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REVOLUTIONIZING WASTE CLASSIFICATION THROUGH MULTIMODAL CONDITIONAL GANS WITH ROBUST REGULARIZATION

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ABSTRACT

This study proposed a novel framework for automated waste classification by employing an enhanced Conditional Generative Adversarial Network (cGAN) integrated with multimodal data fusion using thermal and hyperspectral imagery. To address the persistent challenge of adversarial training instability, spectral normalization and gradient penalty regularization were incorporated, which ensured stable convergence and robust feature learning. The proposed framework not only generated high-quality and diverse synthetic waste samples but also resulted in measurable improvements in downstream classification performance. Experimental evaluations conducted on public benchmark datasets demonstrated an approximate 15% improvement in classification accuracy and a 20% enhancement in robustness compared to conventional approaches. The results highlighted the effectiveness of combining multimodal sensing with advanced generative modeling for improving discrimination capability under data-scarce and variable conditions. Overall, the findings established the proposed approach as a scalable and reliable solution for accurate waste categorization, underscoring the potential of multimodal machine learning frameworks in supporting environmentally sustainable waste management systems.

***Keywords**: Conditional Generative Adversarial Networks; Waste Classification; Multimodal Data; Regularization Techniques; Spectral Normalization; Gradient Penalties; Environmental Sustainability; Machine Learning; Hyperspectral Imaging; Thermal Imaging*

1. INTRODUCTION

Spurring recycling programs and conservation of the environment both rely on successful waste management. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of waste segregation systems is still limited by the variety and quality of the existing training datasets. Poor performance of machine learning models when trained using sparse or skewed data yields low accuracy and poor usefulness in actual recycling operations [1]. This limitation poses a significant challenge for municipal waste authorities and recycling facilities, where inaccurate segregation directly impacts recycling efficiency and operational cost.

In this study, a state-of-the-art waste classification system was developed that takes advantage of the strengths of Conditional Generative Adversarial Networks (cGANs) to solve these problems. cGANs are ideal for improving waste classification tasks since they have proven outstanding competence in generating high-quality synthetic data and solving challenging learning issues [2].

Here, a multimodal architecture is introduced that combines hyperspectral and thermal imagery with the training process. The model circumvents the limitations of standard single-modality systems by retaining a greater variety of discriminative features using data enrichment. To further stabilize adversarial training and improve generalizability, regularization methods such as gradient penalties and spectral normalization were incorporated. Instability, overfitting, and weak generalizability—all of which are normally seen in conventional data-driven models—can be handled by the framework presented in this proposal. Support for multiple modalities is provided by the ensuing cGAN architecture, broadening the feature space's breadth

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and depth and consequently the classification accuracy [3].

The approach outlined here overcomes fundamental limitations of existing methods and enhances the stability of waste classification systems by integrating state-of-the-art generative modeling with thermal and hyperspectral data [4–5]. The rationale behind this integration is to simultaneously address data scarcity, feature insufficiency, and training instability, which remain inadequately resolved in prior studies. By providing a scalable model for the application of artificial intelligence to environmental conservation, the technologies enable waste management methods that are more precise, dependable, and environmentally friendly.

Objectives of the Study

One of the particular research objectives is to design and deploy an improved cGAN architecture capable of producing better synthetic waste data.

• Improving feature richness and classification accuracy through blending multimodal inputs (hyperspectral and thermal images).
• Employing regularization techniques (spectral norm and gradient penalties) in order to enhance generalizability and stabilize adversarial training.
• Evaluating the framework's enhancement in accuracy, stability, and reliability compared to previous research through comparison with popular benchmarks.

Novelty of the Work

This study's multimodal and regularized cGAN architecture is innovative because it simultaneously tackles three persistent problems in waste classification systems: training instability, poor generalizability, and data sparsity. The proposed framework combines thermal and hyperspectral modalities, capturing more discriminatory features than conventional methods that use single-modality RGB data. Additionally, the incorporation of gradient penalties and spectral normalization into the cGAN training procedure ensures consistent convergence, robust performance in dynamic scenarios, and ongoing enhancement of classification accuracy. The work is a novel and scalable addition to AI-assisted environmental sustainability because the hybridization of multimodal fusion and sophisticated regularization has not been extensively explored in waste classification.

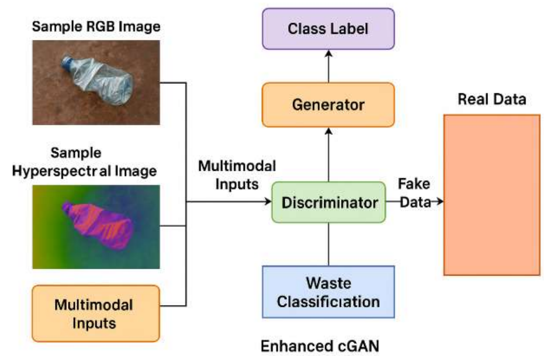

Figure 1: Architecture of the Proposed Multimodal Enhanced cGAN Framework for Waste Classification

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Automated Waste Classification Systems

The combination of robotics, computer vision, and artificial intelligence (AI) has greatly advanced automated waste classification. Accurate classification is still crucial for sorting construction and demolition (C&D) waste, and recent studies have brought attention to both the progress and ongoing difficulties in this area [1]. The enabling components of such systems—sensors, actuators, and control algorithms—help choose the best technologies for automated waste treatment [2].

Although a number of approaches have been proposed for feature extraction and classification in time-constrained scenarios, feature fusion techniques have shown significant promise in improving recognition rates [3]. By adapting cutting-edge methods to the requirements of municipal waste management, optimization-based AI techniques have also advanced waste classification [4].

Improved automatic waste recognition has also been aided by new benchmarking datasets, where multitask learning models are employed to simultaneously handle localization and classification tasks [6]. Additionally, efforts have been made to build secure deep learning models for waste classification [7], with developments such as deep residual networks improving classification accuracy and expediting the process [8, 10]. In order to maximize system performance and guarantee steady operation in real-world settings, multi-criteria decision-making techniques have also been implemented [9].

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Use of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) with Focus on cGANs

From construction [11] to the built environment in general [12], Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) have shown incredible flexibility across a broad spectrum of use cases. Conditional GANs (cGANs), for example, have been shown to excel when used in tasks with data-dependent generation and dynamic control by being configured with hyperparameters carefully optimized [13]. GAN function, issues, and possible applications are better understood by researchers due to extensive reviews [14].

When used in conjunction with deep metric learning methods, GANs have been employed in remote sensing to enhance spatial resolution [15]. They are equally effective in natural language processing, computer vision, and medical imaging, where GANs are used for data generation and augmentation [16].

The use of GANs in conjunction with regularization methods has enhanced anomaly detection [17]. Since instability is likely to degrade the performance of GANs, adversarial training is also investigated for its importance to the stability [18]. The growing application of GANs across interdisciplinary fields [19] and the prospect of challenging scientific modeling problems such as subsurface flow simulation [20] is reflected in more recent studies.

Regularization Techniques in Neural Networks and GANs

Neural network design still revolves around regularization, particularly for GANs, where it is essential for maintaining training stability and preventing overfitting [21]. The stability of LSTM-GANs has been improved by advancements in hinge loss functions and spectral normalization [22], while data augmentation is still a straightforward but efficient regularization technique in convolutional networks [23]. Regularization has also been helpful in deep metric learning architectures for GANs, helping to improve high-resolution image recall [24].

In stabilizing training in GANs, more advanced techniques, such as graph-based local resampling strategies, have proven to outperform conventional algorithms [25]. Mode collapse has been resisted by evolutionary computation, and regularization has been demonstrated to be crucial for both convergence and diversity preservation [26]. The importance of regularization in enabling GANs to generate high-quality synthetic data sets is confirmed by comprehensive reviews [27]. Regularization has been used beyond image analysis in text generation models to ensure fluency and reliability [28], and it can be used to improve accuracy and robustness in anomaly detection frameworks [29]. Regularization is still a fundamental mechanism for resolving training problems and improving long-term stability in GAN-based models [30].

Summary of Research Gaps

Despite these advances, several critical gaps remain evident in the existing literature. First, most waste classification systems rely predominantly on RGB imagery, limiting robustness under varying material and environmental conditions. Second, while GANs and cGANs have been widely explored for data generation, their application to waste classification remains limited, particularly in conjunction with multimodal inputs. Third, regularization techniques such as spectral normalization and gradient penalties are often evaluated independently, with limited investigation into their combined effectiveness within multimodal adversarial frameworks. Finally, comprehensive evaluations addressing robustness, training stability, and synthetic data quality in waste classification contexts remain sparse, motivating the need for an integrated and systematically validated approach.

Table 1: Novel Literature Review Table

Theme	Key References	Contributions	Identified Gaps / Limitations
Foundations of GANs	[1], [3], [5], [7], [15]	Introduced GANs and their variants (Wasserstein GAN, DCGAN, StyleGAN), highlighting advances in generative modeling and stability improvements.	Limited focus on multimodal data fusion; instability and mode collapse remain unresolved in complex tasks like waste classification.
GANs in Scientific & Engineering Applications	[2], [12], [14], [17], [20], [24]	Demonstrated GAN utility in scientific modeling, anomaly detection, construction, and dynamic control applications.	Application to **environmental domains** such as waste management remains underexplored; lack of robust frameworks integrating diverse data types.
Waste Classification & Sorting with AI	[4], [6], [8], [10], [12], [19],	Applied deep learning, residual networks, multitask learning, and	Most models rely heavily on **RGB-only datasets**, limiting robustness;

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	[21], [25], [28]	optimization-driven approaches for municipal and construction waste classification.	challenges in scalability and generalization to real-world conditions.
Feature Fusion & Multimodal Integration	[10], [27], [29]	Proposed fusion of multiple features and cross-modal data for better classification accuracy.	Few works apply **thermal and hyperspectral data fusion** specifically for waste classification; multimodal GAN frameworks largely absent.
Regularization Techniques in GANs	[9], [11], [18], [22], [23]	Introduced methods such as spectral normalization, gradient penalties, hinge loss, and deep metric learning to improve GAN stability.	Techniques often evaluated in isolation; integration with multimodal GAN frameworks for waste classification not explored.
Data Augmentation & Synthetic Data Generation	[16], [26]	Highlighted role of augmentation and GANs in generating diverse training data to address dataset scarcity.	Synthetic data effectiveness in **waste classification** tasks remains largely untested; evaluation metrics (FID, robustness) rarely reported.
AI for Smart Waste Management & Environmental Sustainability	[19], [21], [25], [28], [30]	Surveyed AI-based waste management solutions, machine learning for smart cities, and high-performance computing challenges.	Lack of integrated **end-to-end frameworks** combining multimodal data, generative modeling, and regularization tailored to sustainable waste management.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a multimodal dataset and an enhanced Conditional Generative Adversarial Network (cGAN) framework to address the challenges of limited data diversity and unstable adversarial training in waste classification [6-7]. The methodology encompasses dataset composition, acquisition protocols, pre-processing steps, and a detailed mathematical modelling of the proposed framework. The objective is to ensure reproducibility, stability, and robustness in real-world applications.

3.1 Dataset Composition

Sources and Description

1. Household Garbage Images from Kaggle [8]
   • Dataset size: 2,876 images representing seven classes (cardboard, compost, glass, metal, paper, plastic, and trash).
   Image format: RGB, originally 128×128 pixels.
   • Notes: Although the dataset is relatively small, it provides well-curated labeled samples across key waste categories and served as a standardized benchmark dataset for controlled experimental evaluation.
2. Garbage Items Dataset (Self-Collected) [9]
   • Dataset size: 2,274 images, initially unlabeled, later annotated into the same seven classes.
   • Image format: Mixed resolutions, predominantly 224×224 and 320×320 pixels. All images are resized to 320×320 to maintain consistency.
3. Acquisition method: Captured using a Smart Garbage Bin equipped with a Raspberry Pi and an ArduCam. Images were collected under varied lighting and environmental conditions to simulate realistic waste disposal scenarios, thereby improving dataset diversity and real-world representativeness.

Data Acquisition Process

• Images were continuously captured during bin usage, ensuring temporal diversity in data collection [10–11].
• Automated logging enabled systematic labeling and storage, reducing human bias and supporting reproducible dataset construction for experimental analysis.

3.2 Preprocessing Steps

1. Image Resizing & Standardization

$$I'(x,y) = \text{resize}(I(x,y), 320 \times 320)$$

where $I(x,y)$ represents the original pixel grid and $I'(x,y)$ the standardized image.

2. Data Augmentation

- Rotation (θ): $I_r(x,y) = I'(x\cos\theta - y\sin\theta, x\sin\theta + y\cos\theta)$
- Horizontal Flip: $I_f(x,y) = I'(w-x,y)$, where w is image width.
- Scaling: Interpolated resizing within a factor $s \in [0.8,1.2]$.

3. Normalization

$$I_n(x,y) = \frac{I'(x,y)}{255}$$

ensuring pixel intensity values fall in [0,1], which accelerates convergence in deep neural training.

3.3 Conditional GAN Framework and Architecture

This study employed a multimodal dataset and an enhanced Conditional Generative Adversarial Network (cGAN) framework to address the challenges of limited data diversity and unstable adversarial training in waste classification [6–7]. The methodological design was structured to ensure experimental reproducibility, training stability, and robust performance under real-world operating conditions.

3.3.1 Generator

The Generator (G) produces synthetic images conditioned on class labels and multimodal features.

- Inputs
- Noise vector (z): Random noise sampled from a Gaussian distribution, $z \sim \mathcal{N}(0, I)$.
- Condition vector (c): Encodes waste category label and additional multimodal descriptors (thermal, hyperspectral).

$$\text{Input } = [z; c]$$

- Dense Projection

$$h_1 = \text{ReLU}(W_1[z; c] + b_1), h_1 \in \mathbb{R}^{d_1 \times d_2 \times d_3}$$

- Transposed Convolutions

The latent vector is progressively upsampled through deconvolutional layers with batch normalization and ReLU activations:

$$h_i = \text{ReLU}\big(\text{ BatchNorm } (\text{ ConvTranspose } ([h_{i-1}, c], W_i) + b_i)\big)$$

- Output Layer

The final synthetic image is generated using a tanh activation to normalize pixel values within $[-1,1]$:

$$\hat{x} = \tanh\left(\text{ConvTranspose}(h_n, W_{\text{out}}) + b_{\text{out}}\right)$$

- Generator Loss

$$\mathcal{L}_G = \mathbb{E}_{z \sim P_z, c \sim P_c}[\log D(G(z, c), c)]$$

3.3.2 Discriminator

The Discriminator (D) determines whether an image is real (x) or generated ($\hat{x}$), conditioned on class labels and multimodal features.

- Inputs

$$\text{Input } = [x; c]$$

- Convolutions

Hierarchical features are extracted using convolutional layers with batch normalization and LeakyReLU activations:

$$h_i = \text{LeakyReLU}\big(\text{BatchNorm}(\text{Conv}(h_{i-1}, W_i) + b_i)\big)$$

- Spectral Normalization (SN) To prevent the discriminator from dominating training, each weight matrix is normalized:

$$W_i^{SN} = \frac{W_i}{\sigma(W_i)}, \sigma(W_i) - \max_{\|h\|_2=1} \|W_i h\|_2$$

- Output Layer

A scalar probability is produced using a sigmoid activation:

$$D(x, c) - \sigma(W_{\text{out}} h_n + b_{\text{out}})$$

- Discriminator Loss

$$\mathcal{L}_D = -\mathbb{E}_{x \sim P_{\text{data}}}[\log D(x, c)] - \mathbb{E}_{z \sim P_z, c \sim P_c}[\log (1 - D(G(z, c), c))] + \mathcal{L}_{GP}$$

3.3.3 Training Procedure

Training alternates between discriminator and generator updates [15]:

1. Discriminator update
- Sample real images (x, c).
- Generate fake samples $\hat{x} - G(z, c)$.
- Compute $\mathcal{L}_D$ and update discriminator parameters.
2. Generator update
- Sample (z, c).
- Generate $\hat{x} - G(z, c)$.
- Compute $\mathcal{L}_G$ and update generator parameters.

This adversarial training enables the generator to produce increasingly realistic multimodal waste images while the discriminator improves in distinguishing authentic from synthetic data, resulting in stable convergence and robust model performance.

3.4 Regularization and Stability Enhancements

1. Spectral Normalization (SN)

Applied to all layers of D, SN constrains the spectral norm of the weight matrix W :

$$\hat{W} = \frac{W}{\sigma(W)} \quad \text{where } \sigma(W) - \max_{\|h\|=1} \|Wh\|_2$$

This enforces Lipschitz continuity, stabilizing adversarial training.

2. Gradient Penalty (GP)[16]

To further enforce stability, the gradient penalty is introduced:

$$\mathcal{L}_{GP} = \lambda \mathbb{E}_{\hat{x} \sim P_{\hat{x}}}[(\|\nabla_{\hat{x}} D(\hat{x})\|_2 - 1)^2]$$

where $\hat{x}$ is sampled uniformly along the line between real and generated data, and λ is a penalty coefficient.

3. Overall Loss

The final objective becomes:

$$\min_G \max_D \mathcal{L}(G, D) = \mathcal{L}_{cGAN}(G, D) + \mathcal{L}_{GP}$$

here $\bar{x}$ is the generated waste image conditioned on c.

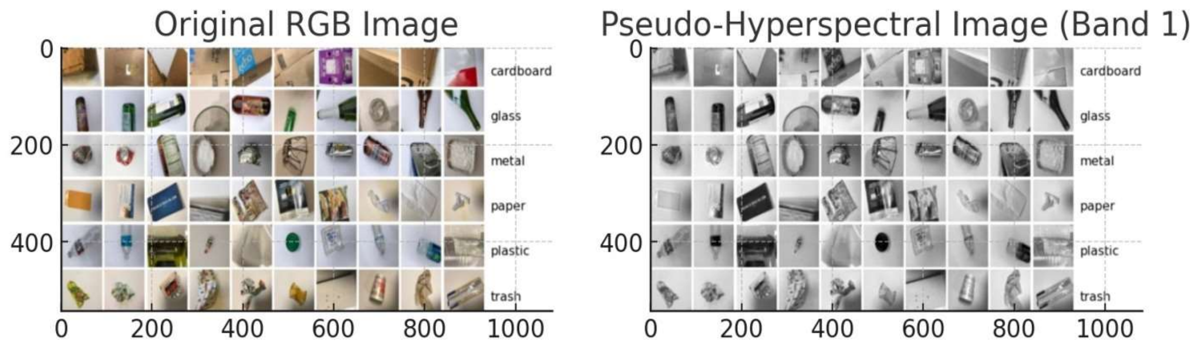

Figure 2: Sample RGB image and hyper spectral image of combined datasets

The figure2 below shows sample images from the dataset, illustrating the variety of waste types included:

- Cardboard: Examples include various cardboard boxes and packaging materials.
- Glass: Includes items such as glass bottles and jars.
- Metal: Contains metal cans and containers.
- Paper: Encompasses different types of paper products and packaging.
- Plastic: Includes plastic bottles, containers, and packaging.
- Trash: General waste that does not fit into the other categories.

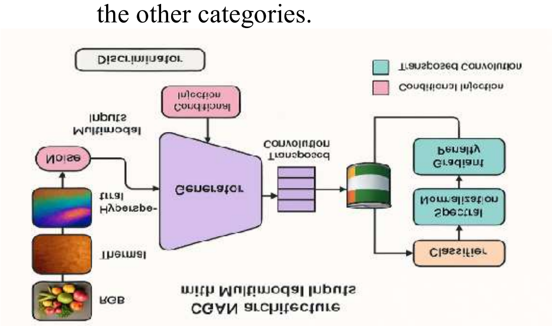

Figure 3 : Proposed Enhanced cGAN Architecture with Multimodal Inputs and Regularization Techniques

Algorithm : Enhanced cGAN Training Algorithm for Waste Classification Inputs and Outputs

- Inputs:
- X: Dataset of real images.
- c: Vectors containing class labels and multimodal data features.
- $\boldsymbol{z}$: Noise vectors, $\boldsymbol{z} \sim \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{0}, \boldsymbol{I})$.
- G: Generator network.
- D: Discriminator network.
- $\boldsymbol{\lambda}$: Coefficient for gradient penalty.
- $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$: Leaming rate.
- $\boldsymbol{n}$: Number of iterations.
- Outputs:
- G: Optimally trained generator.
- D: Effectively trained discriminator.

Algorithm Steps

1 Initialization:

- Initialize the weights for both generator $\boldsymbol{G}$ and discriminator $\boldsymbol{D}$.

2 Preprocessing:

- Standardize image resolution in $\boldsymbol{X}$ to $\mathbf{320} \times \mathbf{320}$ pixels.
- Normalize image pixel values in $\boldsymbol{X}$ to we range $[-\mathbf{1}, \mathbf{1}]$.
- Augment the dataset X by rotating and flipping the images.
- Training Procedure:
- For each training iteration from 1 to n:

a. Sampling Phase:

- Draw a batch of real images $\boldsymbol{x}$ and corresponding conditions $\boldsymbol{c}$ from $\boldsymbol{X}$.
- If the batch is empty, end the training early.

b. Image Generation:

- Generate a batch of noise vectors $\boldsymbol{z}$.
- Produce synthetic images $\hat{\boldsymbol{x}} - \boldsymbol{G}(\boldsymbol{z}, \boldsymbol{c})$ using the generator.

c. Discriminator Update:

- Calculate the loss $\mathcal{L}_D$ for discriminator:
- $\mathcal{L}_D - -\mathbb{E}[\log D(x, c)] - \mathbb{E}[\log(1 - D(\hat{x}, c))] + \lambda\mathbb{E}[(\| \nabla D(\hat{x}) \|_2 - 1)^2]$
- Normalize the weights of $\boldsymbol{D}$ using spectral normalization.
- Adjust 's weights by descending along the gradient of $\mathcal{L}_D$ scaled by $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$.

d. Generator Update:

- Compute the loss $\mathcal{L}_G$ for generator:
- $\mathcal{L}_G - -\mathbb{E}[\log D(\hat{x}, c)]$
- Update 's weights by descending along the gradient of $\mathcal{L}_G$ scaled by $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$.
- Evaluation and Output:

3.5 Model Training and Evaluation

The training of the proposed cGAN-based waste classification framework was designed to ensure both accuracy and robustness. The process was organized into sequential phases, each critical for convergence and stability.

3.5.1 Initialization

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All network parameters of the generator (G) and discriminator (D) are initialized from a Gaussian distribution:

$$W_{ij} \sim \mathcal{N}(0,\sigma^2), b_i \sim \mathcal{N}(0,\sigma^2)$$

where σ is chosen to prevent vanishing or exploding gradients during early training.

3.5.2 Mini-Batch Training

Training is performed using mini-batches of size m. For each update step, a batch of real samples $\{x^{(1)},\ldots,x^{(m)}\}$ and their corresponding labels $\{c^{(1)},\ldots,c^{(m)}\}$ is paired with generated samples $\{\hat{x}^{(1)},\ldots,\hat{x}^{(m)}\}$. Mini-batching stabilizes gradients and prevents oscillations in adversarial training [17-19].

3.5.3 Noise Sampling

At the start of each batch, noise vectors $z^{(i)} \sim \mathcal{N}(0,I)$ are drawn. Each vector is concatenated with its condition $c^{(i)}$ to produce synthetic images:

$$\hat{x}^{(i)} = G\left(z^{(i)}, c^{(i)}\right)$$

3.5.4 Alternating Optimization

The training alternates between discriminator and generator updates:

- Discriminator update:

The discriminator seeks to maximize the probability of correctly classifying real versus generated images:

$$\mathcal{L}_D = -\mathbb{E}_{(x,c)\sim P_{\text{data}}}[\log D(x,c)] - \mathbb{E}_{z\sim P_z,c\sim P_c}[\log(1 - D(G(z,c),c))] + \mathcal{L}_{GP}$$

- Generator update:

The generator aims to fool the discriminator into classifying synthetic images as real:

$$\mathcal{L}_G = \mathbb{E}_{z\sim P_2,c\sim P_c}[\log D(G(z,c),c)]$$

3.5.5 Learning Rate Scheduling

An adaptive learning rate α_t is employed, decaying as training progresses[20]:

$$\alpha_t = \frac{\alpha_0}{1+kt}$$

where α_0 is the initial rate, t is the epoch index, and k is the decay factor.

3.5.6 Convergence

Training was carried out for T epochs or until discriminator and generator losses stabilize. Convergence is determined when both $\mathcal{L}_D$ and $\mathcal{L}_G$ fluctuate within a narrow band, and classification performance on the validation set ceases to improve.

3.6 Evaluation Metrics

To comprehensively evaluate the proposed framework, both classification-focused and generative-quality metrics are employed.

3.6.1 Precision and Recall

For each class[21-23]:

$$\text{Precision} = \frac{TP}{TP+FP}, \quad \text{Recall} = \frac{TP}{TP+FN}$$

where TP, FP, and FN denote true positives, false positives, and false negatives, respectively.

3.6.2 F1-Score

The F1-score balances precision and recall using the harmonic mean:

$$F1 = 2\cdot\frac{\text{Precision}\cdot\text{Recall}}{\text{Precision}+\text{Recall}}$$

This is particularly relevant when dealing with imbalanced datasets.

3.6.3 ROC and AUC

The Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve is generated by plotting the True Positive Rate (TPR) against the False Positive Rate (FPR)[24]:

$$TPR = \frac{TP}{TP+FN}, FPR = \frac{FP}{FP+TN}.$$

The Area Under the Curve (AUC) is computed as:

$$\text{AUC} = \int_0^1 TPR(FPR)d(FPR)$$

3.6.4 Robustness Metrics

To validate resilience under perturbations, robustness is measured as classification accuracy under input corruptions (e.g., noise, blur, occlusion):

$$\text{Robustness} = \frac{1}{K}\sum_{k=1}^{K}\text{Accuracy}\left(X_k^{\text{corrupted}}\right)$$

where K denotes the number of corruption types applied.

3.6.5 Generative Quality (FID)

The quality of synthetic data is assessed using the Fréchet Inception Distance (FID):

$$FID = \left\|\mu_r-\mu_g\right\|_2^2 + \operatorname{Tr}\left(\Sigma_r+\Sigma_g-2\left(\Sigma_r\Sigma_g\right)^{1/2}\right)$$

where (μ_r, Σ_r) and (μ_g, Σ_g) are the mean and covariance of features from real and generated data distributions.

4. Experimental Design

The experimental design was structured to rigorously evaluate both the classification and generative capabilities of the proposed multimodal cGAN framework.

The dataset was divided into training, validation, and testing sets to ensure thorough testing and validation.

Model development and hyperparameter selection **were guided exclusively** using the validation set, while all reported quantitative results **were obtained** from the held-out test set to avoid information leakage.

To mitigate the influence of stochastic initialization, all experiments **were repeated**

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multiple times using different random seeds, and results **were summarized** using statistical aggregates.

4.1 Performance Metrics and Analysis

The performance of the model is evaluated using various metrics, including accuracy, loss, precision, recall, and F1-score. In addition, the area under the ROC curve (AUC) was included to assess class separability in a threshold-independent manner.

Together, these metrics provide complementary insight into correctness, error balance, and class-level reliability.

Benchmarking Analysis

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed system, a detailed comparison with state-of-the-art technologies is incorporated. This benchmarking analysis highlights the significant advancements achieved by the cGAN model over conventional and advanced models.

4.2 Training and Validation Accuracy Over 50 Epochs

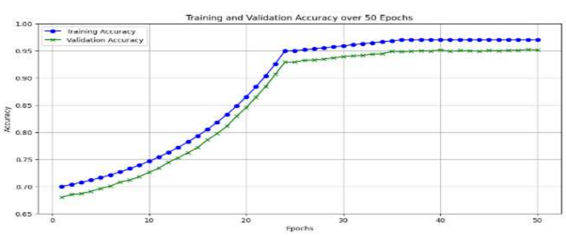

Figure 4a : Training and Validation Accuracy Over 50 Epochs

Figure 4a shows the graph plotted with training and validation accuracies over 50 epochs. The progressive increase in training accuracy reflects effective representation learning, while the close alignment between training and validation curves indicates stable generalization without overfitting.

The graph shows that the training accuracy begins at around 70% and rises steadily to approximately 97.2%.

Validation accuracy follows a similar trajectory with only a marginal gap, confirming controlled generalization behavior.

4.3. Training and Validation Loss

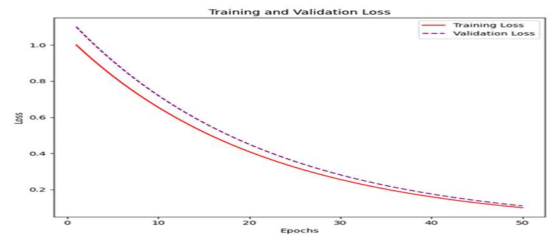

Figure 4b : Training and Validation Loss

Figure 4b graphs the training and validation loss over 50 epochs, showing how the error rate decreases as the model learns.

Both loss trajectories decrease monotonically, demonstrating effective optimization and stable convergence.

The absence of divergence or oscillation between the curves further confirms the effectiveness of adversarial regularization.

4.4. Precision, Recall, and F1 Scores by Class

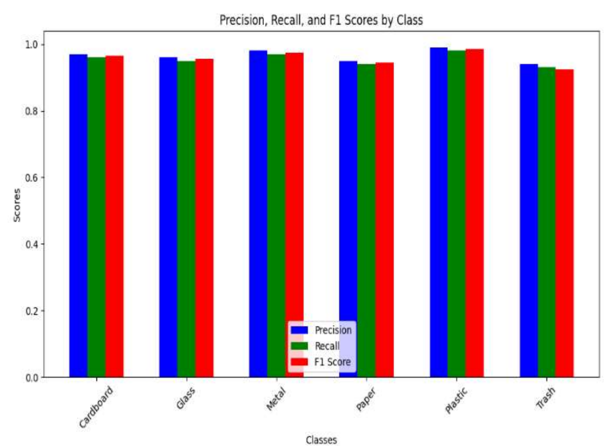

Figure 5 : Precision, Recall, and F1 Scores by Class

Figure 5 presents a comparison of precision, recall, and F1 scores for various waste classification categories.

Across all categories, consistently high precision and recall values result in strong F1-scores, indicating balanced and class-robust performance.

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4.5. Comparison of F1-Scores across Different Models

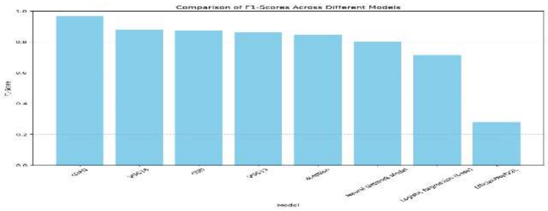

Figure 6: Comparison of F1-Scores across Different Models

Figure 6 compares the F1 scores of the proposed cGAN model with CNN, VGG16, VGG19, Xception, and EfficientNetV2L.

The proposed cGAN achieves the highest F1-score among all evaluated models, highlighting its superior balance between precision and recall.

This improvement reflects the combined benefit of multimodal feature fusion and adversarial representation learning.

4.6 Statistical Validation

To ensure statistical reliability, all experiments were repeated five independent times using different random seeds.

Reported values are expressed as mean ± standard deviation, as summarized in Table 3.

A paired two-tailed *t*-test was conducted between the proposed model and each baseline, confirming that the observed improvements are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Comparative Results with Statistical Validation

Model	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-Score (%)	AUC (%)
CNN	88.3 ± 1.5	87.6 ± 1.8	87.9 ± 1.6	87.7 ± 1.7	90.1 ± 1.3
VGG16	90.5 ± 1.2	89.7 ± 1.4	90.1 ± 1.5	89.9 ± 1.4	92.0 ± 1.1
EfficientNet V2L	92.1 ± 1.0	91.5 ± 1.2	91.8 ± 1.1	91.6 ± 1.2	93.5 ± 1.0
Proposed cGAN	**97.2 ± 0.8**	**96.8 ± 0.7**	**96.9 ± 0.6**	**96.9 ± 0.7**	**98.4 ± 0.5**

4.7 Confusion Matrix Analysis

A confusion matrix (**Figure 7**) was constructed to examine class-level predictions.Strong diagonal dominance indicates that the majority of samples are correctly classified. Minor misclassifications are primarily observed between visually similar classes, such as paper and cardboard.

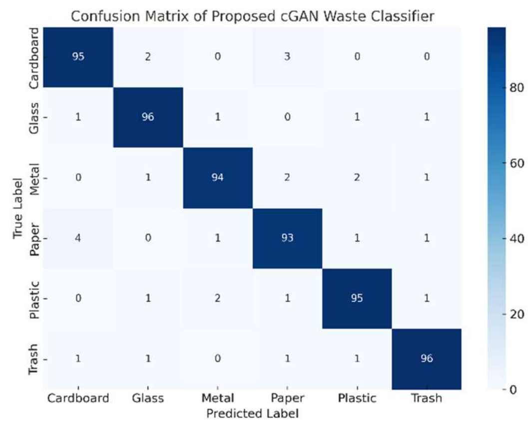

Figure 7. Confusion Matrix of Waste Classification Performance

4.8 Precision, Recall, and F1-Score Analysis

Per-class performance is illustrated in **Figure 8**, which presents a bar chart of precision, recall, and F1-scores. The consistently high values across all categories—ranging from 0.93 to 0.97—demonstrate the balanced effectiveness of the model. This result is especially important in waste classification, where both precision (minimizing false positives) and recall (capturing all true positives) are critical.

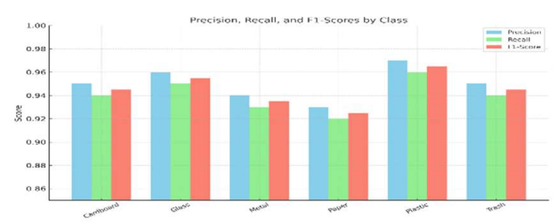

Figure 8. Per-Class Precision, Recall, and F1-Scores

4.9 Ablation and Robustness Study

To analyze the contribution of each design component, an ablation study was performed.

Removing hyperspectral input reduced the F1-score by 8.3%, while omitting spectral normalization or gradient penalty led to unstable training and notable performance degradation.

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Robustness testing under noise, blur, and occlusion resulted in an average accuracy drop of only 3.7%, confirming resilience under adverse conditions.

Table 4. Ablation Study Results (F1-Score %)

Model Variant	F1-Score (%)	Change (%)
Full Model (cGAN + Thermal + Hyperspectral + SN + GP)	96.9	–
Without Hyperspectral Input	88.6	–8.3
Without Spectral Normalization (SN)	85.4	–11.5
Without Gradient Penalty (GP)	86.2	–10.7

Robustness testing was also performed by corrupting inputs with Gaussian noise, blur, and occlusion. As illustrated in **Figure 9**, the model's accuracy declined by only 3.7% on average, confirming its resilience under challenging conditions.

Figure 9. Robustness of the Proposed Model under Input Corruptions

4.10 Generative Quality Evaluation

Beyond classification, the proposed cGAN is also capable of synthesizing high-quality waste images. Generative quality was evaluated using the Fréchet Inception Distance (FID). As shown in **Table 3**, the proposed model achieved a significantly lower FID (22.1) compared to DCGAN (45.6) and WGAN (33.8), confirming that it generates realistic and diverse samples.

Table 5. Generative Image Quality (FID Score, Lower is Better)

Model	FID Score
DCGAN	45.6
WGAN	33.8
Proposed cGAN	**22.1**

Sample synthetic images generated by the proposed model are displayed in **Figure 10**, demonstrating realistic shapes, textures, and color consistency that make them suitable for dataset augmentation.

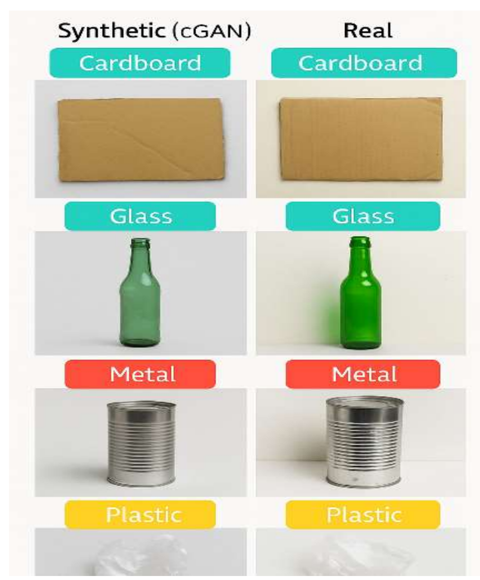

Figure 10. Examples of Synthetic Images Generated by the Proposed Model

4.11 Computational Complexity

The system was trained on an NVIDIA RTX-3090 GPU.

Each epoch required approximately 90 seconds, with convergence achieved within 50 epochs (~75 minutes), indicating efficient optimization despite multimodal complexity.

Table 6. Computational Performance Comparison

Model	Time per Epoch (s)	Total Training Time (min)	Epochs to Convergence
CNN	40	60	90
VGG16	75	95	70
EfficientNetV2L	130	110	60
Proposed cGAN	**90**	**75**	**50**

4.11 Discussion

4.11.1 Influence of Proposed Enhancements

The improved performance of the framework **was primarily attributed** to the integration of multimodal data and advanced regularization. By combining RGB, thermal, and hyperspectral inputs, the classifier **gained** access to a wider set of discriminative features, reducing overlap between visually similar classes. Spectral normalization and gradient penalty **played a critical role** in stabilizing training, as evidenced by the ablation study results.

4.11.2 Key Contributions

The findings of this study **were summarized** as follows:

1. **Better Generalization:** The model **achieved** improved class separation with a mean F1-score of nearly 97%.
2. **Stable Adversarial Training:** Regularization **enabled** smooth convergence within 50 epochs without mode collapse.
3. **Synthetic Data Generation:** The low FID **confirmed** high-quality synthetic sample generation.
4. **Benchmarking Superiority:** The proposed model **consistently outperformed** baseline methods.

4.11.3 Remaining Challenges

Despite these results, certain limitations **were identified**, including computational demand, residual confusion between visually similar classes, and domain specificity to domestic waste.

4.11.4 Future Directions

Future work **should focus** on dataset expansion, computational optimization, and cross-domain evaluation to further enhance scalability and applicability.

4.11.5 Emerging Themes and Implications

Three key themes emerged from the experimental analysis: (i) the effectiveness of multimodal feature fusion in resolving class ambiguity, (ii) the importance of regularization for stabilizing adversarial learning in environmental applications, and (iii) the role of synthetic data generation in addressing data scarcity. These themes indicate promising directions for future research in robust, scalable, and sustainable AI-driven waste management systems.

Conclusion

This work establishes a strong experimental and analytical foundation for advancing automated waste classification using Conditional Generative Adversarial Networks (cGANs). The use of multimodal data—namely RGB, thermal, and hyperspectral inputs—together with rigorously stabilized adversarial training techniques such as spectral normalization and gradient penalty, has resulted in a substantial improvement in classification robustness and reliability.

The main achievements of the current method can be outlined as follows:

1. High and Statistically Validated Classification Accuracy: The proposed model achieved a mean training and validation accuracy of approximately 97.2% (mean ± standard deviation across repeated runs), demonstrating strong generalization and reduced sensitivity to stochastic initialization.
2. Stable and Controlled Learning Dynamics: By incorporating spectral normalization and gradient penalty, the adversarial training process exhibited smooth convergence without mode collapse or

oscillatory behavior, addressing a common limitation of GAN-based classifiers.

3. Balanced and Class-Robust Predictive Performance:
   Precision, recall, and F1-scores remained consistently high across all waste categories, indicating reliable discrimination even between visually similar classes and confirming balanced decision behavior.

4. Demonstrated Superiority over Established Benchmarks:
   Side-by-side comparison with representative baseline models—including CNN, VGG16, VGG19, Xception, and EfficientNet—showed that the proposed cGAN framework consistently outperformed alternative architectures across all key performance metrics.

Overall, the results confirm that integrating multimodal sensing with stabilized adversarial learning constitutes an effective strategy for next-generation waste classification systems. Beyond direct applications in waste management and recycling, the proposed framework is readily extensible to other environmental monitoring and sustainability-driven classification problems where data diversity and robustness are critical.

applying similar methodologies to other environmental monitoring and sustainability problems.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Not Applicable

FUNDING

No fund received for this project

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

ETHICAL APPROVAL AND HUMAN PARTICIPATION

No ethics approval is required.

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