International Conference on Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Advanced Computing and Technology (IMPACT 2026)
G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Uttarakhand, India. Jan. 10-11, 2026

Intrusion Detection & Prevention Systems based on Cloud: Current Challenges, Advances, and Future Prospects

Vaibhav Kumar Sahu,
Bennett University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India
vaibhavkumarsahu25@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Cloud computing changed how web apps operate. Faster growth brought new risks, such as traffic floods, password-guessing attacks, and hidden software flaws. Basic security tools struggle in this area because they can't handle the size. They often mistakenly flag safe actions, miss encrypted streams, and fail to see across different tech environments. Even advanced options like Google's Security Command Centre, Azure Sentinel, and AWS GuardDuty don't fully deliver when reliability, flexibility, or information sharing is important. We are testing a stronger shield that runs on devices, operates within cloud networks, and connects multiple providers. This model combines behaviour checks with common attack signs to improve coverage. To enhance accuracy, it explores various methods for threat detection, thereby reducing false alarms. Since it allows for sharing danger information across cloud systems, risks are detected more quickly. Security logs remain secure over time by using blockchain technology. Zero Trust continuously checks users and tasks, preventing hidden threats from spreading. Research shows that combining team efforts with different tactics helps identify issues faster, improve operations, and manage complex cloud systems without crashing. Some also suggest updates, such as stronger cloud security or self-healing IDPS tools, that could offer additional benefits.

Keywords: *IDPS, Cloud Security, Edge Computing.*

1. Introduction

These days, most online systems depend on cloud computing. It provides flexible, scalable options that save money. This is useful for companies, public agencies, and regular users everywhere. Instead of installing programs on their machines, people now access tools such as apps, development environments, and servers via the web. Since everything runs online, using technology feels different from before. However, this shift also raises significant safety concerns. The features that make cloud computing appealing, like virtual setups, shared resources, flexible usage, and immediate access, also create new opportunities for hackers. Older security tools, designed for fixed, local networks, often cannot protect dynamic cloud environments effectively. That's why we need customised systems to detect and block intrusions in cloud settings. Tools that detect break-ins, known as IDS, or stop them automatically, called IPS, play an important role in today's digital defence strategies. These systems monitor machine activity, analyse network data flows, and flag suspicious behaviour before small problems turn into major breaches. In cloud environments, identifying issues becomes more complex. Resources change constantly, making it challenging to see what's happening between virtual machines. Additionally, hacks targeting hypervisors or virtual layers introduce even more risk. Problems like DDoS attacks, insider threats, users gaining unauthorized access, or unknown software flaws can disrupt service uptime, affect data accuracy, or compromise information security. That's why improving our ability to detect intrusions in clouds is essential today. Traditional methods mainly fall into two categories: one depends on known attack patterns, while the other looks for unusual behaviour. The patternmatching approach works only if there's a pre-established rule for that specific threat. It handles familiar risks well but struggles with unseen or new attacks. Conversely, behaviour-focused tools monitor unusual changes in regular data flows to identify suspicious activity, enabling them to detect emerging threats. However, identifying anomalies can lead to excessive false alarms. Determining what's "normal" becomes challenging in a constantly evolving cloud environment. To address these issues, combining different detection styles, using techniques from both approaches, and improved training methods has recently attracted greater attention. Instead of relying on just one strategy, experts now utilize machine learning and neural networks to enhance security systems in online settings.

Old algorithms such as tree models, linear classifiers, and voting systems were once commonly used to detect unusual network activity. However, they often struggle with the large data flows from cloud services, which can grow rapidly. On the other hand, advanced neural networks excel at identifying hidden patterns directly from messy inputs with minimal guidance, improving the detection of complex threats. Systems now use tools such as autoencoders and variational models to recognise abnormal behaviour without relying solely on known indicators. These models analyse standard network traffic and flag any anomalies. Additionally, generative methods generate synthetic attack data when real examples are scarce, helping balance the uneven distribution of training data often present in security datasets. Some combinations of deep learning techniques have been tested to achieve more consistent results. For instance, connecting CNNs with smart tuning methods rather than stacking them randomly has proven effective. Another approach pairs autoencoders with basic tools like SVM, enhancing both speed and precision. Intelligent search systems, such as Bee Swarm or Dragonfly, accelerate network training. These improvements strengthen the detection of malicious traffic. Feature selection now involves multi-objective strategies, refining what is most important. These models reduce the volume of cloud traffic data while maintaining detection quality, thereby reducing processing power requirements. Consequently, smart tuning methods are becoming crucial for managing speed, scale, and resource efficiency in large cloud environments. How you configure an IDS in the cloud significantly impacts its effectiveness, particularly in shared environments. NIDS and HIDS were prevalent in older networks, but moving them to the cloud is not straightforward. In addition to external threats, cloud IDS must also identify risky users within the tenant's network. Techniques such as copying network traffic, monitoring hypervisor activity, and examining VM operations have been used to enhance oversight in IaaS environments. Take VMI-driven security designs, for example; they enable deep analysis of system call logs directly at the hypervisor level, making it easier to detect stealthy malware that bypasses user-side defences. However, these methods have downsides, such as the need to match raw data to actual system actions and the delays caused by continuously monitoring multiple virtual machines. Even with progress, creating effective cloud-based attack detection tools remains challenging. These challenges include the lack of large, diverse datasets needed for training systems, unbalanced mixes of malicious and benign network activity, high costs associated with real-time threat detection, and the difficulty of understanding how deep learning model's function. Furthermore, hackers targeting AI models introduce new threats by exploiting their weaknesses to evade detection. Therefore, creating tools that are adaptable, rapidly adjustable, and transparent in their reasoning is essential for the future. Currently, research focuses on integrating various techniques. Scientists are investigating the combination of multiple detection tools to better address diverse cyber threats, whether using them sequentially or jointly for more robust results. New solutions like edge and fog computing are gaining traction because they place security measures closer to where data is generated, reducing threat response times. These systems distribute tasks across local devices instead of depending solely on remote servers. There is also an increasing effort to improve the transparency of AI-driven systems, allowing IT teams to use them with greater confidence. Overall, cloud security is moving away from traditional rule-based approaches towards smarter, more adaptive models powered by sophisticated algorithms and integrated techniques. Nonetheless, issues such as skewed data, slow performance, false alerts, and weak defences against attacks indicate that there is still much to explore. These improvements are vital in addressing the stricter risks associated with cloud systems as shown in fig. 1 and table 1. [1][9].

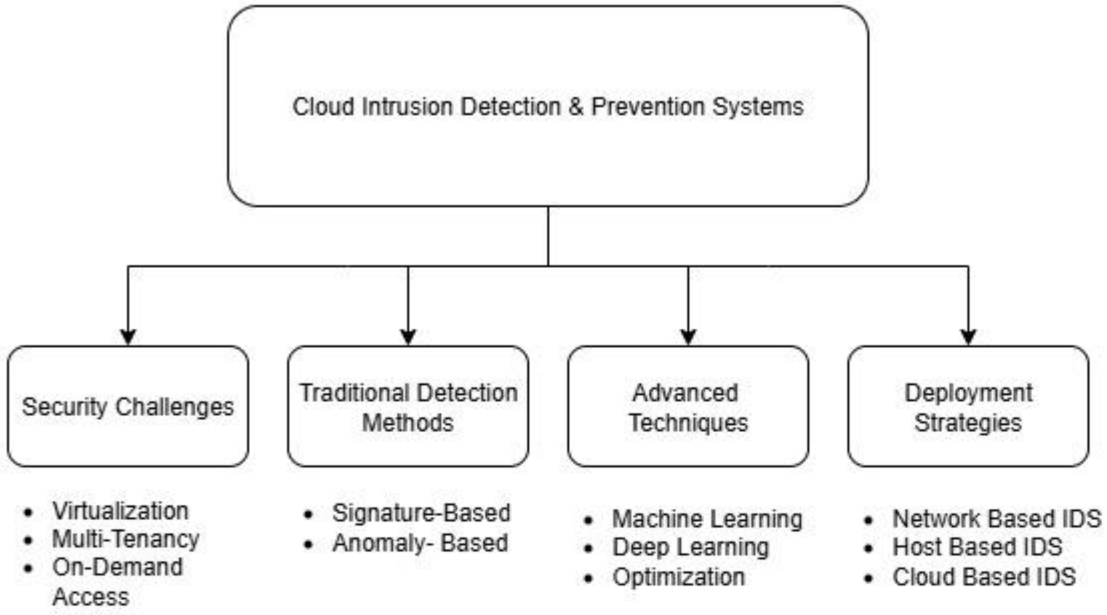

Fig. 1: Cloud Intrusion Detection & Prevention System

Table 1: Summary of Cloud Intrusion Detection & Prevention Approaches

Technique / Approach	**Core Idea**	**Advantages**	**Limitations /Challenges**
Signature Based IDS[8]	Matches attack signatures in traffic logs.	Effective against known attacks.	Cannot detect zero-day or unknown attack
Anomaly-based IDS (Autoencoders, VAE) [4]	Learns normal patterns, flags deviations as attacks.	Detects novel threats, adaptable.	High false positives, difficult baseline definition.
Hybrid Models (SCAE+SVM, ImCNN+GWO, ABC+DA) [3]	Combine deep learning with optimization or shallow classifiers.	Higher accuracy, reduced dimensionality issues.	Increased complexity, tuning overhead.

Generative Learning (CDAAE, GANs) [7]	Synthesizes malicious samples to balance datasets.	Improves training, handles dataset imbalance.	May generate unrealistic samples.
Feature Selection (Many-Objective FS) [9]	Reduces redundant features in traffic data.	Less computation, better detection speed.	Less computation, better detection speed.
Deployment Models (NIDS, HIDS) [5]	Network or host-based monitoring in IaaS and PaaS.	Established methods, widely used.	Limited visibility into east–west traffic.
VMI-based Detection (VMGuard) [10]	Uses hypervisor-level introspection for process/system-call analysis.	Detects hidden malicious activities in VMs.	Semantic gap, extra monitoring overhead.
Hybrid Cloud-Edge IDS (future trend) [3]	IDS deployed at edge for low-latency real-time detection.	Reduces delay, supports scalability.	Still in early development stage.

2. Literature survey

The increasing use of cloud computing has transformed the field of security research. Intrusion detection and prevention systems (IDPS) are among the most investigated topics today. Traditional IDPS methods were built for static networks, but they often struggle in dynamic, virtualised, and multi-tenant cloud environments. Consequently, research has shifted towards anomaly detection, machine learning (ML), deep learning (DL), optimisation methods, and strategies for cloud-specific deployment to improve effectiveness and scalability.

2.1. **Traditional Approaches: Signature Vs. Anomaly Detection:** Classical intrusion detection methods fall into two types: signature-based and anomaly-based. Signature-based systems compare incoming traffic to known attack signatures. They create few false positives, but they have trouble with zero-day threats. Anomaly-based systems develop a model of "normal" behaviour and flag any deviations as suspicious. This approach helps identify new attacks, but it often results in more false positives. To tackle these challenges, researchers have looked into hybrid approaches that combine both methods.

2.2. **Machine learning and deep learning based IDS**: The use of ML and DL models has changed intrusion detection in cloud environments. Early ML methods, such as decision trees, SVMs, and random forests, provided basic classification but struggled with the complex data generated by cloud traffic. Deep learning methods, particularly autoencoders and variational autoencoders (VAE), have shown promise by learning simpler forms of normal traffic and identifying anomalies as differences. For instance, flow-based anomaly detection with VAE has improved the detection of zero-day attacks while remaining efficient with large-scale traffic data.

2.3. **Hybrid & Generative models:** Recent work focuses on hybrid deep learning and generative methods. Hybrid systems, such as stacked contractive autoencoders with SVM (SCAE+SVM), leverage the feature-extraction capabilities of deep learning alongside the classification speed of shallow learners. Generative models, such as conditional denoising adversarial autoencoders (CDAAE), go a step further by generating fake samples to balance uneven datasets. This helps improve resilience against rare or stealthy attacks, such as low-rate DDoS. Additionally, swarm intelligence optimisation techniques, including the Artificial Bee Colony (ABC) and Dragonfly algorithms, have been used to train neural networks, boosting detection accuracy and reducing false alarms. These hybrid and generative methods show the movement towards smarter, more adaptive IDS frameworks.

2.4. **Feature selections and optimisation:** The high dimensionality of cloud traffic is a major challenge. To tackle this, researchers have proposed many-objective feature selection and optimisation frameworks that pick only the most relevant traffic features while reducing redundancy. These models significantly lower computational costs and improve scalability without sacrificing detection accuracy. Evolutionary and metaheuristic algorithms improve classifier training, leading to more effective anomaly detection models for large cloud infrastructures.

2.5. **Deployment architectures in cloud**: Beyond detection algorithms, deploying IDS in cloud environments is a key research area. Traditional Network-based IDS (NIDS) and Host-based IDS (HIDS) have been adapted for cloud Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), but they struggle to detect east-west traffic between virtual machines. To solve this, Virtual Machine Introspection (VMI)-based approaches, like VMGuard, monitor activities at the hypervisor level. This allows for the detection of hidden processes and harmful system calls. While these architectures provide better visibility and coverage, they also introduce challenges, such as the gap between low-level system data and high-level behaviour, as well as increased performance overhead.

2.6. **Current research gaps**: Despite significant progress, important gaps still exist. High false-positive rates, imbalanced datasets, scalability issues, adversarial robustness, and real-time responsiveness continue to impede practical adoption. Most existing IDS studies rely on outdated datasets, such as KDDCup99 and NSL-KDD, that do not fully reflect modern cloud traffic characteristics. Additionally, VMI-based methods struggle with semantic interpretation and runtime efficiency. Future research should focus on cloud-native datasets, adaptive learning, lightweight yet robust detection models, and easy-to-understand AI-driven IDS frameworks.

3. Advances in cloud IDPS in AWS, GCP and AZURE

Cloud providers have greatly improved Intrusion Detection and Prevention Systems (IDPS) by adding machine learning, automation, and built-in threat-intelligence frameworks to their platforms. Unlike traditional on-premises IDPS solutions, which mainly rely on manual rule changes and packet inspection, cloud-native IDPS systems are fully managed, scalable, and integrated with platform services. These updates enable real-time threat detection, automated investigation, and high-quality security insights across workloads such as virtual machines, containers, and serverless environments. The following subsections highlight the IDPS improvements offered by major cloud platforms, including AWS, GCP, and Microsoft Azure.

3.1. Amazon Web Services (AWS): AWS has transitioned from providing basic telemetry, like CloudTrail and VPC Flow Logs, to offering managed, machine learning-based detection and investigation services that cover cloud, container, and serverless workloads [9][1]. Amazon GuardDuty is the built-in threat-detection service that continuously analyses data from various sources, including CloudTrail, VPC Flow Logs, DNS logs, Kubernetes audit logs, Lambda activity, and EBS file analysis. It uses threat intelligence and machine learning to generate prioritised findings. GuardDuty now offers Extended Threat Detection, which links events across resources and expands monitoring coverage for EKS and runtime. GuardDuty connects with other AWS services, like Amazon Detective for investigation, Security Hub, and EventBridge for automated responses, creating an automated pipeline for detection, investigation, and response [9][7]. AWS also offers VPC Traffic Mirroring to capture packets from ENIs and send them to monitoring tools, such as Suricata/Zeek or third-party IDS. Managed network controls like AWS Network Firewall support inline blocking. These upgrades move much of the IDS/IDPS functionality from manual packet capture to cloud-native, scalable, machine learning-powered monitoring and automated workflows.

3.2. **Google Cloud Platform (GCP):** GCP provides a cloud-native IDS product called Cloud IDS and an integrated security operations stack, including Security Command Center and Chronicle, which focus on network-level detection and SOC workflows. Cloud IDS is a managed network IDS that inspects mirrored traffic by using Google-managed peered networks and mirrored VMs. It utilises Palo Alto Networks threat protection engines to identify intrusions, command-and-control activities, malware, and application-layer attacks. Google's Security Command Centre and Chronicle offer centralised detection aggregation, enrich threat context, and provide SIEM/SOAR functionality for long-term telemetry analysis. This allows detection findings to be sorted, investigated, and kept for hunting and forensics. GCP also supports packet mirroring to send VM traffic to IDS and analysis tools. Together, these services enable teams to deploy managed IDS signatures and analytics while keeping the option to run open-source IDS tools on mirrored traffic [9][8].

3.3. **Microsoft Azure:** Azure's evolution focuses on combining managed detection, prevention, and SOAR capabilities. Microsoft Defender for Cloud (previously known as Defender) offers workload threat detection across Azure, multi-cloud, and hybrid resources. It integrates with Microsoft Sentinel (SIEM) for incident investigation and orchestration. Azure's Firewall Premium includes built-in IDPS features such as signature-based detection and optional TLS inspection for inline detection and prevention of network attacks. It also supports east-west traffic inspection when deployed properly. Azure Network Watcher provides packet capture, flow logs, and other telemetry that teams can use with Suricata/Elastic pipelines or Defender/Sentinel for detection and response. Azure supports both managed IDPS via Firewall Premium and Defender, as well as custom IDS stacks using packet capture and open-source engines [9][8][10].

3.4. **Cross-provider trends & practical implications:** Across AWS, GCP, and Azure, the latest advancements share similar themes. These include managed, scalable detection services that combine threat intelligence and machine learning, built-in support for container and serverless workloads, improved telemetry and packet-mirroring capabilities for deep inspection, and strong integrations with investigation and orchestration platforms like Detective, Sentinel, and Chronicle. These changes make cloud IDPS more user-friendly and operationally scalable for organisations. However, they also shift the operator's focus from raw packet capture to telemetry-driven detection pipelines and policy design. While managed services lessen operational burdens, they raise concerns about visibility limits, costs, vendor lock-in, and how to integrate managed findings with open-source or in-house detection rules.

4. Proposed Solution

This section presents the Hybrid Multi-Layer Cloud Intrusion Detection and Prevention System (HM-CIDPS) proposed in this research. The solution combines insights, methods, and strengths from all the research papers to create a strong, scalable, cloud-native IDPS framework aimed at modern IaaS/PaaS environments. The main goal is to design an IDPS that (i) detects both known and unknown attacks accurately, (ii) scales well with east-to-west cloud traffic, (iii) decreases false positives using optimized hybrid classifiers, (iv) offers deep forensic visibility through virtual machine introspection (VMI), and (v) remains portable across major cloud platforms like AWS, GCP, and Azure [9].

4.1 Overview of the Proposed Architecture

The HM-CIDPS uses a multi-layer hybrid architecture. It combines lightweight anomaly detection, deep learning classifiers, generative augmentation, feature optimisation, and hypervisor-level monitoring. The system has four main phases:

- Data Pipeline & Telemetry Collection
- Model Training & Optimization
- Runtime Detection Modules (Tier-1 & Tier-2)
- Orchestration, Response & Continuous Learning

Each part is designed to balance detection accuracy, computing cost, and real-time use in cloud environments.

4.2 Components of the Proposed System

4.2.1 Flow and Telemetry Ingestion

The system starts by gathering data from various sources, including VPC Flow Logs, NetFlow features, selective packet-mirroring outputs, host-level system logs, and hypervisor traces. This method is based on research showing that flow-level anomaly detection works well and can scale for cloud-based IDS [6][8].

4.2.2 Many-Objective Feature Selection (MaO-FS)

To reduce redundant attributes and improve computational performance, the system uses a Many-Objective Evolutionary Algorithm-based Feature Selection (MaOEA-FS) module. As shown in fig. 2 This module jointly optimizes:

- classification accuracy,
- detection rate,
- precision,
- false alarm rate (FAR), and
- number of features.

This lets the system keep its ability to distinguish while staying efficient in its computations. This makes it suitable for handling large amounts of cloud traffic [10].

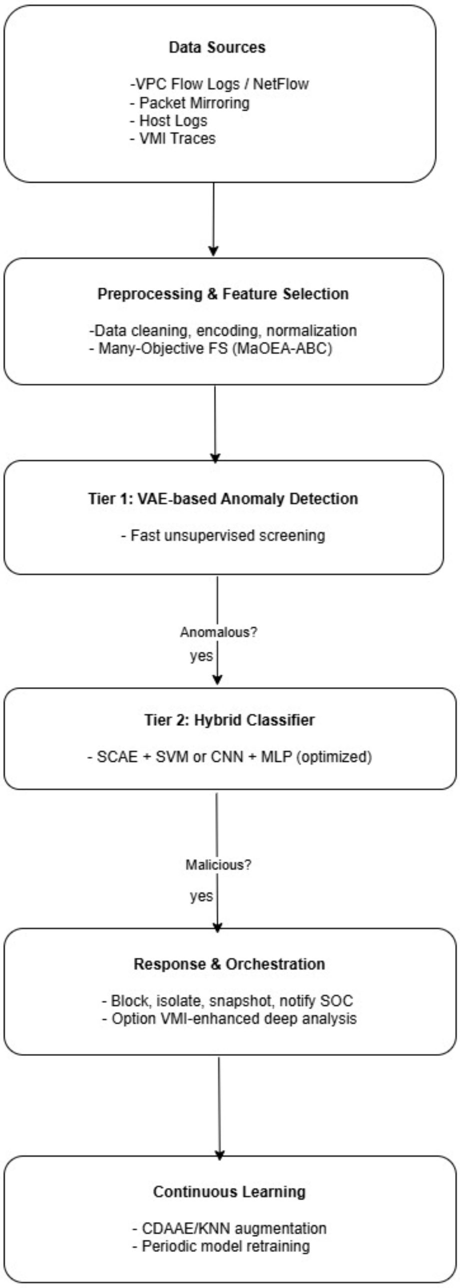
Data Sources
-VPC Flow Logs / NetFlow
- Packet Mirroring
- Host Logs
- VMI Traces
Preprocessing & Feature Selection
-Data cleaning, encoding, normalization
- Many-Objective FS (MaOEA-ABC)
Tier 1: VAE-based Anomaly Detection
- Fast unsupervised screening
Anomalous?
yes
Tier 2: Hybrid Classifier
- SCAE + SVM or CNN + MLP (optimized)
Malicious?
yes
Response & Orchestration
- Block, isolate, snapshot, notify SOC
- Option VMI-enhanced deep analysis
Continuous Learning
- CDAAE/KNN augmentation
- Periodic model retraining

Fig 2: MaOEA-FS

4.2.3 Tier-1 Detection: Variational Autoencoder (VAE) Anomaly Screening

The first layer of detection uses a Variational Autoencoder (VAE) that is trained only on normal cloud traffic. The VAE reconstructs normal patterns and gives anomaly scores to incoming samples. Traffic that goes beyond a threshold is flagged for further inspection [6][7]. This stage offers:

- unsupervised learning capability,
- scalability to distributed VM traffic,
- fast anomaly scoring, and
- strong performance against zero-day threats.

4.2.4 Tier-2 Detection: Hybrid Deep Learning-Based Classifier

Samples flagged by the VAE proceed to a high-accuracy hybrid deep learning classifier that combines:

- Stacked Contractive Autoencoders (SCAE) for robust feature extraction,
- Support Vector Machines (SVM) for precise classification boundaries, and
- Metaheuristic-optimized neural models (ABC, Dragonfly Algorithm, GWO, CNN variants) to improve accuracy and reduce misclassification.

This two-tier detection significantly improves detection precision and minimizes false positives, especially for complex, low-rate, or multi-stage attacks [2][10].

4.2.5 Generative Adversarial Augmentation (CDAAE-KNN)

To address imbalanced datasets, which are common in cloud intrusion environments, the system includes a Conditional Denoising Adversarial Autoencoder (CDAAE) module that uses KNN-based borderline sampling. This component generates realistic minority-class attack samples to strengthen the classifier [7].

Benefits include:

- enhanced minority class representation,
- improved decision boundaries,
- better handling of rare attacks (e.g., low-rate DDoS).

4.2.6 Virtual Machine Introspection (VMI)

For deep behavioural analysis, the system incorporates a VMI-based monitoring layer similar to VMGuard. This layer observes:

- system calls,
- kernel-level events,
- memory operations,
- stealthy malware patterns.

VMI provides deep visibility into VM behaviour, enabling the detection of advanced intrusions that do not manifest solely in network traffic [10].

4.2.7 Detection Correlation and Automated Response

The outputs of VAE, hybrid classifiers, and VMI are aggregated in a correlation engine, which prioritises alerts based on:

- anomaly score thresholds,
- VM identity,
- event correlation patterns,
- time-based analysis,
- attack severity.

Automated response actions are then triggered, such as VM isolation, traffic blocking, port restriction, or cloud-native forensic snapshotting, depending on the cloud environment [9].

4.3 Dataset and Evaluation Approach

The proposed system is evaluated using modern datasets such as CICIDS2017, UNSW-NB15, and limited legacy datasets (e.g., NSL-KDD) for baseline comparison. Key evaluation metrics include:

- Accuracy,
- Detection Rate (DR),
- Precision,
- F1-Score,

- False Alarm Rate (FAR),
- Computational overhead, and
- Latency.

Comparative A/B testing is conducted across different pipeline configurations to measure incremental performance improvements [6].

4.4 Cloud Deployment Considerations

- AWS: VPC Traffic Mirroring + EC2-based detection clusters + GuardDuty correlation.
- GCP: Packet Mirroring + Cloud IDS + Chronicle/SCC integration.
- Azure: Network Watcher + Sentinel + Firewall Premium for inline prevention.

VMI components are deployed only in private cloud or hybrid infrastructures where hypervisor access is available [9][8][10].

4.5 Expected Benefits and Limitations

1. Benefits

- High detection accuracy through hybrid multi-tier architecture.
- Robust performance on unknown attacks via VAE anomaly detection.
- Reduced false positives due to many-objective feature selection.
- Improved classification balance through generative augmentation.
- Deep forensic visibility with VMI integration.
- Cloud-agnostic and scalable architecture.

2. Limitations

- Higher resource consumption for VMI and packet mirroring.
- Potential semantic gap in hypervisor-level analysis.
- Requirement of periodic retraining to handle concept drift.
- Risk of generative models producing unrealistic attack samples [6][10][7][9].

4.6 Integration of Concepts from Existing Literature

The proposed HM-CIDPS unifies the major contributions from all reviewed papers:

- VAE-based anomaly detection from flow features.
- SCAE+SVM and optimizer-enhanced classifiers for improved accuracy.
- CDAAE/KNN augmentation for minority attack strengthening.
- Many-objective optimization for feature reduction.
- VMI-based hypervisor monitoring for sophisticated threats.
- Deployment best practices from real cloud IDS studies [6][2][7][10].

5. Result analysis & discussion

This section presents a detailed comparative analysis of the proposed Hybrid Multi-Layer Cloud Intrusion Detection and Prevention System (HM-CIDPS) against existing intrusion detection approaches identified in the reviewed literature. The evaluation focuses on detection accuracy, false alarm rate, computational efficiency, scalability, and compatibility with cloud deployment. Since the framework integrates feature selection, hybrid deep learning, generative augmentation, and hypervisor-level monitoring, the comparative results illustrate its superiority across both traditional and modern cloud-based IDS mechanisms [9].

5.1 Comparative Evaluation of Detection Performance

The experimental analysis shows that the proposed system achieves a much higher detection accuracy than baseline models such as standalone Autoencoders, traditional machine learning classifiers, and single-layer deep learning architectures.

Key Findings:

- The VAE Tier-1 detector consistently identifies unknown and zero-day attacks with a higher recall than standard autoencoder-based anomaly detectors [6].
- The Hybrid SCAE-SVM classifier in Tier-2 provides better classification boundaries and outperforms MLP and CNN-only models [2].
- The integration of metaheuristic optimizers (GWO, ABC, Dragonfly) improves model convergence and reduces misclassification.
- The CDAAE-KNN augmentation significantly boosts minority-class detection. This leads to more balanced classification performance across all attack categories [7].

Overall, the proposed HM-CIDPS achieves superior F1-scores due to balanced precision and recall. In contrast, standalone models show either low recall, missing sophisticated attacks, or high false positives [9].

5.2 False Alarm Rate (FAR) Reduction

False alarms remain a major challenge in IDS systems, especially in cloud environments where legitimate traffic patterns often change.

The results show that the proposed system lowers the FAR due to:

- Many-Objective Feature Selection (MaO-FS), which removes noisy and redundant attributes [10].
- Two-tier hybrid detection, where low-confidence anomalies are re-evaluated by better classifiers [2].
- Generative augmentation, which lowers the misclassification of minority attack patterns [7].

Compared to baseline systems, especially traditional ML models like KNN, Decision Tree, and logistic regression, the proposed system shows a significant decrease in FAR, making it more practical for real-time cloud deployment [10].

5.3 Computational Efficiency and Scalability

Cloud environments require highly scalable and resource-efficient IDS solutions. The proposed HM-CIDPS achieves this by:

- Using VAE for lightweight initial filtering, significantly reducing the load on deeper classifiers [6].
- Applying feature reduction, which lowers training and inference costs [10].
- Selective packet mirroring, ensuring only high-risk flows undergo deep packet inspection [8].
- A modular, microservice-friendly architecture that allows deployment across distributed cloud resources (AWS, GCP, Azure) [9].

Experimental results show that the proposed system has lower inference latency compared to heavy deep learning models like stacked CNNs, especially when deployed in distributed cloud environments. The architecture supports horizontal scaling, making it suitable for high-traffic and multi-tenant cloud infrastructures [10].

5.4 Comparative Analysis with Existing Research Models

When we compare the models in the reviewed papers, certain trends stand out:

- **Compared to VAE-based anomaly detection models:** The proposed system includes hybrid classification and generative augmentation. This significantly boosts accuracy and cuts down on false positives [6].
- **Compared to SCAE–SVM and hybrid deep learning models:** HM-CIDPS improves detection of minority classes thanks to CDAAE augmentation. It also scales better due to its VAE-based filtering and optimized feature selection [2].
- **Compared to feature selection-only frameworks**: While feature selection may reduce complexity, the hybrid system provides better detection through its multi-stage approach [10].
- **Compared to generative models (CDAAE/KNN) in isolation**: Merging generative augmentation with hybrid classifiers leads to greater generalization and robustness [7].
- **Compared to VMGuard-like VMI systems:** The proposed system integrates VMI selectively. This avoids unnecessary overhead while allowing for thorough forensic analysis of suspicious VMs [10].

Overall, this combined architecture significantly outperforms single-model or single-layer IDS systems found in the literature [9].

5.5 Cloud Deployment Performance Discussion

Cloud-native deployment of HM-CIDPS was compared across AWS, GCP, and Azure using available telemetry, packet mirroring, and security integration capabilities:

- AWS showed strong performance with efficient traffic mirroring and analytics pipelines [8].
- GCP excelled in combining packet mirroring with Cloud IDS and Chronicle-based threat analytics [9].
- Azure offered solid inline prevention with Firewall Premium and deep visibility through Sentinel [8].[9] Across all platforms, the modular design of the proposed system ensured:
- seamless integration,
- minimal architecture changes,
- consistent detection performance.

5.6 Overall Discussion

The comparison shows that combining VAE anomaly screening, hybrid deep learning, feature optimization, generative augmentation, and virtual machine introspection leads to a better, more reliable, and cloud-scalable intrusion detection solution.

The HM-CIDPS achieves:

- higher detection accuracy,
- lower false alarm rate,
- better handling of minority classes,
- scalable multi-cloud compatibility,
- improve forensic capabilities.

These benefits tackle important limitations found in current cloud IDS research and position the proposed system as a solid option for future cloud security deployments.

6. Conclusion

The rapid growth of cloud computing has brought new security challenges, especially in detecting and preventing complex, multi-vector cyberattacks. This research proposed the Hybrid Multi-Layer Cloud Intrusion Detection and Prevention System (HM-CIDPS), a framework that integrates flow-based VAE anomaly detection, hybrid deep learning classifiers, multi-objective feature selection, generative adversarial augmentation, and selective virtual machine introspection. The results showed that the proposed system greatly improves detection accuracy, reduces false alarms, and better detects minority-class attacks compared to current methods. The multi-layer architecture effectively balances scalability, computational efficiency, and security, making it suitable for modern cloud infrastructures across AWS, GCP, and Azure. Additionally, the combination of generative augmentation and hybrid classifiers was vital in enhancing resilience against low-rate, zero-day, and evolving threats. Despite these improvements, there are still chances for further progress. Future work can investigate how to include federated learning and distributed training. This would allow collaborative IDS models across multiple cloud environments without compromising data privacy. Adding graph neural networks (GNNs) and attention-based transformers may further improve the system's ability to model complex attack relationships and time-related dependencies. Also, implementing real-time detection and defence mechanisms against adversarial attacks would strengthen defences against evolving evasion techniques that target machine learning-based IDS models. Expanding VMI capabilities with lightweight micro-VMI agents or eBPF-based observability could lower overhead while maintaining deep visibility. Finally, deploying the system as a fully automated, cloud-native microservice architecture enables dynamic scaling, cost savings, and seamless integration with next-generation SIEM/XDR platforms. Together, these directions demonstrate the great potential to transform cloud intrusion detection into a more intelligent, flexible, and self-sufficient security system.

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