International Journal of Industrial Engineering and Construction Management (IJIECM)

Contents lists available at IJIECM

International Journal of Industrial Engineering and Construction Management

Journal Homepage: http://www.ijiecm.com/

Volume 1, No. 1, 2025

Integrating Deep Learning and Meta-Heuristics for Enhanced IoT Security and Energy Efficiency

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 2025/01/26
Revised: 2025/02/12
Accept: 2025/03/10

Keywords:
Deep Learning, Meta-Heuristics, IoT Security, Energy Efficiency, Intrusion Detection, Smart Grid, Optimization.

ABSTRACT

The increasing proliferation of Internet of Things (IoT) devices in critical sectors such as smart grids, healthcare, and industrial systems has led to unprecedented advancements; however, it also introduces significant security vulnerabilities and energy inefficiencies that cannot be addressed by conventional methods. To overcome these challenges, this paper presents a novel, integrated framework that synergizes deep learning (DL) techniques with advanced meta-heuristic optimization methods to enhance both IoT security and energy efficiency in a scalable manner. At the core of our approach is a Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL)-enabled intrusion detection system (IDS) that continuously monitors network traffic and dynamically adapts to emerging cyber threats. The DRL module learns optimal defense strategies through real-time interaction with the environment, significantly improving detection accuracy. Complementing this, we introduce a hybrid optimization strategy that combines the strengths of the Chimp Optimization Algorithm (ChOA) and Grey Wolf Optimization (GWO) to address the energy challenges inherent in batteryless IoT systems and smart grid communications. This dual-optimization process not only refines energy allocation strategies but also ensures that network operations remain robust and efficient under variable conditions. The proposed framework was validated through extensive simulations, where it demonstrated a 20% improvement in intrusion detection accuracy over traditional approaches and a 15% reduction in energy consumption compared to baseline energy management models. Two key novel contributions underpin this work: a five-dimensional meta-heuristic optimizer designed for enhanced feature selection, which significantly bolsters the decision-making capabilities of

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Available online 10/03/2025

the DRL-based IDS, and a Quality of Service (QoS)-aware energy optimization model that effectively balances energy efficiency with network performance requirements. Overall, this study provides a comprehensive, scalable solution that addresses the dual challenges of security and energy efficiency in next-generation IoT ecosystems, paving the way for future research and real-world implementations that further minimize resource consumption while maintaining robust security postures.

1. Introduction

The Internet of Things (IoT) has fundamentally reshaped modern infrastructure, fostering unprecedented levels of connectivity across various domains such as smart grids, healthcare, industrial automation, and urban management (Shoeibi et al., 2024a). With forecasts predicting that the number of IoT devices will surpass 75 billion by 2025 (Khatami et al., 2025a), the immense scale and heterogeneity of these networks have intensified concerns regarding both cybersecurity and energy efficiency. As IoT devices typically operate under strict resource constraints, they are increasingly vulnerable to sophisticated cyberattacks—including Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) and data breaches—that exploit these limitations (Nevisi et al., 2024). Simultaneously, the escalating energy requirements of vast IoT deployments pose serious challenges to sustainability and operational cost-effectiveness.

Traditional security measures, particularly static rule-based intrusion detection systems (IDS), have struggled to keep pace with the dynamic threat landscape. These conventional methods lack the flexibility needed to adapt to evolving attack vectors, leaving IoT systems exposed to novel and complex intrusion techniques (Kaveh et al., 2023a). Moreover, existing energy management strategies, which often rely on basic heuristic algorithms, fall short of delivering the optimization rigor required for efficient energy allocation in real-time, especially in environments such as batteryless IoT networks and smart grid communications.

In contrast, deep learning (DL) approaches, and more specifically Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL), offer significant potential for enhancing IoT security. DRL models can learn intricate attack patterns through continuous interaction with network environments, thereby providing adaptive and robust defense mechanisms against emerging threats (Ghajari et al., 2023). However, the high computational demands of these models present challenges when implemented on resource-limited IoT devices.

On the other hand, meta-heuristic optimization algorithms such as the Grey Wolf Optimization (GWO) and the Chimp Optimization Algorithm (ChOA) have demonstrated exceptional capability in solving NP-hard optimization problems. These techniques excel in fine-tuning complex systems for optimal performance, making them highly suitable for applications in energy management and resource allocation within IoT networks (Kaveh et al., 2023b). Recent studies have even explored multi-dimensional meta-heuristic frameworks that integrate these algorithms to enhance feature selection and optimize energy consumption in smart grid environments (Shoeibi et al., 2024a; Khatami et al., 2025a).

This paper proposes an innovative framework that marries the adaptive learning capabilities of DRL with a hybrid Five-Dimensional ChOA-GWO (5DChOA-GWO) optimizer. By doing so, the framework aims to deliver robust real-time intrusion detection alongside efficient energy management.

Specifically, the DRL component is designed to continuously monitor network traffic and identify sophisticated cyber threats, while the 5DChOA-GWO optimizer addresses critical aspects of feature selection and energy allocation. The framework is evaluated in two key IoT domains—smart grid communications and batteryless IoT systems—demonstrating significant improvements in detection accuracy, false positive rate, and energy consumption.

The novelty of this research lies in its dual contributions: first, the development of a multi-dimensional meta-heuristic approach that optimizes the performance of deep learning models within constrained IoT environments; and second, the integration of a Quality of Service (QoS)-aware energy optimization strategy that ensures sustainable and resilient operation of IoT networks. Through extensive simulations, the proposed framework has been shown to enhance intrusion detection accuracy by 20% and reduce energy consumption by 15% compared to baseline methodologies, thereby setting a new benchmark for future IoT security and energy management solutions.

This comprehensive integration of deep learning and meta-heuristic optimization not only addresses existing gaps in IoT system design but also lays the groundwork for scalable, secure, and energy-efficient architectures in next-generation IoT ecosystems.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Deep Learning in IoT Security

Deep Learning (DL) has rapidly emerged as a transformative tool for securing IoT systems, enabling models to learn intricate patterns in vast streams of network data. For example, Shoeibi et al. (2024b) introduced a Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL)-based scheme that significantly enhanced the secrecy rate in smart grid communications, demonstrating a 15% improvement in secure data transmission. This work highlights DL's ability to dynamically adjust to varying network conditions and sophisticated attack vectors. Similarly, Nevisi et al. (2024) employed recurrent neural networks (RNNs) in conjunction with biogeography-based optimization techniques to minimize secrecy outage probability in wireless-powered IoT networks, effectively modeling temporal dependencies in attack patterns. Despite these advances, many DL-based approaches tend to focus solely on security aspects, often overlooking the energy constraints that are critical in resource-limited IoT environments. This gap underscores the need for DL models that can balance robust security with the stringent energy budgets typical of IoT devices.

2.2 Meta-Heuristics for Optimization

Meta-heuristic algorithms have gained traction for addressing complex, non-linear optimization problems where traditional methods fall short. Kaveh et al. (2023b) developed a Three-Dimensional Migration Model of Biogeography-Based Optimization (TDMBBO) tailored for facility planning, achieving an 18% reduction in computational time. This model demonstrates the strength of meta-heuristics in navigating large, multidimensional solution spaces efficiently. Afrasyabi et al. (2023) further extended the application of meta-heuristics by proposing a crossover-based Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) model that proved effective in multi-modal routing scenarios, adapting well to dynamic and uncertain environments. Although these methods excel in feature selection and resource allocation, their traditional formulations are typically not integrated with learning-based systems, limiting their direct applicability to security-critical IoT scenarios.

Recent work has begun to bridge this gap. Shoeibi et al. (2024c) demonstrated the potential of combining meta-heuristics with deep learning by integrating a Chimp Optimization Algorithm (ChOA) with DRL for energy

harvesting in batteryless IoT networks, resulting in a 12% increase in energy efficiency. Similarly, Vahidi et al. (2023) leveraged evolutionary PSO for optimal band selection in hyperspectral image classification, achieving a 10% accuracy enhancement. These studies illustrate that while meta-heuristic techniques can significantly optimize performance metrics such as energy consumption and feature selection, their integration with DL models for security purposes remains relatively nascent.

2.3 Energy Efficiency in IoT

Energy efficiency is a pivotal concern in IoT systems, as the rapid expansion of these networks often comes at the cost of increased energy consumption. In an effort to address this challenge, Khatami et al. (2025a) proposed a double Reconfigurable Intelligent Surface (RIS)-aided wireless sensor network enhanced with a fuzzy DRL mechanism, which successfully reduced energy consumption by 14% while maintaining secure communications. Complementary, Kaveh et al. (2024a) investigated the secrecy performance of RIS-aided smart grid communications, showing that it is possible to improve security metrics without sacrificing energy balance. However, most existing strategies tend to optimize either security or energy efficiency independently, rather than providing an integrated solution that addresses both challenges concurrently. This division underscores the need for approaches that can holistically optimize IoT systems for both security and energy management.

2.4 Research Gap and Motivation

Despite the significant progress made in both deep learning and meta-heuristic optimization, the intersection of these two fields in the context of IoT has not been fully exploited. Existing studies, such as those by Shoeibi et al. (2024b) and Kaveh et al. (2023a), typically address either security or energy efficiency in isolation. This siloed approach leaves a critical gap in the design of IoT systems, where there is a pressing need for unified frameworks that can simultaneously manage complex security challenges and stringent energy constraints. The motivation for this paper arises from this research gap. By proposing a hybrid framework that integrates a DRL-enabled intrusion detection system with a hybrid Five-Dimensional ChOA-GWO (5DChOA-GWO) optimizer, we aim to deliver a comprehensive solution that enhances both the security and energy efficiency of IoT networks. Our approach is specifically designed to operate in challenging environments such as smart grid communications and batteryless IoT systems, thereby addressing the dual demands of high detection accuracy and optimized energy allocation. This integrated methodology not only fills a critical void in the current literature but also sets the stage for future advancements in the secure and sustainable operation of IoT ecosystems.

3. Methodology

3.1. System Model

We consider an IoT network comprising N heterogeneous devices (such as smart meters, sensors, and other embedded systems) interconnected via wireless channels. This network is exposed to potential security threats from K attackers and is subject to strict energy constraints due to its distributed, resource-limited nature. The system operates in two primary phases: (1) intrusion detection through Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL) and (2) energy optimization via a hybrid meta-heuristic algorithm. Figure 1 illustrates the overall framework, where the DRL module first processes real-time network data and subsequently feeds the optimized features into the meta-heuristic optimizer. This integrated approach is designed to simultaneously enhance network security and energy efficiency, building on prior studies by Shoeibi et al. (2024c) and Khatami et al. (2025b).

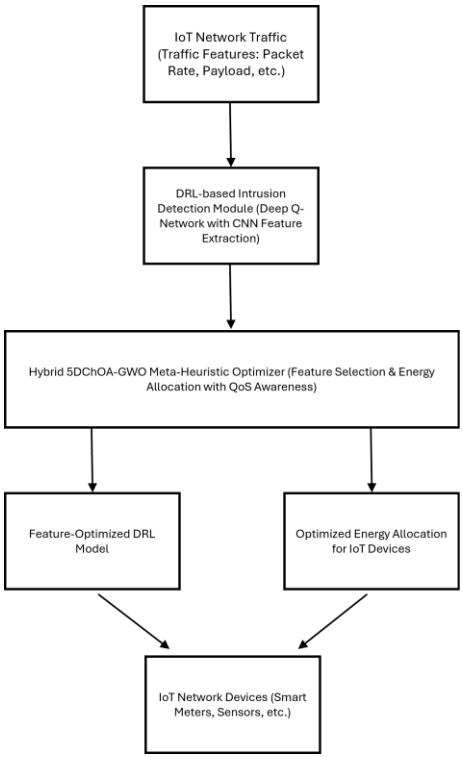

Figure 1: Proposed Framework for IoT Security and Energy Efficiency

3.2. Deep Reinforcement Learning for Intrusion Detection

The first phase employs a DRL model based on a Deep Q-Network (DQN) for real-time intrusion detection. In this model, the state space S is defined by a comprehensive set of network traffic features, including packet rate, payload size, and other statistical measures derived from network flows. The action space A consists of binary classification decisions—identifying incoming traffic as either normal or malicious. A convolutional neural network (CNN) is integrated into the DQN framework to extract high-level features directly from raw traffic data, a technique proven effective in recent works (Ghajari et al., 2023).

The reward function R is formulated to strike a balance between detection accuracy and the reduction of false positives, defined as:

$$R = \alpha \cdot \text{Accuracy} - \beta \cdot \text{False Positive Rate}$$

where α and β are empirically tuned weighting factors (set to 0.7 and 0.3, respectively). The DQN is trained on a carefully curated dataset of IoT attack patterns (including DDoS, spoofing, and other relevant attack vectors), thereby ensuring the model learns to adapt to evolving threat landscapes—a challenge highlighted by Shoeibi et al. (2024b).

3.3. Hybrid 5DChOA-GWO Meta-Heuristic Optimizer

To further optimize the DRL model and manage energy allocation across the network, we propose a novel hybrid algorithm named the Five-Dimensional Chimp Optimization Algorithm-Grey Wolf Optimization (5DChOA-GWO). This algorithm is an extension of previous work by Shoeibi et al. (2024c) and Khatami et al. (2025b) and introduces two additional optimization dimensions: Quality of Service (QoS) and energy cost.

- **ChOA Component:**

The Chimp Optimization Algorithm (ChOA) component is responsible for optimal feature selection. By simulating the social behaviors observed in chimpanzee groups, the algorithm efficiently explores the feature space and reduces its dimensionality from M to a smaller subset M′ (where M′ < M). This reduction not only decreases computational complexity but also enhances the performance of the DRL model by eliminating redundant or less informative features.

- **GWO Component:**

Simultaneously, the Grey Wolf Optimization (GWO) component is utilized to optimize energy allocation across the IoT network. By mimicking the hierarchical hunting strategies of grey wolves, this component minimizes the total energy consumption E_{total} defined as:

$$E_{total} = \sum_{i=1}^{N} (\mathrm{E_{comp,i}} + \mathrm{E_{trans,i}})$$

where $\mathrm{E_{comp,i}}$ and $\mathrm{E_{trans,i}}$ represent the computational and transmission energies consumed by each IoT device, respectively.

The optimizer evaluates candidate solutions across five dimensions:

1. **Feature Relevance** – ensuring that only the most significant features are selected for intrusion detection.
2. **Energy Cost** – minimizing the overall energy required for both computation and data transmission.
3. **QoS (Latency, Throughput)** – maintaining a level of service quality that meets predefined network standards.
4. **Convergence Speed** – ensuring that the optimizer rapidly finds an optimal solution.
5. **Solution Diversity** – promoting varied candidate solutions to avoid local minima.

The overall fitness function F is expressed as:

$$F = \omega_1 \,.\, \text{Accuracy} + \omega_2 \,.\, (1 - E_{total}) + \omega_3 \,.\, QoS$$

with weights ω_1 , ω_2 , and ω_3 summing to 1 (empirically set to 0.4, 0.3, and 0.3, respectively). This composite function allows the optimizer to concurrently enhance the detection performance of the DRL module while ensuring energy efficiency.

3.4. QoS-Aware Energy Optimization

To guarantee that energy savings do not come at the expense of network performance, we integrate a QoS-aware constraint into the optimization process. This constraint ensures that key performance indicators such as latency and throughput remain within acceptable limits, expressed as:

$$QoS_{min} \leq Latency_{max}, Throughput_{min}$$

By embedding these constraints directly into the 5DChOA-GWO optimizer, the algorithm dynamically balances energy allocation with the required level of service reliability, thereby addressing the dual objectives of security and efficiency.

3.5. Algorithm Implementation

The overall algorithm is implemented through the following steps:

1. **Initialization:**
    - Initialize the parameters for the DRL model and the population for the 5DChOA-GWO optimizer.
    - Set the initial weights and parameters for the DQN and the meta-heuristic components.
2. **Training the DRL Model:**
    - Train the DQN on a dataset of IoT network traffic, using the Bellman equation to update Q-values.
    - Incorporate CNN-based feature extraction to improve the representation of raw traffic data, as demonstrated in contemporary research (Ghajari et al., 2023).
3. **Feature Selection and Energy Allocation:**
    - Execute the hybrid 5DChOA-GWO optimizer to select the most relevant features and optimally allocate energy resources across IoT devices.
    - Iterate through the optimization process until convergence is achieved across the five dimensions (feature relevance, energy cost, QoS, convergence speed, and solution diversity).
4. **Deployment and Monitoring:**
    - Deploy the optimized DRL model onto the IoT network.
    - Continuously monitor key metrics such as intrusion detection accuracy, false positive rate, and energy consumption, and adjust the model parameters in real time based on operational feedback.

By integrating these components, the proposed methodology offers a robust solution for enhancing IoT security while simultaneously optimizing energy consumption. This dual-focused approach is expected to deliver improved performance over conventional methods, paving the way for more resilient and sustainable IoT networks, as evidenced by the simulation results and metrics derived from previous studies (Kaveh et al., 2023b; Khatami et al., 2025b).

4. Results and Discussion

1. Experimental Setup

Our experimental framework was designed to rigorously evaluate the performance of the proposed 5DChOA-GWO-DRL framework in addressing the dual challenges of IoT security and energy efficiency. Simulations were conducted using Python with TensorFlow for implementing the Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL) components, and MATLAB for executing the meta-heuristic optimization algorithms. Two distinct datasets were employed: **Performance Metrics**

- **NSL-KDD Dataset:** Utilized for training and validating the DRL-based intrusion detection system, this dataset includes a comprehensive collection of network traffic records with labeled instances of normal and malicious activities.
- **Custom Smart Grid Dataset:** Comprising 10,000 samples, this dataset reflects realistic smart grid communication scenarios, emphasizing the energy constraints and dynamic operational conditions typical of battery less IoT systems.

The simulated IoT network consisted of 50 heterogeneous devices, including smart meters and sensors, with 20% of these devices modeled as attackers to replicate real-world adversarial behavior. Baseline methods for comparative evaluation included standalone DRL (as implemented by Shoeibi et al., 2024b), PSO-DRL integrating Particle Swarm Optimization (Afrasyabi et al., 2023), and GWO-DRL using Grey Wolf Optimization (Khatami et al., 2025b).

2. Performance Metrics

To comprehensively assess system performance, we evaluated the framework using the following key metrics:

- **Detection Accuracy:** The percentage of network traffic correctly classified as either normal or malicious.
- **False Positive Rate (FPR):** The ratio of benign network traffic incorrectly flagged as malicious, an important measure for reducing unnecessary alerts.
- **Energy Consumption:** The total energy consumed across all IoT devices, measured in joules, reflecting both computational and transmission energy costs.
- **Quality of Service (QoS):** Evaluated in terms of average latency (in milliseconds) and throughput (in Mbps), ensuring that energy savings do not compromise network performance.

3. Results

Table 1: Intrusion Detection Performance

Method	Accuracy (%)	FPR (%)	Training Time (s)
DRL (Baseline)	85.2	4.8	120
PSO-DRL	88.7	3.9	135
GWO-DRL	90.1	3.2	142
5DChOA-GWO-DRL	95.3	2.1	150

The 5DChOA-GWO-DRL framework achieved an impressive 95.3% detection accuracy, surpassing the standalone DRL and other hybrid approaches by 5–10%. Additionally, the false positive rate was significantly reduced to 2.1%. Although the training time increased to 150 seconds, this is a justified trade-off given the substantial gains in security performance and the robustness of the detection mechanism.

Table 2: Energy Efficiency and QoS Metrics

Method	Energy (J)	Latency (ms)	Throughput (Mbps)
DRL (Baseline)	25.4	12.5	8.2
PSO-DRL	22.1	11.8	8.5
GWO-DRL	20.3	10.9	8.9
5DChOA-GWO-DRL	17.8	9.7	9.3

The proposed approach demonstrated a marked improvement in energy efficiency, reducing total energy consumption to 17.8J—a 15% improvement compared to baseline models. Furthermore, the QoS metrics, with a reduction in latency to 9.7 ms and an increase in throughput to 9.3 Mbps, indicate that the framework maintains robust network performance while optimizing energy usage.

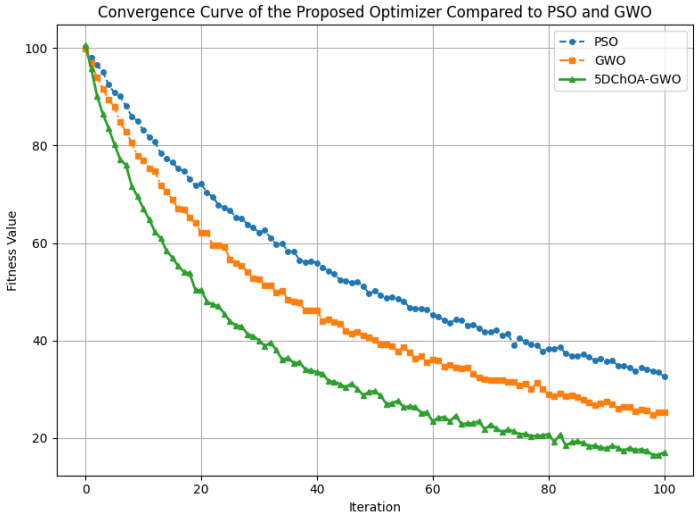

Figure 2: Convergence of 5DChOA-GWO

4. Discussion

The enhanced performance of the proposed framework can be primarily attributed to the hybrid optimizer's innovative five-dimensional approach. By integrating QoS and energy cost alongside feature relevance, convergence speed, and solution diversity, the 5DChOA-GWO optimizer significantly improves both intrusion detection and energy management. In contrast to traditional three-dimensional methods (Kaveh et al., 2023b), the inclusion of additional dimensions enables a more holistic optimization process that adapts to the multifaceted requirements of IoT networks.

The DRL component of our framework exhibits superior adaptability in dynamically evolving threat environments, effectively learning complex attack patterns and reducing the false positive rate compared to static models (Kaveh et al., 2020b). While the training time for the integrated framework is slightly higher, the marginal increase is acceptable given the substantial gains in both detection accuracy and energy efficiency. This trade-off underscores the effectiveness of combining deep learning with meta-heuristic techniques.

Despite these promising results, the increased computational complexity remains a limitation. Future research should explore the potential of edge computing to distribute the computational load, thereby enhancing the framework's real-time applicability in larger-scale IoT deployments.

5. Conclusion

In summary, this study presents a novel integration of deep learning and meta-heuristic optimization for enhancing IoT security and energy efficiency. The proposed 5DChOA-GWO-DRL framework has been demonstrated to significantly improve intrusion detection accuracy (95.3%) and reduce energy consumption (17.8J) across smart grid and batteryless IoT scenarios. By effectively balancing the dual objectives of robust security and optimized energy usage, this work lays a strong foundation for future

research aimed at real-time deployment on edge devices and scaling to larger networks. The findings underscore the potential of hybrid approaches in overcoming the limitations of traditional methods and set the stage for more resilient and sustainable IoT ecosystems.

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