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Impact of Edge Computing on IoT Device Latency and Data Processing Efficiency in Healthcare Systems in United States

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this article was to analyze impact of edge computing on IoT device latency and data processing efficiency in healthcare systems in United States.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: Edge computing has improved IoT device latency and data processing efficiency in U.S. healthcare systems by processing data locally, reducing transmission time and enabling faster decision-making. This results in up to a 50% reduction in latency, enhancing real-time monitoring and enabling quicker interventions. It also optimizes bandwidth and reduces server load, leading to more efficient patient monitoring and faster diagnoses, ultimately improving healthcare outcomes.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Technology acceptance model (TAM), diffusion of innovations theory & systems theory may be used to anchor future studies on the impact of edge computing on IoT device latency and data processing efficiency in healthcare systems in United States. Healthcare providers in remote or low-resource settings should prioritize adopting edge computing technology to overcome latency issues associated with cloud-based systems. Governments and healthcare regulators should create policies that incentivize the adoption of edge computing technologies in healthcare systems.

Keywords*:* *Edge Computing, Device Latency, Data Processing Efficiency, Healthcare Systems*

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INTRODUCTION

Data processing efficiency and latency refer to the speed at which healthcare systems process real-time data from various devices and sensors, particularly in settings where immediate action is required, such as emergency departments or intensive care units. This metric is crucial for ensuring timely decision-making, especially in life-critical situations where delays in processing may lead to negative outcomes. For example, the speed of data analysis directly impacts the accuracy of diagnoses, as real-time information must be processed without significant delay. Latency also affects the system's responsiveness whether medical staff can access updated patient data without waiting for long intervals. A well-optimized system with minimal latency enhances healthcare delivery by providing clinicians with quick access to accurate information, improving overall patient outcomes. In developed economies like the USA, the use of advanced technologies such as edge computing and AI in healthcare systems has shown significant improvements in data processing efficiency. For instance, in 2020, the implementation of AI tools in US hospitals resulted in a 30% reduction in diagnostic error rates, while processing time for imaging data decreased by 25% (Smith, 2020). Additionally, Japan's healthcare systems, which integrate AI with IoT devices, have reduced data latency by over 50% in critical care units, resulting in faster patient monitoring and diagnosis (Yamada, 2021). These innovations have streamlined healthcare processes, leading to quicker response times and higher diagnostic accuracy. Such advancements demonstrate how technological integration can substantially lower latency while improving processing efficiency in developed economies.

In developing economies, data processing efficiency and latency still face challenges, mainly due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of skilled personnel, and limited access to advanced technologies. However, countries like India and Brazil are making significant strides in overcoming these challenges. For example, in India, the adoption of mobile health (mHealth) applications has enabled doctors to access patient data faster, reducing the latency of diagnoses in rural areas by up to 40% (Patel, 2020). Furthermore, Brazil's government-funded program, "Telessaúde Brasil", integrates telemedicine systems that have improved data processing times for remote consultations, cutting down waiting times by nearly 50% (da Silva, 2019). These improvements are helping to enhance healthcare delivery in rural and underserved regions of developing countries by ensuring that patients receive quicker, more accurate diagnoses, despite limited resources. Despite these advances, challenges in data processing efficiency and latency persist in these regions due to infrastructure limitations and limited network coverage. In Brazil, for example, while there have been significant improvements in telemedicine, healthcare providers in remote areas still experience system downtimes, which increase processing times. As a result, delays in treatment are more likely, and diagnostic errors remain a concern. Nevertheless, the integration of cloud-based platforms and the expansion of broadband networks are gradually addressing these latency issues, offering hope for further improvements in the future.

In Sub-Saharan economies, the healthcare systems face more acute challenges regarding data processing efficiency and latency due to poor internet infrastructure, limited access to healthcare technologies, and the lack of standardization in healthcare data. Nevertheless, countries like Kenya and Nigeria are exploring innovative ways to address these issues by implementing low-cost technologies that can facilitate faster data processing. For example, in Kenya, the "M-TIBA" mobile health platform, which allows patients to access healthcare funds and services, has improved data processing efficiency by enabling immediate access to patient data through mobile

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phones, despite having a low-cost infrastructure (Ouma, 2021). In Nigeria, the use of mobile health systems has decreased diagnostic waiting times by 20% in urban areas, although rural areas still face significant challenges (Adebayo et al., 2020). Despite these positive trends, the overall data latency in Sub-Saharan Africa remains high, mainly due to sporadic electricity supply and slow internet connectivity. To improve these systems further, collaborations with international organizations and non-governmental agencies are helping build the necessary infrastructure. However, the high costs associated with implementing advanced technologies like cloud computing and AI limit their reach in the region. As Sub-Saharan countries adopt more mobile-based health platforms, data latency is expected to decrease gradually, but challenges related to poor bandwidth and system integration must be addressed to ensure sustained improvements. These technological interventions, while small in scale compared to those in developed nations, are showing promising results in improving healthcare access and diagnostic efficiency.

The integration of edge computing with Internet of Things (IoT) devices in healthcare systems is revolutionizing the way medical data is collected, processed, and analyzed. Edge computing allows data to be processed closer to the source at the edge of the network reducing the need for data to travel long distances to centralized cloud servers. This is particularly crucial in healthcare settings where real-time data analysis, accuracy of diagnoses, and system responsiveness are critical for patient outcomes. By leveraging edge computing, IoT devices, such as wearable health monitors, smart sensors, and diagnostic tools, can instantly process and analyze data, which reduces latency and enhances the speed of decision-making. The real-time processing capabilities improve not only the accuracy of diagnoses but also the speed at which healthcare providers can respond to critical situations (Bonomi, 2014).

Four key integrations of edge computing with IoT devices in healthcare systems are: Real-time patient monitoring, where IoT devices continuously gather data on vital signs and edge computing enables immediate analysis, reducing latency and improving response times;Predictive analytics for early disease detection, where edge computing analyzes data from sensors to predict health events like heart attacks or diabetic crises, enabling faster intervention; Smart wearables for chronic disease management, which allow continuous data collection from patients, analyzed at the edge for quicker adjustment of treatments; and Remote surgeries and telemedicine that depend on real-time data and minimal delay for accuracy in diagnoses and treatment plans. These integrations all contribute to better data processing efficiency and decreased latency, ultimately leading to improved patient care and outcomes (Yao , 2019).

Problem Statement

The integration of edge computing with Internet of Things (IoT) devices in healthcare systems is increasingly seen as a potential solution to the challenges posed by latency and inefficient data processing. In healthcare, real-time monitoring and timely data analysis are critical for accurate diagnoses, effective treatment decisions, and improved patient outcomes. However, traditional cloud-based systems often face significant latency issues, as data must travel long distances for processing, which can delay medical decisions and reduce the quality of care (Yao, 2019). With the growing use of IoT devices in healthcare for continuous patient monitoring, there is an urgent need for systems that can process data faster, without compromising accuracy. Despite the promise of edge computing to address these issues, its full impact on IoT device latency and overall data processing efficiency in healthcare remains underexplored, particularly in real-world healthcare environments where immediate responses are essential (Bonomi, 2014). Therefore, understanding how edge computing can enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of IoT devices is crucial for advancing healthcare technologies that require real-time data processing.

Theoretical Review

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The technology acceptance model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), focuses on understanding how users come to accept and use new technologies. It posits that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are the two primary factors that determine technology adoption. In the context of edge computing and IoT in healthcare, TAM is relevant because it can help explain healthcare professionals' acceptance of edge computing technologies and how they perceive its utility in reducing latency and enhancing data processing efficiency. As healthcare systems implement edge computing for real-time monitoring and diagnostics, understanding the factors that influence adoption such as the perceived benefits of reduced response times—becomes essential (Venkatesh, 2020).

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Everett rogers' diffusion of innovations theory (1962) explains how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread within a society. The theory categorizes individuals based on their willingness to adopt innovations (innovators, early adopters, etc.). This theory is relevant for understanding how edge computing and IoT adoption will unfold in healthcare systems, particularly regarding how quickly healthcare professionals and institutions embrace these technologies to improve data processing efficiency. The theory can also help identify barriers to adoption, such as resistance to change or concerns over data security and privacy (Frambach & Schillewaert, 2018).

Systems Theory

Systems theory, primarily attributed to Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968), emphasizes the interdependence of various components within a system. In healthcare, this theory highlights how IoT devices, edge computing, and healthcare systems work as interconnected entities, where the efficiency of one component impacts the whole system. In the context of edge computing, this theory can help understand how latency issues in data processing affect healthcare outcomes and how real-time data analysis can improve the system's overall functionality. It supports the idea that optimizing edge computing within IoT networks enhances not just individual device performance, but the entire healthcare delivery system (Zhou, 2019).

Empirical Review

Yao (2019) conducted an empirical study on the impact of edge computing on IoT devices in healthcare systems with a focus on reducing data processing latency. The purpose of the study was to assess how edge computing technologies could enhance the real-time processing of data generated by IoT healthcare devices, particularly wearable health monitors. The researchers used a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative measurements of system performance with qualitative interviews from healthcare professionals. The study found that when edge computing was integrated, there was a 40% reduction in latency for critical health monitoring applications, such as heart rate and blood pressure monitoring. This reduction was especially notable in emergency care settings, where real-time decision-making is crucial. Furthermore, the study revealed that edge computing enabled more accurate real-time data analysis, which led to faster medical responses and improved patient outcomes. The findings suggest that integrating edge computing with IoT devices could reduce delays in the transmission and processing of health data, enabling clinicians to make quicker and more informed decisions. Additionally, Yao recommended that healthcare systems consider adopting edge computing to address issues of scalability and bandwidth limitations commonly faced by cloud-based solutions. The researchers also proposed the use of hybrid edge-cloud architectures for larger healthcare networks to balance efficiency with flexibility. One key takeaway was that integrating edge computing allowed for distributed processing, which not only reduced latency but also improved the reliability of healthcare systems during high-demand periods. The study emphasized the importance of real-time data accessibility in improving the efficiency of telemedicine and remote health monitoring. In conclusion, Yao advocated for the wider adoption of edge computing in healthcare to enhance data processing speed and overall system responsiveness. The study's methodology, findings, and recommendations contribute valuable insights into the growing intersection of healthcare, IoT, and edge computing technologies.

Bonomi (2014) explored the role of edge computing in reducing latency in healthcare systems, particularly in emergency care settings. The purpose of this empirical study was to examine how edge computing could minimize the delays associated with cloud-based systems, where latency could be a critical factor in patient care. The study employed a quantitative methodology, measuring the time required for real-time processing and data transmission in a simulated emergency healthcare environment. The findings indicated that edge computing reduced the time for data processing by up to 50%, providing immediate access to critical health information. This improvement was crucial in environments like emergency rooms (ERs), where immediate access to patient data can significantly impact treatment outcomes. The study also highlighted the importance of processing data locally, closer to where the IoT devices were located, as it minimized the need for data transmission to a central cloud server. This distributed processing not only reduced latency but also enhanced system reliability, ensuring that data could be accessed even during network outages or high traffic conditions. Bonomi recommended the adoption of edge computing in ERs and intensive care units (ICUs) to ensure timely data availability and improve healthcare decision-making. They suggested that hospitals and healthcare providers should implement fog computing, a form of edge computing, to process sensitive health data in real-time. Additionally, the researchers proposed that healthcare systems should adopt scalable edge computing frameworks that could be expanded as patient needs grew. In conclusion, Bonomi emphasized that integrating edge computing into healthcare systems could offer substantial improvements in data processing speed and reduce latency, ultimately enhancing the overall patient experience in critical care environments.

Zhou (2019) conducted a study on the implementation of edge computing in healthcare IoT networks with a particular focus on the impact on latency and data processing efficiency. The study aimed to explore how edge computing could optimize the real-time processing of health data generated by IoT devices, such as smart wearables and sensors. Using a simulation approach, the researchers modeled various healthcare scenarios, including remote patient monitoring, to measure the latency reduction and efficiency improvements that could be achieved through edge computing. Their findings showed that edge computing could reduce data processing latency by 35%, particularly in situations where real-time monitoring was critical, such as in chronic disease management. The study highlighted the importance of edge computing in ensuring that healthcare systems could process large amounts of data locally, without the need to transmit it to distant cloud servers, which would otherwise introduce delays. Zhou also found that edge computing allowed for more accurate and timely analysis, particularly for remote patient monitoring systems, where delayed responses could have serious consequences. The study recommended that healthcare organizations adopt edge computing to enable faster data processing, especially for applications like wearable health devices and telemedicine. Furthermore, the researchers suggested that edge computing would be beneficial in remote areas with limited connectivity, as it could minimize the reliance on cloud infrastructure. Zhou emphasized the importance of creating robust edge computing frameworks that could handle both healthcare data privacy and security concerns while also improving system performance. In conclusion, the study provided strong evidence that edge computing could significantly improve data processing efficiency and reduce latency in healthcare IoT systems, thus enhancing patient care.

Li (2020) investigated the use of edge computing in wearable health devices for chronic disease management, focusing on how it could reduce latency and improve the efficiency of data processing. The purpose of this study was to explore how edge computing could enable real-time data processing in wearable devices used for monitoring conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Using a case study methodology, the researchers evaluated the performance of wearable health devices in conjunction with edge computing technologies, comparing them with traditional cloud-based systems. The results showed that edge computing improved data processing speed by 25%, allowing for faster adjustments to treatment plans. The study found that latency was significantly reduced when data was processed locally on the wearable device, rather than being sent to the cloud for analysis. The researchers also discovered that real-time data analysis at the edge enabled more accurate and timely medical interventions. Li recommended that healthcare providers consider integrating edge computing with wearable health devices to optimize chronic disease management. The study further suggested that combining AI algorithms with edge computing would enhance diagnostic capabilities and improve patient outcomes. The researchers also emphasized the need for healthcare systems to develop secure and reliable edge computing infrastructures to support these technologies. In conclusion, Li provided compelling evidence that edge computing could significantly improve the efficiency and responsiveness of wearable devices in healthcare, particularly for chronic disease management.

Zhang (2021) conducted a study on the application of edge computing in healthcare IoT networks, specifically focusing on latency reduction and data processing efficiency. The purpose of the study was to simulate how edge computing could improve the performance of IoT devices in healthcare systems, particularly in terms of reducing delays and improving diagnostic accuracy. Using simulation techniques, the researchers modeled the impact of edge computing in critical healthcare environments, such as ICUs and emergency departments. The results revealed that edge computing reduced data transmission and processing times by 35%, significantly improving response times in high-pressure medical situations. The study also found that integrating edge computing allowed for more accurate and timely data analysis, which led to better clinical decision-making. Zhang recommended that healthcare systems adopt hybrid edge-cloud architectures to ensure scalability while maintaining the benefits of reduced latency. The study emphasized that edge computing could also reduce the reliance on centralized cloud systems, which could face bandwidth limitations and cause delays. In conclusion, Zhang et al. (2021) provided empirical evidence that edge computing could optimize data processing efficiency and significantly reduce latency in healthcare IoT applications, improving both operational efficiency and patient care.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Research Gap

Although previous studies like Yao (2019), Bonomi (2014), and Zhou (2019) emphasize the role of edge computing in reducing latency and improving data processing efficiency in healthcare systems, there is still a gap in fully understanding the specific mechanisms by which edge computing enhances the accuracy and reliability of real-time diagnostics in complex clinical environments. While these studies suggest the benefits of edge computing, they do not deeply explore the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms within edge computing frameworks to optimize real-time data analysis and decision-making. Furthermore, there is limited exploration of how edge computing could address data security and privacy concerns in healthcare systems that are critical when dealing with sensitive patient data (Li, 2020). Thus, there is a need for conceptual research to develop frameworks that incorporate AI/ML and robust security protocols in edge computing systems for better patient outcomes and trust in these technologies.

Contextual Research Gap

The studies primarily focus on the performance of edge computing in specific healthcare settings such as emergency rooms (Bonomi, 2014) and chronic disease management (Li, 2020). However, there is limited research on the contextual application of edge computing in broader healthcare domains, such as public health monitoring, mental health, or post-surgical recovery, where real-time data processing could also be crucial. Additionally, most studies examine edge computing in developed healthcare systems but fail to account for variations in healthcare infrastructure, workforce capabilities, and resource constraints in low-resource environments. As healthcare systems across different countries have varying levels of technological infrastructure, further contextual studies are needed to assess how edge computing can be adapted and scaled to different healthcare settings globally.

Geographical Research Gap

Most of the studies, including those by Yao (2019) and Zhou (2019), focus on healthcare systems in developed economies, particularly the U.S. and parts of Europe. There is a substantial research gap in understanding how edge computing impacts latency and data processing efficiency in healthcare systems in developing and sub-Saharan economies, where access to technology and infrastructure is more limited. Research that investigates how edge computing can address latency and processing issues in these regions could reveal new challenges and opportunities for healthcare systems facing critical resource constraints, as well as the scalability of such technologies in low-resource settings. The geographical gap presents an opportunity to explore how edge computing can be adapted to improve healthcare in these underserved regions while ensuring equitable access to innovative healthcare solutions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In conclusion, the integration of edge computing with IoT devices in healthcare systems has demonstrated significant potential in reducing latency and improving data processing efficiency. By enabling local data processing at the edge of the network, edge computing alleviates the delays associated with cloud-based systems, ensuring that real-time medical data can be analyzed promptly, which is critical in time-sensitive healthcare environments like emergency rooms, ICUs, and chronic disease management. Studies have shown that edge computing reduces data transmission times and enhances the accuracy of real-time diagnoses, leading to better decision-making and improved patient outcomes. Additionally, the adoption of hybrid edge-cloud architectures offers scalability and flexibility for healthcare systems, enabling them to handle growing data volumes without compromising performance. However, while the technology shows promising results, there remain research gaps regarding its implementation across diverse healthcare contexts, particularly in low-resource and developing regions where infrastructure challenges may persist. To fully capitalize on the benefits of edge computing in healthcare, further research is needed to explore its integration with AI/ML for enhanced diagnostics, address data security concerns, and tailor edge solutions to different healthcare environments. Ultimately, the continued development and application of edge computing in healthcare hold the potential to revolutionize how medical data is processed, leading to more responsive, efficient, and accessible healthcare systems worldwide.

Recommendations

Theory

The integration of edge computing with IoT in healthcare calls for the creation of hybrid models that combine cloud and edge computing. This would not only provide a scalable solution for large healthcare networks but also optimize latency and data processing efficiency. Future research should focus on developing theoretical models that incorporate edge computing and cloud technologies to balance efficiency, scalability, and cost. Theoretical frameworks could also explore the role of machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing real-time decision-making and predictive analytics, especially in critical care scenarios. While edge computing enables faster data processing, it also raises concerns about data privacy and security, particularly with sensitive health information. Future theories in healthcare IT should integrate edge computing with robust cybersecurity principles, addressing issues such as data encryption, access control, and compliance with regulatory standards (e.g., HIPAA). Researchers could explore novel theoretical models that combine edge computing with blockchain or other decentralized technologies to ensure secure data exchanges in healthcare settings.

Practice

Healthcare providers in remote or low-resource settings should prioritize adopting edge computing technology to overcome latency issues associated with cloud-based systems. By processing data locally at the point of care, edge computing can improve healthcare delivery in areas with limited internet connectivity and reduce the dependency on centralized systems. Healthcare practitioners should also consider integrating AI/ML algorithms with edge devices to enable faster and more accurate decision-making, particularly for chronic disease management and telemedicine applications. Edge computing can greatly enhance the functionality of wearable health devices. Healthcare organizations should explore partnerships with technology providers to integrate IoT devices like wearables and smart sensors with edge computing platforms. This integration would allow for faster processing of real-time health data, thereby enabling healthcare providers to make quick adjustments to treatment plans and reducing the need for time-consuming data transmission to remote servers.

Policy

Governments and healthcare regulators should create policies that incentivize the adoption of edge computing technologies in healthcare systems. This could include funding for pilot projects in underserved areas and setting standards for edge computing integration in telemedicine platforms. Policies should also address the scalability of edge computing solutions to ensure that they are adaptable to various healthcare environments, from small clinics to large hospitals. Policymakers must update data protection laws to account for edge computing in healthcare, ensuring that sensitive health data remains protected when processed locally. Regulations should provide clear guidelines on how data should be handled, encrypted, and stored, especially as edge computing can present new privacy risks. Collaborations between healthcare providers, tech developers, and regulatory bodies are necessary to create standards for secure data handling and compliance.

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