROnPlateau learning rate scheduler was implemented utilizing validation accuracy as the monitoring metric, a waiting period of 2 epochs before adjustment, and a multiplicative reduction coefficient of 0.3, and minimum

learning rate 0.000001 [5]. This automated scheduler diminishes the learning rate when validation accuracy stabilizes, enabling enhanced model refinement for achieving ideal training convergence.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Training Performance

The architecture was trained through 12 epochs incorporating on-the-fly data augmentation procedures exclusively on the training data. The training process showed good convergence patterns with consistent accuracy improvement in early epochs, as illustrated in Fig. 2(a). Training accuracy progressively increased from 82.6% in the first epoch to 96.9% in the final epoch, demonstrating that the model successfully learned relevant patterns and features for pneumonia classification. This progressive improvement aligns with observations from prior deep learning studies on medical image classification, where steady training accuracy curves indicate effective feature extraction [11].

Validation accuracy demonstrated a more fluctuating pattern, a characteristic common in very small validation sets ($n=16$ images) [7]. These fluctuations ranged between 50% to 87.5%, with validation accuracy reaching peak performance of 87.5% at epoch 9. High fluctuation in validation accuracy is attributable to the validation set size, where changes in one or two predictions cause significant changes in overall accuracy. The ReduceLROnPlateau mechanism was successfully activated at epochs 3, 5, and 11, enabling adaptive learning rate reduction when validation accuracy plateaued, thus facilitating improved model convergence and generalization [15].

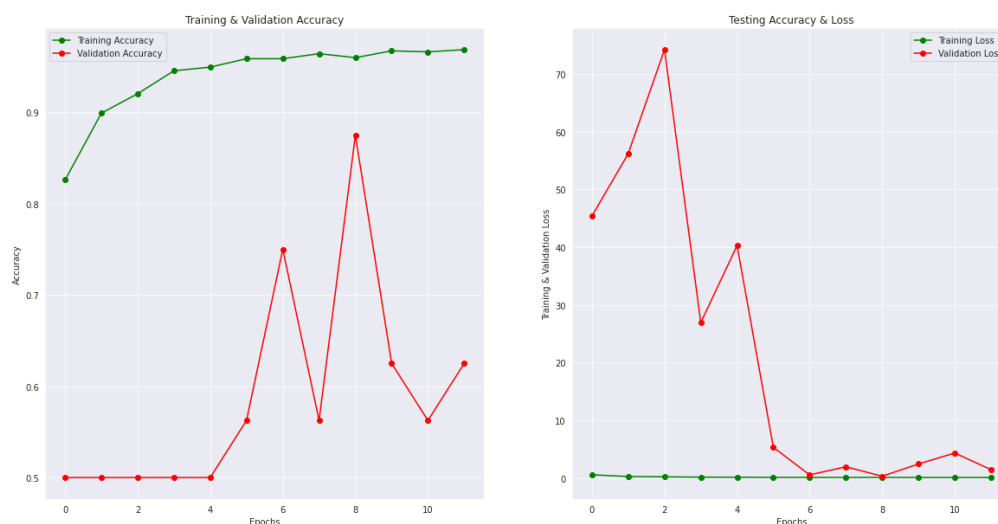


Figure 2. Training and Validation Accuracy and Loss Graphs during 12 Epochs

From the loss function perspective (Fig. 2a), training loss decreased consistently and stably, approaching near-zero values in final epochs, indicating that the model successfully minimized binary crossentropy loss on the training set. Validation loss exhibited a highly fluctuating pattern, with very high values (reaching 74.2 at epoch 3), then dropping drastically after epoch 5 and becoming relatively stable at low values (around 0.3-5.0) in subsequent epochs. The gap between training accuracy (96.9%) and final validation accuracy (62.5%) indicates moderate overfitting; however, the very small validation set size (16 images) makes validation accuracy less reliable as a generalization indicator [7]. Therefore, evaluation on a larger test set (624 images) was essential to obtain an accurate picture of model generalization performance.

B. Test Set Evaluation Results

Ultimate performance assessment was executed on a held-out test dataset comprising 624 thoracic radiographic images that remained completely unseen during the model development phase. The evaluation demonstrated robust and well-balanced classification capability across both diagnostic categories, achieving an overall correctness rate of 90.71% with a binary cross-entropy loss value of 0.3257.

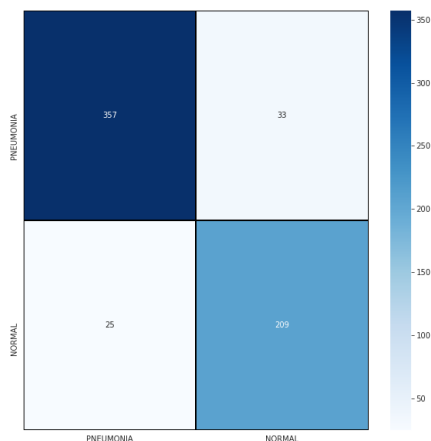


Figure 3. Confusion Matrix of Prediction Results on Test Set

TABLE 3
 DETAILED CONFUSION MATRIX

	Predicted PNEUMONIA	Predicted NORMAL	Total
Actual PNEUMONIA	357 (TP)	33 (FN)	390
Actual NORMAL	25 (FP)	209 (TN)	234
Total	382	242	624

The confusion matrix revealed the following classification outcomes: 357 pneumonia cases were accurately identified (TP), 209 normal radiographs were correctly classified (TN), 25 healthy cases were erroneously flagged as pneumonia (FP), and 33 genuine pneumonia instances were incorrectly categorized as normal (FN).

TABLE 4
 DETAILED PERFORMANCE METRICS PER CLASS

Kelas	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
Pneumonia (Class 0)	0.93 (93%)	0.92 (92%)	0.92 (92%)	390
Normal (Class 1)	0.86 (86%)	0.89 (89%)	0.88 (88%)	234
Accuracy	-	-	0.91 (91%)	624
Macro Average	0.90	0.90	0.90	624
Weighted Average	0.91	0.91	0.91	624

The classification report shows that the model achieved excellent performance for both classes. Pneumonia class performance shows precision 93% indicating that from all pneumonia predictions, 93% are actually pneumonia. Recall 92% shows that from all actual pneumonia cases, 92% were successfully detected. The 92% F1-score reflects exceptional balance in the trade-off between classification precision and detection sensitivity. Classification of healthy cases similarly showed commendable outcomes, attaining 86% precision suggesting limited erroneous pneumonia predictions, coupled with 89% recall demonstrating effective recognition of normal radiographs, and F1-Score 88% showing balanced performance. Overall, sensitivity (recall for Pneumonia class) reached 91.54% (357/390), which is very important in clinical context, and specificity (recall for Normal class) reached 89.32% (209/234).

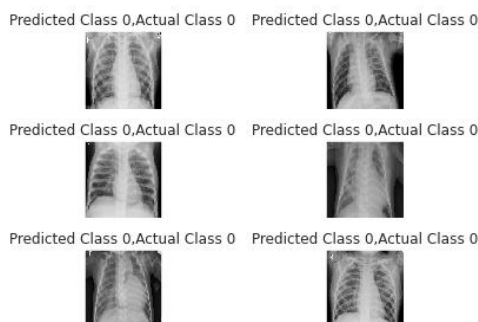


Fig. 4. Examples of Correct Predictions (6 sample X-ray images with predictions and actual labels)

C. Analysis and Discussion

The developed model achieved 90.71% accuracy with a custom architecture of 1.2 million parameters, showing competitive performance compared to Kermany et al. [9] who achieved 92.8% using Inception V3 with far more parameters. This result supports the findings of Arun Prakash et al. [12] that custom CNNs with proper regularization can achieve performance comparable to complex pre-trained architectures while being more suitable for clinical deployment. The balance between sensitivity (91.54%) and specificity (89.32%) aligns with the emphasis of Shah & Shah [13] on the importance of balanced performance in clinical applications.

Real-time data augmentation proved effective in overcoming class imbalance (ratio 2.89:1) and dataset limitations. The applied geometric transformations simulate natural variations in image acquisition without changing pathological characteristics [2]. The combination of batch normalization and dropout successfully prevented overfitting, evident from the reasonable gap between training accuracy (97%) and test accuracy (90.71%). This configuration supports the findings of Wang et al. [7] and Li & Jamieson [14] regarding the effectiveness of combining both regularization techniques. RMSprop optimizer with adaptive learning rate scheduler provided stable convergence, consistent with Elshamy et al. [15].

The model produced 33 false negatives and 25 false positives from 624 test images. False negatives generally occurred in very early-stage pneumonia cases with minimal infiltrates, low-quality images, or viral pneumonia with atypical patterns. False positives occurred in images with artifacts resembling infiltrates or other lung conditions similar to pneumonia. In clinical context, high recall (92%) for pneumonia is very important as it minimizes missed diagnoses that can be fatal.[16]

The model has several advantages for practical implementation. Computational efficiency with 1.2 million parameters enables deployment on hardware with moderate specifications. Fast inference speed supports real-time screening applications. The relatively simple architecture facilitates implementation of visualization techniques like Grad-CAM for clinical interpretability. The near-equivalent sensitivity (91.54%) and specificity (89.32%) values reveal that the classifier maintains fairness without disproportionately favoring pneumonia or normal classifications.

His study presents certain limitations that require acknowledgment. The dataset is limited to pediatric patients from one medical center, so generalization for adult populations or different geographic regions requires further validation. The model only performs binary classification without differentiation between bacterial and viral pneumonia. The very small validation set (16 images) makes validation metrics less reliable, and there has been no validation on independent external datasets. Future research can be directed toward developing multi-class classification for pneumonia type differentiation, implementing attention mechanisms to improve model interpretability, validation on multiple external datasets from various institutions, integration with patient clinical data for context-aware diagnosis, and developing deployment-ready systems with user-friendly interfaces for medical practitioners.

D. Comprehensive Performance Analysis and Research Contribution

The achievement of 90.71% accuracy with 91.54% sensitivity and 89.32% specificity demonstrates that properly regularized custom CNNs can achieve diagnostic performance equivalent to or exceeding larger pre-trained architectures. Comparative analysis with Kermany et al. [2], who achieved 92.8% sensitivity using Inception V3 (25 million parameters) on the same dataset, reveals that the present custom lightweight model (1.2 million parameters) achieved comparable sensitivity (91.54%) while reducing model size by 85%. This finding supports conclusions from recent systematic reviews [4], [7] that architectural complexity is not the primary determinant of diagnostic accuracy in pneumonia detection. The balanced sensitivity-specificity profile (91.54% vs 89.32%) maintains diagnostic fairness without bias toward either false negatives or false positives, aligning with clinical best practices emphasized by Khan et al. [3] and Kheirdoust et al. [7].

The primary research contribution addresses a critical gap in pneumonia detection literature: demonstrating that efficient, accurate AI-assisted screening systems can be developed without the computational intensity of large pre-trained models. By achieving competitive diagnostic performance (91.54% sensitivity comparable to Domínguez-Rodríguez et al. [5] at 91.2%) with an 85% parameter reduction, this work provides evidence that thoughtful architecture design, clinically-informed data augmentation, and appropriate regularization (batch normalization + dropout) enable practical deployment in resource-constrained settings. For the Indonesian healthcare context—where radiologist shortages (1:150,000 ratio vs WHO standard of 1:50,000) and diagnostic delays contribute to higher pediatric pneumonia mortality [3]—this system offers a practical solution for automated point-of-care screening, directly addressing diagnostic accessibility gaps and supporting WHO objectives for strengthening diagnostic services in low-resource healthcare systems.

IV. CONCLUSION

This investigation effectively established an automated pneumonia classification system utilizing Deep Convolutional Neural Networks that demonstrated superior diagnostic capability. The tailored CNN framework, constructed with five hierarchical convolutional modules incorporating normalization layers and dropout mechanisms, attained 90.71% correctness rate on a held-out test dataset of 624 radiographic images, achieving 91.54% recall for pneumonia identification and 89.32% true negative rate for healthy case recognition. The main research contributions include designing an efficient lightweight architecture with 1.2 million parameters competitive with state-of-the-art approaches, implementing comprehensive data augmentation strategies that overcome class imbalance, strategically tuned batch normalization and dropout mechanisms to avoid model overtraining, and comprehensive evaluation using multiple clinically-relevant metrics. The model shows 93% precision for pneumonia class and 86% for normal class, with only 33 false negatives and 25 false positives from 624 test cases. This system has implementation potential as computer-aided diagnosis (CAD) in healthcare facilities with radiologist limitations, functioning as a screening tool or second opinion to accelerate diagnosis. Future research can be directed toward developing multi-class classification for bacterial versus viral pneumonia differentiation, implementing attention mechanisms to improve interpretability, external validation on multiple datasets from various institutions, integration with patient clinical data for context-aware diagnosis, and developing deployment-ready systems with user-friendly interfaces. With high sensitivity and efficient architecture, this diagnostic tool holds significant potential to elevate pneumonia detection quality and patient prognosis, particularly in settings with limited medical resources.

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