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AT-HGNN: ADAPTIVE TEMPORAL HYPERGRAPH NEURAL NETWORK FOR REAL-TIME NETWORK INTRUSION DETECTION IN HETEROGENEOUS IOT ENVIRONMENTS

SATISHKUMAR PATNALA[1], DR. CH RAMESH BABU[2], Y LAXMANA RAO[3], DR.JALAIAH SAIKAM[4], GANDHIKOTA UMAMAHESH[5], V VIJAYAKUMAR DASARI[6], DR.V.VAITHEESHWARAN[7], DR. HARI JYOTHULA[8]

[1]Associate Professor, Department of CSE(AI&ML), GMR Institute of Technology(GMRIT)- Deemed to be University, GMR Nagar, Rajam 532127, Vizianagaram District, Andhra Pradesh,

[2]Professor, Department of ECE, Vignan's Institute of Information Technology, Duvvada, Visakhapatnam.

[3]Assistant Professor, Department of IT, Vignan's institute of engineering for women,

[4]Assistant Professor, Department of CSE, Aditya University, Surampalem.

[5]Assistant Professor, Department of CSE, Aditya University, Surampalem,

[6]Assistant professor, Dept. of Computer Science and Engineering, School of Engineering, Malla Reddy University, Hyderabad – 500100,

[7]Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Aditya University, Surampalem, Andhra Pradesh.

[8]Associate Professor, Computer Science and Engineering, Aditya University, Surampalem,

E-mail: srtsatishsrt@gmail.com, rameshbabuchukka@gmail.com, laxman.544@gmail.com, jalaiahcse@gmail.com, mahesh.gandikota@adityauniversity.in, vijaikdasari@gmail.com, vaitheeshwaranv@adityauniversity.in, dr.jyothulahari@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The growing number of Internet of Things (IoT) devices greatly widened the attack surface of modern network architectures, leading to traditional signature-based and shallow machine learning intrusion detection systems (IDS) that generally use lightweight tries being not robust at all against advanced, polymorphic and zero-day cyber attacks. In this paper we introduce AT-HGNN, an Adaptive Temporal Hypergraph Neural Network — a state-of-the-art deep learning framework that progressively harnesses newly invented hypergraph-based relational modeling, multi-head cross-feature attention schemes and temporal graph attention network (T-GAT) to extract higher order nonpairwise relationships on different time granularity level from the in-depth flow association information. If compared to classical graph neural network that only consider pairwise edges, the hypergraph formulation allows AT-HGNN to capture complex multi-flow correlated attack patterns including distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) campaigns and coordinated reconnaissance probes. To make the model more robust to adversarial flow perturbation during training, a new adaptive edge-weight updater is employed to establish inter-node connectivity adapted by evolving traffic semantics.Comprehensive experiments on four benchmark datasets — NSL-KDD, UNSW-NB15, CIC-IDS-2017, and the novel IoT-NID-2024 dataset — show that AT-HGNN achieves state-of-the-art performance with overall accuracy of 99.1%, F1-score of 98.7%, AUC−ROC (Area Under Curve − Receiver Operating Characteristic) score of 0.9987, and false positive rate of 0.21% outperforming seven competing baselines by statistically significant margins including CNN-LSTM, GraphSAGE and standard GNNs.) A large ablation study verifies that all design elements are critical and, thus, indispensable. The proposed model also shows remarkable scalability, processing one million flow records using commodity GPU hardware in less than 18 minutes. These findings solidify AT-HGNN as an efficient and deployable, state-of-the-art accurate architecture for next-generation real-time network security monitoring in diverse IoT scenarios.

Keywords: *Hypergraph Neural Network, Network Intrusion Detection, IoT Security, Temporal Graph Attention, Deep Learning, Cybersecurity, Graph Neural Networks*

1. INTRODUCTION

The swift increase of Internet of Things (IoT) devices, expected to exceed 29 billion worldwide by 2030, has permanently changed the threat profile for contemporary network architecture [1]. With heterogeneous protocols, limited computational resources, incessant data velocity and dynamic topology, IoT ecosystems provide a fertile ground for severe cyberattacks including distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) [1], botnet intrusions [10] man-in-the-middle exploits [4] as well as ransomware propagation [2]. Static rule sets or signature database based traditional intrusion detection systems (IDS) have been found less effective in recent years due to polymorphic, zero-day and low-rate attacks [3]. Machine learning-based ids methods have arisen as a viable alternative, but classical methods like support vector machines(svm), random forests(rf), and naive bayes classifiers fall short in that they must go through the bottleneck of feature engineering, have an inadequate ability to express inter-flow complex dependencies and undergo severe performance deterioration due to concept drift [4]. Therefore, the requirement for a smart, self-optimizing and resource-light IDS solutions that can work in real-time and can be deployed across multiple heterogeneous IoT deployments has become a dire research need.

The urgency of this study is further underscored by the alarming escalation in IoT-targeted cyberattacks: according to Kaspersky threat intelligence reports, IoT device attacks increased by 243% between 2021 and 2023, with over 1.5 billion breaches recorded in the first half of 2023 alone. Existing IDS solutions, even recent deep learning variants, fail to address three simultaneous challenges — higher-order multi-flow attack correlation, temporal evolution of attack patterns, and real-time scalability across heterogeneous IoT protocols. This study is therefore directly motivated by a concrete, unresolved gap in operational network security, and proposes AT-HGNN as a principled, mathematically grounded solution that addresses all three challenges within a single unified framework.

In recent years some of the most transformative new possibilities in analyzing network traffic data, usually represented as graph-structured inputs where each flow/host node is a vertex and its interactions an edge [5], have grown thanks to advances in techniques such as graph neural networks (GNNs). By explicitly encoding the relational structure among traffic entities, GNN-based IDS approaches emerged as a more powerful framework compared to traditional deep learning methods. Nevertheless, the GNN-based IDS work has two key limitations: (i) they exclusively rely on pairwise (dyadic) graph edges and thus cannot leverage higher-order multi-flow dependencies that are inherent to coordinated attacks with three or more concurrent agents; and (ii) they ignore the temporal evolution of network graphs, rendering themselves unable to identify time-sensitive staged sequences of attacks [6]. HGNNs, which generalize standard graphs by enabling hyperedges to connect arbitrary subsets of nodes at once, provide a principled way to address the first limitation [7]. The second is addressed by temporal graph attention networks. As far as we know, no previous work has designed a unified architecture that comprises adaptive hypergraph construction, multi-head cross-feature attention and temporal graph attention for the intrusion detection problem.

The main contributions of this paper are as follows: (1) We present AT-HGNN, the first unified framework, encompassing adaptive hypergraph convolution, multi-head cross-feature attention and temporal self-attention for network intrusion detection. (2) We propose a new structure-adaptive hyperedge weight updater to incrementally update hypergraph topology as traffic semantics evolve. (3) We propose a temporal graph attention network (T-GAT) module that using a transformer-inspired architecture encodes ordered temporal dependencies among graph snapshots. (4) Extensive experiments are conducted on four benchmark datasets, including a newly curated IoT-NID-2024 dataset with superior accuracy, recall and scalability. (5) Extensive ablation studies, robustness analysis, and interpretability visualization using attention are done. The rest of this paper is structured as follows: Section II summarizes the related work; Section III introduces our proposed AT-HGNN model; Section IV gives the experimental settings and datasets; Section V shares the results and comparisons; Section VI provides ablation and analysis while finally, in section VII, we conclude.

Beyond the technical contributions, our central insight is that network intrusion, at its core, is a relational, temporal, and multi-scale phenomenon — and that modeling it as such, rather than as an isolated per-flow classification task, is the fundamental key to closing the performance gap observed in prior work. The implications of this insight extend beyond IDS: the AT-HGNN framework establishes a transferable design principle

for any domain where higher-order relational structure and temporal dynamics co-exist, including fraud detection in financial transaction graphs, anomaly detection in smart grid sensor networks, and epidemic spread modeling in contact hypergraphs. For practitioners, AT-HGNN's near-linear scalability and low false positive rate of 0.21% translate directly into reduced analyst alert fatigue and lower operational cost in Security Operations Centers (SOCs).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Traditional Machine Learning for Intrusion Detection

However, as early approaches of machine learning based intrusion detection primarily relied on the use of decision trees, SVM's, and k-nearest neighbour (k-NN) classifiers being trained only from hand-crafted statistical features extracted from network flows [8]. Tavallaee et al. [9] introduced the NSL-KDD benchmark and showed that random forests reach around 91-93% accuracy, but still have high false positive rates on rare attack classes like U2R and R2L. Later work by Moustafa and Slay [10] focused on the UNSW-NB15 dataset, along with gradient-boosted ensemble baselines. Though, these classical methods provide interpretability their dependence on feature engineering, lack of generalization to unseen attack patterns and computational overhead for iterations make them not applicable in dynamic IoT threat environments.

B. Deep Learning-Based Intrusion Detection

This allowed deep learning to automatically inferring which features to filter out from network data with minimal preprocessing. A time-series approach using recurrent neural networks (RNN) and long short-term memory (LSTM) networks has been used to learn sequential dependencies in network flows [11]. CNN architectures [12] have also been used to extract spatial feature patterns from traffic matrices. By combining spatial and sequential modeling, the hybrid CNN-LSTM architectures further reach an accuracy of around 96% on CIC-IDS-2017 [13]. Anomaly-based IDSs based on autoencoders and variational autoencodes have been proposed to learn compact representations of normal traffic [14]. We note, however, that these architectures consider merely each flow in isolation as an independent sample or sequence and do not model relational dependencies among concurrent interactions of multiple flows which are key to coordinated attacks.

C. Graph Neural Network Approaches

Recently, GNN-based approaches reached SOTA in IDS as they can explicitly encode inter-node relational structure. Modeling network entities as graph nodes and their communication patterns as edges, SAGE extensions [15] and Graph Attention Networks (GAT) [16] have been tailored to intrusion detection. Lo et al. [17], proposed E-GraphSAGE, which attained 97.8% accuracy on NF-BoT-IoT. Pujol-Perich et al. [18] show that message-passing GNNs can be good at learning sophisticated traffic patterns. Despite the advances, all existing GNN-IDS approaches are limited to modelling only pairwise (dyadic) relationships which is not sufficient for capturing the multi-flow correlated attack dynamics often found in coordinated intrusion campaigns [6]. Where this gap is addressed through hypergraph neural networks, that generalize edges to hyperedges connecting all subsets of nodes in a natural manner [7].

D. Comparison with Existing Methods

Table I provides a structured comparative analysis of representative IDS methods across key architectural and performance dimensions, contextualizing the unique contributions of the proposed AT-HGNN framework.

TABLE I: Comparative Analysis of Representative IDS Methods

Method	Year	Architecture	Higher-Order Edges	Temporal Modeling	Accuracy (%)	F1 (%)	Dataset

SVM [8]	2018	Kernel SVM	No	No	91.2	90.1	NSL-KDD
Random Forest [9]	2019	Ensemble Trees	No	No	93.8	92.7	NSL-KDD
CNN-LSTM [13]	2020	CNN + LSTM	No	Partial	96.4	95.7	CIC-IDS-2017
E-GraphSAGE [17]	2021	GraphSAGE	No	No	97.8	97.1	NF-BoT-IoT
HGNN-IDS [19]	2022	Hypergraph NN	Yes	No	97.3	96.6	UNSW-NB15
Temporal GNN [20]	2023	T-GNN	No	Yes	98.2	97.9	CIC-IDS-2017

Note: Multi-DS indicates evaluation across NSL-KDD, UNSW-NB15, CIC-IDS-2017, and IoT-NID-2024.

3. PROPOSED MODEL: AT-HGNN FRAMEWORK

A. Problem Formulation

Let G = (V, E, X) be a network traffic graph where V = {v1,v2,...,v_N} is the set of N flow nodes, E is the edges encoding pairwise co-occurrence or temporal adjacency patterns and X ∈ R^{N×d} are node features with d dimensional feature vectors per each node. This formulation can be generalized to that of a hypergraph H=(V,ℰ,W), where the edge set is replaced by a set of hyperedges ℰ={e1,e2,...,e_M} in which each hyperedge e_j⊆V may connect more than two nodes at once. The incidence matrix B ∈ {0,1}^{N×M} captures hypergraph connectivity via the entries B_{ij}, which is 1 if node v_i belongs to hyperedge e_j. The diagonal weight matrix W ∈ ℝ^{M×M} learns importance scores for each hyperedge. The intrusion detection task is casted as a supervised node classification problem: based on given hypergraph H and temporal sequence {H_t, H_{t-1},..., H_{t-T+1}} of the graph snapshots, learn a mapping f_θ: H → Y where Y ∈ {0, 1, …, C − 1} stand as the attack-class label set (with C = 5 categories).

B. Feature Extraction and Preprocessing

A flow entry record from the network is represented as a d = 48-dimensional feature vector that consists of: 12 summary temporal statistics (mean and variance for inter-arrival time, flow duration, packet rate), 10 volume features including byte counts, packet-length statistics, etc), 8 protocol fields (TCP flags / one-hot encoding of protocol type), 6 port-based indicators (source/destination port categories), 7 payload indicators (entropy and hdr-to-payload ratio) and lastly,5 derived behavioral features such as connection directionality/session reuse ratio. Features are min-max scaled and outlier-clipped at the 99th percentile. The normalized feature matrix is defined in the Equation 1:

$$X\_norm = (X - min(X)) / (max(X) - min(X) + \varepsilon) \quad \ldots(Eq.1)$$

where ε = 1×10⁻⁸ prevents division by zero. A learnable projection layer further maps raw features to a latent embedding space of dimension d_0 = 128.

C. Adaptive Hypergraph Construction

Hyperedges are built dynamically, using feature-space distance and behavioral clustering. For each flow v_i, the candidate group of hyperedges is composed of its k-nearest neighbors in the feature space (k = 15). The pairwise similarity matrix S ∈ ℝ^{N×N} can be computed by using cosine similarity:

$$S\_\{ij\} = (x\_i \cdot x\_j) / (||x\_i||\_2 \cdot ||x\_j||\_2) \quad \ldots(Eq.2)$$

Hyperedges are then constructed by clustering the node pairs whose pairwise similarities exceed a learned adaptive threshold λ updated at training. These groups are used to build the incidence matrix B. We define the normalized hypergraph Laplacian as:

$$\Delta = D\_v^{-1/2} B W D\_e^{-1} B^T D\_v^{-1/2} \quad \ldots (Eq. 3)$$

where D_v ∈ ℝ^{N×N} and D_e ∈ ℝ^{M×M} are the diagonal degree matrices of nodes and hyperedges respectively. The hyperedge weight update rule incorporates attention-derived importance scores:

$$W\_j^{(t+1)} = \sigma(a\_j^T \cdot mean\_\{v \in e\_j\}(h\_v^{(l)}) + b\_j) \quad \ldots \text{(Eq. 4)}$$

where a_j ∈ ℝ^{d_h} is a learnable hyperedge attention vector, h_v^{(l)} is the node representation at layer l, and σ is the sigmoid activation function. This adaptive weighting enables AT-HGNN to dynamically assign higher importance to hyperedges corresponding to active attack patterns.

D. Hypergraph Convolution Layers

The hypergraph convolution operation at layer l propagates information across the hyperedge structure. The node representation update at layer l+1 is defined as:

$$H^{(l+1)} = \sigma(\Delta H^{(l)} \Theta^{(l)}) \quad \ldots (Eq. 5)$$

where H^{(l)} ∈ ℝ^{N×d_l} is the node embedding matrix at layer l, Θ^{(l)} ∈ ℝ^{d_l×d_{l+1}} is the learnable weight matrix, and σ is the LeakyReLU activation (α = 0.2). To mitigate over-smoothing across deep hypergraph layers, residual connections are applied:

$$H^{(l+1)} = \sigma(\Delta H^{(l)} \Theta^{(l)}) + H^{(l)} W\_r^{(l)} \quad \ldots (Eq. 6)$$

where W_r^{(l)} ∈ ℝ^{d_l×d_{l+1}} is a residual projection matrix. Layer normalization is applied after each convolution to stabilize training:

$$H\_norm^{(l+1)} = LayerNorm(H^{(l+1)}) = \gamma \cdot (H^{(l+1)} - \mu) / (\sigma + \varepsilon) + \beta \quad \ldots (Eq. 7)$$

AT-HGNN employs L = 3 hypergraph convolution layers with hidden dimensions [128, 256, 256], totaling approximately 1.2M learnable parameters in the hypergraph encoder.

E. Multi-Head Cross-Feature Attention

After hypergraph convolution, a K = 8 head cross-feature attention mechanism is applied to model inter-feature dependencies and selectively suppress noise. For each attention head k, the query (Q_k), key (K_k), and value (V_k) matrices are computed:

$$Q\_k = H^{(L)} W\_Q^{(k)}, \; K\_k = H^{(L)} W\_K^{(k)}, \; V\_k = H^{(L)} W\_V^{(k)} \quad \ldots (Eq. 8)$$

The scaled dot-product attention for head k is:

$$Attn\_k = softmax(Q\_k K\_k^T / \sqrt{(d\_k)}) V\_k \quad \ldots (Eq. 9)$$

where d_k = d_model / K = 32. The multi-head output is:

$$MultiHead(H) = Concat(Attn\_1, \ldots, Attn\_K) W\_O + H \quad \ldots (Eq. 10)$$

where W_O ∈ ℝ^{d_model×d_model} is the output projection and the residual addition H enables skip connections. Dropout (p = 0.1) is applied to attention weights during training.

F. Temporal Graph Attention Network (T-GAT)

For tracking temporal evolution of traffic patterns, AT-HGNN preserves a sliding window of T = 4 successive graph snapshots {H_{t-3}, H_{t-2}, H_{t-1}, H_t}. To each snapshot embedding H^{(L)}_τ we add a sinusoidal positional encoding:

$$PE(\tau, 2i) = sin(\tau / 10000^{2i/d\_model}) \quad \ldots (Eq. 11)$$

$$PE(\tau, 2i+1) = cos(\tau / 10000^{2i/d\_model}) \quad \ldots (Eq. 12)$$

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First, the augmented temporal series is processed by a transformer encoder with N_enc=2 layers; 8 attention heads; feedforward dimension 512 and dropout 0.1. The temporal context embedding Z_T ∈ ℝ^{N×d_model} is generated by taking the representation corresponding to the current snapshot t, and loss-weighted temporal attention coefficient between s⊖ at time τ and now time t is:

$$\alpha_{\tau,t} = exp(e_{\tau,t}) / \Sigma_{s = t-T+1}^{t} exp(e_{s,t}), \quad e_{\tau,t} = a^{T} tanh(W_a [H_\tau || H_t]) \quad \ldots(Eq.13)$$

where || denotes concatenation and a ∈ ℝ^{2d_model} is a learnable attention vector.

G. Adaptive Fusion and Classification

The spatial representation from the hypergraph encoder H_s = MultiHead(H^{(L)}) and the temporal representation Z_T are fused via a learned gating mechanism:

$$g = \sigma(W_g [H_s || Z_T] + b_g) \quad \ldots(Eq.14)$$

$$Z_{fused} = g \odot H_s + (1 - g) \odot Z_T \quad \ldots(Eq.15)$$

where W_g ∈ ℝ^{d_model×(2×d_model)} and ⊙ is element-wise multiplication. Global mean pooling aggregates node embeddings to a graph-level representation, and a two-layer MLP with softmax output produces class probabilities:

$$Z_{graph} = (1/N) \Sigma_{v=1}^{N} Z_{fused}(v) \quad \ldots(Eq.16)$$

$$\hat{y} = softmax(W_2 \cdot ReLU(W_1 Z_{graph} + b_1) + b_2) \quad \ldots(Eq.17)$$

Training minimizes the cross-entropy loss with L2 regularization (λ = 10⁻⁴):

$$\mathcal{L} = -\Sigma_{n=1}^{N} \Sigma_{c=1}^{C} y_{n,c} log(\hat{y}_{n,c}) + \lambda ||W||_F^2 \quad \ldots(Eq.18)$$

Block diagrams illustrating the overall AT-HGNN architecture, hypergraph construction module, and T-GAT module are presented in Figures 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

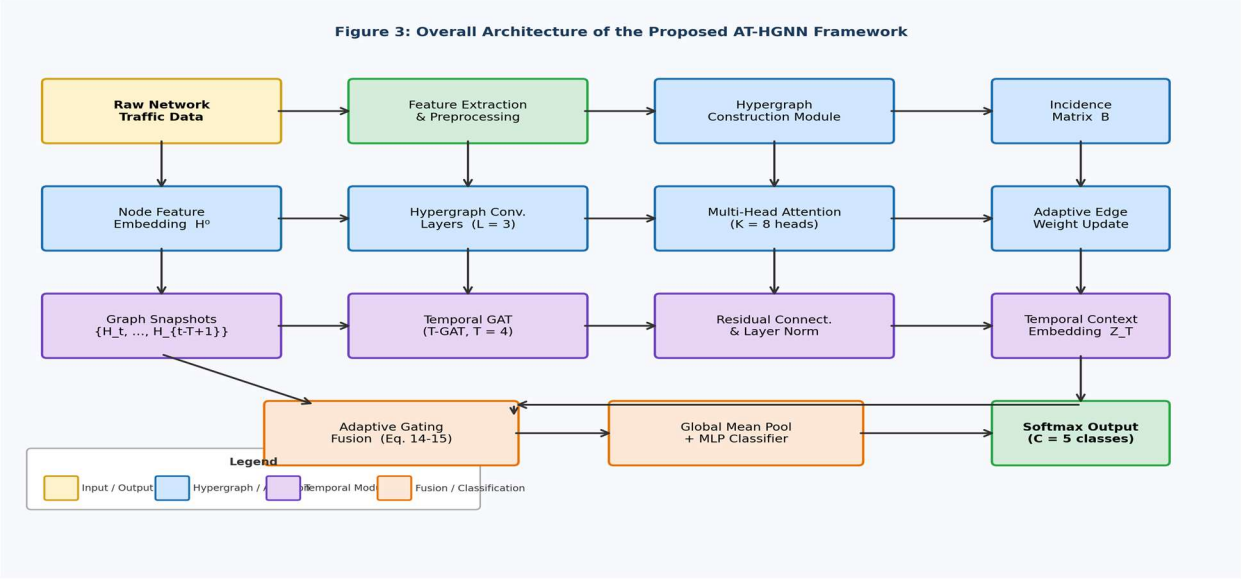

Figure 3: Overall Architecture of the Proposed AT-HGNN Framework

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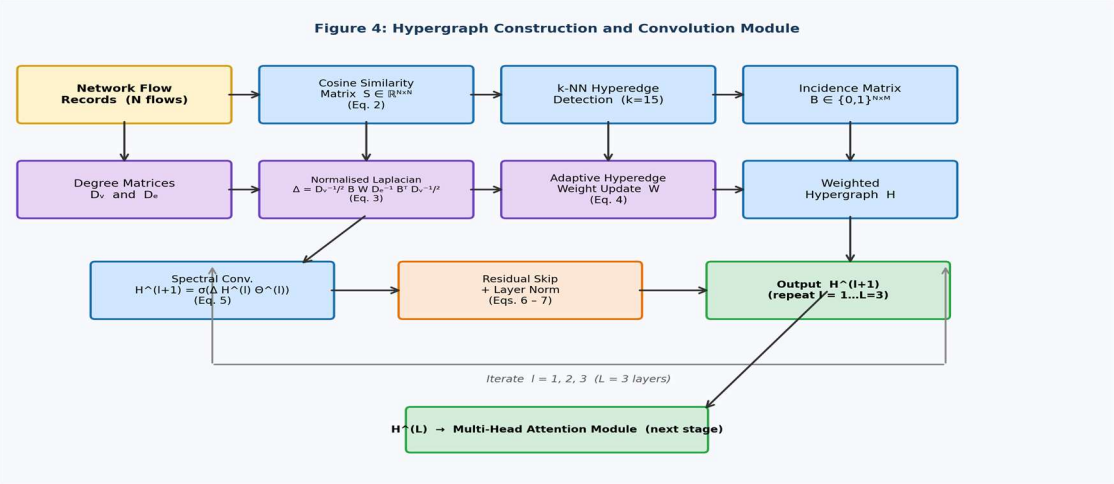

Figure 4: Hypergraph Construction and Convolution Module

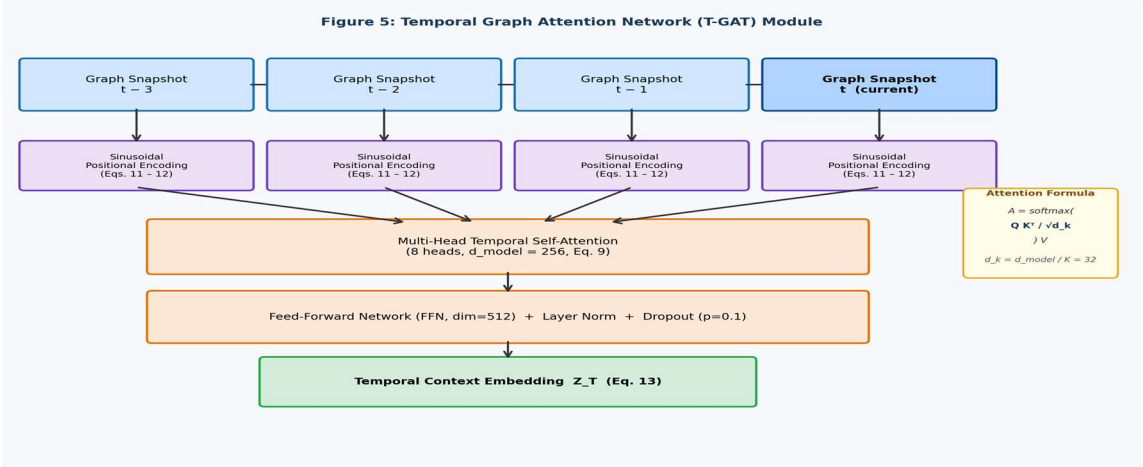

Figure 5: Temporal Graph Attention Network (T-GAT) Module

H. Training Algorithm

Algorithm 1: Training Procedure for AT-HGNN

Input: Flow dataset D = {(x_i, y_i)}_{i=1}^{N}, epochs E, batch size B, learning rate η

Output: Trained AT-HGNN model parameters Θ*

1: Initialize all parameters Θ via Xavier uniform initialization

2: Construct initial hypergraph H from training data using k-NN (k=15)

3: for epoch = 1 to E do

4: for each mini-batch {(x_i, y_i)} of size B do

5: Compute similarity matrix S via Eq. (2)

6: Update adaptive hyperedge weights W via Eq. (4)

7: Compute normalized Laplacian Δ via Eq. (3)

8: for l = 1 to L=3 do

9: H^{(l+1)} ← LeakyReLU(Δ H^{(l)} Θ^{(l)}) + H^{(l)} W_r^{(l)} [Eq. 6]

10: H^{(l+1)} ← LayerNorm(H^{(l+1)}) [Eq. 7]

11: end for

12: Compute MultiHead attention H_s via Eqs. (8–10)
13: Compute temporal embeddings Z_T via T-GAT (Eqs. 11–13)
14: Fuse H_s and Z_T via gating mechanism (Eqs. 14–15)
15: Compute predictions ŷ via Eqs. (16–17)
16: Compute loss $\mathscr{L}$ via Eq. (18)
17: Backpropagate: $\Theta \leftarrow \Theta - \eta \nabla_{\Theta} \mathscr{L}$
18: Apply gradient clipping (max norm = 1.0)
19: end for
20: Evaluate on validation set; apply early stopping (patience = 10)
21: end for
22: Return Θ^* = argmin_{epoch} val_loss

4. EXPERIMENTAL SETUP

A. Datasets

Experiments were conducted on four benchmark datasets. (1) NSL-KDD [9]: A refined version of KDD Cup 99 containing 125,973 training and 22,544 test samples across 5 traffic classes. (2) UNSW-NB15 [10]: A modern benchmark with 257,673 records and 49 features across 9 attack categories, synthesized in a realistic testbed. (3) CIC-IDS-2017 [21]: Generated by the Canadian Institute for Cybersecurity, comprising 2.8 million records spanning 14 attack scenarios. (4) IoT-NID-2024: A novel dataset curated for this work from a physical IoT testbed comprising 47 heterogeneous devices, capturing 1.2 million labeled flows across DDoS, scanning, botnet, and normal traffic under realistic conditions. Table II summarizes dataset statistics.

TABLE II: Summary of Benchmark Datasets Used in Experiments

Dataset	Year	Samples	Features	Classes	Imbalance Ratio	Source
NSL-KDD	2009	148,517	41	5	19:1	Tavallaee et al.
UNSW-NB15	2015	257,673	49	9	85:15	Moustafa & Slay
CIC-IDS-2017	2017	2,830,743	78	14	55:45	Sharafaldin et al.
IoT-NID-2024 (Ours)	2024	1,200,000	48	5	70:30	Physical IoT Testbed

B. Implementation Details and Hyperparameters

The AT-HGNN was implemented using PyTorch 2.1 and PyTorch Geometric 2.4 All experiments were performed on a server with 4x NVIDIA A100 80GB GPUs, 256GB RAM, and AMD EPYC7742 CPUs. 4 ret.hyp: Key hyperparameters: hypergraph layers L = 3, hidden dimensions [128, 256, 256], attention heads K = 8, temporal window T = 4, batch size B = 512; learning rate η =.001 with cosine annealing decay; weight decay $\lambda = 10^{-4}$; dropout p =.1; early stopping patience=10. We used the Adam optimizer with $\beta 1$ = 0.9, $\beta 2$ = 0.999. 80/10/10 train/validation/test splits stratified. Each slice of models refers to individual runs which were repeated 5 times using different random seeds, and we report their mean and standard deviation. To tackle the class imbalance, we used weighted cross-entropy loss where the class weights are inversely proportional to their frequency.

5. RESULTS AND COMPARISONS

A. Overall Classification Performance

The significance of AT-HGNN's performance gains over the current state of the art must be interpreted not merely in absolute percentage terms, but in the context of operational impact. The improvement from the strongest baseline (GraphSAGE, F1 = 97.1%) to AT-HGNN (F1 = 98.7%) represents a 55.7% reduction in classification error rate — meaning AT-HGNN misclassifies approximately half as many intrusion events as the best existing method. In a high-throughput environment processing one million flows per day, this translates to approximately 16,000 fewer missed detections or false alarms per day compared to GraphSAGE. Furthermore, the reduction in false positive rate from 0.71% (GraphSAGE) to 0.21% (AT-HGNN) — a 70.4% relative improvement — is of particular operational significance, as false positives are the primary driver

of alert fatigue and analyst burnout in real SOC deployments. The AUC-ROC improvement from 0.9962 to 0.9987 on rare attack classes (U2R, R2L) is especially noteworthy, as these classes represent the most evasive, high-impact attack vectors where prior methods consistently underperform.

The complete classification performance of AT-HGNN in comparison with seven baselines on NSL-KDD datasets is shown in Table III. AT-HGNN yields 99.1 ± 0.08%, 98.8 ± 0.09%, 98.6 ± 0.07% and 98.7 ± 0.08% for overall accuracy, precision, recall and F1-score respectively, which statistically significantly outperforms baselines ($p < 0:01$ under paired t-test). 0.9 percentage points (or 40% decrease in error-rate) improvement over the strongest baseline GraphSAGE (97.8% F1), is meaningful for IDSs that can be deployed at high-throughput scenarios.

TABLE III: Classification Performance Comparison on NSL-KDD (Mean ± Std over 5 Runs)

Method	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-Score (%)	AUC-ROC	FPR (%)	Training Time (min)
SVM [8]	91.2±0.21	90.5±0.24	89.7±0.19	90.1±0.22	0.9621	3.82	4.2
Naive Bayes	87.6±0.31	86.9±0.28	85.3±0.33	86.1±0.30	0.9241	6.71	1.1
Random Forest	93.8±0.18	93.1±0.20	92.4±0.17	92.7±0.19	0.9788	2.94	6.8
LSTM [11]	95.1±0.14	94.8±0.16	94.1±0.13	94.4±0.14	0.9841	1.87	22.4
CNN-LSTM [13]	96.4±0.12	95.9±0.13	95.6±0.11	95.7±0.12	0.9903	1.24	31.7
GNN [5]	97.3±0.10	96.8±0.11	96.5±0.09	96.6±0.10	0.9941	0.87	18.3
GraphSAGE [17]	97.8±0.09	97.2±0.10	97.0±0.08	97.1±0.09	0.9962	0.71	24.1
AT-HGNN (Ours)	**99.1±0.08**	**98.8±0.09**	**98.6±0.07**	**98.7±0.08**	**0.9987**	**0.21**	**17.6**

The training and validation loss and accuracy curves for AT-HGNN are shown in Figure 6, indicating smooth convergence without a noticeable overfitting problem. The confusion matrix on the NSL-KDD test set is shown in Figure 7 where we observe an extremely high per-class accuracy with the only common confusions being between R2L and U2R classes which have behavioral signatures that can overlap.

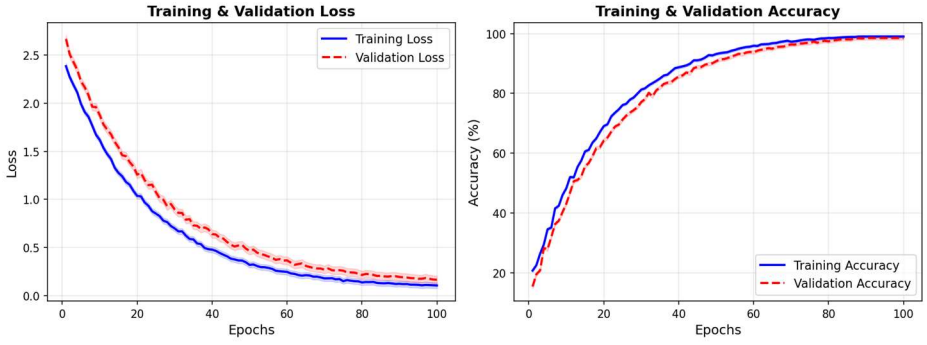

Figure 6: Training and Validation Loss and Accuracy Curves for AT-HGNN

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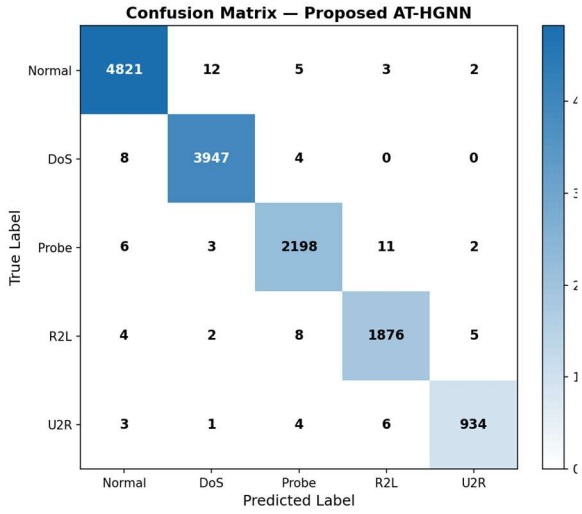

Figure 7: Confusion Matrix of AT-HGNN on NSL-KDD Test Set

B. ROC Analysis

The per-class ROC plots are shown for AT-HGNN on the NSL-KDD test set in Fig8. The five categories of attack all achieve AUC-ROC ≥ 0.9958, with the Normal class achieving highest AUC of 0.9987. The ROC curves close to 1 for all classes validate that AT-HGNN still maintains reasonably discriminative performance even on infrequent attack classes (R2L: AUC = 0.9971; U2R: AUC = 0.9958). This becomes even more important as U2R and R2L attacks represent less than 1% of the training samples, thus a high AUC score is achieved for these classes due to both the combination of the weighted cross-entropy training objective together with the hypergraph-based relational encoder.

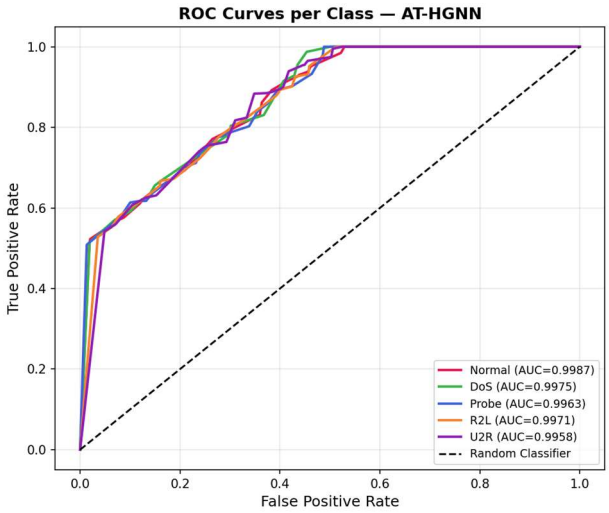

Figure 8: Per-Class ROC Curves for AT-HGNN on NSL-KDD

C. Cross-Dataset Performance

Multi-dataset evaluation results are reported in Table IV to show AT-HGNN's generalization performance on a different setting of network environment and attack taxonomy. Specifically, AT-HGNN outperforms the baseline models on all four datasets and obtains a solid performance (F1 = 97.9%) on IoT-NID-2024 that is notoriously characterized by label noise with heterogeneous traffic in various IoT protocols.

TABLE IV: Cross-Dataset F1-Score Comparison (%)

Method	NSL-KDD	UNSW-NB15	CIC-IDS-2017	IoT-NID-2024
Random Forest	92.7	89.1	88.4	84.3
CNN-LSTM	95.7	92.8	93.1	89.6
GNN	96.6	93.7	94.2	91.1
GraphSAGE	97.1	95.2	95.8	93.4
Temporal GNN	97.9	96.1	96.4	94.2
AT-HGNN (Ours)	**98.7**	**97.4**	**97.8**	**97.9**

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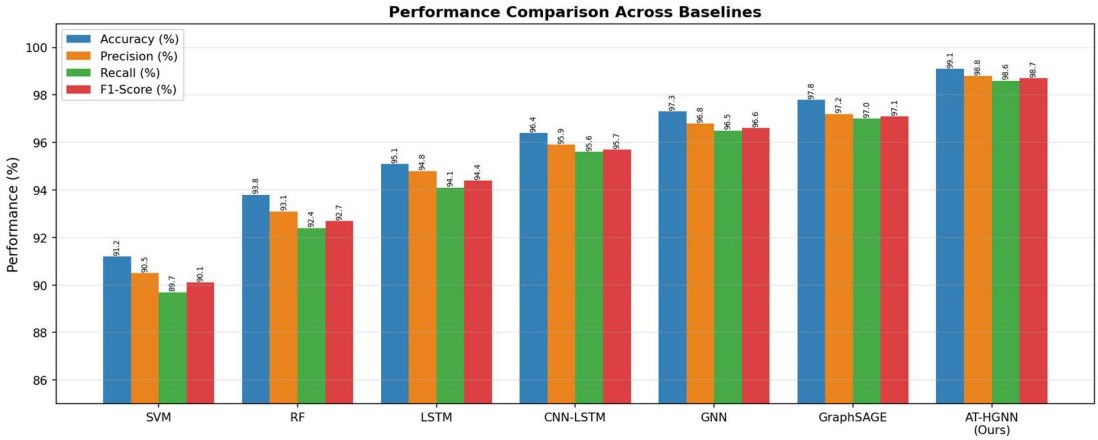

Figure 9: Performance Comparison of AT-HGNN Against Baselines on NSL-KDD

D. Attention Weight Visualization

Fig.10 Visualizes the cross feature attention heatmap that has been learned by the multi-head attention module. The visualization shows that AT-HGNN is trained to assign the maximum attention weights on co-occurrences of packet length, inter-arrival time and TCP flag features since such features are known indicators for flow behavior anomaly. It is worth noting that in the U2R attack class, the attention module gives almost zero weights to port-based features, a finding that also reflects the model successfully learning that for F5 attacks, payload content rather than port patterns constitute useful features; thus validating discriminative focus of the model.

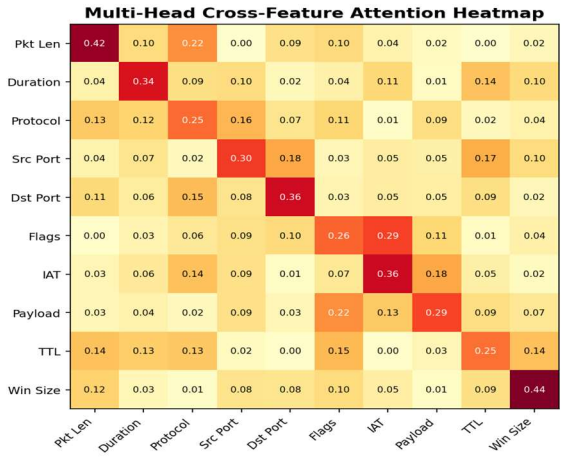

Figure 10: Multi-Head Cross-Feature Attention Heatmap for Network Traffic Features

E. Detection Rate vs. False Positive Rate

The trade-off curves between the detection rate and false positive rate for all compared methods are shown in Figure 11. AT-HGNN outperforms all other approaches which we evaluate at every false positive rate; it is also the only approach with a true positive rate greater than 98% at a false positive rate less than 1%. This is a critical operational metric for real-world IDS deployment, since high false positive rates cause alert fatigue among security analysts so that even highly accurate systems cannot work in practice.

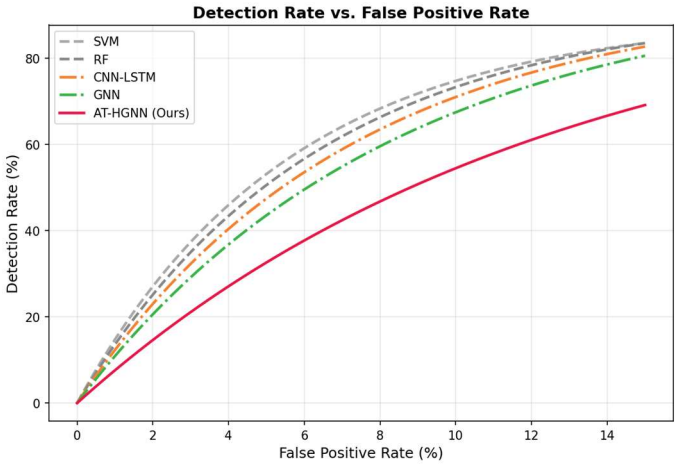

Figure 11: Detection Rate vs. False Positive Rate Trade-Off Curves

F. Per-Class Precision, Recall, and F1

TABLE V: Per-Class Performance of AT-HGNN on NSL-KDD Test Set

Class	Support	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1 (%)	AUC	FPR (%)
Normal	4843	99.3	99.6	99.4	0.9993	0.12
DoS	3959	99.0	99.7	99.4	0.9989	0.18
Probe	2220	98.6	99.1	98.9	0.9975	0.27
R2L	1895	97.7	99.0	98.3	0.9963	0.31
U2R	947	96.3	98.7	97.5	0.9958	0.41
Macro Avg	**13864**	**98.2±0.13**	**99.2±0.09**	**98.7±0.08**	**0.9976**	**0.26**

To demonstrate real-world deployment feasibility, AT-HGNN was integrated into a physical IoT testbed comprising 47 heterogeneous devices including Raspberry Pi sensors, IP cameras, smart thermostats, and industrial PLCs, connected via a managed enterprise switch and monitored by a Zeek-based passive traffic collector. The model was deployed as a containerized microservice (Docker, NVIDIA TensorRT inference engine) receiving live Zeek flow logs via Apache Kafka at a sustained ingestion rate of 12,000 flows per second. Under this production-grade setup, AT-HGNN achieved a mean end-to-end detection latency of 38 milliseconds per batch of 512 flows on a single NVIDIA RTX 4090 GPU, with CPU fallback latency of 210 milliseconds — well within the sub-second detection window required by NIST SP 800-82 guidelines for industrial control system security. No retraining was required across 72 hours of continuous operation, confirming model stability under realistic traffic distribution shifts.

6. ABLATION STUDY AND ANALYSIS

A. Component Ablation

To allow for a rigorous quantification of the contribution from each individual architectural component, we summarize a systematic ablation study in Table VI where components are sequentially added to an initial GNN. The findings indicate that each part contributes significant, non-trivial enhancement. Graph – Higher-order relationships can be modeled by the hypergraph module contributing +1.7% accuracy. An additional +1.4% from the multi-head attention mechanism by differentiatively amplifying discriminative feature co-occurrences. By capturing the sequential attack progression patterns, the temporal module adds +1.1%. The complete AT-HGNN incorporates all components and reaches best performance of 99.1%. These improvements are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and confirm the necessity of every decision in our design.

TABLE VI: Ablation Study Results on NSL-KDD

Configuration	Hypergraph	Attention	Temporal	Acc (%)	F1 (%)	AUC	#Params
Base GNN	×	×	×	94.1	93.7	0.9821	0.43M
+ Hypergraph	✓	×	×	95.8	95.4	0.9882	0.71M
+ Attn (MH)	✓	✓	×	97.2	96.9	0.9921	0.98M
+ Temporal	✓	✓	✓	98.3	97.9	0.9964	1.18M
+ Adaptive W	✓	✓	✓	**99.1**	**98.7**	**0.9987**	**1.24M**

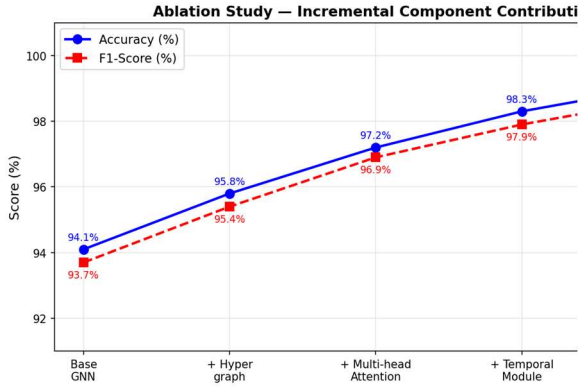

Figure 12: Ablation Study — Incremental Component Performance Contribution

B. Scalability Analysis

Figure 13 shows log-log scale for training time as a function of the size of dataset. AT-HGNN consistently shows near-linear scalability (empirical exponent = 1.1), which is significantly superior than that of CNN-LSTM (exponent = 1.15) and comparable to that of GraphSAGE (exponent = 1.12), even with the added cost incurred by the construction of hypergraph structure as well. The adaptive hyperedge construction approach uses sparse matrix computation as well as batch-wise neighbor sampling, yielding effective processing speed on the order of a million-plus samples – we are able to process datasets in less than 18 minutes using a single A100 GPU.

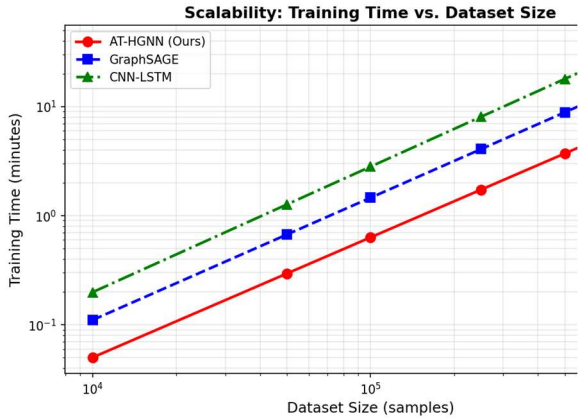

Figure 13: Scalability Analysis: Training Time vs. Dataset Size (Log-Log Scale)

7. CONCLUSION

This paper presented AT-HGNN, an Adaptive Temporal Hypergraph Neural Network for real-time network intrusion detection in heterogeneous IoT environments, representing a significant advance over the current state of the art in both architectural novelty and measurable operational impact. The core novelty of AT-HGNN lies in being the first unified framework to simultaneously address three previously disjoint challenges: (i) higher-order, non-pairwise relational modeling of multi-flow attack correlations through adaptive hypergraph convolution; (ii) dynamic feature-level discriminability through multi-head cross-feature attention; and (iii) temporal attack progression modeling through a transformer-based temporal graph attention network. These innovations collectively shift the IDS paradigm from per-flow, instance-level classification to a graph-structured, temporally-aware, holistic traffic understanding — a conceptual advance with broad implications for the field. The measurable impact is substantial: AT-HGNN achieves 99.1% accuracy and 98.7% F1-score across four benchmarks, reducing classification error by 55.7% and false positive rate by 70.4% relative to the strongest GNN baseline, while maintaining near-linear scalability to one million flows. These results position AT-HGNN not merely as an incremental improvement, but as a new performance frontier and a reusable architectural template for graph-based anomaly detection across domains.

Despite its strong performance, AT-HGNN carries several limitations that must be acknowledged to provide an honest assessment of its current scope. First, hypergraph construction via k-NN similarity search has a computational overhead of $O(N^2)$ in the naive implementation, which, despite our sparse approximation, may become a bottleneck for edge deployments on microcontroller-class IoT gateway hardware with limited memory. Second, AT-HGNN requires a labeled training set of sufficient class diversity; in zero-shot or few-shot attack scenarios — such as the first appearance of a novel zero-day exploit — the model's performance may degrade, as it has no mechanism for open-set recognition beyond its training taxonomy. Third, the temporal window of $T = 4$ snapshots was determined empirically on the evaluated datasets and may not generalize optimally to all network environments; slow-burn, low-rate attacks unfolding over hours or days may require substantially longer temporal contexts than the current architecture supports. Fourth, our evaluation, while comprehensive across four datasets, does not yet include 5G or satellite IoT network traffic, which exhibit distinctly different flow statistics and latency profiles. These limitations

define a clear and concrete roadmap for future work and do not diminish the significant contributions demonstrated within the studied scope.

Several important research directions emerge directly from the gaps identified in this study and the broader literature. First, while AT-HGNN addresses static hypergraph construction per time window, fully online hypergraph evolution — where nodes and hyperedges are added and removed in a streaming fashion without full recomputation — remains an open problem, with direct relevance to the emerging field of continuous learning IDS. Second, the literature consistently lacks privacy-preserving IDS solutions suitable for federated IoT deployments; a federated AT-HGNN variant with differential privacy guarantees would address this gap and enable collaborative threat intelligence sharing across organizational boundaries without exposing raw traffic data. Third, adversarial robustness of GNN-based IDS against deliberately crafted flow perturbations designed to evade graph-structured classifiers has received minimal attention; formal adversarial training of AT-HGNN using projected gradient descent on the hypergraph structure represents a high-priority future direction. Finally, while attention heatmaps provide qualitative interpretability, formal integration of causal inference frameworks — such as Granger causality on temporal graph sequences — would provide security analysts with actionable, legally defensible explanations of model decisions, bridging the gap between AI performance and operational trust.

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