

Per Unit-Based Neural Network Control for MPPT of Wind Turbines: Reducing Data Needs and Enhancing Generalization

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) offer a highly adaptive and precise approach to tracking the Maximum Power Point (MPPT) of wind turbines. Despite their advantages, achieving effective generalization with ANNs often requires significant computational resources—especially when dealing with large datasets—and depends critically on the careful selection of input and output variables to ensure optimal performance.

In this study, we developed an ANN-based MPPT controller for wind energy conversion systems. The proposed network uses wind speed, mechanical power, and turbine rotational speed as input variables, while the output is the rotational speed expressed in Per Unit (PU). This PU-based representation not only simplifies the training process but also enhances the learning efficiency and generalization capability of the network across different wind turbine configurations.

Simulation results demonstrate that the proposed ANN controller provides accurate and robust performance in tracking the maximum power point, highlighting its potential as an effective solution for intelligent wind energy management.

Keywords: ANN, MPPT, wind turbine, Per Unit, Big Data.

1. INTRODUCTION

Given the increasingly alarming environmental consequences associated with the continued reliance on fossil fuels—such as greenhouse gas emissions, global warming, and air pollution—the transition toward renewable energy sources has emerged not only as a strategic choice but also as an unavoidable necessity. Renewable energy systems offer a sustainable alternative by producing electricity without emitting carbon dioxide or other harmful atmospheric pollutants. Their utilization significantly contributes to reducing the ecological footprint of energy production and supports the global effort to combat climate change. Furthermore, the ongoing development and integration of renewable energy technologies into national and international energy portfolios play a pivotal role in facilitating the ecological transition, ensuring energy security, and preserving the environment for future generations [1–3].

Among the wide array of renewable energy sources, wind energy has gained considerable attention due to its abundance, renewability, and inherently eco-friendly characteristics. It presents a clean, efficient, and economically viable solution for electricity generation. The harnessing of wind energy involves a conversion chain that transforms the kinetic energy of the wind into mechanical energy through the rotation of turbine blades, which is subsequently converted into electrical energy by an electric generator. This process, while conceptually straightforward, is subject to several technical challenges that must be addressed to optimize energy extraction.

One of the critical challenges in wind energy systems lies in the inherently nonlinear nature of the mechanical power output of wind turbines, which varies with wind speed and turbine characteristics [4]. This nonlinearity necessitates the implementation of maximum power point tracking (MPPT) techniques to ensure that the turbine operates at its optimal power point under varying wind conditions. Several MPPT algorithms have been developed and applied in this context, among which the Perturb and Observe (P&O) [5–13] and Incremental Conductance (INC) [14–21]

methods are widely used due to their conceptual simplicity and ease of implementation. However, these traditional methods are often accompanied by drawbacks such as oscillations around the maximum power point during steady-state operation, which can lead to efficiency losses and mechanical stress on system components.

In light of these limitations, this study explores a more advanced and adaptive solution based on artificial intelligence. Specifically, we propose the implementation of an MPPT system that leverages the capabilities of artificial neural networks (ANNs) to enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of wind energy conversion systems. The ANN-based MPPT controller is designed to process multiple input parameters—including wind speed, mechanical power, and turbine rotational speed—and output the optimal rotational speed in per unit (PU) to achieve maximum power extraction.

Through detailed simulations, we demonstrate that the developed neural controller exhibits superior performance in terms of robustness, accuracy, and responsiveness compared to conventional MPPT methods. The results confirm that the proposed ANN-based MPPT approach is highly effective in maximizing wind energy extraction while minimizing steady-state oscillations, thereby contributing to the advancement of intelligent and sustainable wind energy systems.

2. TURBINE MODEL

The mechanical power extracted by the wind turbine is expressed as follows [22-24]:

$$P_t = \frac{1}{2} \rho A C_p v^3 \quad (1)$$

Where:

ρ : Air density (Kg/m³).

A: Area swept by the rotor blades (m²).

v: Wind speed (m/s).

C_p : Power coefficient.

The following relation expresses the differential equation of the rotational speed of the turbine [25-26]:

$$J \frac{d\Omega}{dt} = T_m - T_{em} - f\Omega \quad (2)$$

Where:

J: Inertia of turbine and generator (Kg.m²).

f: friction coefficient (N.m.s.rad⁻¹).

T_m : Electromagnetic torque (N.m).

T_{em} : mechanical torque (N.m).

In this work, we use a three-blade horizontal wind turbine. The curve representing the mechanical power recovered from the turbine as a function of the rotational speed, for different wind speeds, is shown in Figure 1. The values of the corresponding simulation parameters are presented in Table 1.

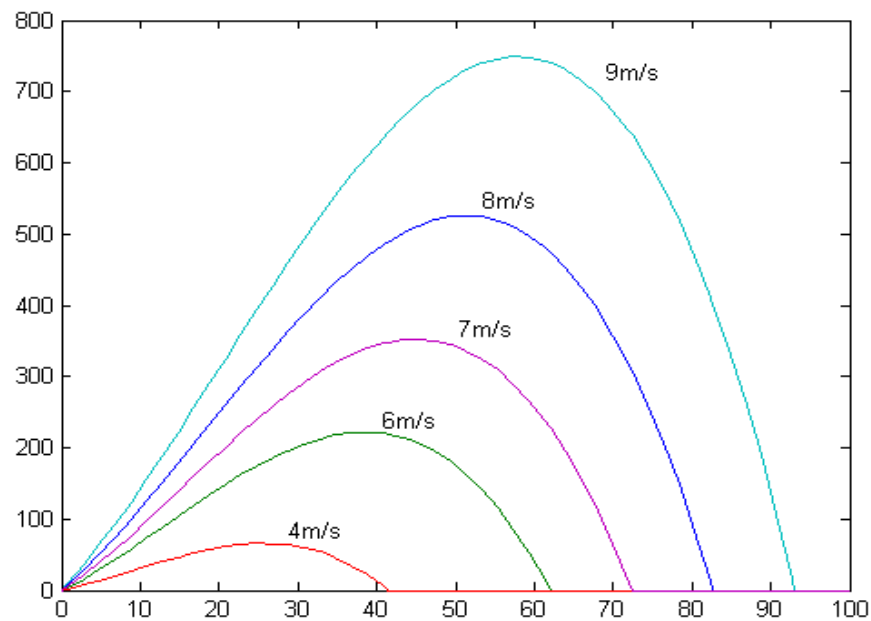


Figure 1. Mechanical power/speed characteristic.

Table 1: Wind turbine parameters

neters	:
l power	7
l wind speed	/s
er of blades	
swept by the rotor blades	²

3. ARTIFICIAL NEURON MODEL

Artificial neural networks (ANNs) are computational models inspired by the functioning of biological neurons [127-28]. They are widely used in artificial intelligence and machine learning to solve complex problems such as image recognition, trend prediction, and natural language processing.

An artificial neural network consists of a set of neurons, where each neuron (see Figure 2) receives a variable number of inputs from neurons located upstream. Each of these inputs is associated with a weight W , which represents the strength of the synaptic connection between the neurons [29-39].

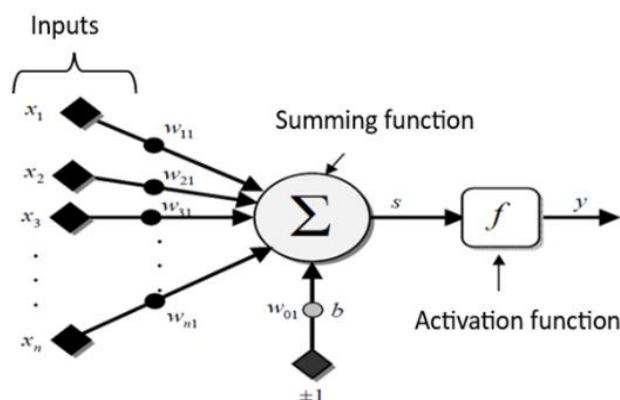


Figure 2. Artificial Neuron model.

The activation function determines whether a neuron should be activated. Without it, the network would behave like a simple linear model.

The connections between neurons, characterized by their respective weights, play a crucial role in the learning process and the overall performance of the network. By adjusting these weights using learning algorithms such as backpropagation [40-42], the neural network can optimize its ability to solve complex problems like image recognition, machine translation, or data prediction.

In summary, artificial neural networks mimic the functioning of the human brain, enabling the processing and analysis of large amounts of data with remarkable efficiency.

4. PROPOSED ARTIFICIAL NEURAL NETWORK

The choice of inputs and outputs in an artificial neural network (ANN) plays a crucial role in its efficiency [43-46], performance, and generalization capability. Poor selection can lead to slow convergence and insufficient accuracy.

In this work, to optimize the learning of the ANN, we developed a neural network (see Fig. 3) using wind speed, mechanical power P , and rotational speed Ω of the turbine as input variables. The output variable of the model is the rotational speed in per unit (PU), defined as the ratio of the measured rotational speed to the maximum rotational speed, as given by the following equation:

$$\Omega_{PU} = \frac{\Omega_{mes}}{\Omega_{Max}} \quad (3)$$

This ratio is between 0 and 1, thus facilitating analysis and use in control models or machine learning [47-52].

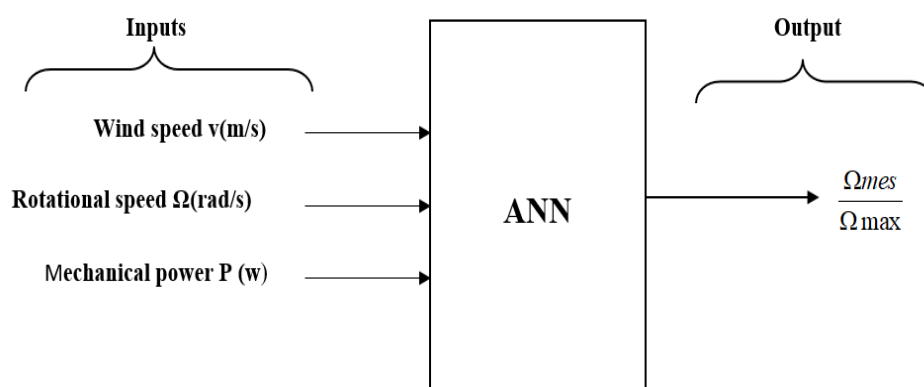


Figure 3. Developed neural network model.

From the rotational speed expressed in per unit, the optimal rotational speed can be calculated using the following equation [40-42]:

$$\frac{\Omega_{op}}{\Omega_{max}} = 0.63 \quad (4)$$

Figure 4 below illustrates the neural network used:

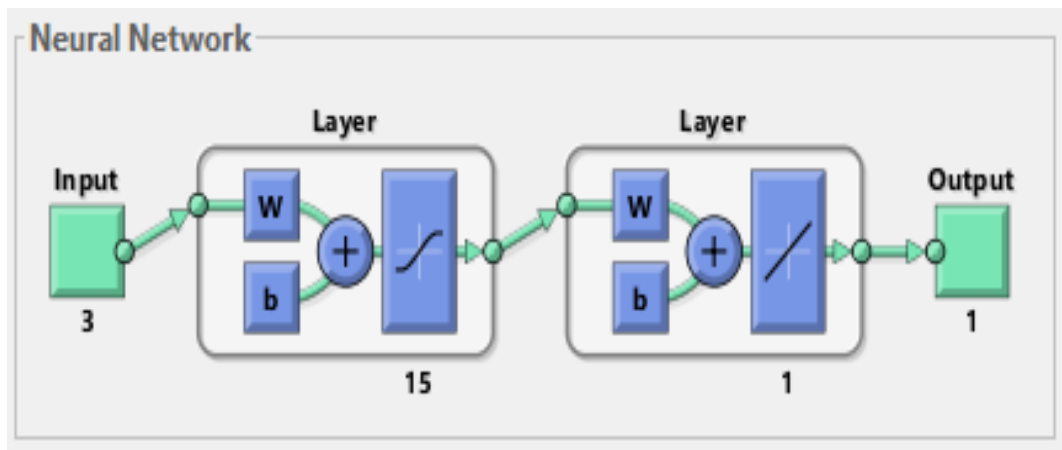


Figure 4. The architecture of the proposed neural network.

Figure 5 illustrates the mean squared error between the outputs of the artificial neural network (ANN) and their target values as a function of the number of iterations (epochs). The final error obtained is 6.6403×10^{-7} .

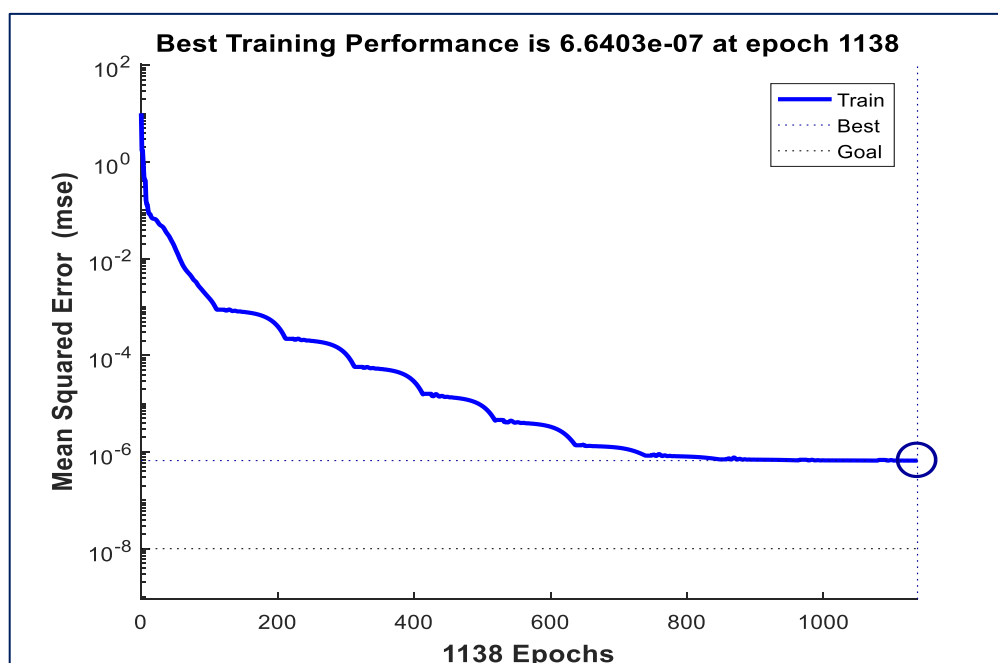


Figure 5. Evolution of the mean squared error during training.

For a scenario involving rapid variations in wind speed (as illustrated in Figure 6), Figure 7 presents the rotational speed response of the wind turbine optimized by the proposed neural network-based MPPT controller. This response is compared against the optimal rotational speed curve derived from the turbine's power characteristic as a function

of its rotational speed. Furthermore, Figure 8 depicts the corresponding variation in the turbine’s mechanical power when regulated by the MPPT controller, highlighting its capability to ensure efficient energy extraction under dynamic wind conditions.

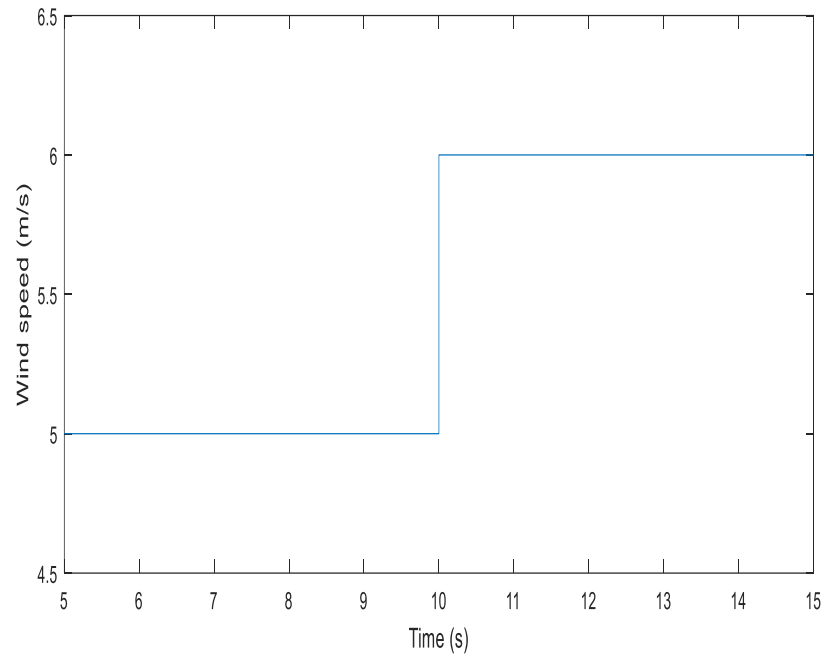


Figure 6. Wind speed

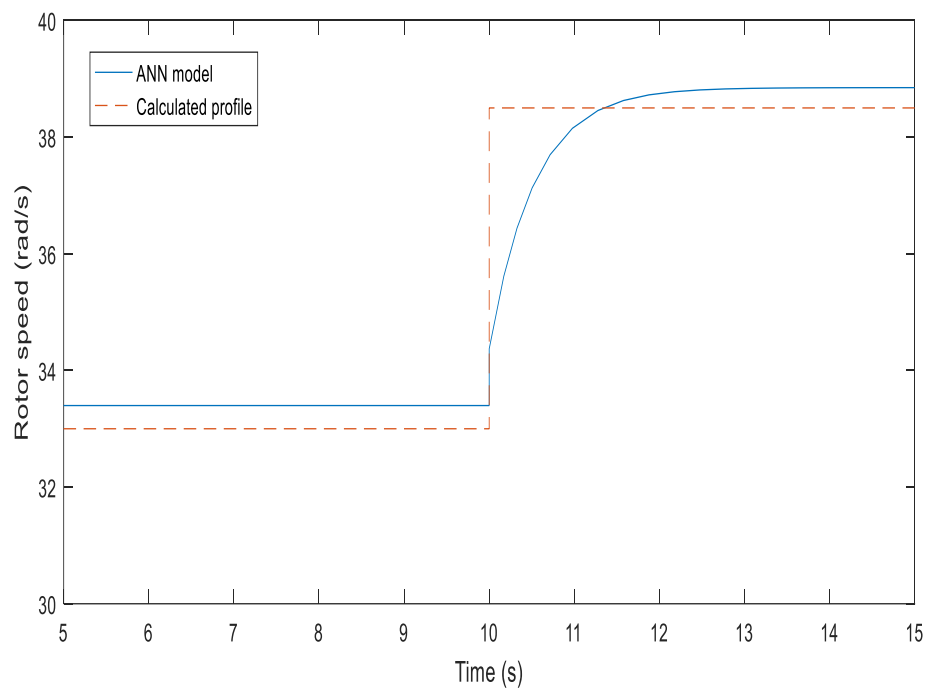


Figure 7. Rotor speed

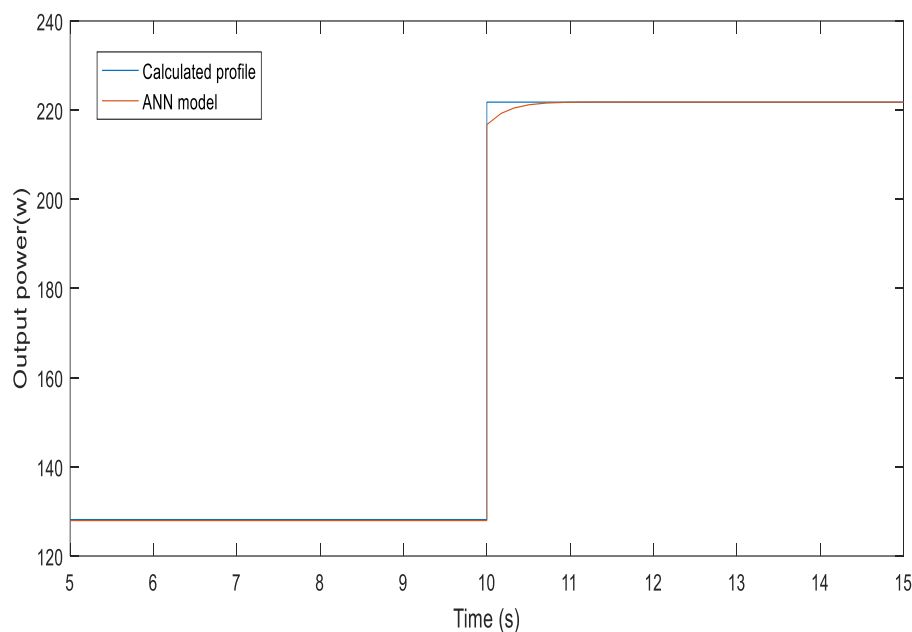


Figure 8. The mechanical power of the wind turbine

The analysis of the simulation results, as illustrated in the preceding figures, clearly highlights the robustness and effectiveness of the proposed neural network-based MPPT controller under dynamic wind conditions. One of the key aspects contributing to this performance is the strategic use of Per Unit (PU) normalization in the preparation of input and output data for the neural network. This normalization technique plays a crucial role in improving the learning efficiency of the ANN by scaling input variables to a consistent range, typically between 0 and 1. As a result, it eliminates disparities in magnitude between variables, which often hinder the training process in conventional neural networks. This uniform scaling facilitates faster convergence during training, reduces the likelihood of local minima entrapment, and leads to more stable and accurate model optimization.

In addition to accelerating the training process, PU normalization significantly enhances the generalization capability of the neural model. By removing the dimensional dependencies tied to specific turbine parameters and absolute values, the trained ANN becomes more adaptable across various wind turbine designs and system configurations. This allows the developed controller to maintain optimal performance even when deployed on turbines with different ratings or characteristics, without requiring retraining or extensive model adjustments. Such adaptability is particularly advantageous in real-world applications, where turbine models and operating conditions vary widely.

Furthermore, the use of PU-based data mitigates the risk of the ANN overfitting to the specificities of raw input data. Raw data often contain system-specific characteristics or anomalies that do not generalize well. PU normalization abstracts these specifics, allowing the ANN to learn the underlying physical relationships rather than memorizing details irrelevant to broader application contexts. Consequently, the dependency on massive datasets—commonly referred to as Big Data—is significantly reduced. Unlike traditional approaches that may require vast quantities of diverse training data to ensure reliable generalization, the proposed method achieves high accuracy and robustness using a relatively smaller and more compact dataset. This reduction in data requirements translates to lower computational load and reduced storage demands, which is particularly important for embedded systems and real-time applications where resources are limited.

Overall, the integration of PU-based data in ANN training presents a multifaceted advantage. It not only improves model training dynamics and performance but also ensures scalability, transferability, and computational efficiency. These benefits collectively position the proposed ANN-based MPPT controller as a viable and intelligent solution for modern wind energy systems, supporting the advancement of clean and efficient renewable energy technologies.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, we have developed and implemented a maximum power point tracking (MPPT) controller based on artificial neural network (ANN) techniques, specifically designed to predict the rotational speed in per unit (PU) of a wind turbine. This predicted speed is then used to determine the optimal operating point, thereby maximizing the extraction of available wind energy under varying wind conditions.

The simulation results confirm the effectiveness and robustness of the proposed ANN-based controller. Compared to conventional MPPT methods, the neural controller significantly enhances tracking performance, particularly by reducing oscillations around the maximum power point and ensuring faster dynamic response. Moreover, the use of per unit (PU) normalization improves the learning efficiency of the neural network, making it more suitable for generalization across various wind turbine models and system configurations.

Overall, the proposed approach offers a promising solution for intelligent control in wind energy systems. Its adaptability, predictive capability, and improved performance make it a valuable contribution to the ongoing development of more efficient and resilient renewable energy technologies. Future work may involve experimental validation and real-time implementation of the proposed controller on physical wind energy systems.

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