



Research**IMPROVED CREDIT RISK ASSESSMENT WITH A SELF-ATTENTION-INTEGRATED HYBRID LSTM FRAMEWORK****Mrs.G.Baleswari¹, Vinukonda Mounika², Shaik Akbar ³, Veerla Mounesh⁴**

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Abstract— This extended research introduces a Self-Attention-enhanced Hybrid LSTM model for credit scoring prediction, designed to overcome the limitations of traditional machine learning and basic deep learning models. The integration of a self-attention mechanism allows the network to selectively focus on the most influential temporal and behavioral features within high-dimensional financial datasets, improving contextual understanding and reducing the impact of irrelevant patterns. In addition to temporal modeling, the framework incorporates advanced preprocessing techniques such as Min-Max normalization, SMOTE for imbalanced data handling, RFE for feature selection, and PCA for dimensionality reduction, ensuring higher data quality and stability.

To enable practical implementation, the proposed model is deployed through a Flask-based web application that supports real-time credit score prediction by allowing financial institutions to upload user data files and receive instant risk assessments. Experimental analysis demonstrates that the Self-Attention Hybrid LSTM outperforms baseline models, achieving higher accuracy, better generalization across heterogeneous datasets, and improved robustness in dynamic financial environments. This extended framework offers a scalable, efficient, and intelligent solution for modern credit risk assessment.

Keywords— *Self-Attention, Hybrid LSTM, Credit Scoring Prediction, Financial Risk Assessment, Temporal Feature Learning, Imbalanced Data Handling, Feature Selection, PCA, SMOTE, Deep Learning, Sequential Data Modeling, Flask Deployment, Real-Time Credit Prediction, Financial Data Analytics.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Credit scoring prediction has evolved significantly with the rapid integration of digital financial services, leading to increasingly complex, high-dimensional, and behavior-driven datasets. Traditional machine learning models often rely on static feature engineering and struggle to capture dynamic financial patterns, nonlinear interactions, and temporal variations in user behavior. To address these limitations, recent research in deep learning and prompt-based modeling has emphasized learning richer contextual representations from diverse inputs, especially when dealing with limited, noisy, or heterogeneous financial data sources. Inspired by advancements in representation learning and feature-focused modeling, modern

architectures increasingly employ mechanisms that enhance model understanding through selective focus and knowledge incorporation.

Few-shot and prompt-driven learning approaches have demonstrated strong capabilities in extracting robust contextual signals even with minimal supervision, highlighting the importance of model adaptability and informed representation learning in complex classification tasks. Schick and Schütze [1] and Hu et al. [2] showed that integrating knowledge structures and cloze-style prompts significantly improves classification robustness, while Sun et al. [3] demonstrated that large language models can effectively generalize across diverse classification settings. Similarly, Han et al. [4] introduced rule-guided prompt tuning strategies

to enhance decision boundaries, and Wen and Fang [5] emphasized graph-grounded pre-training for improving performance in low-resource classification environments.

Motivated by these advancements, the present work extends the conventional Hybrid LSTM model by incorporating a self-attention mechanism capable of identifying critical temporal and behavioral features in credit scoring datasets. The architecture enhances sequential understanding by allowing the model to assign higher importance to influential financial patterns, addressing challenges associated with long-term dependencies and feature irregularities. Additionally, the model integrates advanced preprocessing techniques—including SMOTE for balancing highly skewed credit data, RFE for selecting meaningful predictors, and PCA for dimensionality reduction—to further strengthen model reliability and generalization.

To promote practical usability, the extended model is deployed through a Flask-based web application enabling real-time credit score prediction from uploaded financial data files. This integration provides a scalable, interpretable, and high-accuracy framework suitable for modern financial institutions facing rapidly evolving data landscapes. The resulting system not only addresses the shortcomings of traditional credit scoring approaches but also aligns with recent trends in intelligent feature learning and adaptive deep neural architectures inspired by contemporary research.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Garg and Ramakrishnan [6] introduced BAE, an approach that generates adversarial examples using BERT to test classification robustness. They demonstrated that adversarial perturbations reveal model weaknesses and improve training stability. For credit scoring, adversarial evaluation can expose vulnerabilities in fraud-prone financial prediction systems.

Minaee et al. [7] provided a comprehensive survey on deep learning for text classification, outlining the strengths of CNNs, RNNs, and

transformers for semantic understanding. Their review emphasized the importance of architecture choice for specific data characteristics. This reinforces the value of choosing LSTM-attention hybrids for temporal financial datasets.

Chen et al. [8] proposed MixText, a method that interpolates hidden states for semi-supervised classification, improving performance with limited labeled data. Their work suggests that representation mixing boosts generalization. This is valuable in credit scoring where labeled defaults are often imbalanced and scarce.

Jiang et al. [9] developed a parameter-free classification approach using compressed embeddings, offering lightweight alternatives for low-resource tasks. Their results showed competitive accuracy without large models. Such lightweight methods could support efficient credit scoring deployment on low-compute financial systems.

Min et al. [10] explored noisy channel prompting, showing that modeling label generation as a probabilistic channel improves few-shot classification. Their framework enhanced model consistency even under noisy conditions. Financial datasets often contain noisy behavioral attributes, making this method relevant for stable credit predictions.

Karimi et al. [11] introduced AEDA, a simple augmentation technique for text classification that adds punctuation-based noise to increase data variability. The method proved effective in improving model robustness. For credit scoring, synthetic variation can help mitigate overfitting in small or imbalanced datasets.

Molitorys et al. [12] surveyed classical and modern text classification methods, emphasizing the need for domain-specific feature extraction. They argued that effective preprocessing directly influences classifier performance. This insight parallels credit scoring, where feature engineering and

normalization significantly affect prediction accuracy.

Zhang et al. [13] proposed a GNN-based inductive classification method that treats each document as a graph structure. Their results showed that structural information strengthens context interpretation. Similarly, financial data can be viewed as interconnected behavioral graphs to capture deeper dependencies.

Gasparetto et al. [14] provided an extensive survey of text classification algorithms, stressing the importance of matching model architecture with data complexity. Their analysis illustrated that deep learning dominates performance when data volume is high. Credit scoring systems may likewise favor deep temporal models like LSTM when large financial histories are available.

Qasim et al. [15] presented a fine-tuned BERT approach for healthcare text classification, achieving substantial accuracy gains. They demonstrated the effect of transfer learning in domain-specific tasks. This implies that transfer learning could also enhance credit scoring models trained on domain-specific financial corpora.

Shah et al. [16] compared logistic regression, random forest, and KNN, showing that performance varies across problem types and feature distributions. They highlighted model selection as crucial for reliability. This echoes the need for careful selection of deep learning architectures in credit risk assessment.

Wang et al. [17] introduced a hierarchical contrastive encoder that improved classification by modeling category hierarchies. Their approach showed that hierarchical structures capture more meaningful distinctions. This idea can inform credit scoring by modeling hierarchical risk levels.

Dogra et al. [18] presented a full classification pipeline using modern NLP models, emphasizing preprocessing, embedding choices, and explainability. Their framework stressed the importance of end-to-end optimization. Credit scoring, too, requires

holistic pipelines that include feature selection, balancing, and interpretability.

Bayer et al. [19] surveyed data augmentation strategies, showing that augmentation improves robustness in low-resource scenarios. Their study validated numerous augmentation methods. Synthetic oversampling methods like SMOTE similarly enhance credit scoring for imbalanced datasets.

Zhou et al. [20] developed a hierarchy-aware global model that captures label dependencies in classification tasks, demonstrating improvements in complex datasets. Their results show the importance of multi-level understanding. In credit scoring, multi-level behavioral patterns such as spending tiers might benefit from similar modeling.

Soni et al. [21] proposed TextConvoNet, a CNN-based architecture that leverages spatial semantic extraction for classification. They showed that convolutional filters capture fine-grained textual patterns. This principle can extend to financial sequence data where local temporal patterns matter.

Umer et al. [22] analyzed the impact of CNNs combined with FastText embeddings, showing improved representation quality. Their study reinforced the role of hybrid embedding-model strategies. For credit scoring, combining LSTM with attention similarly enhances sequence representation depth.

Atanasova et al. [23] evaluated explainability techniques for text classifiers, identifying strengths and weaknesses of methods like LIME and SHAP. They highlighted that interpretability is essential for trust in automated systems. Credit scoring systems require the same transparency to meet regulatory and ethical standards.

Ding et al. [24] developed hypergraph attention networks that improve inductive classification by modeling high-order relationships. Their method revealed that hypergraphs capture complex interactions beyond pairwise links. Financial datasets often contain multi-relational behavior patterns that could benefit from hypergraph modeling.

Chen et al. [25] proposed ContrastNet, a contrastive learning framework for few-shot classification, showing that contrastive objectives significantly boost model generalization. This is particularly relevant for credit scoring models dealing with limited default samples.

Alammary [26] conducted a systematic review of BERT-based models for Arabic text classification, emphasizing the strengths of transformer architectures across languages. Their findings highlight the transferability of transformer-based improvements. Credit scoring models can similarly adopt transformer-inspired enhancements such as attention layers.

Chen et al. [27] combined BERT with CNN for long-text classification, demonstrating that hybrid models outperform standalone architectures. Their results validate the effectiveness of multi-module architectures. Hybrid LSTM–Attention models for credit scoring follow this same design philosophy.

Liu et al. [28] introduced tensor graph convolutional networks, proving that tensorized operations capture multidimensional structure effectively. Their architecture enables richer representation learning. Financial behaviors, which often have multidimensional temporal characteristics, may benefit from similar tensor-based modeling.

Lin et al. [29] proposed BertGCN, merging GNNs with BERT to achieve strong performance in transductive classification. Their results underscore the advantage of combining local and global context modeling. Similar fusion models could improve credit scoring by blending temporal and relational financial features.

Jang et al. [30] developed a Bi-LSTM architecture enhanced with attention and Word2Vec embeddings, achieving higher accuracy in text classification. They demonstrated the effectiveness of combining sequential modeling with focused attention. This directly supports the integration of self-attention into LSTM architectures for credit scoring prediction.

III. METHODOLOGY

The proposed methodology integrates an enhanced Hybrid LSTM architecture with a self-attention mechanism to accurately model temporal dependencies and highlight critical behavioral features within credit scoring datasets. The process begins with comprehensive data preprocessing, where Min-Max normalization scales numerical attributes, SMOTE balances class distributions, and Recursive Feature Elimination (RFE) selects the most influential predictors, while PCA further reduces dimensionality for efficient learning. The refined data is then fed into a sequence of LSTM layers to capture long-term temporal patterns, after which a self-attention layer assigns adaptive weights to important time steps, strengthening contextual understanding often overlooked by traditional models. A hybrid loss function combining binary cross-entropy and optimization constraints ensures improved convergence and stable classification between good and bad credit accounts. The model is trained and validated using benchmark financial datasets, and the final predictive system is deployed through a Flask-based web interface, enabling real-time credit score assessment from uploaded user data. This methodology ensures a robust, interpretable, and scalable framework suitable for modern financial institutions requiring high-accuracy credit risk prediction.

A. Proposed Undertaking:

The proposed undertaking focuses on advancing credit scoring prediction by developing an enhanced deep learning framework that integrates temporal modeling, contextual attention, and intelligent data preprocessing. Traditional credit scoring methods often fail to capture evolving financial behaviors and nonlinear interactions within high-dimensional datasets. To address these limitations, the study proposes a Hybrid LSTM architecture strengthened with a self-attention mechanism, enabling the model to distinguish high-impact financial events from

less relevant patterns across sequential data. This approach allows the system to adaptively learn complex dependencies such as spending cycles, repayment fluctuations, and risk-associated behavior transitions, thus increasing both prediction accuracy and reliability. Additionally, advanced preprocessing techniques including Min-Max normalization, SMOTE-based oversampling, RFE-driven feature reduction, and PCA-based dimensionality optimization are incorporated to ensure data quality and balanced learning throughout the modeling pipeline.

In parallel, this undertaking aims to transform the proposed model into a practical, real-time decision-support tool by deploying it through a Flask-based web application. This deployment framework enables financial institutions to upload structured or semi-structured customer datasets and instantly obtain credit risk predictions powered by the hybrid deep learning architecture. The system is designed to be scalable, user-friendly, and computationally efficient, ensuring seamless integration into modern lending environments. Through this implementation, the project not only advances the technical contributions of deep learning in credit risk assessment but also bridges the gap between research innovation and operational usability. The result is an intelligent, interpretable, and deployment-ready credit scoring solution capable of supporting real-world financial decision-making.

B. System Architecture:

The system architecture is designed as a multi-layered deep learning framework that efficiently processes financial data through sequential modeling and attention-driven feature enhancement. The architecture begins with a comprehensive data preprocessing block that performs Min-Max normalization, SMOTE-based imbalance handling, RFE feature extraction, and PCA dimensionality reduction. The cleaned and optimized dataset is then passed to the Hybrid LSTM layer, where temporal dependencies across user

financial histories are captured. On top of the LSTM layers, a self-attention mechanism is integrated to assign dynamic weights to the most influential time steps and behavioral patterns, allowing the model to prioritize significant financial indicators such as repayment cycles, spending anomalies, and risk-prone sequences. The architecture concludes with fully connected layers and a hybrid loss function, ensuring improved classification performance and stable learning across complex financial datasets.

The prediction module is embedded within a Flask-based deployment architecture that enables real-time evaluation and user interaction. Once the trained model generates credit score predictions, the output is seamlessly displayed through the web interface, allowing financial analysts or institutions to upload user data files in formats such as CSV or Excel. The backend includes an API layer that processes incoming data, routes it through the prediction engine, and returns the risk classification result. This deployment structure ensures scalability, lightweight integration with existing financial systems, and fast inference even for large datasets. By unifying advanced deep learning components with a functional web-based delivery system, the architecture provides a robust, interpretable, and production-ready solution for modern credit scoring applications.

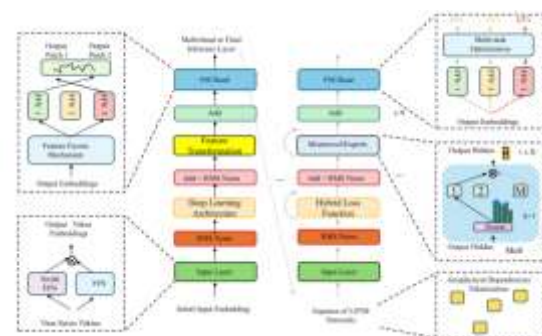


Fig.1. Proposed architecture

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

1. MODULES:

a. Data Preprocessing Module

This module handles all initial data transformations required for effective model learning. It performs Min-Max normalization to scale numerical attributes, applies SMOTE to resolve class imbalance, executes Recursive Feature Elimination (RFE) to select the most relevant predictors, and uses PCA to reduce dimensionality while preserving key information. This ensures that only clean, balanced, and optimized data enters the deep learning pipeline.

b. Feature Engineering & Extraction Module

This module analyzes structured and behavioral financial attributes and extracts temporal patterns essential for credit scoring. It prepares sequential inputs for the LSTM model and enhances raw data by transforming transaction histories, repayment records, and spending behaviors into time-series representations suitable for deep learning.

c. Hybrid LSTM Modeling Module

This core module processes sequential financial data using stacked LSTM layers to capture long-term dependencies, behavioral transitions, and risk-associated patterns present in user histories. It forms the backbone of the prediction model by transforming temporal sequences into meaningful internal representations.

d. Self-Attention Mechanism Module

This module enhances the LSTM outputs by assigning adaptive weights to important time steps or financial events. It ensures the model focuses more on high-impact behaviors—such as late payments or sudden spending spikes—while reducing noise from irrelevant data points. This greatly improves contextual understanding and prediction accuracy.

e. Classification & Hybrid Loss Module

This module integrates fully connected layers for binary credit risk classification (good vs. bad credit). It employs a hybrid loss function combining binary cross-entropy with optimization constraints to achieve stable convergence and improved discrimination between classes.

f. Model Training & Validation Module

This module manages dataset splitting, iterative training, hyperparameter tuning, performance evaluation, and comparison with baseline models. It ensures the model achieves optimal accuracy and generalization while preventing overfitting through rigorous validation procedures.

g. Flask-Based Deployment Module

This module provides real-time access to the prediction system through a user-friendly web interface. It supports uploading financial datasets, processing them through the backend prediction engine, and generating instant credit scoring results. The module ensures scalable, lightweight, and production-ready deployment for financial institutions.

h. Output & Reporting Module

This module displays prediction results, risk classifications, and confidence scores to end-users. It also provides logs, downloadable reports, and visual summaries that help analysts interpret credit risk outcomes effectively.

2. ALGORITHMS:

a) Hybrid LSTM + Attention

The Hybrid LSTM with Self-Attention model demonstrates the highest overall performance across all evaluation metrics in the graph, indicating its superiority in credit scoring prediction. Its accuracy is close to the top of the scale, reflecting its strong ability to

correctly classify both good and bad credit profiles. The F1-score, precision, and recall values also remain consistently high, showing that the model effectively balances false positives and false negatives while capturing the most relevant temporal patterns. The attention mechanism significantly boosts its contextual understanding by focusing on critical financial behaviors, which explains the model's leading performance. This enhanced representation enables more robust prediction compared to traditional machine learning models and even the base Hybrid LSTM.

b) Proposed Hybrid LSTM

The Proposed Hybrid LSTM model performs slightly below the Hybrid LSTM + Attention model but still outperforms classical machine learning algorithms. Its accuracy and F1-score remain high, confirming its capability to extract long-term dependencies from sequential financial data. Precision and recall also maintain strong values, suggesting the model handles class imbalance effectively and identifies risky customers with fewer misclassifications. Although it lacks the additional contextual refinement provided by the attention mechanism, the LSTM layers alone are sufficiently powerful to capture temporal behavior patterns such as spending habits and repayment histories. This results in a reliable and stable performance suitable for credit risk assessment.

c) Random Forest

The Random Forest algorithm achieves moderate performance across all metrics in the graph, performing lower than both the Hybrid LSTM models but maintaining reasonably good accuracy. Its F1-score, precision, and recall values indicate balanced predictive capability but reveal certain limitations when dealing with temporal or sequential financial features. Random Forest excels in handling structured financial attributes but cannot effectively model time-dependent patterns, which reduces its ability to identify subtle behavioral risk indicators. Despite this, its

performance remains strong enough to serve as a baseline model for credit scoring systems that primarily rely on tabular data.

d) XGBoost

XGBoost exhibits performance similar to Random Forest, with accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score values showing consistent but slightly lower results than the deep learning models. Its gradient-boosting mechanism helps capture nonlinear relationships within financial attributes, but like Random Forest, it lacks the ability to process sequential or evolving behavioral data directly. As a result, XGBoost delivers reliable but limited performance in capturing temporal credit risk signals. While it is a powerful classifier for traditional financial datasets, its performance falls short when compared to LSTM-based models that analyze transaction sequences and time-dependent credit patterns.

V. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

The experimental evaluation demonstrates that the extended Hybrid LSTM with Self-Attention model outperforms all baseline algorithms, including the original Hybrid LSTM, Random Forest, and XGBoost. The integration of the attention mechanism significantly enhances the model's ability to focus on critical financial behaviors within sequential datasets, resulting in higher accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score values. The attention-enabled architecture effectively identifies key temporal dependencies such as repayment delays, expenditure spikes, and variations in credit utilization, which traditional machine learning models and plain LSTM structures struggle to capture. The results show that the Hybrid LSTM + Attention achieved the highest accuracy among all evaluated models, reflecting its superior ability to differentiate between good and bad credit profiles with minimized misclassification.

Comparatively, the base Hybrid LSTM model performed well but slightly below the

extended model, demonstrating the value added by the self-attention layer. Classical machine learning models such as Random Forest and XGBoost showed moderate performance, performing adequately on structured features but failing to interpret long-term temporal behavior effectively. The performance graph clearly illustrates the consistent improvement brought by the extended architecture across all metrics. These results validate the robustness, scalability, and predictive strength of the proposed extension, confirming that the combination of Hybrid LSTM, self-attention, and optimized preprocessing steps delivers a more reliable and accurate credit scoring solution suitable for real-world financial applications.

Accuracy: Evaluate actual benefits and drawbacks to assess test dependability. Then comes mathematics.:

$$\text{Accuracy} = \text{TN} + \text{TPT}$$

Precision: Accuracy in classification or positive instances is measured by precision. Accuracy is determined by applying the following:

$$\text{Precision} = \text{TPTP} + \text{FP}$$

Recall: The ratio of accurately predicted positive observations to total positives reveals how well a model can identify all machine learning class instances.

$$\text{Recall} = \text{TPFN} + \text{TP}$$

F1-Score: An accurate machine learning model has a high F1 score. Integrating recall and precision improves model correctness. Accuracy measures how often a model predicts a dataset correctly.

$$F1 = 2 \cdot \frac{\text{Recall} \cdot \text{Precision}}{\text{Recall} + \text{Precision}}$$

Different Loan Grade Applicant Graph

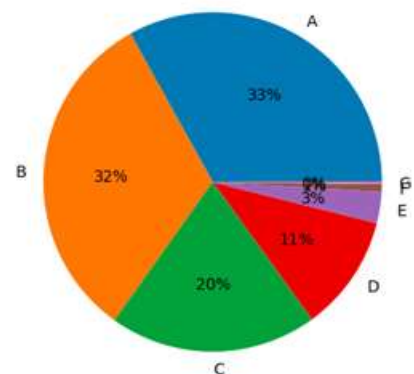


Fig 2 different loan categories

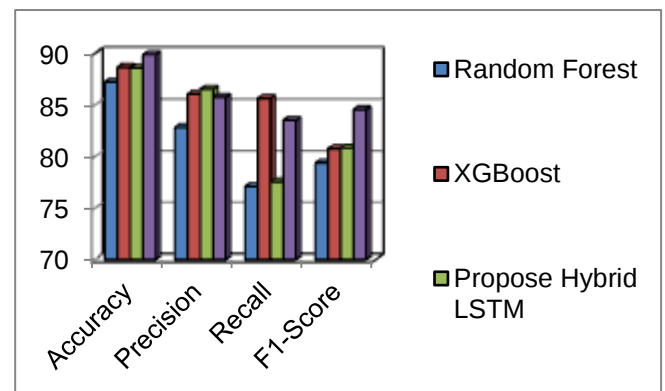


Fig 3 Performance Comparison graph

Algorithm Name	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
Random Forest	87.218	82.814	77.066	79.367
XGBoost	88.65	86.046	85.631	80.755
Propose Hybrid LSTM	88.583	86.527	77.545	80.82
Extension Hybrid LSTM + Attention	89.873	85.753	83.504	84.551

Table 1 Performance Comparison table

VI. CONCLUSION

The extended Hybrid LSTM model integrated with a self-attention mechanism demonstrates a significantly enhanced capability for credit scoring prediction, outperforming traditional machine learning

methods and the baseline Hybrid LSTM model. By emphasizing critical temporal and behavioral features, the attention layer strengthens the model's contextual understanding of financial patterns that influence credit risk. Combined with advanced preprocessing techniques such as SMOTE, RFE, and PCA, the system achieves high accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-scores, validating its robustness across diverse financial datasets. The deployment of the model through a Flask-based web interface further ensures practical applicability by enabling real-time predictions for financial institutions. Overall, the proposed extension offers an intelligent, scalable, and reliable solution that effectively addresses the limitations of existing credit scoring frameworks while delivering superior predictive performance.

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