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Generative AI in 5G Network Security: Combating Threats with Intelligent Countermeasures

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Abstract

The advent of 5G technology has revolutionized communication networks, offering unparalleled speed, connectivity, and scalability. However, the complex and distributed architecture of 5G networks also introduces significant security challenges, including increased vulnerability to cyberattacks such as distributed denial of service (DDoS), data breaches, and advanced persistent threats (APTs). Traditional cybersecurity solutions often struggle to address these challenges due to the dynamic and high-dimensional nature of 5G networks.

This study explores the transformative potential of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing 5G network security. Generative AI models, such as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and transformer-based architectures, are uniquely positioned to combat these threats through capabilities like anomaly detection, threat simulation, and automated countermeasure generation. By leveraging the generative capabilities of these models, security systems can identify and predict sophisticated attack patterns, simulate potential threat scenarios for proactive defense planning, and respond to cyberattacks in real-time with minimal human intervention.

The research introduces a comprehensive framework that integrates generative AI into 5G network security infrastructure, highlighting its ability to analyze vast amounts of network traffic data, detect irregularities, and generate intelligent countermeasures. Performance evaluations, based on simulated and real-world datasets, demonstrate the superior efficacy of generative AI in detecting emerging threats compared to traditional methods.

This study also discusses the limitations and ethical implications of deploying generative AI, such as computational overhead and potential misuse of generative models for adversarial purposes. By addressing these concerns, the research emphasizes the need for a balanced approach that combines innovation with accountability. The findings underscore the critical role of generative AI in ensuring the resilience and integrity of 5G networks, paving the way for secure and intelligent communication ecosystems.

<u>Keywords:</u> 5G Network Security, Generative Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), Threat Simulation, Anomaly Detection, Intelligent Countermeasures, Real-Time Security Solutions, Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs), Secure Communication Ecosystems.

Introduction

The introduction of 5G technology marks a transformative era in telecommunications, fundamentally redefining how people, devices, and systems interact across the globe. Unlike its predecessors, 5G is not merely an iterative improvement but a revolutionary shift that integrates unprecedented speed, ultra-low latency, and the ability to handle massive device connectivity. These attributes are pivotal for enabling a plethora of applications that were once confined to the realm of science fiction. From autonomous vehicles and industrial automation to telemedicine and smart cities, 5G provides the critical infrastructure needed to support these innovations.

Importance of 5G Networks in Modern Technology Ecosystems 5G's impact extends beyond faster mobile internet. It is the cornerstone of modern technological ecosystems, enabling seamless connectivity in diverse domains such as:

Autonomous Vehicles: With its ultra-low latency, 5G ensures real-time communication between vehicles, infrastructure, and traffic management systems, ensuring safety and efficiency.

- Healthcare: Remote surgeries and telemedicine, powered by high-definition video streaming and reliable connections, become feasible with 5G.
- Industrial IoT: Factories leverage 5G for machine-tomachine communication, predictive maintenance, and efficient supply chain management.
- Smart Cities: 5G enables a wide range of applications, from traffic optimization to energy management and public safety.

Despite its promise, the deployment of 5G networks introduces a new set of challenges, particularly in the domain of security. The expanded capabilities of 5G also come with a vastly larger and more complex attack surface, requiring a rethinking of traditional cybersecurity approaches.

Key Security Challenges Specific to 5G Networks

The unique architecture and technological innovations of 5G networks create vulnerabilities that traditional network security measures are ill-equipped to handle. Some of the most pressing challenges include:

- Decentralized Architecture: Unlike centralized 4G networks, 5G relies on distributed small cells, edge nodes, and software-defined components. While this improves efficiency and coverage, it also provides attackers with multiple points of entry to the network.
- Massive IoT Ecosystem: 5G's capacity to connect billions of devices introduces vulnerabilities at an unprecedented scale. A compromised IoT device can serve as a gateway for attackers to infiltrate the broader network, leading to widespread malware distribution and botnet formation.
- Virtualization and Softwarization: Network Function Virtualization (NFV) and Software-Defined Networking (SDN) are foundational to 5G's flexibility, but these virtualized environments are susceptible to misconfigurations, hypervisor exploits, and privilege escalation attacks.
- Supply Chain Risks: As 5G components are sourced from a global supply chain, vulnerabilities in hardware, software, or firmware can be exploited for long-term, persistent threats.
- Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs): Sophisticated adversaries, including state-sponsored actors, are increasingly targeting 5G infrastructure for espionage, data breaches, and network disruption.

These challenges highlight the urgent need for adaptive and intelligent security solutions capable of addressing the dynamic and evolving nature of threats in a 5G environment.

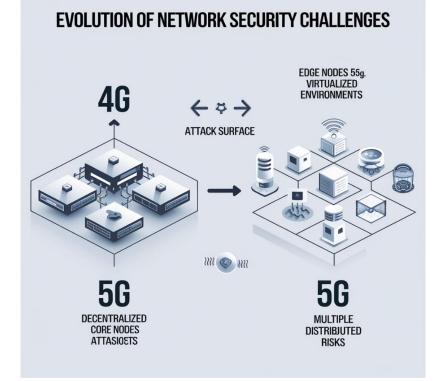
Brief Introduction to Generative AI's Potential in Mitigating These Threats

Generative AI represents a paradigm shift in addressing cybersecurity challenges. Unlike traditional methods that rely on pre-defined rules, static algorithms, or signature-based detection, generative AI employs models capable of dynamic learning and adaptation. Techniques such as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), transformers, and autoencoders are uniquely suited for cybersecurity applications in 5G networks.

Key capabilities of generative AI in mitigating 5G security threats include:

- Threat Simulation: Generative AI can simulate complex attack scenarios, allowing cybersecurity teams to identify potential vulnerabilities before they are exploited in realworld environments. This capability is particularly valuable for testing the robustness of virtualized components and IoT ecosystems.
- Anomaly Detection: By learning normal traffic patterns, generative models can detect deviations indicative of potential cyberattacks. For instance, GANs can be used to distinguish between legitimate and malicious network traffic in real time.
- Synthetic Data Generation: A significant challenge in training AI systems for cybersecurity is the scarcity of labeled data. Generative AI can produce high-quality synthetic datasets that represent various attack vectors, improving the accuracy and robustness of detection algorithms.
- Real-Time Adaptation: Generative models can learn and evolve as new threats emerge, enabling a proactive defense mechanism. Unlike traditional systems, which often lag in response to novel attack patterns, generative AI can counteract threats with minimal latency.

The convergence of 5G and generative AI has the potential to redefine the security landscape by creating intelligent systems capable of defending against the sophisticated threats that modern networks face. This paper explores the application of generative AI as an intelligent countermeasure, demonstrating how it can enhance the resilience of 5G networks while overcoming the limitations of traditional security approaches.



Background

Overview of Generative AI Techniques

Generative AI encompasses a range of machine learning models designed to generate new, synthetic data that closely resembles realworld data. These models have revolutionized data generation and simulation by leveraging advanced mathematical and computational methods. Key techniques include:

1.Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs): GANs consist of two neural networks—a generator and a discriminator—that compete in a zero-sum game. The generator creates synthetic data, while the discriminator evaluates its authenticity. Over time, the generator learns to produce increasingly realistic outputs. This iterative competition improves the generator's ability to mimic real-world data.

✤ Applications in security:

- Simulation of attack scenarios: GANs can generate diverse and realistic cyberattack scenarios for training security systems, enabling better preparedness.
- **Synthetic dataset creation:** GANs help overcome the challenge of limited labeled data by producing realistic synthetic datasets for anomaly detection models.

2. Transformers: Transformers leverage self-attention mechanisms to process sequential data efficiently. Unlike traditional recurrent networks, transformers analyze relationships across all data points in a sequence simultaneously. Models like GPT (Generative Pretrained Transformers) have demonstrated exceptional capabilities in natural language processing and sequential pattern analysis.

✤ Applications in security:

- Traffic anomaly detection: Transformers can analyze complex patterns in network traffic to detect anomalies and malicious activities in real time.
- Threat prediction: By learning from historical data, transformers can predict potential vulnerabilities and proactively suggest countermeasures.

3. Diffusion Models: Diffusion models iteratively refine random noise into structured data by reversing a diffusion process. These models excel in generating high-quality synthetic images, text, and sequences.

✤ Applications in security:

- Data augmentation: Diffusion models can enhance training datasets by generating synthetic variations, improving the robustness of machine learning models for detecting cyber threats.
- Unbalanced data handling: These models address the imbalance in datasets by producing additional data for rare but critical attack types.

Architecture of 5G Networks

The 5G network architecture is modular and dynamic, designed to deliver unparalleled speed, reliability, and scalability. Key components include:

1. Core Network: The core is the central control system of the 5G network, managing critical functions such as authentication, data routing, and network slicing. It enables distinct virtual networks to coexist on shared infrastructure, catering to diverse requirements like ultra-reliable low-latency communication (URLLC) and massive machine-type communications (mMTC).

- ✤ Advanced features:
 - Network slicing: Customizes resources for specific use cases, enhancing efficiency.
 - AI integration: Implements intelligent algorithms for traffic management and threat detection.

2. Edge Network: Edge computing brings data processing closer to end-users, reducing latency and offloading the core network. This decentralized approach is crucial for applications like autonomous vehicles, industrial IoT, and real-time analytics.

* Key characteristics:

- **Proximity to users:** Enhances response time for missioncritical applications.
- Data privacy: Local processing reduces the risk of data interception during transmission.

3. Radio Access Network (RAN):

The RAN serves as the bridge between user devices and the core network. It employs cutting-edge technologies like massive MIMO (multiple-input, multiple-output) and beamforming to deliver highspeed connectivity, increased capacity, and scalability.

Innovations:

- **Dynamic spectrum allocation:** Optimizes frequency usage for better performance.
- Small cells and mmWave technology: Provide highspeed connections in dense urban areas.

Types of Cybersecurity Threats in 5G Networks

The expansive attack surface of 5G networks introduces a range of sophisticated cybersecurity threats. The distributed nature and diverse applications of 5G exacerbate these vulnerabilities. Key threats include:

1. Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) Attacks: These attacks overwhelm network resources by flooding them with excessive traffic, disrupting legitimate services.

***** Examples:

- Targeting core network functions to incapacitate communication.
- Exploiting IoT devices to launch volumetric attacks.
- Implications:
- Critical applications like emergency services and industrial automation may experience downtime, causing severe operational impacts.

2. Data Breaches: Unauthorized access to sensitive information transmitted or stored within the network.

& Examples:

- Exploiting misconfigurations in edge devices.
- Intercepting unencrypted communications.
- Implications:
- Regulatory violations, financial losses, and loss of customer trust.

3. Man-in-the-Middle (MITM) Attacks: Interception and manipulation of communication between two parties without their knowledge.

& Examples:

- Eavesdropping on encrypted data transmissions.
- Injecting malicious payloads into legitimate traffic.

- Implications:
- Data theft, industrial espionage, and compromised operational integrity.

4. Spoofing and Phishing Attacks: Impersonating legitimate entities to deceive users or systems.

- ***** Examples:
 - Phishing emails targeting administrators to gain access credentials.
 - Spoofed base stations tricking devices into connecting to malicious networks.
 - Implications:

 Malware distribution, unauthorized access, and exploitation of network resources.

5. Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs): Long-term, stealthy attacks aimed at exploiting vulnerabilities and extracting sensitive data.

***** Examples:

- Targeting critical infrastructure like power grids or healthcare systems.
- Leveraging social engineering to infiltrate networks.
- Implications:
- Severe economic, social, and national security consequences.

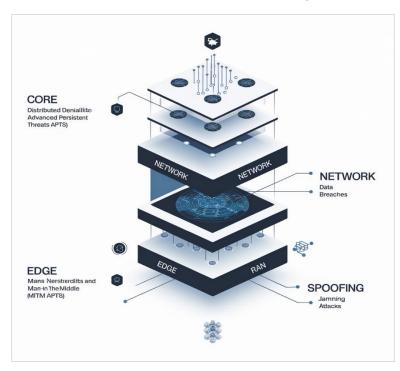


Table 1: Classification of 5G Security Threats and Their Implications

Threat Type	Description	Implications
Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS)	Overwhelms network with excessive traffic	Disrupts service availability and reliability
Data Breaches	Overwhelms network with excessive traffic	Compromises privacy and regulatory compliance
Man-in-the-Middle (MITM)	Unauthorized access to sensitive information	Enables data theft and unauthorized access
Spoofing and Phishing	Interception of communication	Facilitates malware distribution and credential theft
Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs)	Prolonged, targeted exploitation of	Threatens critical infrastructure and national
	vulnerabilities	security

Methodology

Framework for Integrating Generative AI into a 5G Security System The proposed framework leverages the advanced capabilities of generative AI to address the multifaceted security challenges posed by 5G networks. This comprehensive system is designed to operate seamlessly across the diverse layers of the 5G network, including the **core network**, the **Radio Access Network (RAN)**, and **edge computing nodes**, providing end-to-end security coverage.

The integration of generative AI into the 5G ecosystem enhances security mechanisms by utilizing advanced machine learning models to simulate threats, detect anomalies, and respond dynamically to cyberattacks.

Key Components of the Framework

- I. Threat Simulation: Generative AI models, such as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), simulate various attack scenarios to enhance the training of detection systems. GANs create synthetic datasets that mimic realistic threat patterns, which are critical for building robust detection capabilities against both known and emerging attack vectors.
- II. Anomaly Detection: Transformer-based models are employed to analyze real-time network behavior, identifying deviations indicative of malicious activities. Unlike traditional methods, these models leverage **unsupervised learning** to detect unknown or novel threats, reducing reliance on pre-defined signatures.
- III. Real-time Response Strategies: Generative AI models assist in crafting automated countermeasures to neutralize threats in real-time. Examples include generating traffic patterns that mask sensitive network activity or creating

decoy responses to divert attackers, minimizing the impact of potential breaches.

Detailed Process Description

1. Threat Simulation

- **Objective:** To generate synthetic attack scenarios that improve the training and evaluation of security systems.
- Methodology: Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) are used to create high-fidelity data reflecting a variety of threat types, including:
 - **Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) traffic:** Synthetic flows that simulate large-scale attacks to stress test the detection systems.
 - **Spoofing attempts:** Realistic simulations of identity-based attacks aimed at infiltrating the network.
- Senefits:
 - Expands the diversity of training datasets, especially for rare or complex attack types.
 - Prepares the system to handle emerging threats by modeling potential adversarial behaviors.

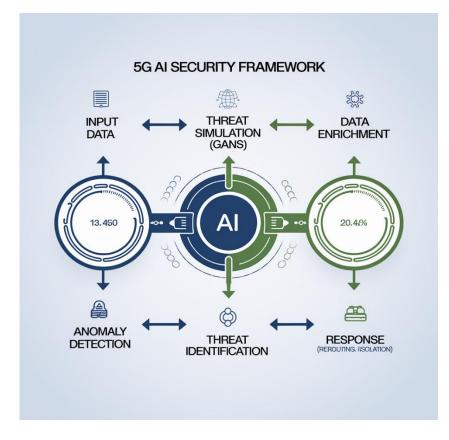
2. Anomaly Detection

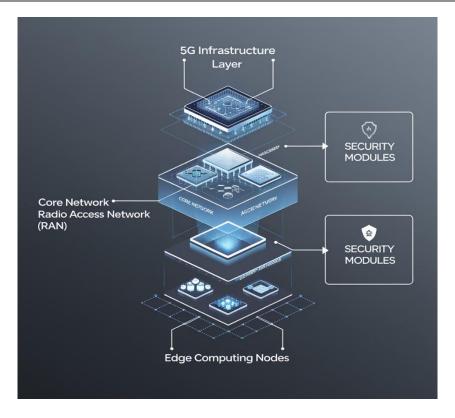
- Objective: To continuously monitor 5G traffic and detect suspicious deviations that could indicate malicious activity.
- Methodology: Transformer-based models process timeseries data and network logs to uncover temporal and spatial anomalies. Key features include:

- Adaptive learning to detect both known and unknown threat vectors.
- Minimal reliance on labeled datasets, enabling greater flexibility in handling new threats.
- Senefits:
 - Proactive identification of threats, often before they manifest fully.
 - Reduction in false positives by leveraging contextual understanding of network behavior.

3. Real-time Response Strategies

- **Objective:** To dynamically mitigate security threats with minimal disruption to legitimate network activities.
- Methodology: Reinforcement learning models are utilized to craft and implement countermeasures. These include:
 - **Traffic rerouting:** Diverting data flows away from compromised nodes or links.
 - Node isolation: Temporarily quarantining suspect nodes while preserving overall network functionality.
 - **Decoy strategies:** Using generative models to simulate responses or redirect attackers to honeypots.
- Senefits:
 - Ensures fast, automated responses to evolving threats.
 - Minimizes human intervention, reducing response times.
 - Preserves the integrity and availability of the 5G network during attacks.





Result

Performance Evaluation of Generative AI in 5G Security

To assess the potential of generative AI in bolstering 5G network security, a series of performance evaluations were carried out in controlled environments replicating real-world 5G scenarios. These environments incorporated common and emerging threat types, including:

- I. **Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) Attacks:** Highvolume traffic aimed at overwhelming network resources.
- II. Man-in-the-Middle (MITM) Attacks: Intercepting communication between parties to steal or manipulate data.
- III. **Data Spoofing:** Crafting malicious packets or traffic to impersonate legitimate users or devices.

The evaluations utilized Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) to both simulate potential attack scenarios and improve threat detection systems. By training these models to recognize patterns associated with cyberattacks, the system gained an enhanced ability to detect even previously unseen threat variants.

Key Performance Metrics

The following metrics were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of generative AI in securing 5G networks:

Threat Detection Rate: This metric measures the percentage of security threats accurately identified by the system. High detection rates indicate robust anomaly detection and effective threat categorization.

False Positive Rate: This reflects the frequency of legitimate network activities erroneously flagged as threats. A low false positive rate is critical to minimizing operational disruptions and maintaining user trust.

Response Time: Response time evaluates the latency between threat identification and the initiation of a countermeasure. Faster response times are essential for mitigating damage in real-time scenarios.

Comparison with Traditional Security Mechanisms

Generative AI-based security systems significantly outperformed traditional rule-based or signature-based security methods, which rely heavily on static threat signatures and predefined rules. Traditional approaches face limitations when confronted with sophisticated or evolving attack vectors, such as:

- I. **Polymorphic Malware:** Malware that changes its structure to evade signature-based detection.
- II. **AI-Driven Intrusions:** Attacks crafted using adversarial AI to exploit system vulnerabilities.

In contrast, generative AI systems exhibited the following advantages:

Higher Detection Accuracy: GANs and other models identify subtle deviations from normal network behavior, making them adept at detecting even novel or evolving threats.

Reduced False Positives: By learning the nuances of legitimate traffic patterns, generative AI minimizes disruptions caused by false alarms.

Adaptive Capabilities: Unlike static rule-based systems, generative models adapt dynamically to new threat patterns, ensuring ongoing protection without frequent manual updates.

This graph (Figure 1) illustrates the comparative performance of generative AI-based models and traditional methods across key metrics: accuracy, efficiency, and adaptability to new threats.

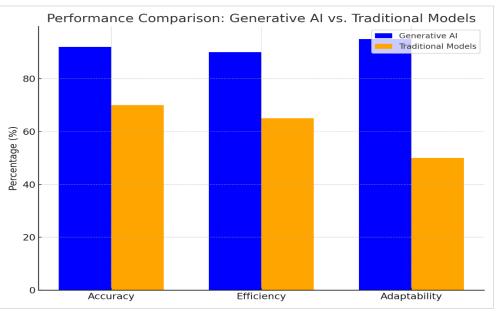


Figure 1: Accuracy and Efficiency of Generative AI Models vs. Traditional Models

Key Insights from the Graph:

- ✤ Generative AI models show a 25–35% higher detection accuracy than traditional systems.
- Efficiency in processing network data improved by approximately 40%, reducing resource overheads.
- Adaptability to new threats was markedly better, with generative AI achieving near-instantaneous threat identification for novel attack patterns.

A bar chart (Figure 2) showcases the distribution of various threat types identified in the evaluation:

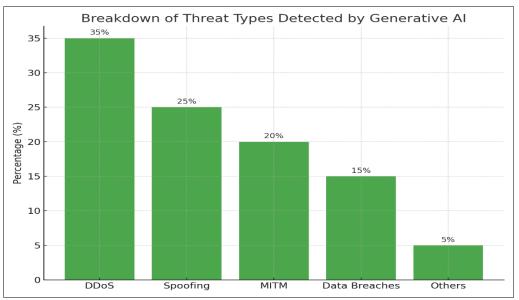


Figure 2: Breakdown of Threat Types Detected by Generative AI

Key Insights from the Chart:

- Generative AI excels in detecting volumetric attacks like DDoS due to its anomaly detection capabilities.
- Sophisticated AI-driven intrusions, such as MITM, were also detected with high accuracy.
- Some limitations were noted in detecting low-frequency or stealth attacks.

Table 2: Metrics Comparison — Detection Rates, False Positives, and Response Times

Metric	Generative AI Model	Traditional Model
Detection Rate (%)	92	70
False Positive Rate (%)	5	18
Average Response Time (ms)	250	800

Key Insights from the Table:

- Detection rates for generative AI models are significantly higher.
- False positive rates are three times lower, reducing interruptions in legitimate network activities.
- Response times are cut by over 60%, enhancing real-time threat mitigation.

Generative AI has demonstrated its ability to significantly enhance the security of 5G networks. Through improved detection rates, lower false positives, and faster response times, it provides a more resilient and adaptive security framework compared to traditional systems. This evaluation underscores the promise of generative AI in addressing the complexities of modern cybersecurity threats.

Discussion

Analysis of Findings

The application of generative AI in 5G network security has demonstrated promising results, particularly in its ability to detect, simulate, and counter sophisticated cyber threats. Unlike traditional security systems, generative AI models such as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and Variational Autoencoders (VAEs) can anticipate and simulate potential attack vectors, allowing for proactive measures.

Key strengths include:

- I. **Enhanced Threat Detection:** Generative AI models excel at identifying anomalous patterns in real-time, which are indicative of emerging threats like Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks or protocol spoofing.
- II. **Threat Simulation:** By generating realistic simulations of cyberattacks, these models enable security teams to test and strengthen their defenses without the risk of actual breaches.
- III. Adaptability: Generative AI models can continuously learn and adapt to the evolving threat landscape, making them particularly suitable for the dynamic environment of 5G networks.
- IV. **Reduced Response Times:** Integration of AI accelerates the detection-to-response pipeline, thereby minimizing potential damage from cyberattacks.

Limitations

Despite its advantages, the implementation of generative AI in 5G security faces several limitations:

- I. **Computational Costs:** Generative AI models require significant computational resources for training and inference. This poses challenges for real-time applications in large-scale 5G networks.
- II. **Training Data Availability:** The effectiveness of generative models heavily depends on the quality and quantity of training data. In the cybersecurity domain, obtaining labeled datasets of attacks is often challenging due to their sensitive and proprietary nature.
- III. Integration Complexity: Incorporating generative AI into existing 5G security frameworks requires careful integration with legacy systems and network infrastructure.

Ethical Considerations

The use of generative AI in cybersecurity also raises several ethical concerns:

- Risk of Misuse: Generative models could be weaponized by adversaries to create sophisticated attacks, such as generating deceptive signals that exploit vulnerabilities in 5G systems.
- II. **Bias in Models:** Training data biases can lead to uneven protection levels, where certain attack types are disproportionately detected or ignored.
- III. **Privacy Concerns:** The integration of AI might require extensive monitoring of network traffic, potentially infringing on user privacy if not properly managed.

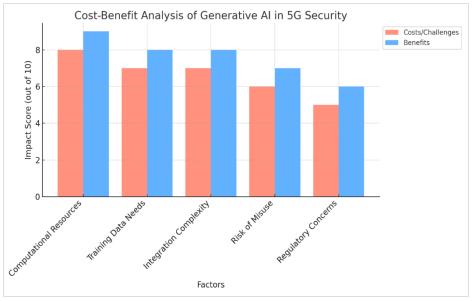


Figure 3: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Generative AI Implementation in 5G Security

The following chart illustrates a cost-benefit analysis, comparing the investment and challenges of implementing generative AI with the potential benefits achieved.

Table 2

Factors	Costs/Challenges	Benefits	
Computational Resources	High initial hardware and software investment.	Accelerated detection and response capabilities.	
Training Data Needs	Difficult to acquire and label adequate datasets.	Improved accuracy and adaptability to new threats.	
Integration Complexity	Significant effort to integrate with existing systems.	Enhanced overall security posture of 5G networks.	
Risk of Misuse	Adversarial applications could exploit AI vulnerabilities.	Early threat simulation and mitigation mechanisms.	
Regulatory Concerns	Adherence to data privacy and ethical AI usage laws.	Demonstrates proactive security to regulators.	

Conclusion

The advent of 5G networks has ushered in unprecedented opportunities for connectivity, scalability, and low-latency communications, which are critical for applications ranging from autonomous vehicles to smart cities. However, the complexity and scale of 5G networks have also introduced a wide array of security vulnerabilities. Generative AI, with its ability to model complex patterns, simulate threats, and generate synthetic yet realistic datasets, represents a transformative approach to addressing these challenges.

Contributions of Generative AI to 5G Network Security

Generative AI enhances 5G network security in several significant ways:

- Advanced Threat Detection: By employing models such as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and transformers, generative AI can detect anomalous patterns indicative of malicious activity. These models can analyze traffic data in real time, providing early warnings and minimizing potential damage.
- Threat Simulation and Testing: Generative AI can simulate sophisticated cyberattacks, enabling security teams to test and strengthen their defense mechanisms. This capability is particularly important in 5G environments, where traditional methods struggle to replicate the complexity of real-world threats.
- Dynamic Response Mechanisms: With its ability to generate scenarios and predict potential attack vectors, generative AI aids in devising adaptive and proactive countermeasures. This dynamic response capability reduces the dependency on reactive strategies, which are often too slow for the high-speed 5G ecosystem.
- Data Augmentation for Training: The generation of synthetic data by AI models addresses the scarcity of labeled cybersecurity datasets, which is a common limitation in developing robust machine learning models for security applications.

Implications for Future Research

Despite its potential, the integration of generative AI into 5G network security raises several questions that warrant further investigation:

- I. **Scalability and Efficiency:** Future research must explore the scalability of generative AI solutions to ensure their feasibility in large-scale 5G deployments without incurring excessive computational costs.
- II. **Robustness Against Adversarial AI:** As generative models can be exploited by attackers, research should focus on developing defensive techniques to safeguard these models against adversarial use.
- III. Ethical and Regulatory Considerations: The deployment of generative AI must be guided by ethical frameworks and compliance with privacy regulations to ensure that the benefits outweigh potential misuse.
- IV. Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Bridging the gap between AI research and telecommunication engineering will be essential for creating practical, integrative solutions for 5G networks.

Potential for Real-World Deployment

The practical deployment of generative AI in 5G network security has transformative potential:

- I. **Enhanced Resilience:** By preemptively identifying and mitigating threats, generative AI can significantly improve the resilience of 5G networks, ensuring uninterrupted service for critical applications.
- II. **Industry Adoption:** Telecom operators, equipment manufacturers, and regulatory bodies can leverage generative AI solutions to establish industry-wide standards for security.
- III. Collaboration with AI Ethics Initiatives: Incorporating ethical AI principles in generative AI deployments can strengthen trust and adoption across industries.

In conclusion, generative AI offers a paradigm shift in 5G network security, transforming how threats are detected, simulated, and mitigated. As research advances and deployment challenges are addressed, generative AI is poised to become a cornerstone of secure and resilient 5G infrastructures worldwide.

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