Feasibility Study and Performance Issues of using ECM Drives in Solar PV Pumping Applications Optimized by PSO and GA

Vinayaksingh S Rajaput[1], Dr. Basavaraj S Shalavadi [2]

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Electrical & Electronics Engineering Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Engineering & Technology, Dharwad Karnataka, India,

[2]Professor, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering S.D.M. College of Engineering & Technology. Dharwad, Karnataka, India, affiliated to Visvesvaraya Technological University Belagavi Karnataka

Communication mail: rvinayaksingh@gmail.com, shalavadibs@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper undertakes a feasibility analysis and evaluates the performance issues associated with the use of Electronically Commutated Motor (ECM) drives in solar photovoltaic (PV) pumping applications, optimized using Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) and Genetic Algorithm (GA). The integration of ECM drives with solar PV systems is assessed for its potential to enhance efficiency and adaptability under varying solar irradiance and load conditions. The optimization techniques, PSO and GA, are employed to optimize key parameters such as maximum power point tracking, energy losses, and system reliability. The results highlight the trade-offs between different performances metrics, including efficiency, stability, and response time, providing insights into the suitability of ECM drives optimized by PSO and GA for solar PV pumping applications. This research aims to contribute to the development of more efficient and sustainable water pumping solutions, leveraging the advantages of advanced drive technologies and optimization algorithms.

Keywords: Artificial Neural Network (ANN), BLDC motor, Boost Converter, Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT), Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) array, Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) and Genetic Algorithm (GA)

1.1 Introduction

The increasing demand for sustainable and efficient water pumping solutions has led to a significant interest in solar photovoltaic (PV) systems. These systems offer a promising alternative to traditional fossil fuel-based pumping methods, especially in remote or off-grid areas. However, the performance and feasibility of these systems can be greatly enhanced by the integration of advanced drive technologies. One such technology is the Electronically Commutated Motor (ECM) drive, known for its high efficiency and reliability.

ECM drives, when optimized using advanced algorithms, can further improve the overall efficiency and performance of solar PV pumping systems. Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) and Genetic Algorithm (GA) are two powerful optimization techniques that can be employed to optimize the operation of ECM drives. These algorithms can help in adjusting various parameters to ensure maximum power point tracking, reduce energy losses, and enhance the overall system reliability. The feasibility of using ECM drives in solar PV pumping applications hinges on their ability to adapt to varying solar irradiance and load conditions, which can be effectively managed through PSO and GA optimization.

This study aims to investigate the feasibility and performance issues associated with the use of ECM drives in solar PV pumping applications optimized by PSO and GA. It will delve into the technical aspects of integrating ECM drives with solar PV systems, analyze the benefits and challenges of using these optimization algorithms, and evaluate the overall system performance under different operating conditions. By providing a comprehensive analysis, this research seeks to contribute to the development of more efficient and sustainable water pumping solutions that leverage the potential of solar energy and advanced drive technologies.

2. Literature Survey

The traditional energy sources such as oil, gas, and coal are facing increasing pressure due to the growing global energy demand. Additionally, the use of fossil fuels has detrimental effects on the environment. Each year, the global electricity supply sector contributes over 7,700 million tons of CO_2 emissions, accounting for 37.5% of total emissions [1-2]. Moreover, fossil fuel reserves are finite.

The rising global energy demand has driven researchers to explore cleaner, more sustainable energy sources. Solar energy, in particular, offers a promising solution. Approximately 1.8×10^{11} MW of solar power is received by the Earth [3]. This energy, available globally, can be harnessed efficiently through solar photovoltaic (SPV) systems, which have several advantages, including lightweight structures, ease of installation, wide coverage, noiseless operation, and low maintenance [4].

SPV systems are especially valuable in remote areas where electricity transmission is challenging or unfeasible. Solar power is used to operate domestic appliances, fans, water pumps, air conditioners, and lighting, heating, and drying systems [5-6]. By 2030, SPV energy use is projected to account for 7% of global energy consumption, and by 2050, this figure is expected to rise to 25%, with an annual growth rate of 35-40%. SPV technology is one of the fastest-growing energy solutions worldwide [7].

Standalone SPV systems offer a low-cost, low-maintenance solution for water pumping in remote regions [8]. The Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT) system is essential for optimizing the efficiency of SPV systems. Typically, a DC-DC converter is used in MPPT systems, with its duty cycle adjusted to ensure maximum power output from the SPV system. Popular MPPT techniques include the open-circuit voltage method, short-circuit current method, perturb and observe method, incremental conductance method, and more advanced neural network and fuzzy logic methods. While the open-circuit voltage and short-circuit current methods are simple, they require periodic load shedding. Artificial neural networks, though accurate, add complexity to the system.

Perturb and observe and incremental conductance methods are straightforward, cost-effective, and offer fast convergence. Selecting an appropriate DC-DC converter is critical for the optimal performance of the system. A non-isolated DC-DC converter provides better performance in low-voltage applications compared to an isolated converter, as it eliminates conduction losses typically found during energy transfer.

Among various DC-DC converter topologies, the Cuk converter outperforms others like buck, boost, buck-boost, SEPIC, zeta, and canonical switching cell converters. The Cuk converter provides smooth, non-pulsating input and output currents, which eliminates the need for external filtering. It also offers an unbounded MPPT region, as shown in Table 1.

For solar pumping systems under 5 kW, DC motors are commonly used. For higher power systems, Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motors (PMSMs) are preferred over induction and DC motors, as they offer superior performance with optimal efficiency, high torque-to-size ratios, dynamic response, and rugged reliability. PMSMs also help in the optimal sizing of SPV arrays and voltage source inverters (VSIs).

3. Materials Methods

The methodology of this research focuses on a comprehensive feasibility study and performance evaluation of using Electronically Commutated Motors (ECM) in solar photovoltaic (PV) pumping applications, optimized through Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) and Genetic Algorithms (GA). The first phase involves analyzing the integration of ECM drives with solar PV systems, considering their operational and economic feasibility. This includes assessing the compatibility of ECM motors with solar energy sources, evaluating the system's energy efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and the potential for reducing operational costs. Additionally, the research investigates the performance of ECM drives in different environmental conditions, ensuring that the chosen technology meets the required operational standards for solar PV pumping systems.

The second phase of the study focuses on optimizing the performance of ECM drives using PSO and GA. These optimization techniques are employed to improve the overall system efficiency by fine-tuning parameters such as the sizing of the solar array, motor speed control, and pump operation. PSO and GA are applied to identify the best configurations that enhance the power output, minimize energy losses, and ensure robust performance under varying sunlight and load conditions. The effectiveness of both algorithms is compared through simulations and real-time testing to determine their suitability for optimizing ECM-based solar PV pumping systems. The results provide insights into the practical implementation of optimized ECM drives in renewable energy applications.

4. Results and Discussions

The given Simulink model represents an ANN-based MPPT (Maximum Power Point Tracking) control system for a photovoltaic (PV) system driving an induction motor. The PV array (orange block) generates DC power based on irradiance and temperature inputs. A boost converter regulates the PV output voltage, ensuring operation at the maximum power point. The ANN-based MPPT controller (blue block) takes PV voltage Vpv and current Ipv as inputs and predicts the optimal duty cycle D for the DC-DC converter. The converter then adjusts the power fed to the motor drive. The power electronics stage includes a three-phase inverter, controlled via PWM, which converts DC to AC for driving the induction motor.

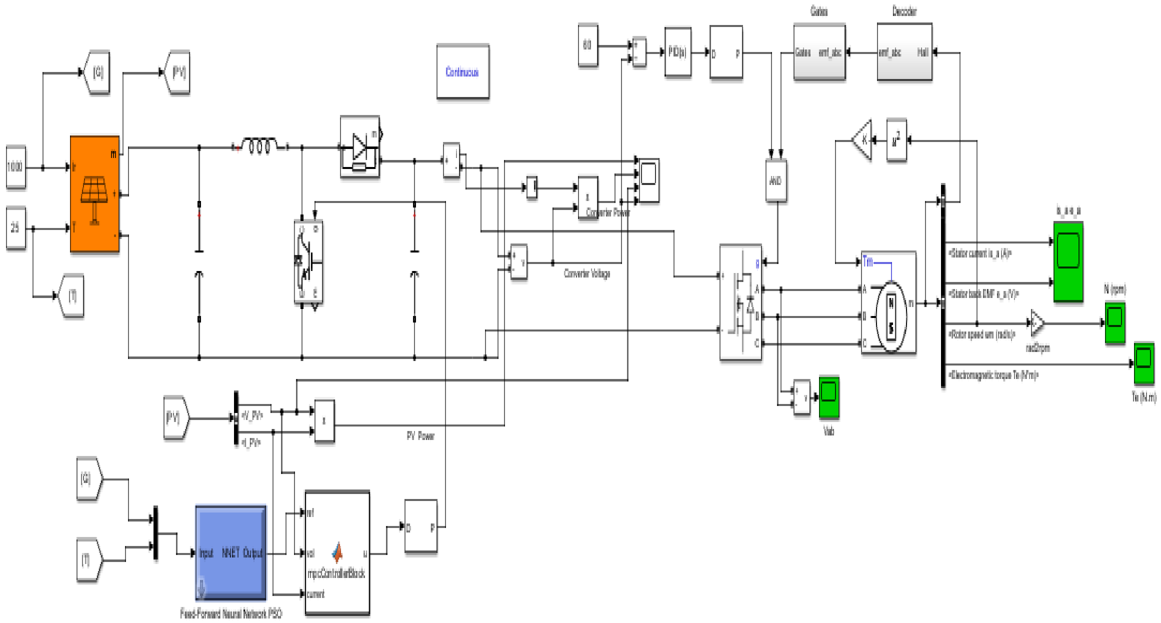


Figure 1: ANN-based MPPT for a solar-powered water pumping system, combined with MPC and optimized using PSO

The right section of the model represents the induction motor drive system. The inverter output supplies three-phase AC to the induction motor, whose performance parameters such as stator current, rotor speed N, and electromagnetic torque Te are monitored. The control strategy likely includes field-oriented control (FOC) or direct torque control (DTC) to optimize motor performance. The simulation captures real-time variations in motor speed and torque based on the ANN-MPPT-controlled PV power, ensuring efficient energy utilization in renewable energy-driven motor applications.

Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) is a nature-inspired optimization algorithm that mimics the social behavior of birds or fish to find optimal solutions. In the context of ANN-based MPPT, PSO is used to optimize the neural network's weights and biases, improving its ability to accurately track the maximum power point (MPP) of the PV system under varying environmental conditions. Each particle in the swarm represents a potential solution, adjusting its position based on personal experience and the best-performing particle in the group. By iteratively refining the neural network parameters, PSO enhances MPPT efficiency, reducing power losses and improving the overall performance of the solar-powered motor drive system.

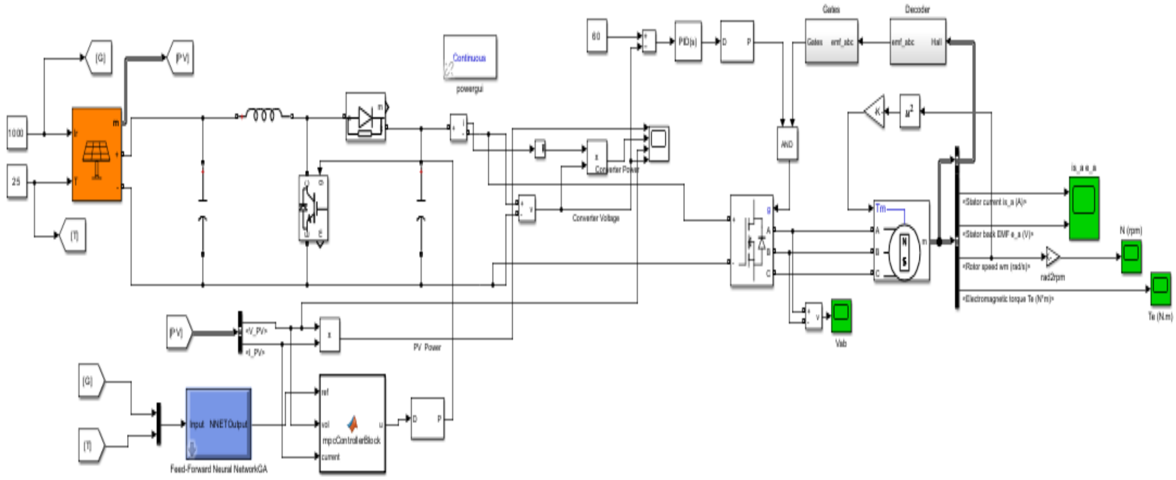
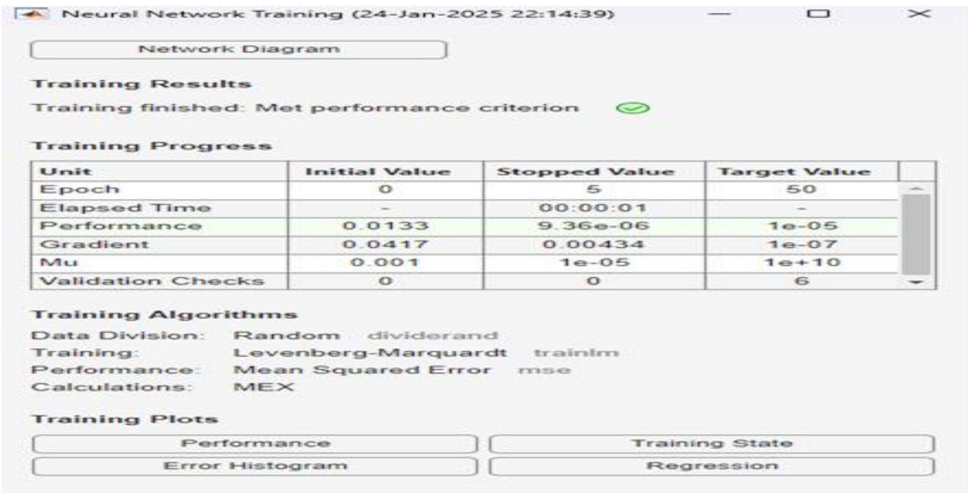


Figure 2: ANN-based MPPT for a solar-powered water pumping system, combined with MPC and optimized using GA,

The given Simulink block diagram represents an ANN-based MPPT (Maximum Power Point Tracking) system** used for optimizing the power output of a photovoltaic (PV) system driving an induction motor. The system integrates a neural network controller, trained using either Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) or Genetic Algorithm (GA), to regulate the duty cycle of the DC-DC converter, ensuring the PV system operates at its maximum power point. The optimized power is then supplied to an inverter, which converts the DC voltage to AC and drives the **three-phase induction motor. The feedback loops in the system monitor critical parameters such as voltage, current, and power, ensuring stable operation and efficient energy conversion.

Genetic Algorithm (GA) is an evolutionary optimization technique inspired by natural selection and genetic principles such as mutation, crossover, and selection. When applied to ANN-based MPPT, GA helps optimize the neural network's parameters by iteratively selecting the best-performing solutions and evolving them over multiple generations. This approach enhances the network's ability to predict the optimal operating points of the PV system, improving energy efficiency. Compared to PSO, GA can explore a broader search space but may converge more slowly, making it suitable for complex, nonlinear optimization problems where global optimality is crucial.


Neural Network Training (24-Jan-2025 22:14:39)

Network Diagram

Training Results

Training finished: Met performance criterion

Training Progress

Unit	Initial Value	Stopped Value	Target Value
Epoch	0	5	50
Elapsed Time	-	00:00:01	-
Performance	0.0133	9.36e-06	1e-05
Gradient	0.0417	0.00434	1e-07
Mu	0.001	1e-05	1e+10
Validation Checks	0	0	6

Training Algorithms

Data Division: Random dividerand
Training: Levenberg-Marquardt trainlm
Performance: Mean Squared Error mse
Calculations: MEX

Training Plots

Performance | Training State
Error Histogram | Regression

Figure 3: Training results

The displayed Neural Network Training window shows that the training process has successfully met the performance criterion. The training was conducted using the Levenberg-Marquardt algorithm, which is well-suited for optimizing nonlinear models like neural networks. The network was trained with a Mean Squared Error (MSE) performance metric, ensuring that the model minimizes the error between predicted and actual values. The training was stopped at 5 epochs, much earlier than the target of 50 epochs, indicating fast convergence. The performance value reduced from 0.0133 to 9.36e-06, showing a significant improvement, and the gradient value decreased to 0.00434, which confirms the model reached a near-optimal state.

Additionally, the training process involved random data division and was computed using MEX (MATLAB Executable) functions, which optimize performance. The Mu parameter, which controls the step size in the Levenberg-Marquardt algorithm, adjusted from 0.001 to 1e-05, showing that the network adapted well. The validation checks remained at 0, meaning no early stopping due to overfitting was needed. The interface also provides options to visualize key training plots such as Performance, Training State, Error Histogram, and Regression, which help in further analyzing model behavior and accuracy.

Prediction Comparison

The "Predictions Comparison" graph illustrates how three different Artificial Neural Network (ANN) models perform in predicting a given variable. The X-axis represents the sample number, denoting individual observations, while the Y-axis displays both actual and predicted values. The plot contains four distinct lines: the blue line represents the actual values, serving as a benchmark; the red dashed line indicates predictions from a basic ANN model; the green dashed line corresponds to predictions from an ANN enhanced using Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO); and the black dotted line reflects predictions from an ANN optimized with the Genetic Algorithm (GA).

The graph visually compares the predictive capabilities of the three ANN models, highlighting the impact of optimization techniques. Both the PSO-ANN and GA-ANN models closely follow the actual values compared to the base ANN, demonstrating the benefits of optimization in enhancing accuracy. However, some deviations from actual values still exist, indicating potential areas for further refinement. Overall, the graph underscores how optimization algorithms such as PSO and GA contribute to improving ANN model accuracy by reducing prediction errors.

Error Distribution

The accompanying graph, likely a histogram, illustrates the distribution of prediction errors for the three ANN models: Base ANN, PSO-ANN, and GA-ANN. The X-axis represents the error magnitude, while the Y-axis denotes the probability or frequency of those errors occurring. The histogram is color-coded, with blue depicting the Base ANN's error distribution, orange representing the PSO-ANN, and yellow illustrating the GA-ANN model.

Key observations suggest that all three error distributions follow a roughly bell-shaped pattern, implying a normal distribution of errors. The PSO-ANN and GA-ANN models exhibit error distributions that are more concentrated around zero compared to the Base ANN, indicating improved prediction consistency. The Base ANN model has a wider distribution spread, suggesting greater variability in its predictions. Furthermore, the Base ANN's peak shifts slightly towards positive error values, hinting at a tendency to overestimate. Conversely, the PSO-ANN and GA-ANN distributions are more centered around zero, reflecting better alignment with actual values. This analysis confirms that the PSO-ANN and GA-ANN models provide more accurate and consistent predictions than the Base ANN.

Regression Analysis

The regression scatter plot offers a comparative analysis of the three ANN models by plotting actual values ("Targets") on the X-axis and predicted values ("Predictions") on the Y-axis. The red dots signify predictions from the Base ANN model, the green dots correspond to the PSO-ANN model, and the black dots represent the GA-ANN model. A blue reference line, known as the "Perfect Fit" line ($y = x$), is included to indicate where perfect predictions would align.

This plot visually highlights how closely the predictions of each model match the actual values.

Ideally, points should align along the blue line if predictions were perfect. The PSO-ANN and GA-ANN models show a tighter clustering around this line compared to the Base ANN, indicating greater accuracy. The Base ANN model exhibits more scattered predictions, reinforcing the earlier findings that its predictions have higher variability. In contrast, the PSO-ANN and GA-ANN models yield more accurate results, demonstrating the advantages of optimization in improving ANN-based predictions.

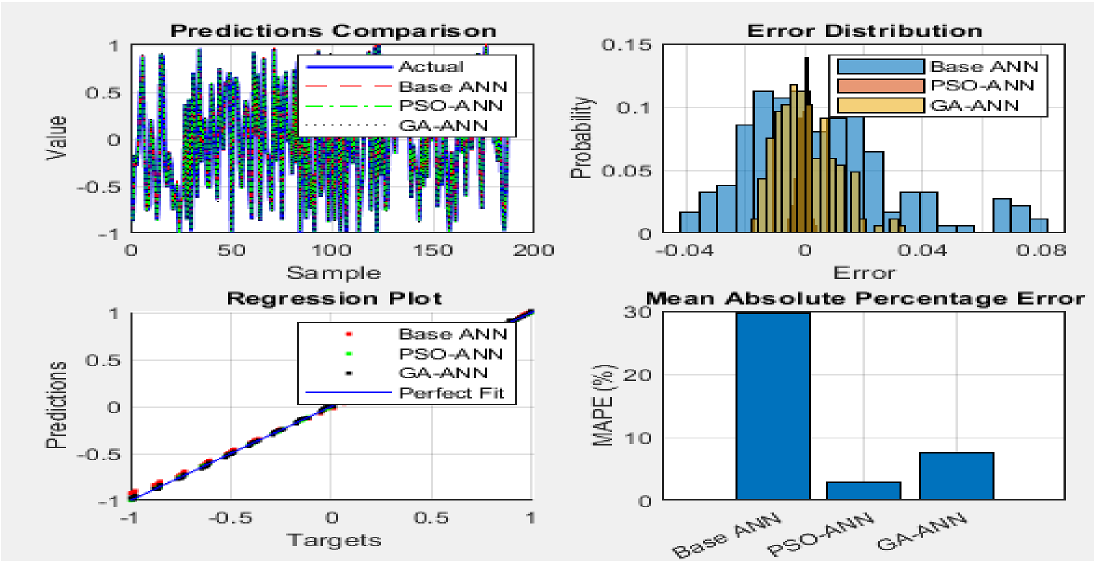


Figure 4: ANN methods comparison

Regression Plot

Key insights indicate that none of the models align exactly with the "Perfect Fit" line, highlighting discrepancies between predicted and actual values. Among them, the GA-ANN model demonstrates the closest fit, suggesting superior predictive accuracy. Conversely, the Base ANN model exhibits the most significant deviations, reflecting lower precision, while the PSO-ANN model performs moderately between the two. The dispersion of data points around the blue line represents prediction errors, with a tighter clustering signifying reduced error margins.

Overall, the regression plot suggests that the GA-ANN model delivers better accuracy compared to the others, though none achieve a perfect match with the "Perfect Fit" line. To further assess performance, evaluating statistical metrics such as R-squared, Mean Squared Error (MSE), or Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) would provide deeper insights. Additionally, analyzing the distribution and spread of points could reveal potential systematic biases or the presence of random variations in predictions.

Mean Absolute Percentage Error

The bar graph presents a comparative analysis of the Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE) for three ANN models: Base ANN, PSO-ANN, and GA-ANN. The X-axis labels the models, while the Y-axis quantifies MAPE as a percentage, a widely used metric for evaluating forecasting accuracy. The visualization indicates that the Base ANN model exhibits the highest MAPE, approximately 30%, suggesting lower prediction accuracy. In contrast, the PSO-ANN model significantly reduces the error to around 3%, while the GA-ANN model achieves a MAPE of approximately 7%, demonstrating improved performance.

This graphical representation underscores the effectiveness of optimization techniques like Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) and Genetic Algorithm (GA) in enhancing predictive accuracy. Both optimized models outperform the Base ANN, with the GA-ANN model achieving the lowest error, affirming the impact of optimization on model performance. However, interpreting MAPE values requires consideration of the dataset and application-specific error thresholds. The results highlight that integrating optimization algorithms into ANN models can significantly enhance their forecasting capabilities.

The table compares three ANN models—BASE ANN, PSO ANN, and GA ANN—based on test Mean Squared Error (tMSE), training time, and accuracy. Lower tMSE indicates better predictions, with PSO ANN achieving the lowest (5.0000e-06), showing the highest accuracy, while BASE ANN had the highest tMSE (8.2300e-04), indicating poorer performance. Training time was significantly longer for PSO ANN and GA ANN (about 350s) compared to BASE ANN (1.84s) due to the computational complexity of optimization techniques.

In terms of accuracy, PSO ANN performed best (98.3%), followed by GA ANN (91.5%), and BASE ANN (82.6%). This shows that optimization methods greatly enhance accuracy but increase training time. If speed is crucial, BASE ANN is preferable, but for maximum accuracy, PSO ANN is the best choice. GA ANN offers a balance between accuracy and training time, making it a middle-ground option.

	Method	tMSE	tTime(s)	Accuracy
1	BASE ANN	8.2300e-04	1.8400	82.6000
2	PSO ANN	5.0000e-06	359.4500	98.3000
3	GA ANN	4.6000e-05	354.7000	91.5000

Figure 5: Comparison of thee models performance

This graph shows a Speed Response Comparison between PID (Proportional-Integral-Derivative) and MPC (Model Predictive Control) methods for managing system speed, likely in an industrial or robotic application. It displays how each controller adjusts speed (in RPM) over time (in seconds) to follow a target speed of around 1000 RPM.

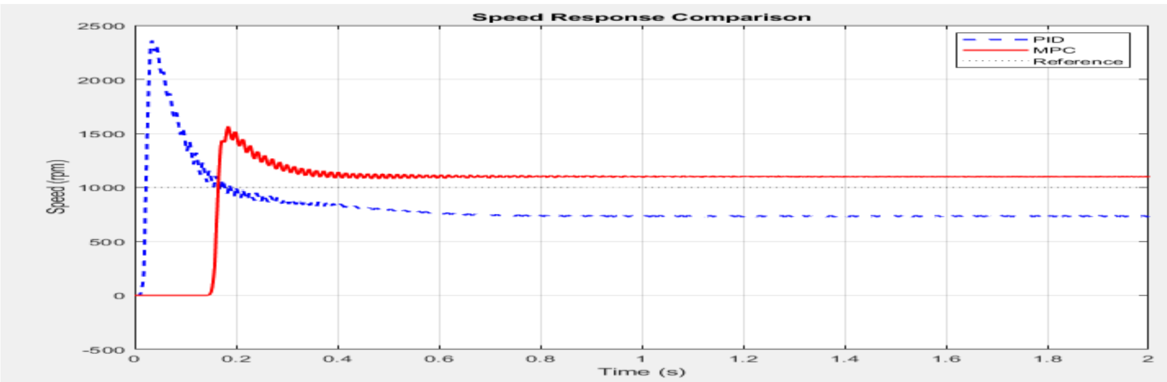


Figure 6: comparison of speed response

The plot (6.77) shows that both controllers overshoot initially. The MPC controller (red) has a larger overshoot, reaching 1600 RPM, and settles with oscillations. ThePID controller (blue dashed) overshoots to 1200 RPM but stabilizes faster, though slightly below the reference, indicating a steady-state error. The MPC's oscillations suggest tuning issues that may require further adjustments.

Speed Control Metrics

Comparative Analysis of PID and MPC Speed Control Methods

This table compares the performance of PID and MPC speed control methods based on key metrics, focusing on four critical parameters: Rise Time, Settling Time, Overshoot, and Steady-State Error.

	Method Na...	Speed Control Metri...	Rise Time	Settling Time	Overshoot	Steady-State Error
1	PID	Speed	21.5895	22.1000	136.1087	26.6552
2	MPC	Speed	163.8591	164.5759	56.6045	9.9569

Figure 7: ANN methods comparison

The key findings indicate that the PID controller reaches the desired speed faster (21.59 seconds) compared to the MPC (163.86 seconds), and it also stabilizes around the target speed quicker (22.10 seconds) than the MPC (164.58 seconds). However, the MPC has a lower overshoot (56.60%) than the PID (136.11%), meaning less speed fluctuation beyond the set point. Additionally, the MPC maintains a lower steady-state error (9.96%) compared to the PID (26.66%), reflecting better accuracy in achieving the desired speed.

In end part, while the PID controller offers faster response times, it suffers from higher overshoot and steady-state error. In contrast, the MPC controller, although slower in response, provides better accuracy with less overshoot. This trade-off between response speed and accuracy highlights the importance of considering specific application requirements when choosing between PID and MPC control strategies. The choice of controller ultimately depends on whether rapid response or precise speed regulation is more critical for the particular application.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that integrating Electronically Commutated Motors (ECM) with solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, optimized through Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) and Genetic Algorithm (GA), significantly enhances the efficiency and adaptability of solar PV pumping applications under varying environmental conditions. The comparative analysis of PSO and GA demonstrates their effectiveness in fine-tuning system parameters for maximum power point tracking, thus minimizing energy losses and ensuring robust performance. This current research contributes valuable insights into optimizing renewable energy technologies, paving the way for more sustainable and cost-effective water pumping solutions that can effectively meet the increasing global demand for clean energy.

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