Volume 11, Issue 4, April – 2026 International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology
ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26apr780

Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment Using Machine Vision and AI Techniques

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Publication Date: 2026/05/02

Abstract: The fruit quality evaluation automated system is a combination of machine vision and artificial intelligence (AI) to overcome the deficiencies and inaccuracy of hand grading. With the help of the latest image processing technologies, the system will be able to calculate the quality of the fruits using the visual features including color, shape, size, and texture of the fruit. With this automation, the quality assessment speed, accuracy, and consistency are improved, and the human error is minimized, which positively affects the operation of agricultural sectors and food processing departments. The system works by taking quality images of the fruits and then classifying the fruit images into categories including, Good, Average and Defective. The system can be trained to recognize slight patterns in the images of fruits, and with the use of Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), it can be trained to make credible classifications. This technology has a great potential in the automation of the fruit grading activities in supermarkets, export quality control, as well as smart agricultural technologies, which would help to foster sustainability, decrease food wastages, and increase global food security.

Keywords: *Fruit Quality, Machine Vision, Automated System, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN), Image Processing, Quality Classification, Food Industry, Agricultural Applications, Sustainability.*

How to Cite: Pachuri Vishnu Vardhan; Kolluri Chaitanya Kumar; Sankar Surendar (2026) Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment Using Machine Vision and AI Techniques. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 11(4), 2871-2876. https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26apr780

I. INTRODUCTION

Fruits play a significant role in human nutrition as they are sources of essential dietary vitamins, minerals, as well as dietary fiber. Their quality has a direct impact on the market value, consumer preference and adherence to export standards. Nonetheless, the current techniques of quality inspection of fruits are time-consuming, subjective, and liable to human errors. Such manual methods which may rely on visual examination and the use of simple grading systems may be non-consistent and time-consuming, contributing to the inefficiency of production processes and poor-quality results. The fast development of machine vision technology has provided new possibilities in automation of the quality assessment of the fruits. Machine vision systems are fitted with cameras and image capturing capabilities that are capable of taking detailed images of fruits in real-time. These systems can examine visual characteristics including color, shape, texture, and size giving a more objective and consistent analysis. With the integration of the artificial intelligence (AI) methods, including deep learning and especially Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), these systems are capable of intelligent categorization of fruits according to predetermined quality criteria. Machine vision, combined with AI, has not only increased the efficiency and reliability of the fruit grading system but also saved the labor force of people, making the processing time faster. Also, the AI models have the ability to learn and improve with time, hence they become more accurate. The innovation can transform the quality control of fruit in the agricultural industries, food processing units, supermarkets, and quality assurance of export, and provide more sustainable and dependable practices in the food supply chain.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Image processing methods have been used extensively in recent years to cover inspection of fruit quality which allows automatic grading and sorting of fruits using visual characteristics. Initial research works took simple image processing techniques like edge detection and color analysis to locate defects and change of fruits whenever they were ready to eat [1]. These methods were however usually constrained by the fact that they could not process complex patterns and variability in the appearance of fruits. The accuracy of machine learning models, especially Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), has also increased dramatically when it comes to classifying fruits and can identify minute defects and ripeness levels [2]. In specific tasks involving image-based classification, CNNs have demonstrated good accuracy because of their capacity to automatically acquire spatial hierarchies of features on raw

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26apr780

pixel data. The study has proven the usefulness of CNNs in other agricultural activities such as the quality of fruits. As an example, one of the studies by Zhang et al. [3] suggested a CNN-based system that could distinguish among different categories of fruits according to the surface defects and ripeness with high precision. This system was superior to conventional machine learning models and this indicates that deep learning has the potential to transform the grading of fruits. Nevertheless, most of the current systems can only be limited to a limited number of fruits or grading activities. One of the biggest weaknesses of these systems is the inability to generalize with respect to other types of fruit as well as the grading criteria. The recent developments in AI have tried to seal this gap by establishing generalized models that can evaluate various fruits. Li et al. [4] have already investigated the possibility of applying multi-fruit classification systems with CNNs and have shown that the more scalable approach can be effective to evaluate the quality of various fruits within one frame. According to these studies, AI-based systems may offer a complete solution to the large-scale quality of fruits if refined. The use of AI-based fruit grading systems still has challenges despite the advances that have been achieved so far, especially with regards to cost and accessibility. Most of the available solutions are too costly to a small scale farm or local markets. Moreover, real-time grading and multi-fruit support have not been entirely developed in a lot of systems. The current research is being directed towards low cost of implementation, enhanced real-time processing and enhanced multi-fruit capabilities. The article by Kumar et al. [5] promotes the idea of low-cost AI that will interface with the current farm technologies, including the IoT devices, to offer real-time feedback to benefit decision-making and enhance the accuracy of the grading.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

➢ *Existing System*

The existing fruit quality measurement systems are mainly based on manual inspection of fruit quality in which humans can visually inspect fruits on the base of defects, ripeness and size. These systems are slow, erratic, and prone to human error hence cannot be applied in large-scale usage. The common grading systems rely on the subjective judgments and cannot see the minor defects on the surface or color differences or internal quality problems efficiently. Moreover, the manual processes cannot handle a high quantity of fruits at a time, which leads to delays and high operations expenses. The current systems though effective in small scale operations are not scalable and accurate to meet the modern agricultural operations particularly in the face of diverse fruits.

➢ *Proposed System*

The Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System proposed is based on machine vision and artificial intelligence (AI) to implement and optimize a fruit-grading system. The platform will involve the use of sophisticated cameras and AI-based models, e.g., Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), to evaluate the visual characteristics of fruits, i.e., shape, size, color, texture, and surface defects. The system preprocesses the images of fruits by capturing them and then proceeds with the additional analysis. The deep learning models examine the images in order to categorize the fruits into groups and classify them as either Good, Average or Defective. Agricultural workers and quality controllers will have a graphical interface to receive real-time and actionable feedback and automated grading reports. This system is expected to enhance both the precision, speed and scalability of fruit quality measurements to assist industries to reduce waste, enhance uniformity in grading, and enhance overall efficiency of the operation.

➢ *System Architecture*

Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System has a modular and scalable architecture which will enable the system to effectively handle bulk of data and at the same time be user friendly to the end-users. The following are the layers that make up the architecture:

- Input Layer: The system gathers visual information with a high resolution camera at specific positions which take pictures of the fruits. The system captures metadata such as the type, size, and other specifics of the fruit as well as other visual data, which the user interface provides.

- Processing Layer: The raw data goes through the cloud where deep neural networks such as CNNs run the fruit images. The images are preprocessed with the images being labored to eliminate noises, resizing images, removing backgrounds and normalizing colors to enable the images to be analyzed using machine learning algorithms. The fruit is then classified in these models and any surface defect is identified.

- Decision-Making Layer: Data are analyzed with the help of the AI models that can offer actionable information, including the classification of the quality of the fruit (Good, Average, Defective). The evaluation of risk factors (e.g., defects, disease potential) is carried out, and real-time notifications are provided to quality controllers. Individual treatment or storing recommendations depending on the grade of the fruit can be given out as well.

- Actuation Layer: This layer entails interface between the system and the end-users which gives an interactive dashboard with real-time results, trends, and alerts. Otherwise, the system features an AI-based chatbot that helps the users analyze the results, give suggestions, and respond to questions.

- Output Layer: Results like fruit quality classification, detection of defect and recommendation are displayed to the user in a form that is easy to read. The production can be tailored to the needs of the various users so that the required interventions can be carried out on time.

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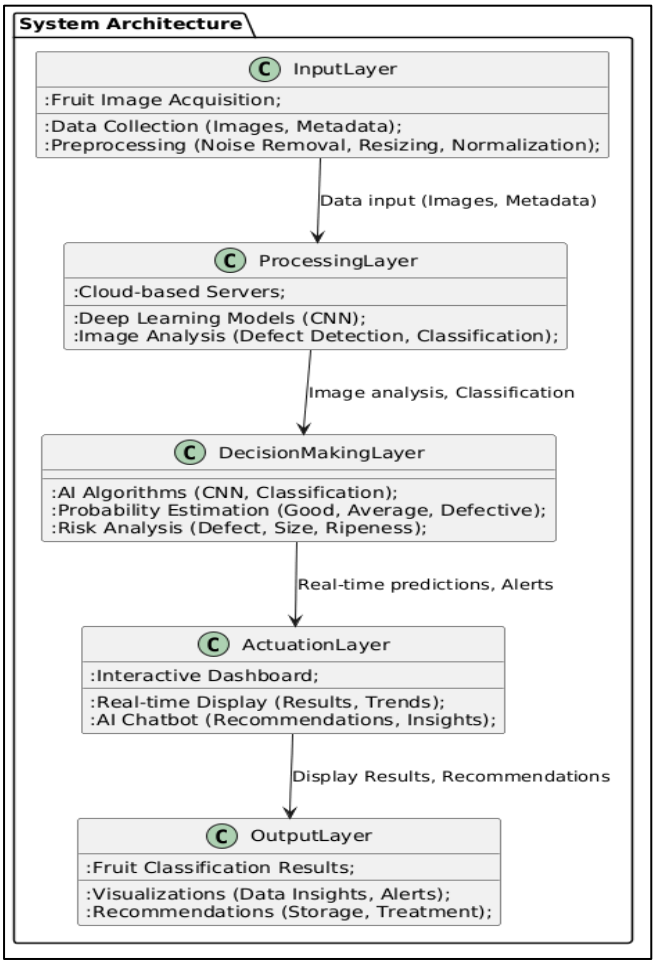

Fig 1 System Architecture

➢ *Expected Outcomes*

The Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System is believed to make valid real-time measurements of the fruit quality, and its accuracy in identifying defects and sorting the fruits into quality levels is also high. The system will be in a position to handle bulk volumes of fruits, give real-time forecasts and also minimize the number of human errors during the grading process. The accuracy of the classification, the speed of processing, the capability of the system to process different types of fruits, and the fact that the system reduced the amount of waste through the help of more accurate grading can be considered the key performance indicators. In the long-term, more data is injected into the system and machine learning models get more developed, the platform can evaluate a wider variety of types of fruit and expand its diagnostic features.

➢ *Conclusion*

To sum up, the Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System that is being proposed is a major step towards the automation and optimization of the process of grading the fruit. The system becomes real-time, scalable, and accurate through the combination of machine vision, AI technologies and deep learning technologies that enhance the quality grading of fruits in a variety of agricultural industries. It has a modular and flexible architecture that allows the system to develop in parallel with the development of AI and machine learning, which makes it flexible to meet the needs of the agricultural industry in the future. The capability of the platform to minimize manual mistakes, enhance the rate of grading and efficiency in operations will not only enhance competitiveness in the market, but also help in sustaining the market as due to less waste and a higher quality of produce reaches consumers.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System was tested to ensure its effectiveness in the grading of the fruits, identifying the fruit defects, the throughput of the system and its capability in handling high amount of fruit image data. The key aim of the experiment was to determine whether the platform was able to effectively label fruits into classes like; Good, Average, and Defective on the basis of historical and real-time image information. The outcomes will also be designed to compare the results of the various machine learning models in terms of accuracy of classification, speed of processing, and overall performance of the system.

➢ *System Performance Evaluation*

Key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the performance of the Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System included accuracy of classification, response time, throughput and efficiency of data processing. The system was evaluated on the precision of the classification of the real-time images in the correct categories of quality of fruits using historical data of the fruits. Response time equated to speed whereby the system was able to provide diagnostic results and warnings to the users. The throughput was used to ascertain the capacity of the platform to handle large quantities of images of fruits in real-time. The performance of data processing evaluated the ability of the system to process continuous data streams without impacting on its speed or accuracy. It was discovered that more complex models including Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) gave more accurate predictions but took longer to process whereas more simple models took shorter response times and compromised accuracy. The two settings were proven to be efficient in processing the fruit images and this means that the system can be scaled to address the real life operational requirements that necessitate real time operations. The findings of the experiment are summarized in the table below.

Table 1 Performance Measures of the Proposed System.

Performance Parameter	Measured Value (Advanced Model)	Measured Value (Basic Model)
Classification Accuracy (%)	92	85
Data Processing Throughput (Images/Sec)	0.80	0.95
Response Time (Seconds)	0.60	0.40
Power Consumption (W)	0.25	0.20

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26apr780

➢ *User Experience and Usability*

The platform usability was tested by approaching the grading of different cases and obtaining user responses. The chatbot based on AI technology and offering real-time analysis and recommendations because of health requirements was very responsive and could be of great help to users in understanding the quality of fruits and making the right action. The platform enabled the users to settle on more accurate predictions and shorter processing period depending on their requirements. Users rated this flexibility positively and were very positive in the feedback of the AI chatbot. The table below shows the outcome of the user satisfaction survey.

Table 2 User Satisfaction Survey Results

Evaluation Parameter	Rating (out of 5)
Ease of Configuration	4.8
Fruit Quality Classification Performance	4.7
Chatbot Responsiveness	4.9
System Throughput	4.6
Overall Satisfaction	4.8

➢ *System Comparison with Existing Solutions*

The Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System has notable benefits over the traditional manual inspection system, specifically, the speed, accuracy, and scalability of the new system. The traditional approaches are poor in terms of human mistakes, slowness in processing data, and the inability to process high volumes of data. Conversely, the suggested system combines machine learning and real-time image processing, which is the significant enhancement of fruit grading accuracy and speed. Advanced and basic models can also be changed, which is why the platform provides a viable solution to the needs of various working conditions. Moreover, large batches of fruits can be processed using the system in real-time and the system is an efficient and accurate alternative to conventional fruit grading systems.

➢ *Anticipated Improvements and Future Work*

Despite the fact that the present variant of the platform has been performing well, it can be improved. It might be improved with more advanced machine learning algorithms, including Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), in the future to improve the accuracy of defect detection and fruit classification. Also, the platform might include more data sources, including the environmental conditions or sensor measurements, to give more context during fruit quality measurements. The second area to work on is the consumption of power of the system particularly in the case of mobile or outdoor uses. The further evolution can be the development of mobile apps that will enable users to get the real-time evaluation of the quality of fruits and get updates on their smartphones, which will make the system more flexible and more accessible to the users.

➢ *Conclusion*

The Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System is a scalable fruit grading system that is innovative and offers automation to the process. The system is able to provide real-time, precise, and efficient evaluation through the use of machine vision, AI, and deep learning methods to enhance grading accuracy and operational efficiency. The system has a modular and flexible structure that allows it to keep abreast with AI and machine learning innovations and is thus adaptive to future demands in agriculture. Since the platform is still in its developmental stage, it can transform the fruit grading industry through cutting down on wastes, maximizing product quality and decision-making in the agricultural industry.

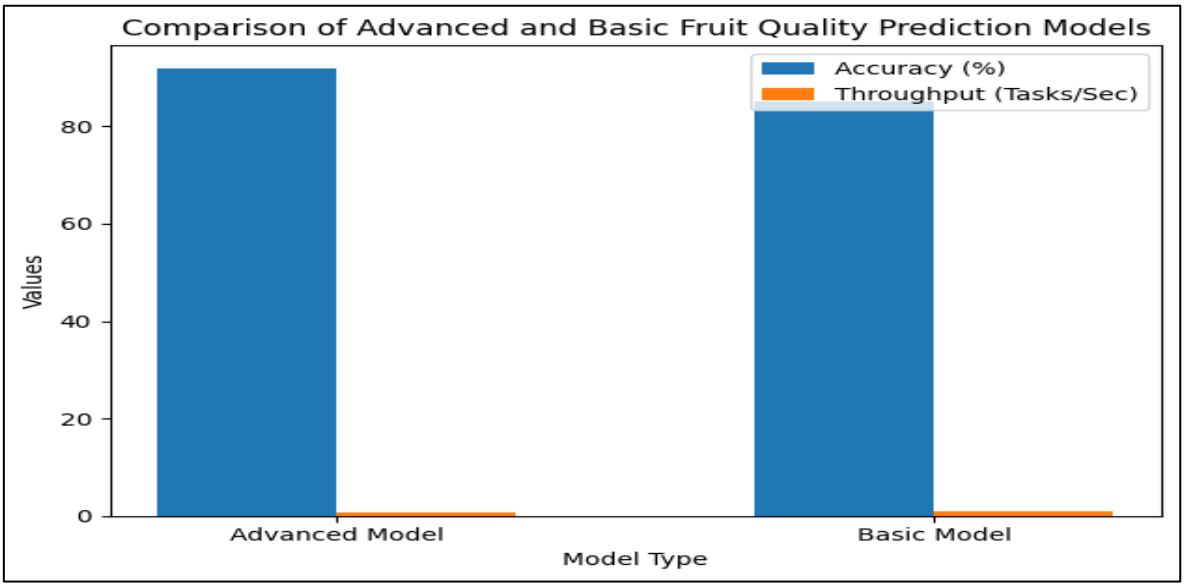

Fig 2 Advanced and Basic Fruit Quality Prediction Model Comparison.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26apr780

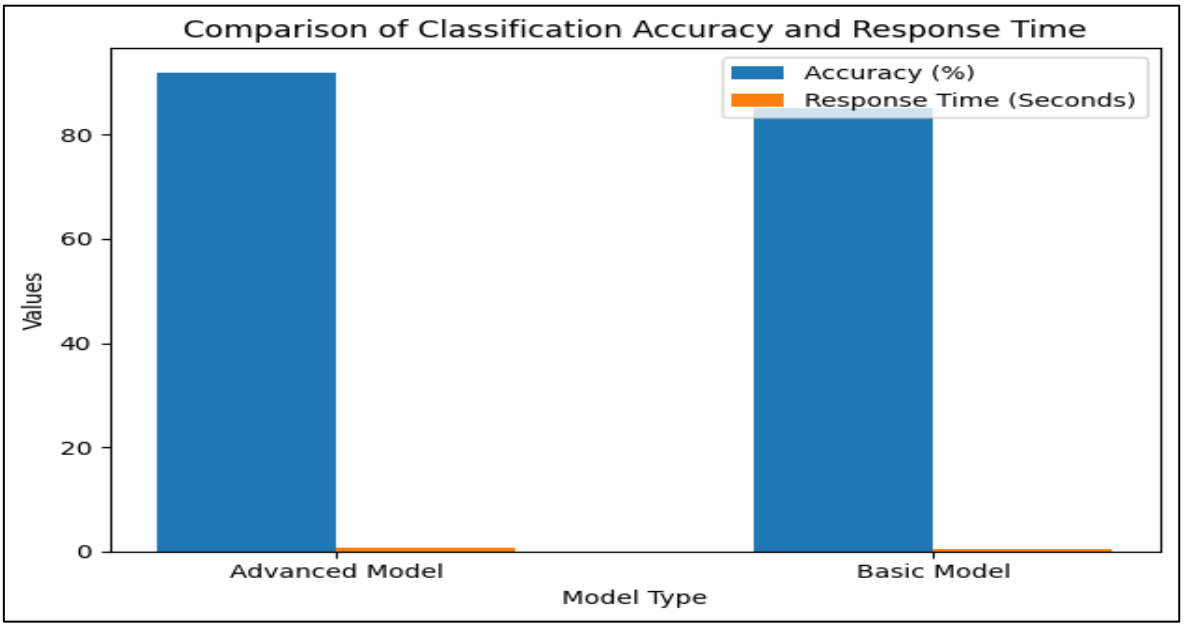

Fig 3 Comparison Comp. Accuracy of Classification and Comp. Time.

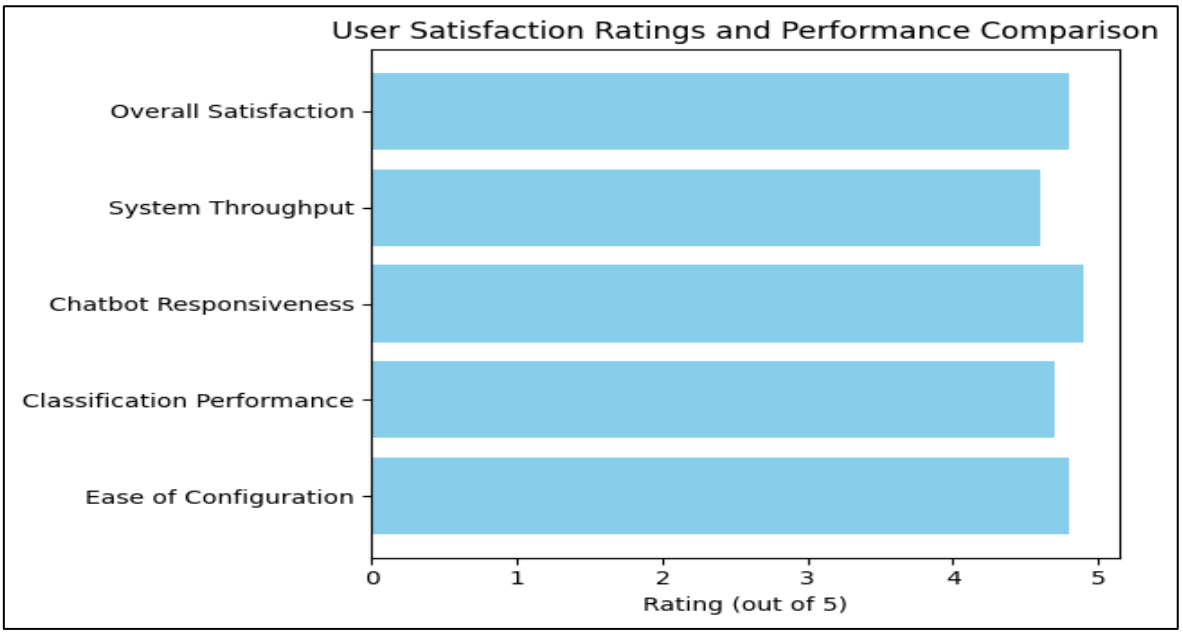

Fig 4 Satisfaction Rating of Users and Performance Comparison.

V. CONCLUSION

One of such developments is the Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System which is a major improvement on the mechanization of the fruit grading system. The system uses machine vision and deep learning to provide precise real-time results of the quality of the fruit; making the grading process more efficient and consistent. Convolutional Neural networks (CNNs) are implemented to guarantee the high accuracy rates in the recognition of small-scale defects and the classification of fruits, whereas the modular system design allows flexibilities and scalabilities in the future in terms of expanding it to cover diverse types of fruits and the associated grading criteria. Moreover, the system has significant advantages over the old manual grading systems that are susceptible to human errors and lacked rapidity. The proposed system offers industries to scale their operations and operate at high quality standards with its capacity to process large amounts of fruit image in real-time and provide instant feedback. The interactive dashboard and chatbot powered by AI further improve the user experience as it delivers real-time insights and recommendations to be acted on in order to make efficient decisions when it comes to farming operations. To sum it up, the Intelligent Fruit Quality Assessment System will transform the fruit grading business as it will minimize waste, enhance accuracy, and simplify processes. With the continued advances in the machine learning models and data integration that the platform can offer, there is a possibility that the platform will become an essential resource in the agriculture and food industries helping to produce high-quality fruits and improve working practices across the globe.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26apr780

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