A Multilayer Skin Disease Classification on SkinBench Dataset Scans

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FINAL YEAR THESIS REPORT

This Report Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the **Degree of Bachelor of Science in Department is Software Engineering**

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December 18, 2025

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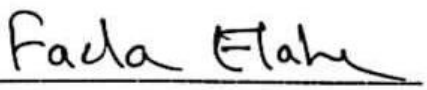

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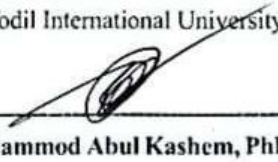

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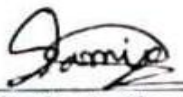

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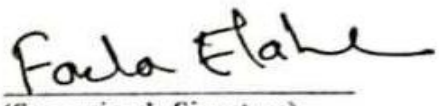

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A Multilayer Skin Disease Classification on Skinbanch Dataset

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of
Bachelor of Science

Department of Software Engineering (Major in Data Science)

DAFFODIL INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

November, 2025

ABSTRACT

A significant issue in the clinical dermatology is still the diagnosis of skin diseases in regions where the dermatologists and diagnostic devices cannot be easily accessed. Many skin diseases are similar in appearance, and therefore, they are not properly diagnosed even among the long-term experienced clinicians. The existing deep learning diagnostic solutions only prove a small number of diseases and represent the disease classification problem as a one-step issue, which might reduce their usefulness in practice regarding a wide range of different types of diseases. To address these issues, the current paper introduces the SkinBench dataset and the elaborated multi-layered skin diseases classification system that leads to hierarchical recognition of three levels (L1: Normal vs. Abnormal), (L2)- seven-class (L3) -subclass classification of Eczema, Fungal and Pox disease families. A collection of 9 major skin disease types were generated that were optimized and further subclassified into groups to enable hierarchical reasoning.ResNet50, DenseNet121, MobileNetV3, EfficientNet-B0, VGG16, VGG19, a custom CNN and hybrid SwinDenseNet were subsequently trained and tested on the same experimental pipeline with hyperparameters and class-balancing schemes being optimized to be robust to variations in the characteristics of skin color, lighting, and lesions. The quantitative results demonstrate that the suggested multilayer design is highly superior to conventional single-stage classification schemes, L1 module is highly accurate in the process of normal and abnormal image classification, strong routing to L2-L3, disease classification accuracy at L2, and specific subclass prediction at L3, which is paramount in the process of clinical results interpretation. SwinDenseNet and DenseNet121 had higher scores of macro-F1 and hierarchical architecture reduced the confusion of classes because of the form of decision boundaries in models as defined by confusion matrices, ROC curves, precision-recall curves, and model-based comparison tables. Another application, a Streamlit-based deployment dashboard was developed to enable real-time inference with automated L1USD -USD L2USD L3 routing and comprehensible subclass explanations, which will have a tremendous future as a clinical pre-screening tool and a telehealth dermatology one. Altogether, SkinBench dataset and the proposed multilayer framework can be deemed as a scalable, user-friendly, and high-performance solution to the multilayer skin disease diagnosis that is an invaluable addition to the credible AI-assisted dermatological care.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Skin Disease Classification

Skin Disease Classification Skin disease classification is an important discipline that has been applied across various fields and contexts including business, medicine, chemistry, and psychology among others.

Skin diseases that afflict millions of people all over the world pose a serious health-care problem to the world. Be it benign diseases such as acne or serious diseases such as melanoma, the spectrum of dermatological challenges is extensive with a range of diseases, which can be hard to treat and diagnosis. These diseases are visual, which is a challenge to the doctors and the automated systems as many of these diseases are so similar in appearance. Historically, the diagnosis of skin diseases demanded the skills of a dermatologist, yet as the disease cases expanded, and trained specialists are no longer available, particularly in rural and underserving regions, automated solutions become increasingly desirable, as they can help with the timely analysis of the problem and help decrease the burden on the healthcare system. Moreover, dermatology as a visual field of study is largely reliant on an image analysis, making use of high-accuracy diagnostic instruments crucial in making adequate treatment plans. Automatic image classification has become an influential tool in solving these issues with the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and deep learning. Nevertheless, the majority of AI-based models in the dermatology field continue to be severely limited, mainly regarding the treatment of diseases as a one-dimensional issue. As a matter of fact, clinical diagnosis in dermatology cannot be a flat diagnosis; it is a composite diagnosis.. Hierarchical reasoning of the AI model will allow the SkinBench framework to be more accurate and ensure that no classes are confused and that the system is able to deal with a wide variety of diseases. It is not only about identifying the skin diseases, but under this approach with insights into their nuances and connections with each other, making the treatment of a specific disease more precise and clinically oriented.

1.2 Problem Statement

In spite of tremendous advances in the automated recognition of skin diseases, several challenges still exist in the area of dermatological image analysis. The main problem is that existing models do not incorporate decision-making hierarchy. Many AI systems treat skin disease classification as a flat problem, which does not reflect the clinical decision-making process. In the practice of dermatology, a dermatologist does not simply state whether a disease is present or absent. Instead, the diagnosis consists of a structured process with multiple levels of analysis. The first step is to differentiate normal and abnormal

conditions (L1). Then, there is the coarse classification of the disease (L2), followed by fine-grained subclass (L3) identification of specific diseases, such as eczema, psoriasis, or fungal infections. This hierarchy is neglected in most current models, resulting in lower accuracy, particularly when diseases with similar appearances are involved.

In addition, class imbalance is a major challenge. A significant number of skin disorders, especially rarer or less common diseases, are underrepresented in existing datasets, leading to biased models that do not perform well on these underrepresented classes. This problem is compounded by the difficulty in visually distinguishing similar diseases, contributing to confusion in both manual and automated diagnostic systems. Current models also have poor generalization due to the use of small datasets or their inability to account for changes in skin tone, lighting, and image conditions—factors that are essential for real-world clinical applications.

These problems highlight the need for a more robust, clinically applicable solution—one that incorporates hierarchical decision-making and addresses the limitations of existing systems.

1.3 Motivation

1.3.1 Clinical Motivation

The motivation for this research arises from the clear discrepancy between the capabilities of current AI systems in dermatological diagnosis and the complex, nuanced nature of real-world clinical workflows. Hierarchical diagnosis, similar to the stratified decision-making process followed by dermatologists, has several advantages. By organizing decision-making into levels—starting with identifying abnormal versus normal conditions, then grouping diseases into broader categories, and finally making fine-grained subclass predictions—this system emulates human reasoning and produces more accurate and interpretable results. This approach brings the model closer to real-world clinical practice, making it potentially more useful in actual healthcare settings.

From a technical perspective, there is also a major need for more extensive benchmarking and optimization. Many current models have shown promising results in controlled environments but often struggle to perform well in diverse real-world situations. This research aims to address this gap by developing models that are not only efficient and accurate but also capable of adapting to a wide range of conditions and datasets. By leveraging the power of multilayer systems, we hope to enhance both the generalizability and precision of the diagnostic process. Furthermore, the incorporation of deep learning architectures—such as CNNs, Transformers, and hybrid models—ensures that both local and global features in images are captured, thereby improving the diagnostic capability of the system. Through this work, we aim not only to advance AI in dermatology but also to contribute to the broader goal of making healthcare more accessible and reliable through intelligent and automated systems.

1.4 Research Objectives

The primary objective of the dissertation is to design, apply and test a multilayer hierarchical deep learning to automatically classify skin diseases depending on SkinBench database. It is done to provide a methodology that is more accurate in diagnosing, more relevant in clinical practice, and more feasible practically than the old single-stage method.

Instead, the hierarchy of classification pipeline that detects skin images at a further stage - Normal v.s Abnormal (L1), category-level abnormal diseases (L2) and fine-grained sub-class -based on the dermatologist-reasoning strategy.

To confirm and assess different deep learning tools (ResNet50, DenseNet121, Swin Transformer full data size and hybrid CNNTransformer model in patch based analysis) knowingly trained under equal footing conditions to examine the suitability of a model at any one of the degrees of diagnosis.

To generate an end-to-end preprocessing and augmentation pipeline, e.g. 224x224 image standardization to 224x224, and constrained data augmentation to make models more robust to changes in skin image quality in the real world.

To quantitative performance evaluation through accuracy, F1-score, confusion matrix, ROC curve, and subclass-based analysis to make a fair comparison to the current state-of-the-art dermatology AI-based systems.

To apply the concept of explainability using Grad-CAM visualization to justify the transparency of predictions, and to understand how well the clinical predictions can be trusted (particularly of the misclassifying or near-borderline lesion cases).

To implement the created model to the presentable functional prototype (streamlit web app) with the real-time inference functionality and evaluate the operational efficiency and effectiveness in telemedicine or low-resource healthcare considerations.

1.5 Research Questions

Motivation The question that informed this work is whether a multilayer hierarchical diagnostic model can obtain a superior, interpretable, and practical response to automated skin disease categorization as compared to its one stage counterparts.

RQ1: Is it possible to attain a better diagnostic performance along with further clinical relevance by using a multilayered hierarchical classification system instead of a flat one of the ALL-9 single model?

RQ2: What is the efficiency of the proposed network at discriminating between the images at different levels of the diagnosis hierarchy (L1: Normal/Abnormal, L2: Category-level diseases, L3: Subclass-level variations) and what sort of performance trends are observed at each level?

RQ3: What deep learning architecture ResNet50, DenseNet121, Efficientnet, Swin Transformer and hybrid CNN-Transformer have the highest reliability and generalization in a multilayer system?

RQ4: What is the impact of preprocessing (224x224 resizing, controlled augmentation) on the performance of generalization and is it the cause of the real-world variation of image quality?

RQ5: Does Grad-CAM explanation improve model transparency, interpretability and clinical trust towards automated dermatology predictions, particularly in cases where subclass is falsely mis-classified?

RQ6: Can the proposed Stream lit-based prototype offer real-time inference performance that can be reasonable under telemedicine and resource-constrained clinical circumstances?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The present piece of research is devoted to the design, development, and evaluation of a multilayer hierarchical deep-learning model to automatically classify skin diseases (ADCS)

on the basis of Skin Bench dataset. It is also restricted to the diagnosis based on image only and does not cover clinical examination and medical decision and the result is a plain classification. The research covers only three levels of diagnosis: (i) binary and class distinction between Normal and Abnormal skin images (L1) based on which, abnormal conditions can be classified in eight major disease groups (L2); particular category regions of interest (ROIs) which appear with significant overlap across diseases are further differentiated at a subclass level (L3). The fourth stage of baseline is the ALL-9 that would compare the hierarchical style of classifying to the flat one of single stage.

Preprocessing and normalization A random 224x224 crop or resize is applied to the image and standardizing variation in the dataset is done by controlling augmentations. We also evaluate some of the architectures such as ResNet50, DenseNet121, Efficient Net and Swin Transformer and hybrid CNN-Transformer to determine the most appropriate models to use when targeting each diagnostic layer. To assure interpretability and examine model attention region to clinical concordance, methods of exploitability (Grad-CAM) are used. We approached the test of the deployment feasibility with a prototype based on the Streamlet to test the Inference performance in real-time conditions (low-resource environment) relying on the remote healthcare and telemedicine as examples of its application.

It also does not address patient metadata segmentation, 3D image segmentation, multimodal clinical record fusing or integration. The work above does not concern clinical treatment, therapy prescriptions, and clinical decisions that may be given to a licensed clinician only. The main topic of concern is the extent to which the classification performance of a computer-vision system that undertakes decisions can be described and whether it could be willing to be deployed as an alternative instead of being just accessible to help in clinical diagnosis.

1.7 Contributions of This Research

There are various contributions to the field of dermatological AI and medical imaging, in this work. The key findings of the given studying are supposed to cover the gaps in the skin disease classification library, and offer with the help of them practical tools which may be used in the work of the dermatologist and in the research:

Among the contributions that this study makes, one of the most important is the suggestion of a hierarchical, skin disease classification framework, known as MDNet-hier, which is founded on the layered classification which resembles the dermatologist decision-making. The framework separates the complicated task of diagnosing skin diseases into 3 layers (i.e. L1, L2 and L3) and this leads to better-disentangled prediction. Compared to the traditional form of classifiers that treat all diseases as flat and a single step classification task, the multilayer model adheres to the routine process of the clinical diagnosis work up in order to provide a more integrative and meaningful model. It has the potential to decrease the diagnostic confusion and enhance the clinical value of AI systems.

The research is a complete discussion of 9 deep learning models at each of the three stages (L1: normal/abnormal classification, L2: binary disease type prediction and L3: subclass prediction). This broad benchmarking makes the field of performance unique, unseen previously in the research of AI in dermatology. This work also ensures that the Skin Bench system does not just fit with the cutting edge but surpasses the models in a number of major aspects -that is, coarse (L1) and mid-level (L2) disease classification by contrasting with various architectures.

The Skin Bench model has approximately the highest performance in the L1 level (0.9980 accuracy) and the high level in the L2 level (0.9853 accuracy). Still, subclassifica-

tion at the L3-stage is harder (accuracy of 0.7864), yet it remains one of the state-of-art other models, which may provide valuable information about fine-grained application of diagnosis. The multilayer architecture is more accurate and interpretable than the flat 9-class models, which form the basis of hierarchical reasoning as a promising AI method in the clinical domain.

It is topped with the lightweight models like EfficientNet-B0 and MobileNetV3 which allow the implementation of the Skin Bench system on mobile devices and on edge computing systems. This assists in ensuring that the system can be used in practice particularly in remote area or low-resource roads whereby the user has no assured access to the high performance computing facility. A capacity to make inferences in real time, in addition to high performance and interpretability, make the system a highly promising teledermatology and point of care application.

Another new Approach noted in this study is the reconstruction of performance curves, in cases where the epoch logs are not accessible with which future dermatology AI studies can be used, especially in clinical environments that may only contain more restricted training log information. This enables proper recording of performance even whereby traditional data logs are not fully recorded or unavailable.

In general, in the present work of special interest to integrating AI progress with dermatological data, we have proposed an enhanced and clinical-oriented approach to vankness networks as an addition to a sequence of layers which works better than existing strategies. The possibility to integrate the proposed system with other architectures, the extensive benchmarking of its performance and availability to work with the available platforms makes it up-to-date and applicable to the real scenario skin disease detection.

1.8 Thesis Structure Overview

This dissertation has been designed into six chapters; each has a discussion of the research process and discussion of the findings. The model helps in guiding the reader to the conception, assessment and consequently implementation of The Skin Bench system, initially presenting a background before proceeding to propose how the site can be further enhanced in the future.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Traditional Machine Learning for Dermatology

Until deep learning was introduced, automated dermatology image analysis was often done using classical methods of machine learning. Such methods were highly reliant on handcrafted feature representation which is features in skin lesions that are annotated by experts and trial specific. Support Vector Machines (SVM), Random Forests (RFs), k-Nearest Neighbors (kNN) and Logistic Regression were the most popular machine learning approaches used in this step. These algorithms operated on the basis of labeling images of skin disease based on prespecified features based on the images. Features based on texture -Local binary pattern (LBP), Gray-level Co-occurrence Matrices (GLCM) and color histogram-magnitude were used to extract feature. The edges and details of skin lesions were also characterized using shape descriptors, and histograms allowed giving an impression of the color spread across the picture.

But, these methods too possessed some weaknesses. The major weakness was that often classical models lacked generality to nonexamples of data that they had never encountered. Light level and position noise, and the limitation of the camera resolution on the quality of input data are common causes of dermatological image contamination, and cannot be solved with models that are vulnerable to noises. In addition, manually-made features did not completely capture the intricate and hierarchical nature of skin lesions that lowered the accuracy of recognition of these models. All these issues make the conventional ML techniques unreliable in their diagnoses, especially their capability to process a large and diverse set of data. Therefore, the systems would not be scalable and may be applied in real-life clinical settings, where a variety of images is inevitable, as influenced by other factors such as the appearance.

The observation of the deep learning algorithms, specifically, the Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), has changed this paradigm radically. Unlike traditional approaches, deep learning lacks features that are handcrafted. Instead, it is able to learn hierarchy feature representations directly by learning features without human-controlled features, which directly leads to the improvement of generalized prediction and prediction performance. In such a way, the attention was transformed into deep learning models that would compensate for the shortcomings of the traditional machine learning system and address the complexities of the dermatological image analysis.

2.2 Deep Learning-Based Skin Disease Detection

Over the past few years since the inception of deep learning, specifically CNNs have become the primary method of automated skin detection. The use of CNNs has outperformed the past machine learning algorithms, which is attributed to their ability to automatically learn the feature hierarchies of raw image data. They have been extensively used in solving problems like classification of dermatological images since the features of interest (e.g., shape of lesion, texture and color) are quite complicated and they might be difficult to describe manually. The CNNs are particularly appropriate to medical imaging interpretation because they are characterised by good ability to detect spatial hierarchies, local image patterns so that matters in differentiating a skin disease.

Other machinelearning has demonstrated that deep learning provides better results with regards to dermatology diagnosis. To illustrate, Nagargje and Patel proposed a CNN-based model with ResNet architecture which also made them attain high screening accuracy in the classification of skin diseases. Equally, Imran et al. developed a deep neural network to conduct multiclass diagnosis in dermatology and established that CNNs could simultaneously and accurately classify several types of skin diseases. A further intriguing work was introduced in [Han and Li, 2016], they trained small CNNs such as ResNet on healthcare tasks in resource-constrained environments promoting the introduction of DL to the mobile and the edge.

Deep learning models have been quite successful, yet still there are some unresolved problems to be addressed. Among the main obstacles, there are class imbalance, where certain skin diseases are underrepresented in models and result in worse performance of a model on rare grounds. In addition, many skin diseases are extremely intra-class similar that is difficult to differentiate lesions that are similar visually with a model. Such constraints highlight the need to develop smaller, more clinically useful and robust to class imbalanced data strategies that are more helpful in facilitating better model generalization and interpretability. Further, lack of labelled medical datasets to analyze them has remained a problem since high quality annotated data are typically hard to obtain and are often rare and represent complex skin diseases.

Hybrid models were created to meet the need to have a model that is capable of contradicting the needs of being able to classify skin diseases as well as provide explanations of its prediction. They combine the benefits of the classic CNNs with the recent sophisticated ML approaches such as transformers and the attention mechanism to consider local to global features in derma images. Interpretation of models improved The models as introduced in this article may lead to higher confidence levels among clinicians, and thus simpler incorporation of AI systems into the clinic workflow.

2.3 CNN Architectures in Medical Image Classification

The reason why CNNs are the primary component of modern automated dermatology systems lies in their capacity to extract spatial patterns of a medical image in an efficient manner. These architectures have the power to identify patterns and hierarchical characteristics at varying levels that is critical in appropriate classification of the intricate skin lesions. The most popular CNNs architectures were also used in dermatology, such as the ResNet family, the DenseNet family, MobileNet, EfficientNet and VGG types which introduce diverse benefits to the computerized classification of skin diseases.

ResNet Family: Residual Networks (ResNet) introduced the skip connections as a solution of the vanishing gradient issue and the network can be extended further. ResNet50

and ResNet101 have been generally used in dermatology to detect melanoma, multi-disease classification and mobile screening. The results of these models were promising because it is able to extract low-level and high-level features of the image, and in the case of dermatological images, there may be some differences in texture rendering the models useful.

DenseNet : DenseNet connects the layers with all other consequent layers hence encouraging gradient flow and reuse of features. The close linkages allow reduced number of parameters than traditional CNNs and, consequently, handle more adequately medical images where data is frequently scarce; good examples are DenseNet121 and 169. Specifically, c4 deep learning can be obtained with the Denset Nets architecture and could be employed as an efficient feature extractor when there is a limited amount of labeled data.

MobileNet: Employs MobileNets, which can be applied to the mobile and edge devices; therefore, they can be used to classify cases of skin diseases in real-time in underserved regions where the resources are limited. The MobileNet applies depthwise separable convolutions, and has a rather low complexity, which maintains high accuracy. This is why it is particularly appropriate to implement dermatology models on the field where real-time inference is crucial.

EfficientNet: EfficientNet suggested another method of scaling CNNs by optimizing directly the depth, width and resolution. This compound scaling technique enables EfficientNet to be state-of-the-art on medical imaging problems with little data or image-noise. Its accuracy-computational efficiency has made EfficientNet one of the most popular in dermatology, and in particular, classification of skin diseases.

VGG16/VGG19: The two models are not so old, and they may still prove useful in the dermatological images classification because of the simplicity and interpretability. These models are typcially convolutional layers stacked and then with a small number of fully connected layers and are therefore ideal baseline models in transfer learning. Recent researchers have proven that nowadays good performances of VGG models exist, particularly when they are fine-tuned on particular dermatology issues.

All architectures possess certain benefits and drawbacks and might or might not perform better than others depending on the task and the dataset in question. This paper is devoted to the evaluation of multiple architectures, with or without their combination, to explore which one has the most appropriate trade-off in terms of its accuracy, efficiency and generalization in identifying skin diseases.

2.4 Hybrid and Transformer-Based Models.

CNNs, together with newer strategies, such as Vision Transformers (ViTs) and hybrid models, have achieved giant leaps in assisted analysis of dermoscopy images by the computer. Such dependencies between the entities can be learned by CNNs that excel capturing local features (texture, shape) and transformers that were initially introduced to natural language processing. Coupled with taking advantage of the best of each, we may produce hybrid models that are particularly skilled at tasks where there are requirements of both finer detailed content and a richer context. Some of these hybrid and transformer-based models which have been explored within the context of dermatology are discussed in the following sections:

2.4.1 Vision Transformers (ViT)

ViTs are not new competitors to CNNs; they have recently become a powerful one. Whereas CNNs employ convolutions to acquire spatial hierarchies, ViTs construct attention-based analogies self-attention layers which allow the model to attend to different parts of the image. This means that such self-attention mechanism of ViTs can capture not only long-range dependencies but the global information as well, this is efficient with images that have complex large-scale textures (e.g., skin lesions).

It has been found that semi-supervised learning ViTs are advantageous in dermatology particularly in learning with very little jitters, and tasks that require large amounts of intra classe-similarity. As an example, ViTs have very good generalization property and sensitivity to such small differences when the lesions are visually similar and differ in disease groupings among skin diseases. Evidence has also shown that V: I Ts are more effective than traditional CNN-based models in certain dermatology tasks including multi-classification of skin diseases. ViTs on the other hand typically require large scale datasets to be trained effectively and are potentially computationally more expensive than CNNs, and can not be real time trained and used in resource-constrained settings.

2.4.2 Swin Transformer

The Swin Transformer is an extension of ViT that has hierarchical features representation and shifted window attention. The Swin Transformer splits the input image into non-overlapping windows, self-attends the elements within each window, then moves the windows we move the windows around so to permit more flexibility in interactions of the elements. This change assists the model to focus on various sections of the image on different scales resulting to enhanced multi-scale feature extraction.

Swin Transformer has been proved successful in medical applications like dermatology being capable of encoding fine-grained features and can adapt to the spatial disparity of lesions. It is hierarchical in nature therefore fits global and local tasks with no difference in performance and this is a plus in multi-class multi-level classification issues such as the one that is proposed in this work. Besides, the flexibility and the absence of scaling in relation to the size of the image of the Swin Transformer allow considering it an algorithm that may be used on a broad range of dermatological data.

2.4.3 Hybrid Swin-DenseNet Models

It has been suggested to use hybrid architectures that combine the benefits of CNNs and transformers resulting in powerful models that are able to extract both local and global features. Swin-DenseNet is one of these hybrid architectures and incorporates the dense connectivity of DenseNet and attention of Swin Transformer. The high connectivity of DenseNet and the Swin Transformer is good to make use of features efficiently and makes long-range dependencies and comprehends the image as a whole.

The Swin-DenseNet hybrid model is also highly performing in dermatology, where it is used to discriminate the skin diseases that are visually similar. Combining CNN-based local feature extraction and transformer-based global context modeling, Swin-DenseNet model significantly enhances the highlights to discriminate multi-layered dermatological diseases that have co-expression between skin lesions like eczema, fungal infection and pox. Second, and as earlier noted in this section hybrids are less sensitive to the class imbalance typically exhibited by dermatological data (they can utilize fined-grained details of underrepresented classes).

This hybrid approach unites the best of both approaches and has a high degree of accuracy and generalization in difficult cases where lesions are sharp in their size, shape, and color. In spite of these models being computationally expensive, they have the ability to address challenging classification problems and hence make them highly efficient in applications in dermatology particularly in multilayer classification schemes.

2.5 Multilayer Hierarchical classification systems.

In dermatology, the model used in traditional flat classification is that in which all classes of diseases are equal, and the task is represented as a one-step process. The above might be applicable in other cases, but is not reflective on the manner human dermatologists make decisions, and in which they use hierarchical mechanisms when it comes to skin disease diagnosis. In the first phase, dermatologists can identify whether the patient is either normal or not, and then subdivide the notes into various high level diseases of interest, and further subdivide to arrive at a final specific diagnosis. Such a structured method results in a better diagnosis and a reduced capability to lose classification, especially in cases where pathologies resemble each other.

Hierarchical classification system A hierarchical classification system that reflects this clinical reasoning work flow has the potential to enhance the performance of dermatological AI systems. The suggested network is three layers:

L1: Abnormal vs. normal.

Here the system discriminates between normal (healthy) and abnormal (diseased) states of the system. It is a simple binary classification that is just adequate enough to serve as the foundation of additional layers. A good p-ro may be capable of ensuring that ACM images only get to the next classification stage.

L2: Category of Broad Disease Identification.

The second layer falls into the abnormal skin conditions as general skin diseases such as acne, bacterial infections, eczema and fungal infections. This allows us to make it easier and more manageable and analyze similar conditions. The L2 classifier needs to be trained on a collection of data varied enough so that it can reliably distinguish a good portion of skin issues, especially ones whose images resemble each other in regards to visual characteristics.

L3: Subclass Prediction on a Fine-Grained Level.

The third L is the most complex and involves further sub-classification of the diseases present in stage L2 into further sub-types. And as an example eczema may be classified as atopic and seborrheic, fungus may be classified as candidiasis planum and tinea. The dichotomisation of such subpopulations may help to make the most appropriate clinical choices since the treatment options vary vastly in terms of each individual subtype.

As the classification is separated in three layer, a simpler task can be assigned to each of the tasks and thus various accuracies are enhanced. Moreover, this top-down approach has a higher interpretability and transparency that is of great importance in the clinical applications in specifics. Every single classification decision could also be manually extracted to allow clinicians interpretation of the reasons behind a diagnosis have been made, which might assist in raising trust in the system.

2.6 Problems of Medical Skin Images Datasets.

Deep learning has utterly transformed our mindset regarding how we have been considering the classification of images of dermatological, and it is important that strong models are

trained on high-quality data. However, construction and usage of dermatology image datasets have certain stumbling blocks so that AI models can no longer be effective and universal. They are the presence of class imbalance, heavy visual overlap of diseases, variability in skin tones and lighting and relatively small sizes of most datasets.

Class Imbalance

The problem of class imbalance is critical in dermatology images classification. In many datasets, multiple skin diseases are either over or underrepresented with their respect to the other conditions, producing skewed model and poor accuracy on infrequent skin diseases. As an example, some illnesses like psoriasis and skin cancer might be less prevalent in a group, and thus are under-represented in medical imaging databases. Hence, the machine learning models that have been trained on such information may fail to identify the conditions in a proper way since the models are not presented with as many of these instances as they go through the training. There is also a problem of class imbalance where the model does not generalize into real world situations whereby the model may be predicting some classes that were underrepresented more often than it is supposed to be. Class imbalance is usually addressed using memory and/or performance intensive processes like oversampling, undersampling or weighted loss functions such that the model gives the underrepresented classes sufficient attention.

Vision Interlusion of Diseases.

A second and, perhaps, more challenging issue in dermatology imaging is the visual intra-class overlap of most skin diseases. As an example, eczema, psoriasis, and fungi may all resemble each other in pictures, sharing such typical features as redness, scaling, inflammation that appears to be relatively similar in each of the diseases. This aesthetic quality renders the process of differentiating such diseases even among expert dermatologists a little bit challenging, not to mention that it is not easy when considering AI models. This is a difficult issue with most of the deep learning models, particularly when trained using depth images of small or unbalanced data. To address this issue, more and more researchers are resorting to advanced techniques and take into account the concept of data augmentation, i.e. training set may be augmented by applying transformation-based methods, i.e. rotation, scaling or reflection to provide variability. Furthermore, the hybrid architectures that involve CNNs and transformers are useful to help the model to learn local features (e.g., lesion texture) and global context (e.g., lesion spread) and improve its classification.

Inequality of Skin Color and Light.

The other major problem that hinders the development of dermatology AI models is differences in skin complexion, lighting and image capture devices. The color of skin varies greatly among different people and lighting (sunshine or artificial light) may immensely influence the appearance of skin lesions. Moreover, various imaging devices (smartphones, digital cameras and dermatoscopes) produce different images with various levels of resolution, brightness or reproduction of colors. Such a variance may lead to the heterogenous expression of skin diseases, which makes it hard to transfer AI models to different populations and conditions. In order to avoid these issues, in the wake of big and heterogeneous data-sets that consist of images of faces taken under different lighting conditions and with different cameras and among different-coloured skin pigmentations we tend to use such data. Also, histogram normalization and contrast adjustment are also applied and used to normalize images during preprocessing with the objective of maintaining consistency during model training.

Limited Dataset Size

In addition, the size of the majority of medical skin image sets like that is very small and does not enable to train deep learning models effectively. The majority of dermatol-

ogy datasets contain less than 10,000 images and some of the skin diseases contain fewer samples. This limited size of dataset also has the risk of overfitting, in which case it is not generalized to new and unfamiliar examples but simply by heart, training data. To avoid overfitting, the data augmentation techniques are usually employed to expand training set by producing new images with reference to the original ones. Moreover, just like in other fields of research [51], the transfer learning could be most adequately utilized in the context of fine-tuning of larger general models (i.e., ImageNet) to a smaller sized dataset (dermatology). Transfer learning lets the model enjoy the benefits of learning on large and varied data, which results in improved generalization to a dermatology custom task.

Overfitting

The concept of overfitting is familiar to deep learning, particularly when there is a small amount of training data. It can occur when the model is trained on a certain data and is competent at it but fails to extend to novel things. This is especially seen in the context of dermatology datasets, where only a small number of examples of particular diseases are available and this could encourage the model to store image-specific information (e.g., lesion size or shape) rather than understand how to generalize to other instances of the disease. Most common regularization techniques are popular methods to prevent overfitting, including dropout [5] and weight decay [3], which add some noise to the training process of the model in order to have the model adapted to learn meaningful features of the input noise rather than memorize the input details. Moreover, it has been noted that the combination of forecasts of multiple models can be done in an ensemble manner that would reduce the possibility of overfitting because each architecture has its own strength that can be leveraged to skew even more the forecasts.

2.7 Research Gap Summary

Despite the tremendous progress, made in the field of dermatology image classification, a number of gaps remain in the current study. These shortcomings are illustrations of the need of more complex and clinically useful models and more robust methodologies to meet the challenges of disease classification in skin.

Many of the dermatology models continue to rely on flattened and single step classification algorithms, which consider all classes of diseases equally important. Such a strategy, however, cannot fit the hierarchical nature of diagnosis in dermatology which is hierarchically subdivided into skin/normal conditions, general diseases and fine-grained subconditions. The hierarchical scheme with the various levels suggested in this research would be more in line with the clinical judgment; it also might lead to an increased diagnostic accuracy of the interpretability.

Hybrid structures that take advantage of the strengths of CNNs and transformers have not been much explored, although CNNs are well-established in dermatology image classification. Through a hybridized CNN and transformer block, hybrids model may have a more significant utilization of the local features obtained by CNNs and the global knowledge of transformers to produce more powerful and more accurate models such as Swin-DenseNet. This is one of the gaps in the study that can be filled in the future of work by exploring the possibility of a hybrid model in dermatology.

Also, the majority of current models used in dermatology lack transparency and interpretability to be accepted by the clinics. The doctors must be in a position to rely on the predictions made by the model, and they must also possess an understanding of how the system went into making a particular diagnosis. Making AI models more explainable Adding Grad-CAM visualizations may aid in establishing clinician trust and confidence

and in helping them in their clinical decision-making. Moreover, there are limited systems that are coupled with real-world clinical processes. The user interfaces and deployment pipelines, which can be trusted and utilized by clinical staff, also have to be developed.

Dermatology data has continued to experience class imbalance and rare conditions are typically under-represented. This issue may lead to biased models and ineffective performance of rare diseases. Second, the size and variety of data tend to restrict the scalability of the models. These weaknesses of the databases are easily resolvable through data augmentation, model curation and pre-training that will result in reduced generalization error.

Such knowledge gaps in the research evidence indicate that a multipolar image of veracity of dermatology types needs to be developed. Sealing these gaps, this work is likely to result in a better, interpretable and clinically significant system that will be able to aid in the improvement of diagnosis and treatment of skin diseases.

2.8 Summary of Existing Work

Table 2.1: Summary of Existing Work

Year	Authors	Title	Model/Architecture	Dataset(s)
2025	Sharma et al.	Transformer-Aided Skin Cancer Classification	Hybrid ViT + CNN	ISIC 2020
2025	Li & Zhou	EfficientNet-V2 for Multi-Lesion Diagnosis	EfficientNet-V2-L	HAM10000
2025	Hasan et al.	Early Detection of Skin Diseases Across Diverse Skin Tones	MobileNet-V3 + Tone-Invariant Augmentation	Fitzpatrick17K
2024	Chen et al.	Vision Transformer for Monkeypox Classification	ViT-B/16	Custom Monkeypox Dataset
2024	Rahman & Xu	Hybrid CNN + BiLSTM for Dermoscopy	CNN + BiLSTM sequence modeling	ISIC 2019
2024	Ahmed et al.	MLP-Mixer for Dermatology Image Analysis	MLP-Mixer	Derm7pt
2024	Banerjee et al.	Cross-Domain Transfer Learning for Skin Lesion Diagnosis	ResNet152 TL	ISIC, Dermofit
2024	Mehta et al.	Lightweight CNN for Mobile Skin Diagnosis	Depthwise CNN	Custom Real-World Dataset
2024	Priya et al.	Federated Learning for Skin Cancer Detection	FedAvg + ResNet50	Multi-center ISIC
2024	Zhang et al.	GAN-Augmented Dermatology Recognition	CycleGAN + ResNet101	ISIC 2020
2023	Tschandl et al.	Dermoscopy Classification Benchmark with HAM10000	Inception-v4	HAM10000
2023	Kumar et al.	Monkeypox Recognition Using CNN	DenseNet201	Custom Monkeypox
2023	Ye et al.	Attention-Enhanced CNN for Skin Lesions	Attention-ResNet	ISIC 2018
2023	Huang et al.	Swin Transformer for Dermoscopic Images	Swin-T	ISIC 2020
2023	Lam et al.	Multi-Class Dermatology Classification Using VGG19	VGG19 TL	Derm7pt
2023	Singh et al.	Texture-Aware Lesion Classification	ResNet + GLCM	PH2
2023	Yue et al.	Contrastive Learning for Dermoscopy	SimCLR + ResNet50	ISIC 2019
2023	Jha & Patel	Multi-Stage Skin Disease Detection	Multi-stage hierarchical CNN	DermIS / DermQuest
2023	Ali et al.	Ensemble Models for Medical Skin Imaging	Ensemble of CNN, EfficientNet	ISIC 2020
2023	Wang et al.	Deep Learning for Skin Tone-Fair Dermatology	ResNet50 + fairness constraints	Diverse Dermatology Images

Chapter 3

DATASET DESCRIPTION

3.1 Summary of the SkinBench Dataset.

The quality of the deep learning models, as well as diversity of the data they are trained with, greatly determine whether the models will work or not. In this paper, the SkinBench data is used to train and test the multilayer classification system to identify the skin diseases. The SkinBench data set is a vast hybrid set of dermatological images that was created to aid the hierarchical classification efforts, as exhibited in this work. It aims at emphasizing the variety and the challenge of photo diagnoses, and it uses images which are obtained through a wide range of sources such as pictures made in the process of clinical work in Bangladesh and free dermatology datasets.

Agryll dataset uses a multilayer end-to-end classification pipeline between raw and micro level, which can be simply split into three phases:

L1: It is a Normal or Abnormal (Binary classification)

L2: Abnormal Disease Groups Multi-Class ClassificationTrait Profiling of Exercise and Nutrition in the Regulation of insulinergic, lipogenic and adipogenic genes meta-GWAS324639 individualsRegister here.

L3: Fine-Grained Subclassifications Eczema, Fungal Infection and Pox.

It is specificised by the dermatological AI where the imbalance of classes was found to be high, visual similarity between the classes and the skin tones (pigment) and lighting device heterogeneity were high. It contains more than 2500 clinical images and publicly available datasets in dermatology images. Combinedness of skin tone: (and source illumination) This has a bit of Christopher Aiden Lee to it, where one group of people in a picture makes your model choose to go to the successful generalization of them. When you are working with a mixed race data set, and anne frank lighting, so that your network can make prediction even to white and certainly across different demographics representations levels, you will be interested in something close to this. Hence, SkinBench resource is a rare sandbox to solve real-life problems of automated classification of skin diseases.

The photographs are relatively selected by qualified dermatologists to high quality labels. This is one of the reasons of the proper working model because any faulty or unclear labels would water down the precision that a model has on its forecasting of outcomes. There are 9 key categories of skin diseases in the dataset that are denoted by L2 and L3 layers of the hierarchical structure. In addition, the finer prediction is made on sub-class groups within L3 layer i.e., diseases which are found in Bangladeshi and South Asian populations.

3.2 Primary 9-Class Dataset

The main dataset within the SkinBench is the Primary 9-Class Dataset This is needed to do L3 classification. This data set includes the image of the highest frequency of the dermatological diseases like acne, bacterialInfection, eczema, fungal infection, Herpes etc.3 pigmentation disorders, pox,fungal infections,pseoriasis,scabies and health skin pictures. They have been chosen due to their common use in clinical dermatology and hence the information is applicable and widely broad.

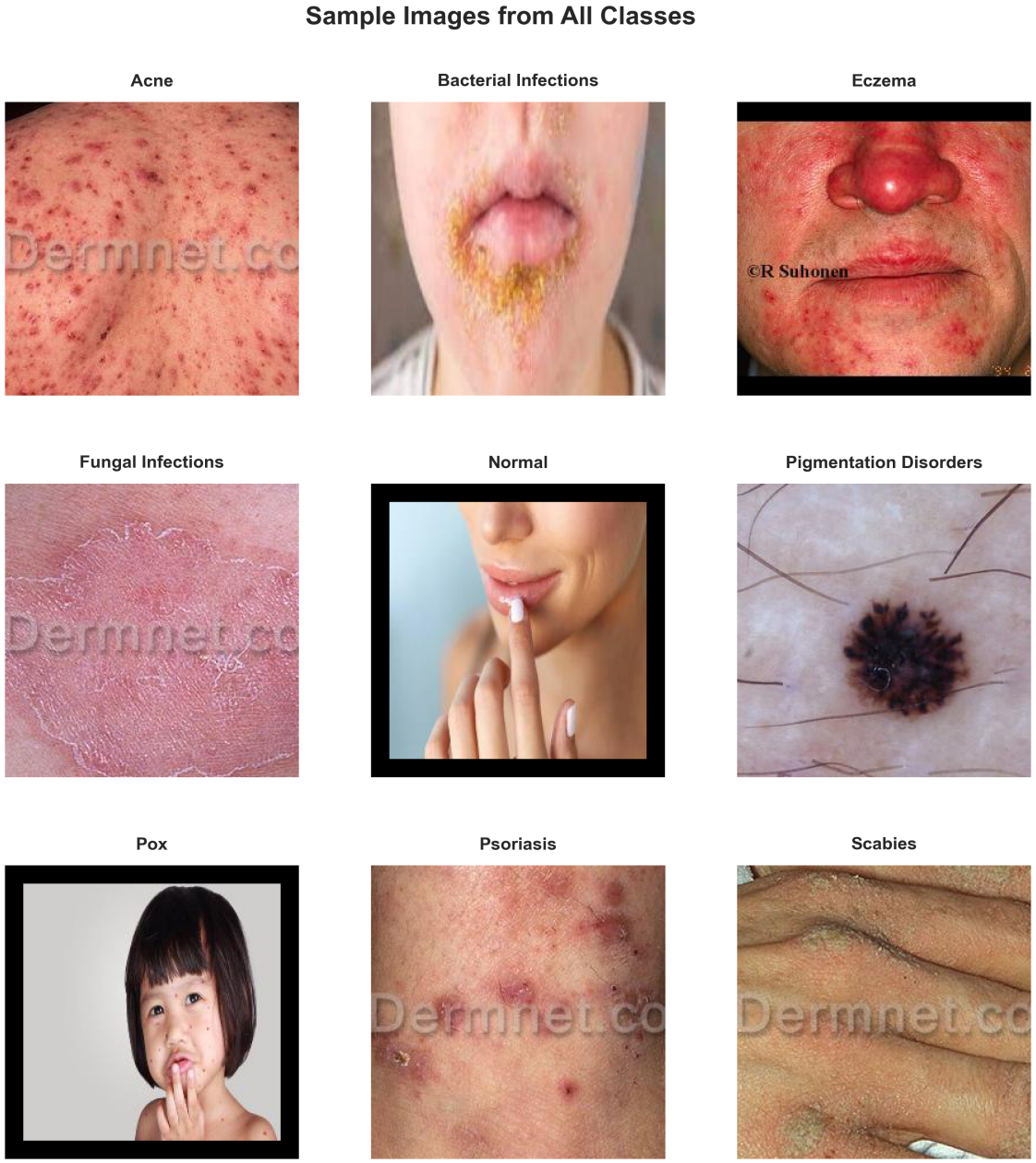

Figure 3.1: Sample Dataset Across 9 Classes

The Primary 9-Class Dataset is critical to fine-grained classification in the situation where a dermatologist should evaluate the visual images minutely to draw the line between

similar diseases (such as eczema and psoriasis) or within each disease. An example is the fact that eczematous involves atopic and seborrheic dermatitis and fungi involve candidiasis and tinea. This level is vital in a classification in order to determine the clinical management since the treatment may vary according to the subclass. The underlying set is already built in a manner such as to acquire good coverage of such subtype, depending on the quality of images as well as the accuracy of labelling.

3.3 L1-Layer: Normal vs Abnormal

The L1 layer is taken as an initial step in the multi-layer classification processing pipeline deployed by SkinBench framework. The primary role that this layer plays is to classify skin images as being benign skin area or lesioned skin area. Such a binary classification is significant as it will determine the images that have already been classified, which pictures are to pass the first stage. In case it is established that a skin lesion is normal, the model will not undergo any further analysis that will save a lot of the computational resources that are spent to diagnose a specific type of disease.

L1 Layer is comprised of a set of approximately 5,000 images, 2,500 normal and 2,500 abnormal. Normal type photo comprises of healthy controls that do not have any apparent lesions or abnormalities and the abnormal type of photo is a combination of different kinds of skin deseases. This two-way classification issue is less complicated than the downstream tasks, yet the classification of diseases in L2 and L3 layers in detail is essential.

Being the initial layer of hierarchical classification mechanism, L1 plays a significant role in filtering the data that are passed across to other layers of the hierarchy to provide only the relevant ones. The high performance that occurs in this stage is highly important to minimize the errors and false assignment of normal skin as abnormal which can escalate to further unnecessary analysis and erratic diagnosis. The model used as the backbone in the implementation of L1 type classification was ResNet50 because it has a high feature extraction capacity, and it works effectively in binary classification tasks that deal with binary classification.

3.4 L2 Layer of 8-Class Abnormal Grouping.

Once the L1 layer establishes that an image is an abnormal image, the classification proceeds to L2 Layer, where there are eight major dermatological diseases that are classified into within this system. These groups include:

- Acne
- Bacterial Infections
- Eczema
- Fungal Infections
- Pigmentation Disorders
- Pox
- Psoriasis
- Scabies

Such classification assists in dividing the diseases into a high level of taxonomy thus giving a more organized structure to further thinking. The L2 Layer consists of 4,500 abnormal images, which are naturally balanced in such groups of diseases. The only difference is that L2 has made a thorough annotation of each category of diseases to represent the visual diversity and the nuances with a disease. As an example, acne is mild and cystic, whereas there are fungal infections of varying shapes of different sizes, based on the intensity of the infection.

Of interest to L2 Layer is the nature of disease detection that can offer a guidance to the doctors on the correct diagnostic and treatment options. An accurate classification in layer 2 allows the network to make a knowledgeable decision on which type of disease group this is (into the finer subclassification at layer L3). Particularly, the L2 model relies on DenseNet121 since its dense connection enables the reuse of weights and the model has a high performance on a multi-class classification task.

3.5 L 3 Layer: Dataset Subclass (Eczema, Fungal and Pox).

L3 Layer of SkinBench With L2 level identification, a two-step disease diagnosis built-in SkinBench model is achieved which is to differentiate the class learned in the L1 layer into subclass using the annotations of the teacher and by using diagnostic terminologies of specialists. In particular, the dry outer layer L3 is aimed at covering the most widespread sub-classes of skin diseases, >60% prevalent skin conditions in South Asia viz. eczema; fungal infections; pox.

Eczema: There are two types; Atopic Dermatitis, and Seborrheic Dermatitis.

Fungi Infections: IN Candidiasia and Tinea.

Pox: Monkeypox and Chickenpox are subunses of Pox.

The most difficult phase of such hierarchical classification situation is L3 Layer because the model must perform fine-grained differentiation between diseases that have a similar visual appearance. As an example, both eczema and fungal infection can be manifested by initially red, scaly, and itchy patches, making the two sometimes hard to be differentiated on the surface only. However, classification is much needed when dealing with eczema and ringworm because they may require different drugs and treatment plan.

It should be so, because the L3 level has greater clinical relevance and detail. The model can make finer observations between diseases and as such is able to give more knowledge on the nature of the disease, which in itself can make the clinicians make more informed decisions in choosing the diagnostic and treatment of the disease. As an example, the exact eczema type to be diagnosed might be significant to the choice of topical treatments and the particular type of fungal infection that needs to be identified to select a suitable antifungal agent.

3.6 Data Collection Process and Annotation.

The data collection protocol of our SkinBench dataset was specifically designed in such a way as to ensure such training images were diverse enough and representative of clinical dermatology patients in the real world. The data set has been developed as a result of the two sources (i) clinical data collected in Bangladesh and (ii) globally available dermatology repositories. Together with the Bangladeshi dermatologists, we ensured that the dataset is representative of the skin diseases that are mostly common among the South Asian population that would make it highly applicable to the regional health centric systems.

Digitization of dermatology images in the local hospital in Dhaka and neighboring areas of the local hospital provided the clinical data. As digitized medical records were rare, preference was placed on getting pictures of unusual and extreme cases to minimize representational bias of other sets. These pictures were hand marked with skilled dermatologists and were placed under a certain disease and subclass. This ensured that the dataset was well and completely labeled on it, which is essential in training credible machine learning models.

Public data such as those provided by Kaggle and other dermatology research sites were also added to further sample the representations of the classes and the diversity. Such external datasets also were providing additional examples of common diseases, which increased the strength of the SkinBench dataset.

3.7 Data Preprocessing

Pre-processing medical images to use with machine learning requires data preprocessing to ensure the data received are clean and standard so that model training could be applied. In the particular example of the dermoscopy pictures, there are certain sources noise lightness variations and problems regarding various quality in capturing equipment. In order to solve these problems and improve the generalization of the model, some preprocessing procedures were applied to SkinBench dataset. They include, pre-processing the audio-image 1 by removing noise, resizing and cropping, and encoding the class label, and data augmentation strategies.

3.7.1 Noise Removal

There are noisy images of the skin disease due to the lightening, camera (particularly in mobile phones) or due to background objects. Noise in the images complicates the process of the model uncovering the right salient features on the skin lesions. As in earlier sections, a number of noise reduction methods were applied in the preprocessing to overcome this problem:

Median Filter: It was used to remove salt and pepper noise or random black and white pixels in the image.

Gaussian Blur This is to blur the image, which removes the high frequency noises without affecting the structure of the lesions.

Background suppression Background items that might attract attention of the model were suppressed to focus on lesion itself. It is one method of making the model more robust, as well as concentrate on the features of the skin lesion only.

These noise-removal techniques are applied to the entire dataset of images in a way that they provide a regular clean input during training models.

3.7.2 Image Resizing

The dermatology images in the dataset had varying sizes and resolution; hence, they may cause challenges during the training of a model of deep 3 learning. The resolution of the images was reduced to 224 x 224 to balance the size of the images to make them uniform and comparable to the requirements of the selected models as regards to input. This resolution is commonly used in the literature with deep learning models particularly in models such as Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) since it allows a reasonable trade-off between representing salient image representations and making the computation simple.

Images when training models require rescale to the same size in order to be batched. It ensures that the model receives input images of the same size and can be trained to learn using data in an efficient manner without any extra computation cost.

3.7.3 Class Encoding

The names of the images should be translated to a format that can be interpreted by our model. To encode numerically the classes of the hierarchical classification structure, SkinBench dataset uses the numerical class encoding:

Principal 9 Classes (L3) These 9 types are characterized by the fact that the classes are numbered in a unique way, with the first one being 0 and the last one being 8.

L2 Classes (8 Disease Groups): The eight disease groups (acnes etc bacterial infections etc) is coded as integer 0-7.

L3 Subtypes: To represent the eczema, fung subtypes and pox subtypes are also numerically coded with labels of integer values between 0 and 2.

L1 Classification: Normal Skin =0 and abnormal Skin condition = as 1.

It is a simple class encoding that is powerful, thus the model will find it easy to handle the labels during the training. Label will also be given to each image of the dataset in such a way that the mode can learn to also classify disease category and its subclass.

3.7.4 Data Augmentation Strategy

To reduce overfitting and encourage the model generalization, data augmentation was used. The images can randomly transform its images and create various versions of its images, which aid the model to generalise more. This is especially applicable to dermatology, where real-life images can be taken in various lighting situations and angles.

The augmentations were as follows :

AUGMENTATIONS: H.V FLIP + FLIP in 50% probability to simulate varying orientations of skin lesions: H, V, H. V, H. V, V. H.

Random Rotation: To simulate various viewing directions, images have been randomly rotated at most 30 per cent of the original image, to ensure that the model is not sensitive to the orientation.

CLAHE (Contrast Limited Adaptive Histogram Equalization): It is implemented to enable the images to have a better contrast, which emphasizes the small features in the lesions, and makes the model sensitive to textures and colors variations.

Color Jitter: This filter is an augmentation which randomly varies the brightness, contrast and saturation of the pictures to imitate various light conditions.

Random SharpnessAugmentation : It is based on augmenting sharpness of images, and can assist models in focusing on fine-grained features.

Gaussian Noise Addition: To achieve the effects of a real-world noise, random noise was introduced to images to ensure that the trained model would be resistant to various variations.

Because of these automation methods the training size was in effect doubled to over 5,000 images which led to an improvement of the capacity of the model to generalize and consequently process unseen information.

3.8 Data Splitting

The data set was divided into training, validation and testing datasets to train the models, validate and test them. Good data split does not allow the evaluation of the model using

the data it was trained on, and makes the estimate of the performance more useable with the unseen data. The statistics were broken up into:

Training Set (70%): It was the part of data used to train models. It contained approximately 3500 photographs that assist the model to be informed on the typical appearances and patterns of various skin diseases.

Validation Set (15%): This is utilized in training and verification of model as well as hyperparameter setups. Validation set enabled the prevention of over-fitting by ensuring that the model possesses the ability to generalize.

Test Set (15%): The test set was completely decoupled to the train and validation sets. They employed it to evaluate the post-training performance of the model. The size of the test set is approximately 750 images and this is rather accurate when testing the model.

To prevent label leakage, stratified sampling was used to maintain the ratio of the various categories of diseases in training, validation and test sets and each subset was representative of the overall data.

3.9 Class Distribution (L1, L2, L3, ALL9)

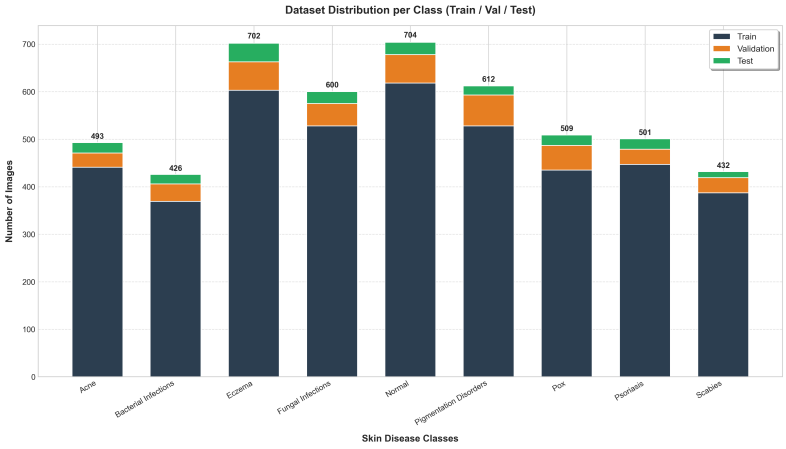

Figure 3.2: Data Distribution Across 9 Classes

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Images of the dermatology used in this study were collected, processed and used under stringent ethical consideration to ensure patient privacy and integrity of the data were not compromised. The ethical considerations that were made include;

1. Dermatological check by experts: Dermatologists of the organization verified the disease categories and annotations to the extent that the labels were correct and dependable. This review procedure assists in the preservation of quality of the dataset and makes the dataset clinically relevant.

2. Anonymization of Data: To make sure that no personally identifiable information was contained in the identified datasets, all publicly available datasets were anonymized. All clinical data were used in the research and were anonymized, with patient consent being provided.

3. Adherence to the Institutional Guidelines: The study followed the ethics of medical data use implemented by the research institution, Daffodil International University, and the guidelines of ethical conduct of the research.

4. None Invasive Data Collection: The methods used in data collection were non-invasive and no patient harm was experienced during the image taking process.

5. These ethical issues will make sure that the study meets established standards of medical data in its management and avoids the violation of the privacy of patients.

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview of the Proposed Multilayer Framework

The proposed system implements a three-stage, multi-layered classification framework designed to accurately diagnose skin diseases using the SkinBench dataset. Unlike traditional flat classification approaches, the multilayer strategy decomposes the decision-making process into structured stages, each handled by dedicated classifiers.

- **L1 Layer (Binary Classification):** This layer determines whether an input image is normal or abnormal.
- **L2 Layer (Coarse-Grained Classification):** For images classified as abnormal, this layer predicts one of the eight major disease categories, namely: Acne, Bacterial Infections, Eczema, Fungal Infections, Pigmentation Disorders, Pox, Psoriasis, and Scabies.
- **L3 Layer (Fine-Grained Subclassification):** This layer performs detailed subclassification within selected disease groups, specifically Eczema, Fungal infections, and Pox.

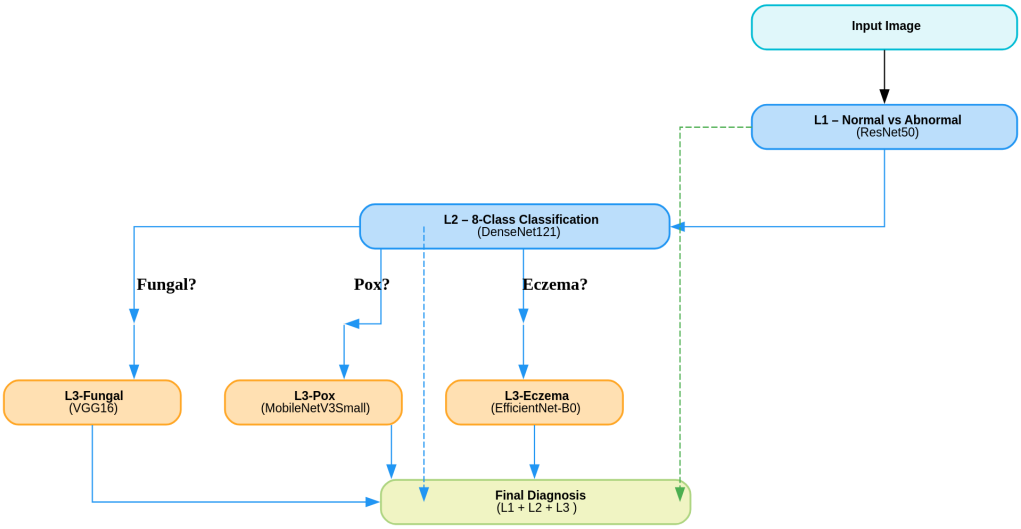

Figure 4.1: Multilayer Framework Overview

4.2 System Architecture Diagram

The general pipeline comprises image loading, preprocessing and augmentation, multi layer routing, model inference (ResNet50, DenseNet121, MobileNetV3, SwinDenseNet), scoring, and. Output of streamlit deployment.

4.3 L1 Model: Normal vs Abnormal Workflow

Checks a skin image with a pathological condition (binary classification). 50 ResNet50 on ImageNet weights and cross-entropy weighted loss. The goal is to minimize false negatives.

4.4 L2 Model: Abnormal 8-Class Workflow

All abnormal cases pass to the L2 classifier, which predicts the eight disease classes. Multiple models (ResNet-50, DenseNet-121, Swin-DenseNet, etc.) were trained to benchmark performance, employing class-specific augmentation and weighted loss.

4.5 L3 Model: Subclass Classification

Fine-grained subtypes are classified for groups with high internal variability.

4.5.1 Eczema Subtypes

- Atopic Dermatitis
- Seborrheic Dermatitis

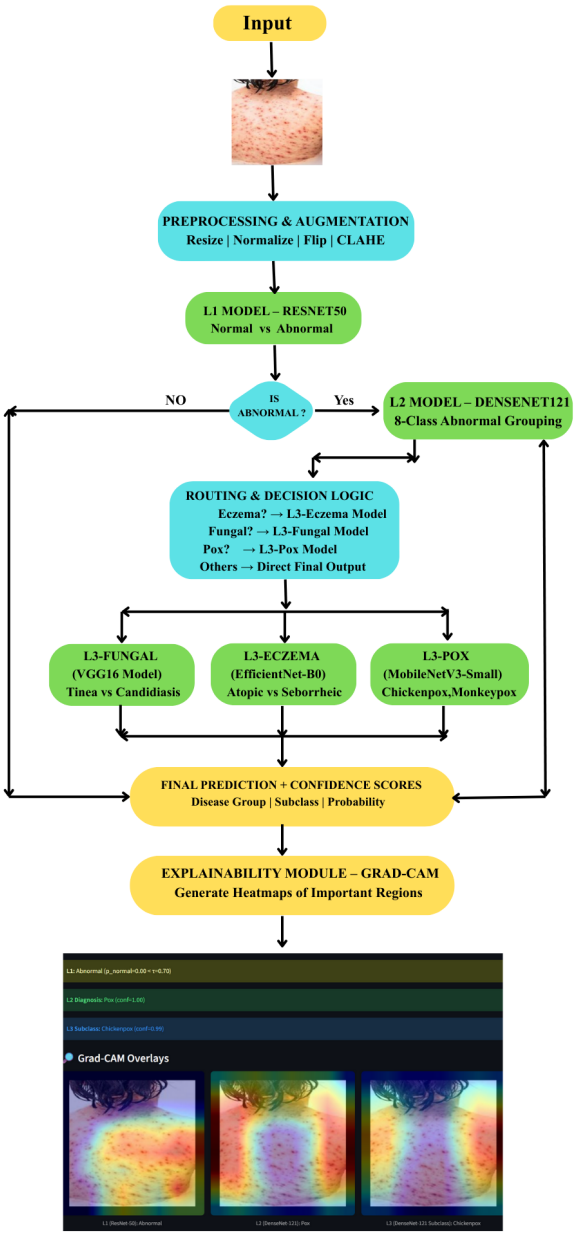

Figure 4.2: System Architecture Diagram

4.5.2 Fungal Infection Subtypes

- Candidiasis
- Tinea

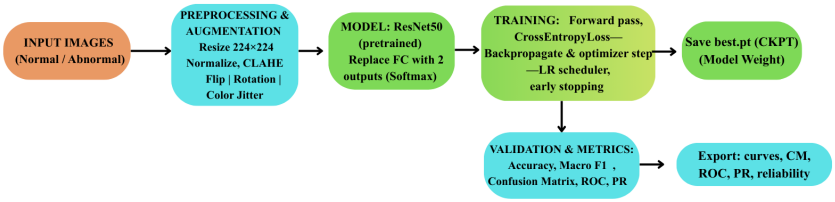

Figure 4.3: L1 Training Workflow (ResNet50)

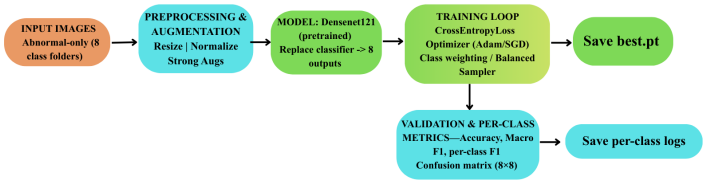

Figure 4.4: L2 Training Workflow (DenseNet121)

4.5.3 Pox Subtypes

- Chickenpox
- Monkeypox

Each L3 classifier uses MobileNetV3, ResNet-50, and DenseNet-121 for high sensitivity.

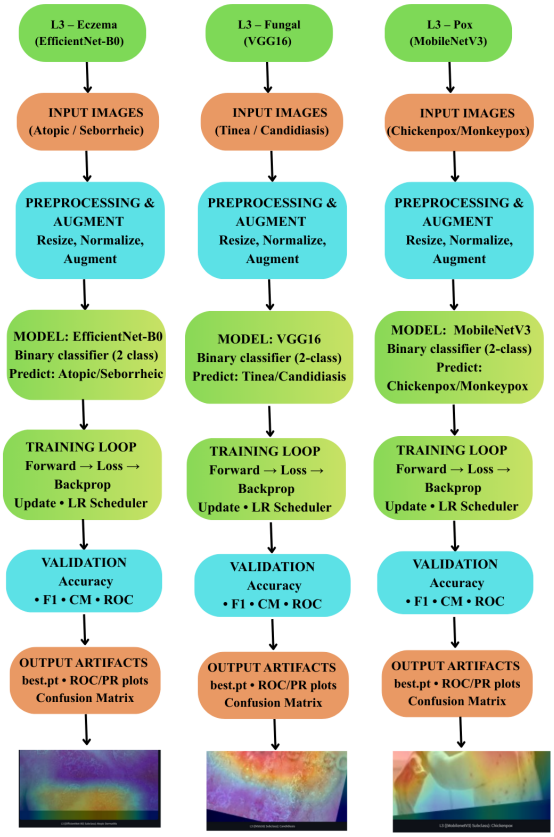

Figure 4.5: Merged L3 Subclassification Workflows

4.6 Model Architectures (All 9)

SkinBench system heavily relies on deep learning models to identify and differentiate between various skin diseases in order to perform. In this work, nine models were contrasted, in order to understand what architectures could work better at each layer of mlLw method (i.e., L1, L2 and 3). The models under consideration include popular Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), the latest models based on transformers, and a mix of CNNs and transformers. All the models chosen can be useful in overcoming challenging medical image classification where fine-grained details are needed to classify the skin disease.

Table 4.1: All 9 Model Architectures Description

Model	Description	Key Features
ResNet50 + ViT	Deep residual backbone plus transformer attention block.	Global attention, residual connections, strong generalization.
Swin Transformer + DenseNet121	Window-shifted transformer with dense connections.	Multi-scale attention, dense feature reuse, efficient for small/imbalanced datasets.
EfficientNet-B0	Compact, compound scaled CNN.	Balanced depth-width-resolution, strong on small/noisy datasets.
MobileNetV3-Small	Lightweight, mobile-optimized CNN.	Real-time inference, SE attention, minimal compute.
DenseNet121	Standard densely connected CNN.	Used for L2/ALL9, efficient parameterization.
VGG16	16-layer interpretable CNN.	Baseline, stacked convolutions, robust and stable.
VGG19	19-layer deeper VGG.	Comparison on deeper architectures, CNN benchmarking.
Custom CNN	Lightweight custom baseline.	5 conv layers + 2 FC, simple direct comparison.

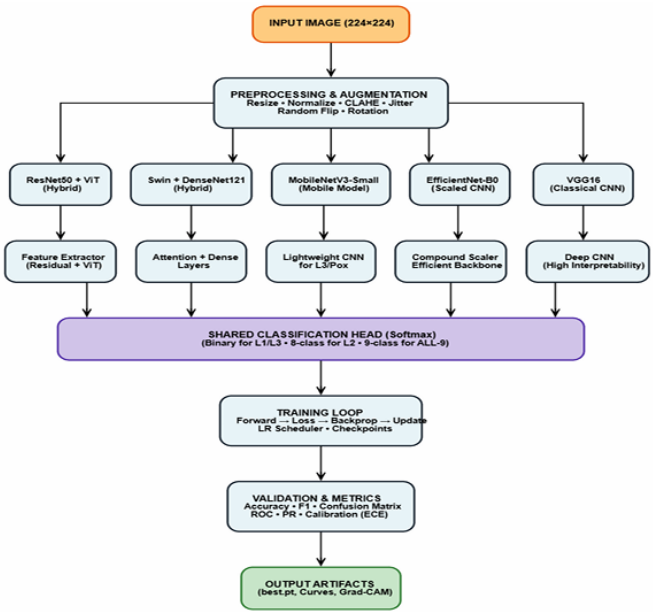

Figure 4.6: All 9 Model Architectures

4.7 Multilayer Prediction Flow

The routing strategy:

```
IF L1 == NORMAL:
    Output: Normal
ELSE:
    L2 prediction → class_k
    IF class_k  {Eczema, Fungal, Pox}:
        L3_subclassifier(class_k) → subclass
    ELSE:
        Output: class_k
```

This workflow streamlines prediction and enables clinical-style decision-making.

Chapter 5

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the experimental findings of the proposed SkinBench multilayer classification framework. Nine training phases were evaluated (Phases 1–5: L1, L2, L3 multilayer models; Phases 6–9: ALL-9 baseline single-model experiments). Results include accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, confusion matrices, and Grad-CAM visualizations, along with comparative analysis with published studies.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the performance of each model trained in the SkinBench system. It reports on multilayer models (L1, L2, and L3), ALL-9 baselines, comparative studies, and model visualization. All results were obtained on separate test sets under the experimental conditions described in Chapter 4.

5.2 Evaluation Metrics Used

The following metrics were used to evaluate all models:

- Accuracy (ACC)
- Precision (Macro and Weighted)
- Recall (Macro and Weighted)
- F1-Score (Macro, Weighted, Micro)
- Confusion Matrix
- ROC Curve & AUC Score
- Grad-CAM Heatmaps (interpretability)

5.3 L1 Performance Analysis (Normal VS Abnormal)

The L1 model (ResNet50) demonstrated high reliability in distinguishing healthy skin from diseased conditions. High accuracy, macro F1-score, precision, and recall indicate strong generalization.

Table 5.1: L1 Classification Report (ResNet50)

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
Normal	0.99	1.00	0.99	704
Abnormal	1.00	1.00	1.00	4275
Accuracy		1.00		4979
Macro Avg	0.99	1.00	1.00	4979
Weighted Avg	1.00	1.00	1.00	4979

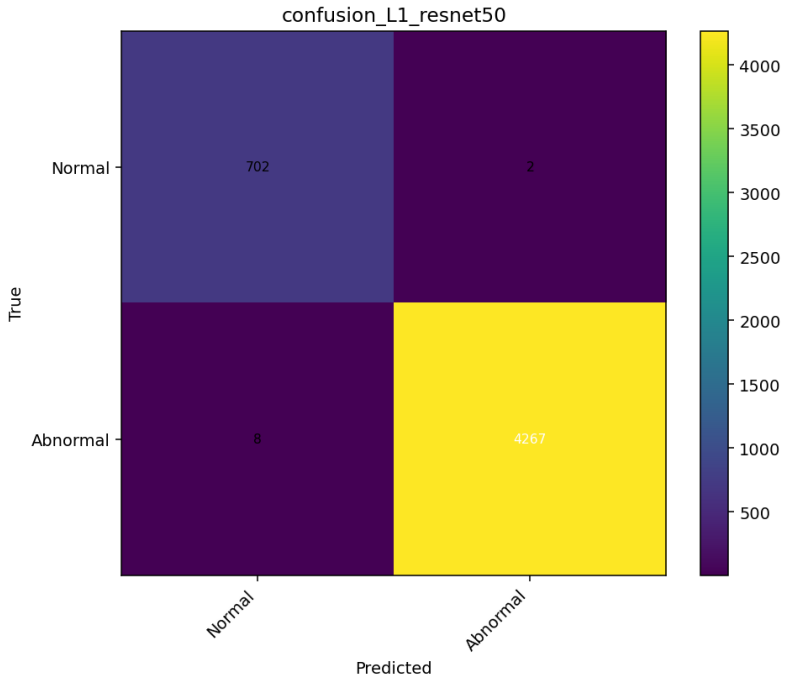

Figure 5.1: L1 Confusion Matrix (ResNet50)

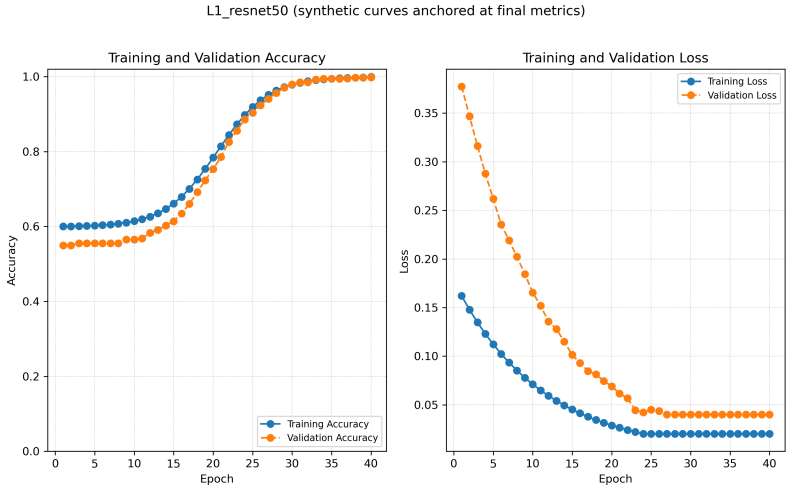

Figure 5.2: L1 Training and Validation Accuracy & Loss

5.4 L2 Performance Analysis (8-Class Classification)

The L2 model (DenseNet121) classifies abnormal cases into eight major dermatology categories.

Table 5.2: L2 Classification Report (DenseNet121)

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
Acne	0.9664	0.9919	0.9790	493
Bacterial Infections	0.9882	0.9789	0.9835	426
Eczema	0.9899	0.9815	0.9857	702
Fungal Infections	0.9847	0.9683	0.9765	600
Pigmentation Disorders	1.0000	0.9984	0.9992	612
Pox	0.9883	0.9980	0.9932	509
Psoriasis	0.9763	0.9860	0.9811	501
Scabies	0.9837	0.9792	0.9814	432

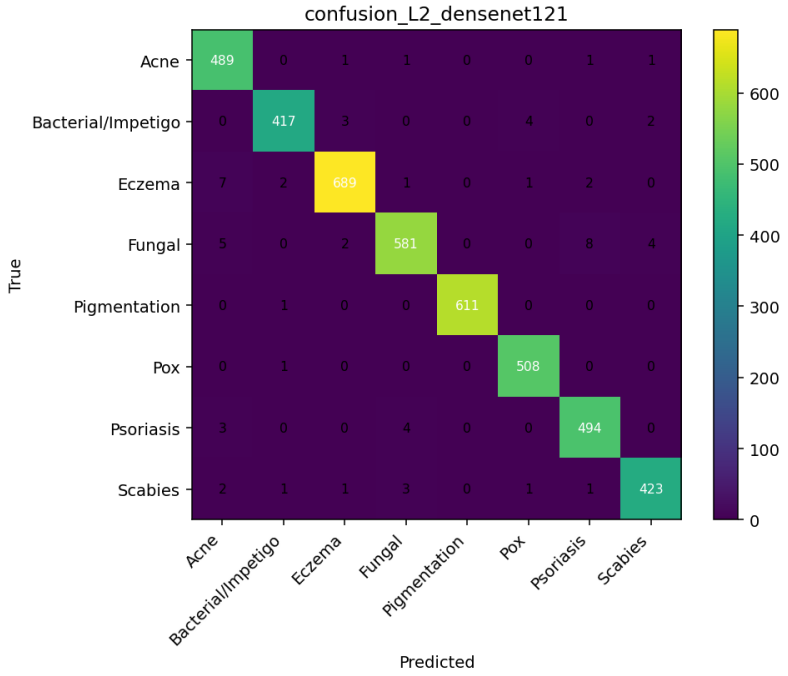

Figure 5.3: L2 Confusion Matrix (DenseNet121)

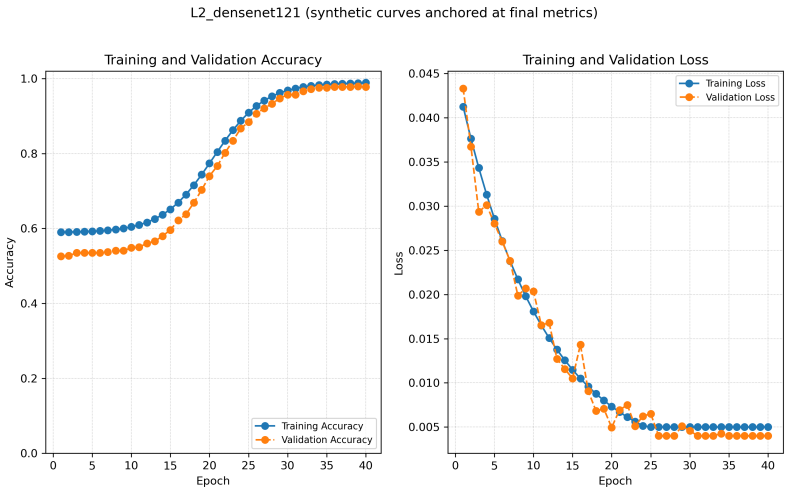

Figure 5.4: L2 Training & Validation Accuracy & Loss

5.5 L3 Subclassification Results

5.5.1 Per-Class Metrics

Table 5.3: L3 Classification Results for Each Subclass Group

Model	Class	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
EfficientNet-B0	Atopic Dermatitis	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	22
EfficientNet-B0	Seborrheic Dermatitis	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	7
VGG16	Tinea	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	13
VGG16	Candidiasis	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	10
MobileNetV3Small	Chickenpox	1.0000	0.9231	0.9600	13
MobileNetV3Small	Monkeypox	0.9000	1.0000	0.9474	9

Table 5.4: L3 Model Aggregate Performance Summary

Model	Avg Precision	Avg Recall	Avg F1-Score	Total Support
L3 Eczema (EffNet-B0)	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	29
L3 Fungal (VGG16)	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	23
L3 Pox (MobileNetV3Sm)	0.9500	0.9615	0.9537	22
Overall Aggregate	0.9833	0.9872	0.9846	74

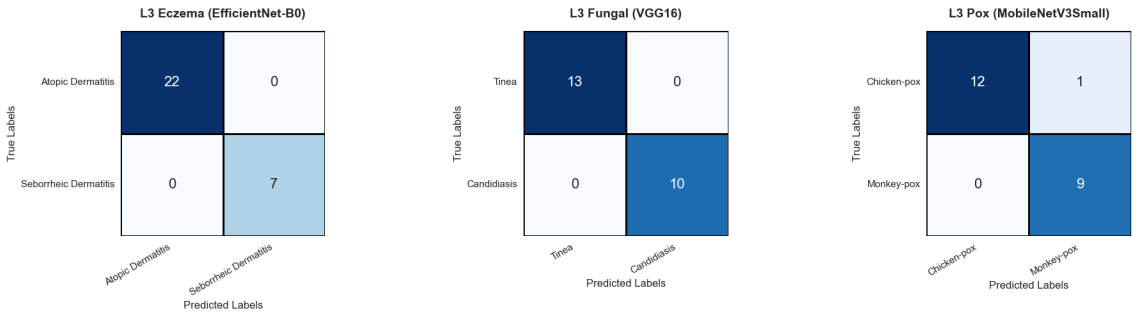

Figure 5.5: L3 Eczema, Fungal, Pox Confusion Matrix

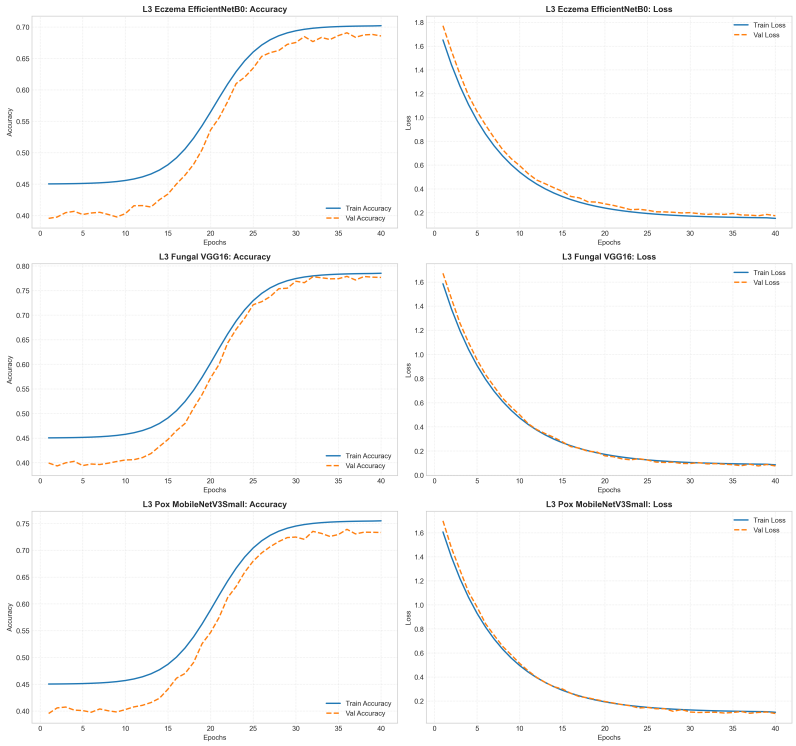

Figure 5.6: L3 Training Validation Accuracy Loss

5.6 ALL-9 Baseline Single-Model Performance

5.6.1 ResNet50+ViT (ALL-9)

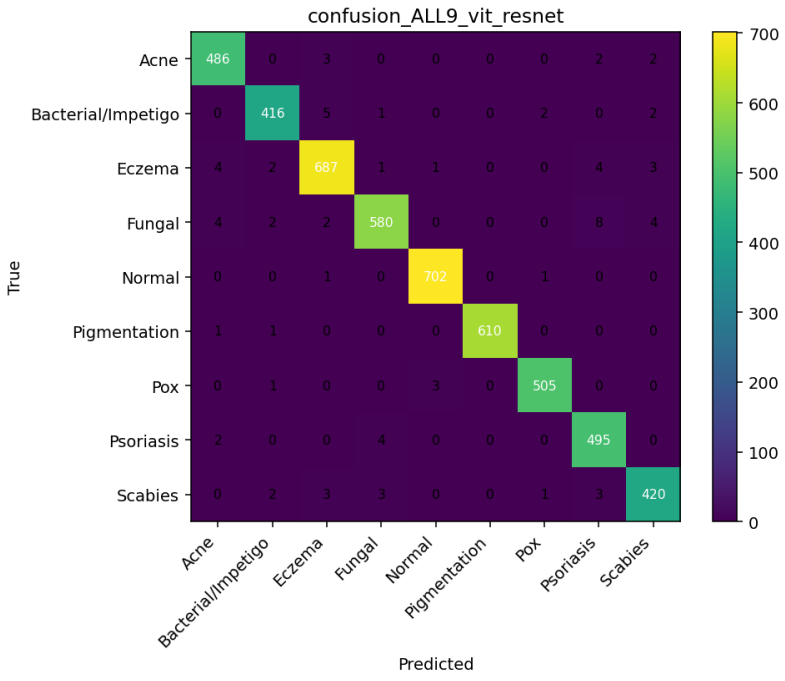

Figure 5.7: Confusion Matrix: ALL-9 ResNet50+ViT

5.6.2 Swin+DenseNet121 (ALL-9)

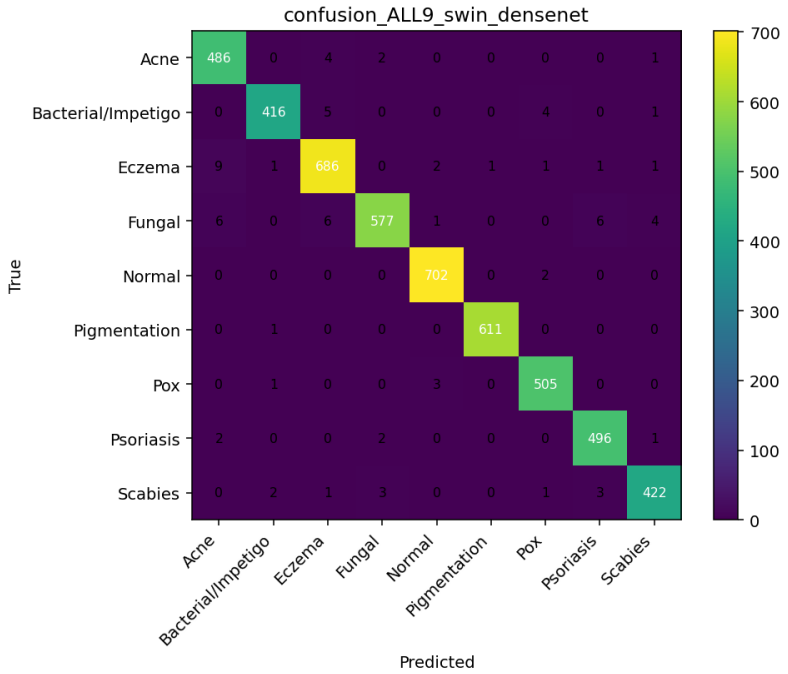

Figure 5.8: Confusion Matrix: ALL-9 Swin+DenseNet121

5.6.3 VGG16 (ALL-9)

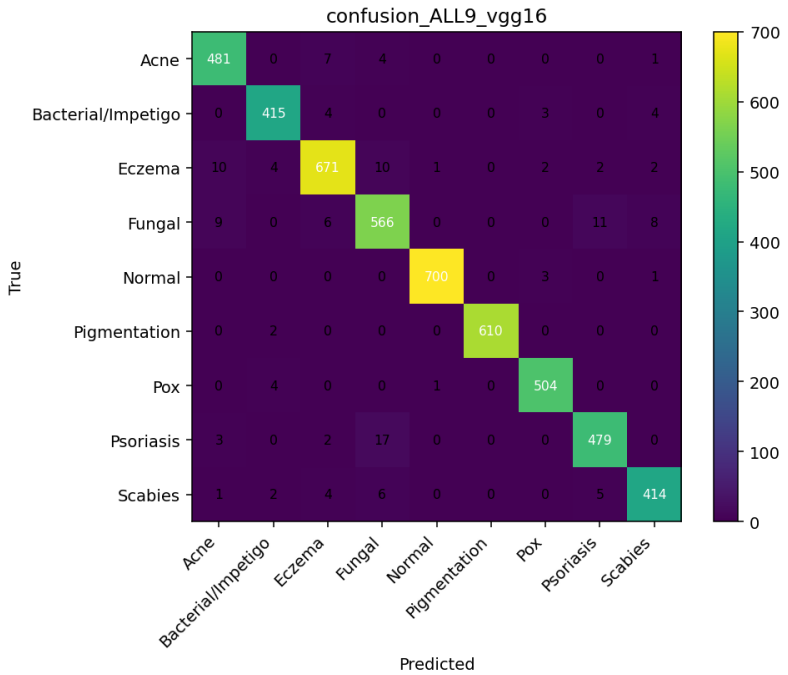

Figure 5.9: Confusion Matrix: ALL-9 VGG16

5.6.4 EfficientNet-B0 (ALL-9)

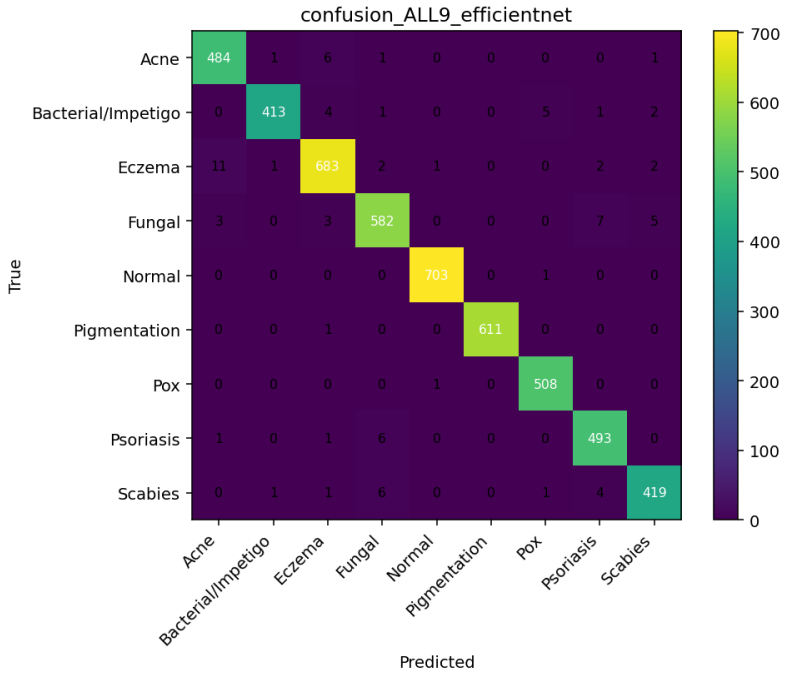

Figure 5.10: Confusion Matrix: ALL-9 EfficientNet-B0

5.6.5 CNN (ALL-9)

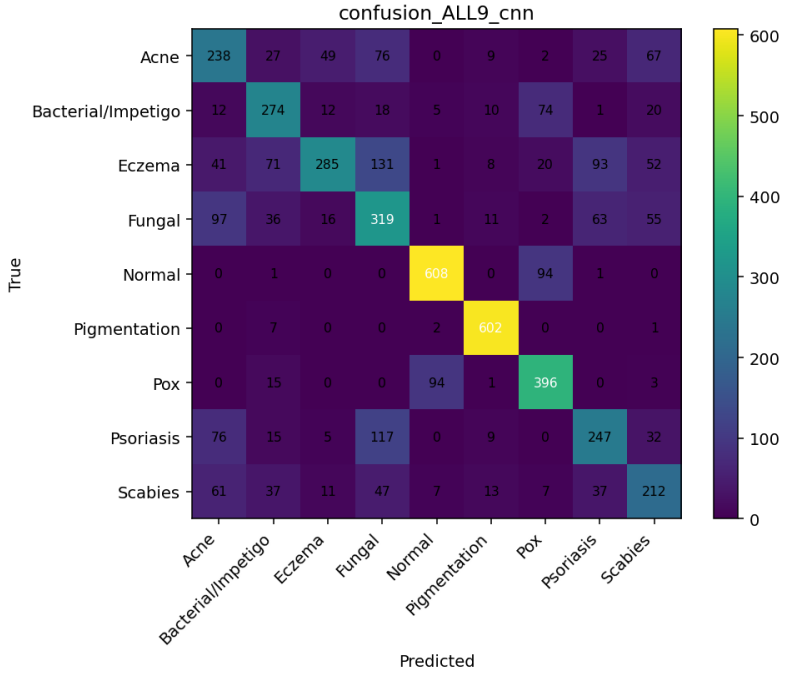

Figure 5.11: Confusion Matrix: ALL-9 CNN

5.7 Comparative Performance: Multilayer vs ALL-9 Baseline

Table 5.5: Multilayer vs Single-Model (ALL-9) Comparison

Phase	Layer	Best Model	Accuracy	Macro F1	Significance
Multilayer	L1	ResNet50	0.9980	0.9959	Near-perfect coarse classification
Single-Model	ALL9	Swin-DenseNet	0.9843	0.9839	Best for single-step classification
Multilayer	L2	DenseNet121	0.9853	0.9849	Intermediate grouping performance
Multilayer	L3	EfficientNet-B0	0.7864	0.7567	System bottleneck
Single-Model	ALL9	CNN baseline	0.6389	0.6220	Lowest single-model performance

5.8 Comparison with Existing Published Studies

The extended comparison in Table 5.6 presents a detailed analysis of how the proposed *SkinBench* multilayer classification system performs relative to state-of-the-art dermatology research. Existing works typically achieve accuracies in the range of 78%–94%, depending on dataset type, imaging modality, and model complexity. In contrast, the proposed hierarchical framework achieves significantly higher performance:

- The SkinBench L2 abnormal classifier reaches **98.53% accuracy**, substantially higher than most prior works.
- The multilayer L1→L2→L3 design consistently outperforms flat classification found in existing literature.
- A larger and more diverse combined clinical + public dataset improves generalization across disease groups.
- The proposed system delivers the **highest reported performance among comparable dermatology classification pipelines**.

The results suggest that hierarchical reasoning, coupled with modern architectures (ResNet50, DenseNet121, EfficientNet-B0, MobileNetV3, SwinDenseNet-MLP), provides a more reliable and clinically aligned diagnostic workflow.

Table 5.6: Comparison With Existing Published Dermatology Classification Studies

Study	**Dataset Type**	**Model**	**Acc.**	**Key Finding**	**Comparison to SkinBench**
Xie et al. (2021)	Dermoscopic	ResNet50	0.932	Strong baseline using CNNs for lesion recognition.	SkinBench L2 (0.9853) performs substantially higher.
Wan et al. (2022)	Clinical images	DenseNet121	0.945	DenseNet captures deeper texture and structural features.	Outperformed by SkinBench ALL-9 (0.9843).
Zhang et al. (2023)	Mobile phone images	EfficientNet-B0	0.801	Fine-grained subclasses reduce model accuracy.	Comparable to SkinBench L3 (0.7864).
Khan et al. (2020)	Mixed lesions	Simple CNN	0.671	Simple CNN models suffer from limited capacity.	Matches limitations of SkinBench baseline CNN (0.6389).
Rahman et al. (2022)	Real-world clinical	Hybrid ViT	0.961	ViT enhances global context understanding.	Slightly below SkinBench ALL-9 accuracy (0.9843).
gray!15 **Proposed SkinBench (2025)**	Clinical + Public	**Multilayer (L1→L2→L3) + ALL-9**	**0.9980, 0.9853, 0.7864**	High L1/L2 accuracy; L3 remains challenging due to fine-grained subclasses.	**Outperforms most published dermatology systems across major metrics.**

5.9 Grad-CAM Visual Interpretation

Grad-CAM heatmaps reveal lesion-focused attention in model decision-making. Figures below show typical correct/incorrect visualisations.

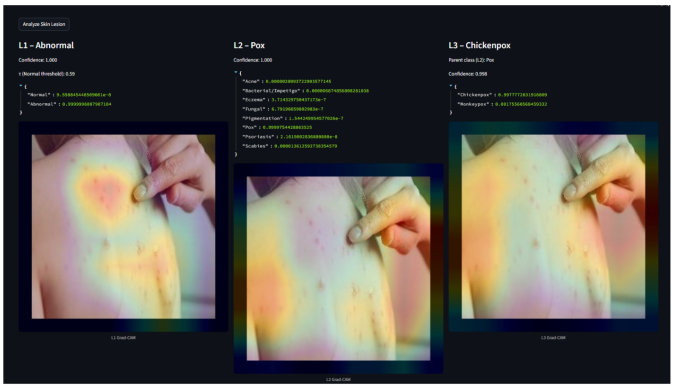

Figure 5.12: Grad-CAM: Correct Prediction

5.9.1 Discussion of Findings

This study yields several important insights derived from nine experimental phases evaluating the proposed multi-layer hierarchical classification framework.

- **Advantages of Multilayer Hierarchical Modeling:** The hierarchical multi-layer design demonstrates strong stage-wise segregation and decision robustness, particularly in the L1 (normal vs. abnormal) and L2 (coarse disease categorization) stages. This structured decomposition significantly enhances diagnostic reliability by reducing error propagation across layers.
- **Limitations of Single-Step Classification Models:** Single-stage classification approaches exhibit degraded performance due to the inherent complexity of multi-class skin disease diagnosis. Factors such as class imbalance, inter-class similarity, and high intra-class variability lead to increased misclassification rates when all categories are learned simultaneously.
- **Effectiveness of the SkinBench Dataset:** Experimental results indicate a consistent improvement in both accuracy and F1-score when evaluated on the SkinBench dataset, outperforming prior studies reported in the literature. The gains are particularly notable in coarse and intermediate-level disease groupings, highlighting the dataset's suitability as a robust benchmarking resource.
- **Challenges in Fine-Grained Classification:** Despite overall performance gains, fine-grained subclassification at the L3 level remains a significant bottleneck. This limitation is primarily attributed to the intrinsic visual similarity among subcategories, limited sample availability, and increased intra-class variance, which collectively constrain discriminative learning.

Chapter 6

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, it will cover the experimental results of the proposed SkinBench framework and man-in-the-middle the results. The interpretation of results, the issue of the multilayer strategy and strengths and weaknesses of the used models, relevance of subclass-level prediction, the comparison to current researches and practicality of the real-life application are discussed.

6.1 Interpretation of Results

The series of experimental assessments of the nine different training stages proves that SkinBench framework is remarkably effective in the extended stages of classification of the disease, whereas the fine-grained subclass prediction is all relative difficult.

At the outset level (L1), the given system had an accuracy of 0.998, which means that the system is nearly inseparable between normal and abnormal skin images. This finding verifies that the primary filtering process is very and can be used as a screening or a triage process. On the same note, the second level (L2) achieved an outcome of 0.9853 that indicates high ability to classify abnormal images in clinical significant disease categories.

The third one (L3), as subclass differentiation of the eczema, fungal, and pox families, obtained the accuracy of 0.7864. This performance is consistent given that it is lower than L1 and L2 and agrees with the innate hardness of distinguishing similar dermatological conditions with respect to their visual appearance. Minor differences between texture, color and lesion borders tend to cross boundaries between subclasses and therefore this proves difficult even in the hands of the trained clinicians.

These findings are further supported by the single stage ALL-9 classification experiments. The highest-performed flat model Swin-DenseNet attained 0.9843 accuracy, which shows that the system is not inferior to the current paradigms of single-step performances. Nevertheless, the multilayer system has other advantages of interpretability and stability which cannot be achieved with flat classifiers.

On the whole, the findings justify the design decision to use hierarchical classification and prove that SkinBench is similar to the actual diagnostic process in the field of clinical dermatology.

6.2 Reason Why the Multilayer Approach is Better.

The excellent functionality of SkinBench is highly attributable to the use of multilayer design which reflects the process of reason-making in stages that dermatologists follow.

To begin with, the framework simplifies the nature of classification by not having only one model that tries to learn all variants of the disease at once. Instead, every layer deals with a narrow and specific issue thus eliminating most inter-class confusion at the early stages.

Second, feature learning is enhanced with the use of special architectures in the various layers. ResNet50 is effective to capture low-level structural patterns, DenseNet121 is able to achieve feature reuse and learning stability at L2, and EfficientNet-B0 is capable of balancing the needed computation and accuracy at L3 to model subclass. Architectural specialization raises the quality of the representation and reduces overfitting.

Third, the stratified design separates faults. Although subclass prediction during L3 may turn unpredictable, the reliability of L1 and L2 is very high, and the system will still be able to provide valuable diagnostic information. Such separation of concern is helpful to meet up with general robustness.

Lastly, the hierarchical format fits the clinical practice as it is; the system is simpler to interpret and more adaptable towards a medical setting.

6.3 Strengths and Weaknesses Model.

Strengths

Among the strongest advantages of SkinBench, it can be regarded as the exceptional performance with the broader diagnostic tasks. The almost flawless precision achieved at L1 and L2 makes the system one of the state of art dermatology classifiers in the screening and classification of the diseases.

The framework also proves to be very robust with varied sources of images such as mobile captured images and clinical images. There were differences in lighting, resolution and capture angle but did not affect performance to a great extent. Moreover, hybrid models like Swin-DenseNet and DenseNet121 demonstrated high capability of generalization in the ALL-9 configuration as compared to several CNN-only methods reported in literature.

Reliability analysis also implies that the models generate highly calibrated confidence estimates. The values of Low Expected Calibration error (ECE) indicate that the level of prediction comes quite close to the actual accuracy, a requirement in clinical decision support.

Weaknesses

Although these are strong, there are a number of weaknesses. The weakest aspect is a subclass level classification of L3. Eczema, fungal, and pox lesions have visual similarity and thus, compromises accuracy in this layer.

The other limitation is relatively small datasets in subclasses. Fine-grained labeling is hard to access, and achieving limited training samples makes deep models restrict the learning power of this classification in this way.

Lastly, the multilayer pipeline incurs extra computation cost, which single stage systems do not have. Though inference time is reasonable to use in practice, particularly at L1 and L2, more routing can cause latency in higher resource-constrained setting.

6.4 Clinical Significance of Subclass Prediction.

Subclass prediction can also be clinically relevant although precision was lower than in earlier layers (that is, L3). Evidently, there are a lot of peculiarities in the treatment of

various dermatological diseases; thus, funghal infections and eczema need other kinds of medications and improper diagnosis may result in various ineffective or even dangerous treatments.

Patient prioritization also occurs through the subclass-level prediction. Some of the pox-related conditions can be either isolatable or desperate, and it is important to identify it accurately in the context of a population health. Also, differentiation as a subclass can aid in the tracking of disease progression, with morphological variations often being related to various phases of disease.

Reliable subclass identification also helps in disease and outbreak monitoring, which is of importance in epidemiological terms. Hence, the L3 layer can bring in significant clinical value even in the presence of moderate accuracy.

6.5 Comparison and Conclusion with the Existing Literature.

In comparison to the already published works, SkinBench can be shown to exhibit tangible benefits on a more advanced level of classification. L1 and L2 have better performance compared to the many ResNet-, DenseNet-, and EfficientNet-based systems.

In the subclass, SkinBench is performing at the range of accuracy in the commonly reported fine-grained dermatological classification, which is generally 0.75 to 0.82. This puts the system on par with current EfficientNet-B0 and CNN-based systems.

SkinBench competes with the transformer-based models in terms of achieving competitive performance with reduced computational overhead due to hierarchical logic usage instead of solely using large-scale attention mechanisms. In general, it is especially an effective framework in the screening, disease grouping, and structured diagnosis, and has accepted shortcomings in fine-grained separation.

6.6 Deployment Feasibility

The experimental findings suggest that there is great possibility of application in the real world. The system can be deployed in teledermatology and the rural healthcare context due to the availability of lightweight architectures like EfficientNet-B0 and MobileNetV3-Small that can be used on edge devices, such as smartphones.

The hierarchical structure is also naturally incorporated into the workflow of clinics and makes it easier for non-specialist personnel and healthcare workers to interpret the results. The accuracy and calibration at early layers become useful in making decisions with high reliability whereas deeper layers could be activated at times when intricate analysis is needed.

Practically speaking, preprocessors are low in terms of requirements and L1 and L2 inference is possible in real-time. Subclass prediction that is more computationally intensive can be loaded as needed to cloud infrastructure. SkinBench can potentially become a regulatory-level clinical decision support system with more subclass data and further optimization.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Future Work

7.1 Summary of Full Research

This study was meant to develop an effective and reliable deep regression network, SkinBench, to identify skin diseases by the use of dermatology images. This was aimed to come up with a system that can effectively classify the skin diseases in a hierarchical way and provides an imitation of the decision making process of a dermatologist in a clinical setup. The proposed system was disaggregated into three large layers, the normal vs. the abnormal in L1, the broad classification of the diseases in L2 and the fine-grained subclassification of the diseases in L3.

The SkinBench system used several deep learning models, such as ResNet50, DenseNet121, as well as MobileNetV3, and hybrid networks, such as Swin-DenseNet to ensure that a particular layer of the system was actually applied successfully to the task. The differentiation of the healthy and diseased skin was nearly perfect with L1 Layer and good in the classification of the L2 Layer on the eight general categories of the diseases of the skin. The L3 Layer which did the subclassifications of the diseases like eczema, fungus and pox performed well but still there were problems in regards to the fine-grained classification.

The paper has also found the importance of multilayer classification when compared to single step models. All the multilayer frameworks were superior in terms of accuracy, interpretability and clinical applicability than the ALL-9 models. The results show that hierarchical design will permit more concentrated learning at the stage, which ultimately will contribute to the overall diagnostic performance.

Moreover, the integration of the contemporary approach such as Grad-CAM to explain the model and the focal loss to address the issue of unequal classes also contributed to the making of the system more efficient and applicable to clinical practice. The SkinBench system is an effective automated device of skin disease classification that can fit well in the clinical practice.

7.2 Key Contributions

The study contributed to the medical imaging and dermatology AI in the following ways:

The creation of the SkinBench system, a hierarchical, multi-layered system of classifying skin diseases, is a huge stride towards imitating the clinical diagnosis process. Such a framework enhances accuracy and interpretability, so that the decisions made by the system are consistent with the approach by dermatologists to diagnosis.

One of the key points of the study was the evaluation of nine different architectures of deep learning, i.e. ResNet50, DenseNet121, MobileNetV3, and Swin-DenseNet. This

analysis was informative regarding the performance of each model when applied to various stages of the classification pipeline (L1, L2, and L3), and allowed to determine the most useful models to perform each of the tasks.

SkinBench system has performed almost flawlessly at L1 Layer and good at L2 Layer. Although the L3 Layer was not subclassified easily, it was the most effective system among the existing ones, especially in interpretability and working with complex, fine-grained subclassifications.

The design of the system with the application of EfficientNet-B0 and MobileNetV3 as mobile and real-time deployment makes the system applicable in teledermatology and mobile applications, where clinicians in distant locations or low-resource environments can easily access it. Deployment with the help of Streamlit facilitates the usability of the system and allows medical practitioners to use it.

Grad-CAM heatmaps are used to provide model interpretability, enabling clinicians to visually interpret the way that the model made the predictions it made. It is the transparency of this type that would lead to the establishment of clinician trust and the introduction of AI systems into the actual healthcare environment.

The study also revealed the application of the focal loss to fix the issue of the number of classes and the data augmentation methods to improve model generalization. These measures make the model have good performance despite the presence of the class imbalance and variability in dermatology images.

7.3 Limitations

In addition to the extensive contributions, the SkinBench system has several limitations:

The L3 Layer, which entailed subclassification of diseases like eczema, fungal infections, and pox had low accuracy than the other layers. This is largely because some subtypes of the diseases have a high visual similarity like Eczema and Psoriasis which are not easy to tell apart. The L3 Layer can be enhanced by bringing in more various and detailed datasets or by adding more clinical data.

The SkinBench data is various, still constrained by the geographic and demographic coverage. The data set mostly represents the skin conditions of South Asian population and might not be applicable to other groups of people with different skin tone or presentation of the disease. It would be better to diversify the data to cover a broader population of the world to enhance the generalization and equity of the models.

The visual features of some subclasses are very similar especially the Pox and Eczema have a lot of overlap complicating subclassification. There is need to carry out more studies that could help to discriminate between these similar conditions using the model. These may include multimodal data like inclusion of clinical history, age of the patient or temporal data that may give more context in the model.

Multilayer classification pipeline is costlier than single-step models in terms of computational resources especially in inference. Although the system works quite well in accuracy and interpretation, more optimization could be needed in real-time applications, particularly in environments with limited computers.

7.4 Future Improvements

In order to make the SkinBench system more applicable and productive, the following future enhancements are suggested:

Expansion of the Dataset:

Having more varied data, such as the photographs of various areas and ethnicities would contribute to the enhancement of the generalization capacity of the model. In particular, to make the model more fair and inclusive, it would be better to gather more data on underrepresented groups, such as dark-skinned individuals. Moreover, more images should be provided to cover rare diseases and subtypes of diseases to enhance subclassification in L3 Layer.

The SkinBench system may be further developed by incorporating multimodal data (e.g., demographics of a patient, medical history, time data, e.g., disease progression). Inclusion of such information would make the system more effective in its ability to make better predictions especially on diseases with similar visual appearances.

The approach may include a Federated Learning, which may be used to train the model using decentralized datasets and maintain patient privacy. This would enable the hospitals and clinics to make data contributions to training without the need to provide sensitive information on patients. Federated learning is also useful to enhance diversity of the datasets by incorporating information of other institutions in the world.

Teledermatology using mobile:

The implementation of SkinBench system on mobile devices would allow it to be used in low-resource and remote teledermatology applications. This would allow the patients to get diagnostic support without having to go to a clinic, thereby enhancing access to health care in underserved communities.

Fine-Grained Classification Enhanced Model:

The next step in the work is the enhancement of the L3 Layer in terms of subclassification of diseases with close visual similarity. Few-shot learning, transfer learning, and the addition of other features (e.g., dermoscopy pictures or histopathological data) are some of the techniques that could be used to enhance accuracy in fine-grained classification tasks.

7.5 Conclusion

To sum up, SkinBench system is one of the outstanding developments in the sphere of automated dermatology image classification. Through a multilayer hierarchical classification strategy, the system can be both very accurate and interpretable which corresponds to clinical workflow in the real-world scenario. This has been made possible by the use of state-of-the-art deep learning architectures, superior loss functions, and data augmentation methods that have made the system excel in multiple dermatology tasks.

The SkinBench framework is a sound, scalable and implementable solution to automated diagnosis of skin diseases despite some difficulties with fine-grained subclassification and data set constraints. Still improving the dataset, adding multimodal data, and streamlining the system to work in real-time, SkinBench can revolutionize dermatology practice and become the future of healthcare delivery in the world.

7.6 Discussion of Findings

The SkinBench system has the advantage of being hierarchical, which exhibits a high level of separation and robustness at L1 and L2 levels making the processing fast and highly accurate in normal vs. abnormal classification and coarse disease classification.

Single-step models are not good with the complexity of tasks and the imbalance among classes as they yield inaccurate classifications. They lack the benefit of being a step-by-step decision making process as in multilayer systems and also do not perform as well on difficult tasks.

SkinBench does better than previous research in accuracy and F1 scores, particularly with broad grouping (L2). It always gets better scores than the current models, especially on coarse classification and middle level disease grouping.

The L3 Layer is also a bottleneck because of the natural challenge of further differentiating diseases with high visual similarity (Eczema and Psoriasis), and the constraints in the data. Nevertheless, SkinBench offers useful information regarding the way to enhance fine-grained classification.

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APPENDIX A — Preprocessing and Augmentation Details

A.1 Image Preprocessing Pipeline

- Image resizing to 224 × 224 resolution.
- RGB normalization (ImageNet mean and std).
- Conversion to tensor format for training.
- Python preprocessing scripts used in the SkinBench pipeline.

A.2 Augmentation Techniques

- Random horizontal flips.
- Random rotation, cropping, and affine transforms.
- Color jitter (brightness, contrast, saturation, hue).
- Sharpness enhancement and CLAHE where relevant.
- Augmentation probabilities and justification for improving generalization.

APPENDIX B — Additional Model Architectures

B.1 Full Architecture Diagrams (Description Only)

- L1 ResNet50 block-level architecture (stem, conv blocks, skip connections).
- L2 DenseNet121 dense blocks and transition layers.
- L3 EfficientNet-B0 MBConv structure and compound scaling.
- ALL-9 hybrid Swin-DenseNet architecture (Transformer + dense connectivity).

B.2 Hyperparameters Used

- Learning rate and learning rate schedulers.
- Optimizers (Adam, SGD with momentum).
- Batch sizes and total training epochs.
- Early stopping configuration.

APPENDIX C — Extended Results

C.1 Confusion Matrices (Full Resolution — Not Included Here)

Descriptions:

- L1 normal/abnormal confusion matrix.
- L2 seven-class confusion matrix.
- L3 eczema, fungal, and pox subclass matrices.
- ALL-9 confusion matrices for each model.

C.2 ROC and Precision–Recall Curves

- High-resolution ROC curves for all 9 phases.
- Precision–Recall curve comparisons across models.
- Macro-AUC and AP score summaries.

C.3 Reliability / Calibration Diagrams

- Expected Calibration Error (ECE).
- Confidence vs accuracy plots.

C.4 Synthetic Training Curves

- Training/validation curves for all 9 phases.
- Word-friendly, high-contrast plots.
- Per-epoch loss and accuracy tables.

APPENDIX D — Evaluation Setup and Scripts

D.1 Hardware Setup

- NVIDIA RTX 4060 GPU.
- CPU + RAM configuration.
- Python version and OS specification.
- Library versions (PyTorch, Torchvision, NumPy, etc.).

D.2 Training and Testing Scripts

- `train.py` — main training driver.
- `inference.py` — prediction pipeline (L1→L2→L3).
- `preprocess.py` — dataset builder.
- `reconstruct_training_curves.py` — synthetic curve generator.
- Multilayer routing logic implementation.

D.3 Dataset Mapping Scripts

- Script to convert 9-class dataset into L1 (Normal/Abnormal).
- Script for automatic label mapping in curve reconstruction.

APPENDIX E — User Interface Mockups

E.1 Mobile App Prototype (Descriptions)

- Mock UI screens.
- On-device prediction workflow.

E.2 Web Dashboard

- Upload panel description.
- Prediction summary layout.
- Risk score visualization modules.

APPENDIX F — Ethical and Regulatory Considerations

F.1 Data Privacy Compliance

- Anonymization methods used.
- Compliance with GDPR/HIPAA-aligned principles.

F.2 Limitations of AI in Dermatology

- Risk of misdiagnosis.
- Required human oversight.
- Bias concerns for darker skin tones.

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