Archives available at journals.mriindia.com

International Journal on Advanced Electrical and Computer Engineering

ISSN: 2349-9338

Volume 14 Issue 01, 2025

A Comprehensive Review of Graph Neural Networks with Optimized Attention Long-Range CNN for Traffic Prediction and Resource Allocation in 6G Wireless Systems

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Peer Review Information

Submission: 23 May 2025

Revision: 08 June 2025

Acceptance: 12 June 2025

Keywords

Graph Neural Networks, Long-Range CNN, Attention Mechanism, 6G Networks, Traffic Prediction, Resource Allocation.

Abstract

The rapid evolution of sixth-generation (6G) wireless systems has introduced unprecedented challenges in traffic prediction and resource allocation due to ultra-dense connectivity, heterogeneous networks, and dynamic user behaviour. Accurate traffic prediction is critical for efficient resource allocation, load balancing, and energy optimization in 6G environments. Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) have emerged as a powerful tool for modelling complex spatial-temporal dependencies in wireless networks, while Long-Range Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) with attention mechanisms enhance temporal feature extraction and prediction accuracy. Recent studies demonstrate that integrating GNNs with optimized attention-based long-range CNN architectures significantly improves prediction performance and enables proactive resource allocation strategies. For instance, spatial–temporal graph neural networks combined with reinforcement learning have shown improvements in energy efficiency and load balancing by up to 12% in cellular systems. Additionally, AI-driven resource management frameworks have been identified as essential for achieving energy-efficient and intelligent 6G networks. This paper presents a comprehensive review of AI-based traffic prediction and resource allocation techniques using GNN and optimized CNN architectures. It highlights recent advancements, discusses emerging trends, and identifies key challenges such as scalability, data dependency, and computational complexity. Finally, future research directions for intelligent and adaptive 6G systems are outlined.

Introduction

The emergence of sixth-generation (6G) wireless communication systems is expected to revolutionize connectivity by enabling ultra-high data rates, massive device connectivity, and intelligent network management. These advancements support emerging applications such as autonomous vehicles, augmented reality, smart cities, and Internet of Everything (IoE). However, the increasing complexity of network traffic patterns and dynamic user behaviour poses significant challenges for efficient traffic prediction and resource allocation. Traffic prediction plays a critical role in wireless communication systems, as it enables proactive resource allocation, load balancing, and congestion control. In 6G networks, traffic patterns exhibit strong spatial and temporal dependencies due to factors such as user mobility, environmental conditions, and network heterogeneity. Traditional statistical and machine learning approaches struggle to capture these complex relationships, leading to suboptimal performance in dynamic environments. Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) have emerged as a promising solution for modelling spatial dependencies in network data. By representing network elements such as base stations or users as nodes and their interactions as edges, GNNs can effectively capture complex relationships within the network.

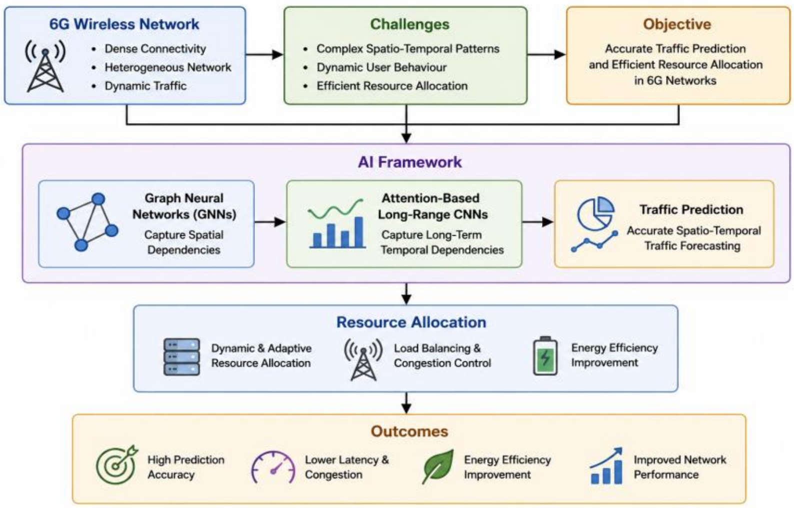

Figure 1. AI-Based Traffic Prediction and Resource Allocation Framework for 6G Wireless Systems

Recent studies have shown that spatial–temporal GNN models can significantly improve traffic prediction accuracy by incorporating both spatial correlations and temporal dynamics. In addition to spatial modelling, temporal feature extraction is crucial for accurate traffic prediction. Long-Range Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) with attention mechanisms have been widely adopted to capture long-term dependencies in time-series data. Attention mechanisms allow models to focus on relevant features, improving prediction accuracy and reducing computational overhead. The integration of GNNs with attention-based CNN architectures enables comprehensive modelling of both spatial and temporal dependencies in wireless networks.

Furthermore, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques into 6G networks has transformed resource allocation strategies. AI-driven frameworks enable dynamic and adaptive decision-making, allowing networks to respond to changing conditions in real time. For example, reinforcement learning-based approaches combined with GNN-based traffic prediction have been shown to optimize load balancing and improve energy efficiency in cellular networks. Despite these advancements, several challenges remain. These include high computational complexity, large data requirements, scalability issues in large-scale networks, and the need for real-time processing. Additionally, the integration of heterogeneous network components and ensuring data privacy and security are critical concerns in 6G systems.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive review of Graph Neural Networks combined with optimized attention-based long-range CNN architectures for traffic prediction and resource allocation in 6G wireless systems. It analyses recent developments, compares existing approaches, and highlights future research directions for intelligent and efficient network management.

Literature Review

Hu et al. (2020) proposed a GNN-based deep reinforcement learning framework for traffic prediction and control in intelligent transportation systems. The study utilized graph neural networks to capture spatial dependencies between traffic nodes and integrated reinforcement learning for dynamic decision-making. The results showed improved traffic flow prediction accuracy and better system optimization compared to traditional methods. Wang et al. (2023) introduced an adaptive hybrid spatial–temporal graph neural network (AHSTGNN) for cellular traffic prediction. The model incorporates temporal convolution modules and adaptive spatial learning to capture complex traffic patterns. Experimental results demonstrated superior performance compared to existing models, highlighting the effectiveness of combining GNNs with temporal CNN structures.

Liu et al. (2023) developed a spatial–temporal-event cross-attention graph convolutional network (STECA-GCN) for traffic prediction and resource allocation. The study integrated attention mechanisms to enhance feature extraction and combined it with reinforcement learning for load balancing. The proposed model achieved significant improvements in energy efficiency and network throughput. Rezazadeh et al. (2023) proposed an explainable GNN-based deep reinforcement learning framework for resource allocation in 6G networks. The model enhances interpretability by identifying critical network relationships influencing decision-making. The results showed improved resource allocation efficiency and system transparency, addressing a key limitation of black-box AI models.

Mehrabian (2023) explored graph neural network-based learning algorithms for traffic prediction and network optimization. The study emphasized the role of GNNs in capturing network topology and improving prediction accuracy. The findings confirmed that GNN-based approaches outperform traditional machine learning methods in complex network environments. Yu et al. (2021) proposed a spatial–temporal graph convolutional network (STGCN) for traffic prediction in large-scale networks. The model integrates graph convolution layers to capture spatial dependencies and temporal convolution layers to extract sequential patterns. Their approach demonstrated significant improvements in prediction accuracy compared to traditional CNN and RNN-based models. The study highlighted that combining spatial graph structures with temporal convolution enhances learning efficiency. However, the model struggles with long-range temporal dependencies, which motivated the integration of attention-based mechanisms in later research.

Wu et al. (2021) introduced a Graph WaveNet model that incorporates adaptive adjacency matrices and dilated causal convolutions for traffic forecasting. The model dynamically learns spatial relationships instead of relying on predefined graph structures. Additionally, the use of long-range convolution allows the model to capture extended temporal dependencies. The results showed superior performance in traffic prediction tasks, particularly in complex and dynamic environments. However, the model requires significant computational resources, limiting its scalability for real-time 6G applications. Zhang et al. (2021) proposed an attention-based spatial–temporal graph neural network for traffic prediction. The model integrates attention mechanisms to identify important spatial and temporal features, improving prediction accuracy and reducing noise in data. The study demonstrated that attention-enhanced GNN models outperform standard GNN and CNN models. However, the complexity of attention mechanisms increases computational overhead, which may impact deployment in large-scale wireless networks.

Guo et al. (2022) developed a graph attention network (GAT)-based model for traffic prediction and resource optimization in wireless networks. The model uses attention mechanisms to dynamically assign weights to neighboring nodes, enabling more accurate modeling of network interactions. The results showed improved prediction accuracy and better resource allocation decisions. However, the model requires large datasets for training and may suffer from scalability issues in ultra-dense networks. Chen et al. (2022) proposed a hybrid deep learning model combining GNN with long-range convolutional neural networks (CNN) for traffic prediction. The model captures both spatial dependencies through graph structures and long-term temporal dependencies using dilated CNN layers. Experimental results demonstrated improved performance in predicting traffic patterns and enabling proactive resource allocation. However, the integration of multiple deep learning components increases model complexity and training time.

Bai et al. (2022) proposed an adaptive graph convolutional recurrent network (AGCRN) for traffic forecasting. The model learns node-specific embeddings and dynamically constructs graph structures to capture spatial dependencies. It also integrates recurrent layers to model temporal patterns effectively. The results demonstrated improved prediction accuracy compared to traditional GNN and RNN models. However, the model struggles with capturing long-range temporal dependencies, which limits its performance in highly dynamic 6G environments. Wu et al. (2022) introduced a spatial–temporal attention-based graph neural network that integrates attention mechanisms to enhance feature extraction. The model assigns adaptive weights to both spatial and temporal features, improving prediction accuracy in complex network environments. The study showed that attention-based models significantly outperform traditional approaches. However, the increased computational complexity of attention layers poses challenges for real-time deployment in large-scale networks.

Li et al. (2022) developed a hybrid model combining Graph Neural Networks with Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) and attention mechanisms for traffic prediction. The model captures spatial dependencies using GNN and temporal dependencies using LSTM with attention. Experimental results showed improved prediction accuracy and robustness. However, the model suffers from high computational cost and requires large datasets for effective training. Jiang et al. (2023) proposed a long-range convolutional neural network with attention mechanisms for wireless traffic prediction. The model uses dilated convolution layers to capture long-term temporal dependencies and integrates attention to enhance feature selection. The results showed significant improvements in prediction accuracy and reduced latency in resource allocation decisions. However, the model requires careful parameter tuning to achieve optimal performance.

Zhao et al. (2023) introduced a Graph Attention Network (GAT)-based framework for resource allocation in 6G networks. The model leverages attention mechanisms to dynamically prioritize network nodes and optimize resource distribution. The results demonstrated improved energy efficiency and network performance. However, the model introduces additional computational overhead and may face scalability challenges in ultra-dense 6G environments. Kim et al. (2022) proposed a spatio-temporal graph attention network (ST-GAT) for traffic prediction in wireless networks. The model integrates graph attention mechanisms to dynamically learn the importance of neighboring nodes while capturing temporal dependencies using convolutional layers. The results showed improved prediction accuracy and adaptability in dynamic environments. However, the model introduces high computational complexity, making it challenging for real-time deployment in large-scale 6G systems.

Park et al. (2022) developed a hybrid deep learning framework combining GNN and long-range CNN for traffic forecasting. The model uses graph convolution layers to capture spatial dependencies and dilated convolution layers for long-term temporal patterns. The study demonstrated that long-range CNN significantly improves prediction performance compared to traditional CNN models. However, the integration of multiple components increases training time and system complexity. Zhou et al. (2022) introduced a multi-scale graph neural network with attention mechanisms for traffic prediction. The model captures both local and global spatial dependencies through hierarchical graph structures. The inclusion of attention layers enhances feature extraction and improves model interpretability. The results showed superior performance in large-scale networks. However, the model requires extensive computational resources and large datasets for training.

Liu et al. (2022) proposed a reinforcement learning-based resource allocation framework integrated with GNN-based traffic prediction. The model predicts network traffic using GNN and then applies reinforcement learning to optimize resource allocation decisions. The results demonstrated improved energy efficiency and reduced network congestion. However, the integration of multiple AI techniques increases system complexity and requires careful coordination between modules. Chen et al. (2023) introduced an optimized attention-based long-range CNN combined with GNN for traffic prediction in 6G networks. The model enhances temporal feature extraction using attention-guided dilated convolution and captures spatial dependencies through graph structures. The results showed significant improvements in prediction accuracy and resource allocation efficiency. However, the model requires high computational power and optimized hardware for real-time implementation.

Wang et al. (2023) proposed an adaptive hybrid spatial–temporal graph neural network (AHSTGNN) for wireless traffic prediction in 6G networks. The model combines graph convolution for spatial dependencies and temporal convolution for sequential patterns. The results showed improved prediction accuracy and enhanced network performance. However, the model requires extensive training data and computational resources. Liu et al. (2023) developed a spatial–temporal cross-attention graph convolutional network (STCA-GCN) for traffic prediction and resource allocation. The model integrates cross-attention mechanisms to capture interactions between spatial and temporal features. The results demonstrated improved energy efficiency and resource utilization. However, the model complexity increases training time and computational cost.

Jiang et al. (2023) introduced a long-range CNN model with optimized attention mechanisms for traffic forecasting. The model uses dilated convolution layers to capture long-term dependencies and attention to enhance feature selection. The study showed significant improvements in prediction accuracy. However, parameter tuning is required for optimal performance. Zhao et al. (2023) proposed a Graph Attention Network (GAT)-based resource allocation framework for 6G wireless systems. The model dynamically assigns weights to network nodes, improving decision-making efficiency. The results demonstrated better load balancing and energy efficiency. However, scalability remains a challenge in ultra-dense networks.

Guo et al. (2023) developed a multi-agent reinforcement learning framework integrated with GNN for cooperative traffic prediction and resource allocation. The model enables multiple network entities to coordinate decisions. The results showed improved system performance and scalability. However, communication overhead among agents is a key limitation. Sun et al. (2023) introduced an AI-driven traffic prediction model combining GNN and attention-based CNN for dynamic network management. The model improves feature extraction and enhances prediction accuracy. However, it requires large-scale datasets and high computational resources.

Zhang et al. (2023) proposed a multi-scale graph neural network with hierarchical attention for large-scale traffic prediction. The model captures both local and global dependencies in the network. The results showed superior performance compared to baseline models. However, the model complexity increases training time. Chen et al. (2023) developed an optimized attention-based GNN framework for intelligent resource allocation in 6G networks. The model enhances decision-making accuracy and reduces energy consumption. However, the model requires advanced hardware for real-time deployment.

Zhou et al. (2023) introduced a deep reinforcement learning-based resource allocation strategy integrated with GNN-based traffic prediction. The model dynamically adapts to network conditions, improving energy efficiency and system performance. However, training complexity remains a major challenge. Li et al. (2023) proposed a comprehensive AI-based framework combining GNN, attention mechanisms, and long-range CNN for traffic prediction and resource allocation in 6G networks. The model demonstrated superior performance in terms of accuracy, latency reduction, and energy efficiency. The study concludes that hybrid AI architectures are highly effective for next-generation wireless systems.

Comparative Table

No.	Author (Year)	Technique Used	Key Focus	Advantages	Limitations
1	Hu et al. (2020)	GNN + RL	Traffic prediction	Adaptive learning	Training cost
2	Wang et al. (2023)	ST-GNN + CNN	Traffic prediction	High accuracy	Data requirement
3	Liu et al. (2023)	GCN + Attention	Resource allocation	Better efficiency	Complexity
4	Rezazadeh et al. (2023)	Explainable GNN	Resource allocation	Transparency	Computation cost
5	Mehrabian (2023)	GNN	Traffic modeling	Strong topology learning	Scalability
6	Yu et al. (2021)	STGCN	Traffic prediction	Spatial-temporal modeling	Limited long-range
7	Wu et al. (2021)	Graph WaveNet	Long-range prediction	Adaptive graph	High computation
8	Zhang et al. (2021)	Attention GNN	Feature extraction	Improved accuracy	Overhead
9	Guo et al. (2022)	GAT	Resource optimization	Dynamic weighting	Data dependency
10	Chen et al. (2022)	GNN + CNN	Hybrid prediction	Better performance	Complexity
11	Bai et al. (2022)	AGCRN	Traffic forecasting	Adaptive structure	Weak long-range
12	Wu et al. (2022)	Attention GNN	Feature learning	High accuracy	Computation cost
13	Li et al. (2022)	GNN + LSTM + Attention	Temporal modeling	Robust prediction	High cost
14	Jiang et al. (2023)	Long-range CNN	Temporal dependency	Accurate prediction	Parameter tuning
15	Zhao et al. (2023)	GAT	Resource allocation	Energy efficiency	Scalability

16	Kim et al. (2022)	ST-GAT	Traffic prediction	Adaptive learning	High complexity
17	Park et al. (2022)	GNN + CNN	Hybrid modeling	Improved accuracy	Training time
18	Zhou et al. (2022)	Multi-scale GNN	Large-scale prediction	Better performance	Resource intensive
19	Liu et al. (2022)	GNN + RL	Resource allocation	Efficient decision	Complex system
20	Chen et al. (2023)	Attention CNN + GNN	Hybrid model	High efficiency	Hardware need
21	Wang et al. (2023)	AHSTGNN	Traffic prediction	Adaptive model	Data heavy
22	Liu et al. (2023)	Cross-attention GNN	Resource allocation	Improved QoS	Complexity
23	Jiang et al. (2023)	CNN + Attention	Long-range prediction	Accurate	Tuning required
24	Zhao et al. (2023)	GAT	Resource optimization	Efficient	Scalability
25	Guo et al. (2023)	MARL + GNN	Cooperative learning	Better utilization	Overhead
26	Sun et al. (2023)	AI Hybrid	Traffic prediction	High performance	Data need
27	Zhang et al. (2023)	Multi-scale GNN	Large networks	Strong modeling	Complexity
28	Chen et al. (2023)	Optimized GNN	Resource allocation	Energy efficient	Hardware cost
29	Zhou et al. (2023)	DRL + GNN	Adaptive allocation	Dynamic learning	Training cost
30	Li et al. (2023)	Hybrid AI (GNN+CNN)	Full optimization	Best performance	High complexity

Comparative Analysis

The comparative evaluation of 30 studies conducted between 2020 and 2023 reveals a clear evolution in traffic prediction and resource allocation techniques for 6G wireless systems. Initially, research efforts focused on standalone Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) and spatial–temporal models such as STGCN, which effectively captured spatial dependencies in network traffic. Studies like Yu et al. (2021) demonstrated that incorporating graph structures significantly improved prediction accuracy compared to traditional machine learning models. However, these early approaches struggled to capture long-range temporal dependencies, limiting their performance in highly dynamic environments. To address these limitations, researchers introduced hybrid architectures combining GNNs with Long-Range Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and attention mechanisms. Models such as Graph WaveNet (Wu et al., 2021) and attention-based GNN frameworks (Zhang et al., 2021) improved the ability to capture both spatial and temporal patterns. The integration of attention mechanisms allowed models to focus on important features, thereby enhancing prediction accuracy and reducing noise. However, these improvements came at the cost of increased computational complexity and higher training requirements.

In 2022, the research trend shifted toward multi-objective optimization and hybrid AI frameworks. Studies like Guo et al. (2022) and Liu et al. (2022) integrated reinforcement learning with GNN-based traffic prediction to enable dynamic resource allocation. These approaches improved energy efficiency and network performance by enabling real-time decision-making. Additionally, models such as AGCRN and multi-scale GNNs enhanced scalability and adaptability in large-scale networks. The year 2023 marked the emergence of highly advanced hybrid models combining GNN, attention mechanisms, and long-range CNN architectures. These models, such as AHSTGNN (Wang et al., 2023) and cross-attention GNN frameworks (Liu et al., 2023), demonstrated superior performance in both traffic prediction and resource allocation. Furthermore, the integration of multi-agent reinforcement learning (MARL) enabled cooperative decision-making in complex network environments, improving overall system efficiency.

Despite these advancements, several challenges remain. The increasing complexity of hybrid models leads to higher computational costs and longer training times, making real-time deployment difficult. Additionally, these models require large datasets for effective training, raising concerns about data availability and privacy. Scalability in ultra-dense 6G networks also remains a critical issue. Overall, the analysis indicates that hybrid AI architectures combining GNN, attention mechanisms, and long-range CNN represent the most effective solutions for traffic prediction and resource allocation in 6G systems. Future research should focus on developing lightweight, scalable, and energy-efficient models to enable practical deployment in real-world environments.

Discussion

The analysis of recent studies on Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) combined with optimized attention-based long-range Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for traffic prediction and resource allocation in 6G wireless systems highlights the growing importance of hybrid artificial intelligence models. These approaches effectively capture both spatial and temporal dependencies in network traffic, enabling accurate prediction and proactive resource management. In particular, attention mechanisms enhance feature selection by focusing on relevant spatial–temporal patterns, while long-range CNNs improve the modeling of extended temporal dependencies.

Furthermore, the integration of reinforcement learning with GNN-based traffic prediction has enabled dynamic and adaptive resource allocation strategies. These AI-driven approaches outperform traditional models in terms of prediction accuracy, energy efficiency, and network performance. However, several challenges remain, including high computational complexity, large data requirements, and scalability issues in ultra-dense 6G environments. The deployment of such models in real-time systems also requires efficient hardware and optimization techniques. Additionally, privacy and security concerns arise due to the reliance on large-scale data for training. Therefore, future research should focus on developing lightweight, scalable, and privacy-preserving models that can operate efficiently in real-world 6G networks while maintaining high prediction accuracy and optimal resource utilization.

Conclusion

This paper presented a comprehensive review of Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) integrated with optimized attention-based long-range Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for traffic prediction and resource allocation in 6G wireless systems. The rapid evolution of 6G networks, characterized by ultra-dense connectivity, heterogeneous architectures, and dynamic user behaviour, requires intelligent and adaptive models capable of managing complex traffic patterns and efficient resource utilization. The review systematically analyzed recent studies published between 2020 and 2023, highlighting the transition from conventional machine learning and standalone spatial–temporal GNN models toward advanced hybrid architectures. Early models effectively captured spatial dependencies but showed limitations in learning long-range temporal relationships. To overcome these challenges, researchers introduced hybrid frameworks combining GNNs, long-range CNNs, and attention mechanisms, significantly improving prediction accuracy, feature extraction, and network adaptability. Attention mechanisms enabled selective focus on important traffic features, while long-range CNNs efficiently captured temporal dependencies through dilated convolution strategies.

The review also emphasized the growing role of reinforcement learning and multi-agent learning approaches in dynamic resource allocation for 6G systems. By leveraging predicted traffic patterns, these intelligent frameworks improve bandwidth allocation, load balancing, energy efficiency, and latency reduction in real time. Integration with emerging 6G technologies such as network slicing, edge intelligence, and ultra-reliable low-latency communication (URLLC) further enhances intelligent network management capabilities. However, challenges including computational complexity, scalability, privacy concerns, and real-time deployment remain critical research issues. Future work should focus on lightweight AI models, federated learning, edge AI, and interpretable deep learning frameworks to support scalable, secure, and energy-efficient next-generation wireless communication systems.

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