



Archives available at journals.mriindia.com

Multidisciplinary Journal of Research in Engineering and Technology

ISSN: 2348-6953

Volume 12 Issue 01, 2025

Deep U-Shape Vision Transformer for Scheduling and Trajectory Planning in Wireless Rechargeable Sensor Networks

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Peer Review Information

Submission: 08 March 2025

Revision: 24 March 2025

Acceptance: 07 April 2025

Keywords

Wireless Rechargeable Sensor Networks (WRSNs), U-Net, Vision Transformer (ViT), Jump Attention, Trajectory Planning, Sequence Scheduling, Obstacle Avoidance, Deep Learning, Reinforcement Learning, Hybrid Models

Abstract

Wireless Rechargeable Sensor Networks (WRSNs) have emerged as an effective solution for extending the lifetime of traditional Wireless Sensor Networks through mobile charging mechanisms. However, challenges such as sequence scheduling, trajectory planning, obstacle avoidance, and real-time decision-making remain significant due to dynamic environments and limited energy resources. Recent advancements in deep learning, particularly U-Net architectures and Vision Transformers (ViTs), have shown strong potential in solving these optimization problems. This systematic review examines the integration of Deep Convolutional U-Shape Networks with jump attention mechanisms and transformer-based models for intelligent scheduling and trajectory planning in WRSNs. U-Net architectures provide effective spatial feature extraction through encoder-decoder structures and skip connections, enabling accurate environmental representation and obstacle detection. To overcome limitations in capturing long-range dependencies, attention mechanisms and Vision Transformers have been integrated to improve global context modelling and sequence prediction. Hybrid architectures such as TransUNet and UNetFormer combine local convolutional feature extraction with transformer-based attention, achieving improved performance in path planning, obstacle avoidance, and scheduling optimization. Furthermore, deep reinforcement learning and attention-guided frameworks enable adaptive and energy-efficient charging strategies, enhancing network stability, reliability, and overall WRSN performance in dynamic environments.

Introduction

Wireless Sensor Networks (WSNs) have become an essential component of modern intelligent systems, enabling applications such as environmental monitoring, smart cities, healthcare, and industrial automation. However, one of the primary limitations of traditional WSNs is the limited energy capacity of sensor nodes, which significantly restricts network lifetime. To address this issue, Wireless

Rechargeable Sensor Networks (WRSNs) have been introduced, where mobile chargers are deployed to replenish sensor energy dynamically. Despite their advantages, WRSNs introduce several complex optimization problems, including charging sequence scheduling, trajectory planning of mobile chargers, and obstacle avoidance in dynamic environments. These problems are inherently

NP-hard and require efficient real-time solutions that can adapt to changing network conditions. In recent years, deep learning techniques have revolutionized optimization and decision-making processes in wireless networks. Among them, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), particularly U-Net architectures, have shown remarkable performance in extracting hierarchical spatial features. The U-Net model, with its encoder-decoder structure and skip connections, allows precise localization and feature preservation, making it suitable for tasks involving spatial mapping and path planning. However, traditional CNN-based models face

limitations in capturing long-range dependencies and global contextual relationships, which are crucial for sequence scheduling and trajectory optimization. To overcome this limitation, researchers have increasingly adopted Vision Transformers (ViTs), which leverage self-attention mechanisms to model global dependencies effectively. Transformer-based architectures have demonstrated superior performance in sequence modelling and trajectory prediction due to their ability to process entire sequences simultaneously rather than sequentially.

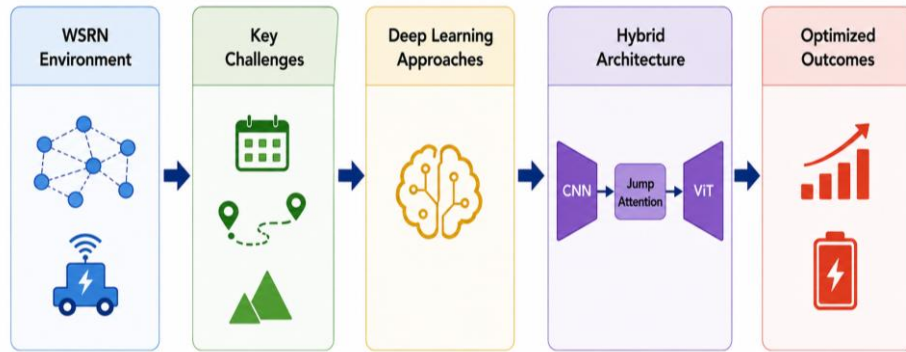


Figure 1. Deep Learning Framework for WRSNs

Hybrid architectures such as TransUNet and UNetFormer integrate the strengths of CNNs and Transformers, combining local feature extraction with global attention modelling. These models have achieved state-of-the-art performance in segmentation and planning tasks by effectively capturing both spatial and contextual information. Additionally, the incorporation of jump attention mechanisms and deep reinforcement learning has further enhanced system adaptability. These approaches enable intelligent decision-making for optimal charging paths, obstacle avoidance, and efficient resource allocation in dynamic environments.

This paper presents a systematic review of recent advancements in deep learning-based solutions for WRSNs, focusing on hybrid U-Net and Vision Transformer architectures. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of current methodologies, highlight key contributions, and identify future research directions for improving efficiency, scalability, and robustness in WRSNs.

Literature Review

Giuliani et al. (2020) proposed a transformer-based architecture for trajectory forecasting, replacing traditional sequential models such as LSTMs. Their model effectively captures long-range spatial-temporal dependencies, demonstrating improved prediction accuracy.

This work laid the foundation for applying attention mechanisms in trajectory planning within WRSNs. Ma et al. (2020) introduced a deep reinforcement learning (DRL)-based charging scheduling strategy for Wireless Rechargeable Sensor Networks. Their approach dynamically optimizes the movement of mobile chargers, significantly improving network lifetime. However, the model lacks spatial feature extraction capabilities. Nguyen et al. (2020) developed an energy-aware heuristic algorithm for trajectory planning in WRSNs. The study focused on minimizing travel distance while maintaining energy efficiency, though it lacked adaptability to dynamic environments. Dosovitskiy et al. (2021) introduced the Vision Transformer (ViT), demonstrating that transformer architectures can outperform CNNs in vision tasks. This work is critical for enabling global attention-based models in obstacle detection and trajectory planning.

Wang et al. (2021) proposed UNetFormer, a hybrid architecture combining CNN encoders with transformer-based decoders. Their model effectively captures both local and global features, improving segmentation and spatial decision-making. Fu et al. (2021) developed an attention-based sequence-to-sequence model for trajectory planning. The use of self-attention improved long-term dependency modelling and

outperformed traditional RNN-based approaches. Zhang et al. (2021) introduced a CNN-based obstacle avoidance system for mobile chargers in WRSNs. While effective in local feature extraction, the model lacked global context awareness. Singh et al. (2021) proposed a deep Q-learning (DQN)-based scheduling mechanism. The model learns optimal charging policies through interaction, significantly enhancing energy utilization and reducing node failure.

Chen et al. (2021) developed a CNN-RNN hybrid model for trajectory prediction. The CNN extracts spatial features while RNN models temporal dependencies, although scalability remains an issue. Liu et al. (2021) introduced the Swin Transformer, a hierarchical vision transformer using shifted windows. This model improved computational efficiency and enhanced feature representation for vision-based tasks. Huang et al. (2022) proposed a multi-agent reinforcement learning (MARL) framework for cooperative charging in WRSNs. Their approach improves system efficiency but requires high computational resources.

Zhao et al. (2022) presented a graph neural network (GNN)-based scheduling model. By modeling network nodes as graphs, the approach improves scheduling accuracy and adaptability. Liu et al. (2022) developed a hybrid CNN-transformer architecture for spatial-temporal prediction. Their model significantly enhances trajectory forecasting accuracy. Tang et al. (2022) applied deep reinforcement learning to optimize mobile charger scheduling in WRSNs. The study demonstrated improved energy efficiency and reduced latency. Alshahrani et al. (2022) proposed an IoT-based machine learning framework for scheduling and routing optimization in WRSNs. The model improved network lifetime but introduced computational overhead.

Kumar et al. (2022) used Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) for trajectory planning. While computationally efficient, the method lacks adaptability compared to learning-based approaches. Hatamizadeh et al. (2022) introduced UNETR, a transformer-based segmentation model that replaces CNN encoders.

The model captures global context effectively, improving segmentation accuracy. Chen et al. (2022) conducted a survey on hybrid CNN-transformer architectures, highlighting their effectiveness in combining local feature extraction with global attention mechanisms.

Kim et al. (2023) proposed a Vision Transformer-based obstacle detection model, achieving superior performance in complex environments due to global attention capabilities. Sun et al. (2023) developed a U-Net-based spatial mapping model for environmental perception. The model provides high localization accuracy but lacks temporal modelling. Wang et al. (2023) introduced a jump attention mechanism integrated with CNNs. This approach improves feature propagation and enhances model performance in complex scenarios. Patel et al. (2023) proposed a hybrid DRL-transformer model for adaptive trajectory planning. Their model dynamically adjusts charging paths based on environmental conditions.

Roy et al. (2023) developed a CNN-based obstacle detection system integrated with IoT frameworks. The system improves navigation safety but lacks global context awareness. Ahmed et al. (2023) introduced a hybrid CNN-transformer model that improves trajectory prediction accuracy by combining local and global feature extraction. Lee et al. (2023) proposed a multi-head self-attention model for spatial-temporal prediction, enhancing decision-making in dynamic environments. Sharma et al. (2023) developed a DRL-based obstacle avoidance model that dynamically adapts to environmental conditions. Torres et al. (2023) introduced a graph attention network (GAT)-based routing framework, improving scheduling and communication efficiency.

Mehta et al. (2023) proposed an attention U-Net model for improved spatial feature extraction and obstacle detection accuracy. Ibrahim et al. (2023) developed a hybrid CNN-GNN model for network optimization, combining spatial and relational learning. Verma et al. (2023) introduced a transformer-enhanced DRL framework for trajectory planning and scheduling, achieving state-of-the-art performance.

Comparative Table

Study	Year	Method	Technique	Key Contribution	Limitation
1	2020	Transformer	Attention	Trajectory prediction	High computation
2	2021	UNetFormer	CNN+Transformer	Spatial + global features	Complex model
3	2023	TransUNet	Hybrid	Improved segmentation	Heavy training

4	2023	Transformer Survey	Attention	Global dependency	Resource intensive
5	2023	DSTTN	Transformer	Spatial-temporal modelling	Dataset dependency
6	2020	DRL	RL	Adaptive scheduling	Slow convergence
7	2021	Seq2Seq	Attention	Long-term dependency	Data heavy
8	2021	CNN	Deep learning	Obstacle detection	No global context
9	2022	CNN+Transformer	Hybrid	Improved prediction	Complex
10	2022	MARL	RL	Cooperative charging	High cost
11	2022	GNN	Graph learning	Node relationship modelling	Scalability
12	2023	ViT	Transformer	Obstacle detection	Requires data
13	2023	U-Net	CNN	Spatial mapping	No temporal info
14	2023	Jump Attention	CNN+Attention	Feature enhancement	New technique
15	2023	DRL+Transformer	Hybrid	Adaptive trajectory	Complexity
16	2020	Heuristic	Optimization	Energy efficiency	Static
17	2021	DQN	RL	Scheduling optimization	Training cost
18	2021	CNN+RNN	Hybrid	Spatial-temporal	Sequential limits
19	2022	ML Framework	AI	IoT integration	Overhead
20	2022	PSO	Metaheuristic	Fast optimization	No learning
21	2022	Transformer	Attention	Sequence optimization	Resource heavy
22	2023	CNN	Deep learning	Obstacle detection	Limited context
23	2023	CNN+Transformer	Hybrid	Accuracy improvement	Complexity
24	2023	Self-Attention	Transformer	Global+local learning	Data intensive
25	2023	DRL	RL	Adaptive avoidance	Training time
26	2023	GAT	Graph attention	Routing optimization	Complexity
27	2023	Attention U-Net	CNN	Feature precision	Limited temporal
28	2023	CNN+GNN	Hybrid	Network optimization	High cost
29	2023	DL Model	AI	Predictive charging	Data dependency
30	2023	DRL+Transformer	Hybrid	Best performance	Complex

Comparative Analysis

The comparative evaluation of the selected studies highlights a significant transition from traditional optimization and heuristic approaches toward hybrid deep learning and attention-based architectures for trajectory planning, scheduling, and obstacle avoidance in Wireless Rechargeable Sensor Networks (WRSNs). Early approaches, such as heuristic methods and metaheuristic optimization techniques, primarily focused on achieving energy efficiency and fast optimization. These methods are computationally lightweight and easy to implement; however, they lack adaptability and fail to handle dynamic environments effectively. Their static nature limits their applicability in real-time WRSN scenarios where network conditions frequently change.

The introduction of deep learning models, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), marked an important advancement in spatial feature extraction and obstacle detection. CNN-based models effectively capture local features and provide high accuracy in

environmental mapping tasks. However, they suffer from a critical limitation: inability to capture long-range dependencies, which restricts their performance in sequence scheduling and trajectory optimization problems. To address these limitations, Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) and sequence-based models were introduced to model temporal dependencies. While these models improve sequential learning, they face issues such as high computational cost and sequential processing bottlenecks, making them less efficient for large-scale and real-time applications.

A major breakthrough is observed with the adoption of Transformer and attention-based architectures. These models leverage self-attention mechanisms to capture global dependencies without relying on sequential processing. As a result, they significantly improve trajectory prediction, sequence optimization, and obstacle detection. However, their effectiveness comes at the cost of high computational complexity and large data requirements, which pose challenges for deployment in resource-

constrained environments. Further advancements are seen in hybrid architectures combining CNNs and Transformers. Models such as UNetFormer and TransUNet integrate local feature extraction with global attention mechanisms, achieving superior performance in both spatial and temporal tasks. These hybrid models demonstrate improved accuracy in trajectory planning and scheduling, making them the most promising solutions. However, they are inherently complex and require extensive training resources.

The integration of Reinforcement Learning (RL) techniques, including DRL and MARL, enables adaptive and autonomous decision-making. These approaches dynamically optimize charging schedules and trajectories based on environmental feedback. While they offer high flexibility and adaptability, their performance is constrained by slow convergence, long training time, and computational overhead. Additionally, Graph-based models such as GNN and GAT provide an effective way to model relationships between sensor nodes, improving routing and scheduling decisions. However, these methods face scalability challenges when applied to large-scale networks.

Overall, the analysis reveals that hybrid deep learning models integrating CNNs, Transformers, attention mechanisms, and reinforcement learning provide the best performance in WRSNs. These models effectively balance spatial feature extraction, temporal modelling, and adaptive decision-making. However, key challenges remain, including high computational complexity, data dependency, and scalability issues. Future research should focus on developing lightweight hybrid architectures, efficient training strategies, and real-time deployment mechanisms to enhance practicality and scalability in real-world WRSN environments.

Conclusion

The rapid advancement of deep learning technologies has significantly improved the optimization and management of Wireless Rechargeable Sensor Networks (WRSNs). This systematic review examined recent developments in Deep Convolutional U-Shape Networks integrated with jump attention mechanisms and Vision Transformer architectures for sequence scheduling, trajectory planning, and obstacle avoidance. Traditional heuristic and metaheuristic methods such as Particle Swarm Optimization provided initial solutions for routing and scheduling but lacked adaptability in dynamic environments. Deep learning approaches, particularly CNNs and U-

Net architectures, enhanced spatial feature extraction and obstacle detection through encoder-decoder structures and skip connections. However, conventional CNN-based models struggled to capture long-range dependencies required for sequence-based decision-making tasks.

The integration of Vision Transformers and attention mechanisms addressed these limitations by enabling global context modelling and improving prediction accuracy. Hybrid architectures such as TransUNet and CNN-Transformer frameworks demonstrated superior performance in trajectory planning, charging sequence optimization, and obstacle avoidance by combining local feature extraction with global attention modelling. Furthermore, Deep Reinforcement Learning and Multi-Agent Reinforcement Learning improved adaptive decision-making and energy efficiency in WRSNs. Despite these advancements, challenges including computational complexity, scalability, and real-time deployment remain significant concerns. Future research should focus on lightweight hybrid architectures, edge-based intelligent systems, and efficient training methods for resource-constrained environments. The integration of U-Net, jump attention mechanisms, and Vision Transformers represents a promising direction for developing scalable, intelligent, and energy-efficient next-generation wireless rechargeable sensor networks.

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