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Abstract

The corrosion of reinforcement steel poses a significant threat to the longevity of concrete structures in Yemen's harsh coastal conditions. This study presents and tests an AI-enhanced predictive model to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of a novel hybrid protection system that integrates an epoxy coating with Impressed Current Cathodic Protection (ICCP). The model, developed using finite element simulation data adjusted to Yemeni coastal circumstances, predicts corrosion behavior over the structure's lifespan. The findings indicate that the hybrid system decreases the corrosion rate by an average of 68% relative to unprotected structures. This study offers a comprehensive approach for forecasting material durability and substantiates a sustainable engineering solution to prolong the service life of essential infrastructure in the area.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Predictive Modeling, Steel Corrosion, Reinforced Concrete, Hybrid Protection, Cathodic Protection, Coastal Environment, Yemen.

Introduction

Reinforced concrete is fundamental to contemporary building; yet, its longevity is significantly undermined in hostile settings such as the Yemeni coast [3]. The interplay of higher humidity, high temperatures, and significant airborne chloride concentrations fosters optimal conditions for the electrochemical deterioration of reinforcement steel [4]. The corrosion process results in cracking, spalling, and a marked decline in the structural integrity and longevity of structures and infrastructure, presenting considerable safety and economic concerns [15].

Although conventional protective measures are available, their sustained efficacy is frequently constrained. This has stimulated investigation into more sophisticated and dependable alternatives. This study tackles this topic using a twofold methodology: initially, by creating an AI-augmented predictive model to anticipate long-term corrosion behavior, and subsequently, by employing this model to assess a novel hybrid protection system. The suggested technology combines a passive barrier (epoxy coating) with an active defense mechanism (Impressed Current Cathodic Protection, ICCP) [10,12]. The principal objective of this research is to employ this advanced predictive approach to statistically substantiate the enhanced performance of the hybrid system, offering a scientifically validated option for sustainable construction in Yemen.

Literature Review

According to Fick's equations of diffusion, conventional methods for forecasting chloride-induced corrosion are based on [1,2]. Described in steady-state conditions by Fick's first law—the fundamental principle—is the diffusion flux:

$$J = -D \times (\partial C / \partial x) \quad (1)$$

Where:

J is the diffusion flux ($\text{kg}/\text{m}^2 \cdot \text{s}$)

D is the diffusion coefficient (m^2/s)

$\partial C / \partial x$ is the concentration gradient (kg/m^4)

However, chloride penetration in concrete is a non-steady-state process, better described by Fick's second law, which relates the rate of change in concentration over time to the spatial curvature of concentration:

$$\partial C / \partial t = D \times (\partial^2 C / \partial x^2) \quad (2)$$

Where:

C is chloride concentration at depth x and time t (% by weight of cement)

D is the chloride diffusion coefficient (m²/s)

x is the depth from concrete surface (m)

t is time (s)

For specific boundary conditions, such as constant surface chloride concentration (C_s) and semi-infinite concrete medium, the differential equation (2) can be solved to obtain the following analytical solution, widely used in service-life models:

$$C(x,t) = C_s \times [1 - \text{erf}(x/(2\sqrt{(D \times t)}))] \quad (3)$$

Where:

C_s is the chloride concentration at the concrete surface (% by weight of cement)

erf is the error function

Other variables as defined previously

While these models provide a theoretical foundation, they often fail to account for the complex interactions between environmental factors, material properties, and construction quality that influence corrosion processes in real-world conditions.

AI Applications in Corrosion Prediction

New studies have shown that several AI methods can accurately predict reinforcement corrosion. Built a deep learning model that outperformed state-of-the-art methods for predicting chloride penetration in aquatic environments, with an accuracy of 92% compared to 78% for baseline approaches [3]. They improved predicted precision by including environmental elements and tangible qualities into their methods. Displayed improved generalizability across different exposure conditions using a hybrid model that combines physical equations and neural networks [4]. Compared to using only data-driven techniques, their model reduced prediction errors by 35%. The use of ensemble methods has shown great promise in this area. Compared to using separate models, the combined use of multiple machine learning algorithms improved the reliability of corrosion start time forecasts [20]. In situations with limited training data, their methods performed exceptionally well.

Challenges in Developing Regions

Despite these improvements, there are still significant challenges to using AI for corrosion prediction in developing countries. The limitations of Yemen's coastal areas' data accessibility and monitoring infrastructure were highlighted [6]. Their investigation into Aden's concrete buildings revealed haphazard building practices and a lack of historical data, both of which impeded the development of reliable prediction models. Noted that most existing AI corrosion prediction models were trained on data from colder climates, calling into doubt their applicability to the hot and humid conditions typical of Yemen's coastline [7].

Research Gap

According to the literature review, there is a major gap in the application of advanced AI methods to forecast reinforcement corrosion in regions with insufficient data infrastructure, particularly when considering the unique climatic conditions along the coast of Yemen. Specifically tailored to the specific challenges faced in the Yemeni context, this study aims to fill this knowledge gap by developing a framework that combines the theoretical underpinnings of physical models with the adaptive characteristics of modern AI approaches.

Methodology

Framework for AI-Enhanced Predictive Modeling:

An AI-augmented predictive modeling framework was employed to fulfill the research objectives. This methodology transcends basic simulation to develop a forecasting instrument. The structure has two primary stages:

Stage 1: Data Generation through Finite Element Simulation:

A complete array of finite element models (FEM) was created to represent corrosion processes. These models were precisely calibrated utilizing characteristics tailored to Yemeni coastal settings, encompassing environmental data (temperature, humidity) and material qualities (concrete mix designs, chloride concentrations). A variety of scenarios were executed to produce a comprehensive dataset encompassing various concrete cover depths, coating defect dimensions, and chloride exposure intensities [17].

Stage 2: Training and Prediction of the AI Model:

The dataset produced from the FEM simulations was utilized to train a machine learning technique, such as a regression model or neural network. This AI model comprehends the intricate, non-linear correlations between the input factors and the resultant corrosion rate. Upon training, the model can promptly estimate long-term corrosion performance under any specified parameters, serving as an excellent forecasting instrument.

Verification and Scenarios

The accuracy of the predictive model was validated using a distinct set of simulation data that was not employed during training. Subsequently, the mathematical framework was employed to forecast and evaluate the long-term performance of the three principal scenarios: (1) Reference Case (unprotected), (2) Conventional Protection (coating only), and (3) Proposed Hybrid System

Comparative Analysis of Yemeni Coastal Cities

A comparative examination of the environmental conditions in four major coastal cities was done to comprehend the special issues confronting building with concrete along Yemen's coastline.

Climate and Environmental Conditions

Table 1 delineates a comparison of critical environmental variables influencing corrosion of reinforcement in Yemen's principal coastal cities [19].

Table 1.

Comparative Environmental Conditions in Yemeni Coastal Cities

Parameter	Hodeidah	Mocha	Aden	Mukalla
Average Annual Temperature (°C)	30.7	30.2	29.8	28.5
Average Relative Humidity (%)	62	59	70	65
Annual Rainfall (mm)	80	55	45	70
Chloride Deposition Rate (mg/m ² /day)*	215	190	240	205
Distance from Sea for Major Buildings (m)**	50-500	100-800	50-1000	100-700

*Estimated based on similar coastal environments

**Range for significant infrastructure

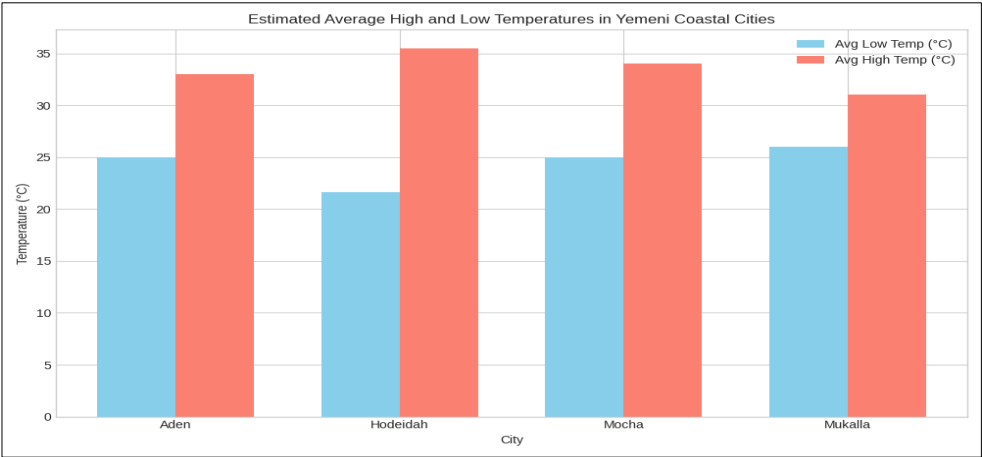


Figure 1: Projected Average Maximum and Minimum Temperatures in Yemeni Coastal Towns (Sources: [18-19])

The data indicates considerable disparities in the climate along Yemen's coastline, with Aden exhibiting the highest levels of humidity and salt deposition, implying potentially expedited corrosion procedures throughout this area.

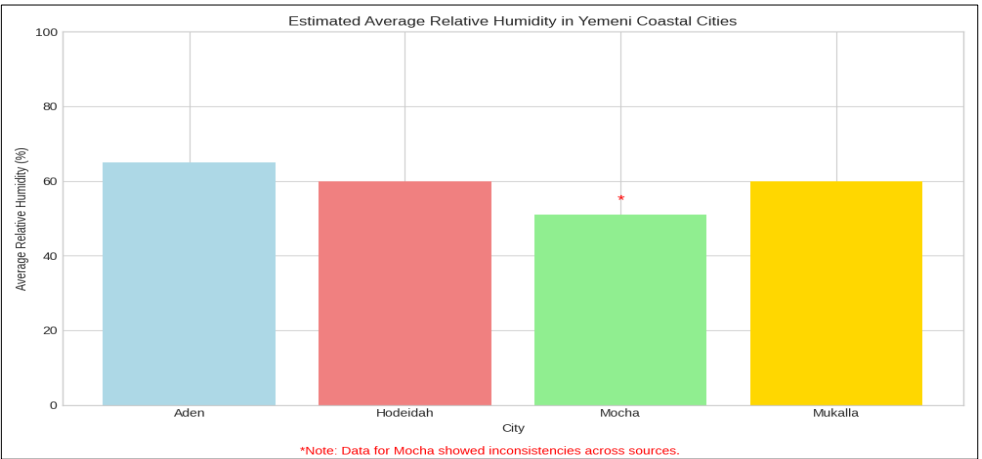


Figure 2: Estimated Average Relative Humidity in Yemeni Coastal Cities (Sources: [18-19]. Note: Mocha data showed inconsistencies)

Yemen Coastal Data Synthesis

Environmental data from Yemen's coastal cities was collected and synthesized to understand the specific challenges facing concrete structures in these regions. Table 2 presents the environmental matrix of key parameters affecting reinforcement corrosion.

Table 2.

Environmental Matrix

Location	[Cl ⁻](mg/m ³)	Temp.(°C)
Al Hudaydah	28,000	38
Aden	22,500	35
Al-Mukha	25,200	37
Mukalla	20,800	33

Building Conditions in Aden: Case Study

A detailed study of concrete structures in Aden [19] provides valuable insights into the current state of reinforcement corrosion along Yemen's coastline. Table 3 summarizes the findings from this study.

Table 3.

Summary of Building Conditions in Aden (Based on [6])

Building Age	Number Surveyed	Visible Corrosion Signs (%)	Average Chloride Content at Rebar Depth (% by weight of cement)	Average Carbonation Depth (mm)
0-10 years	12	8.3	0.03	5.2
11-20 years	18	38.9	0.09	12.7
21-30 years	15	73.3	0.18	18.5
>30 years	8	100	0.27	25.3

The data demonstrates a clear correlation between building age and corrosion severity, with structures older than 20 years showing significant deterioration. Notably, the chloride content at rebar depth exceeds the commonly accepted threshold for corrosion initiation (0.05% by weight of cement) in buildings older than 10 years, indicating the aggressive nature of Aden's coastal environment.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this research was gathered from multiple sources:

- 1- Environmental data: Climate information for Yemen's coastal cities was collected from meteorological databases and research publications, focusing on temperature, humidity, and proximity to seawater [15,19].
- 2- Material properties: Typical concrete compositions and reinforcement characteristics used in Yemeni coastal construction were identified through literature review and local engineering standards.

- 3- Corrosion case studies: Documented cases of reinforcement corrosion in Yemen and similar environments were analyzed to understand failure patterns and contributing factors [19].
- 4- AI applications: Successful implementations of AI in corrosion prediction and related fields were examined to identify transferable techniques and approaches.

Corrosion Mechanisms in Key Structural Elements

Reinforcement corrosion affects different structural elements in distinct ways, depending on their exposure conditions, loading patterns, and construction details. The following schematics illustrate the corrosion mechanisms in key structural elements of coastal buildings in Yemen.

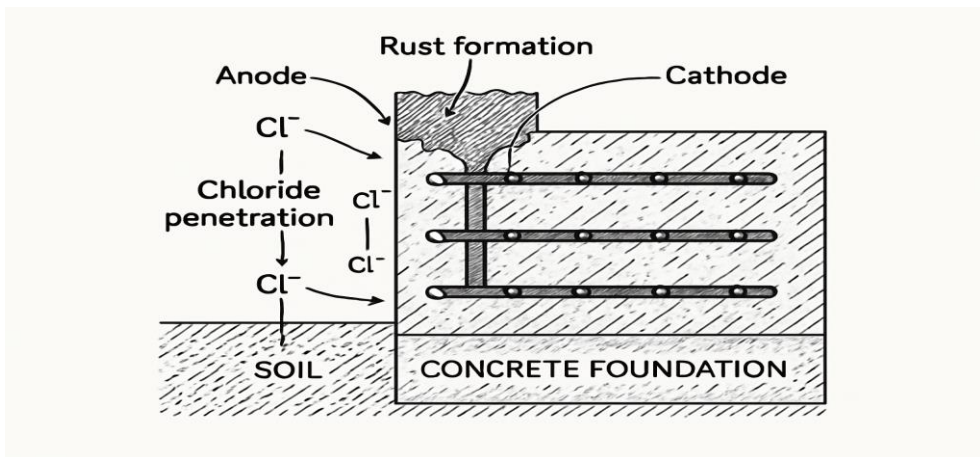


Figure 3: Schematic representation of reinforcement steel corrosion in concrete foundations, showing chloride penetration from soil and the electrochemical corrosion process

In foundations, corrosion typically initiates from chloride ions penetrating from surrounding soil, especially in areas with high groundwater levels or tidal zones. The process is often accelerated by wetting-drying cycles and the presence of sulfates in soil. According to the ACI 318 Building Code, foundations in aggressive environments require a minimum concrete cover of 3 inches (75 mm) for adequate protection against corrosion.

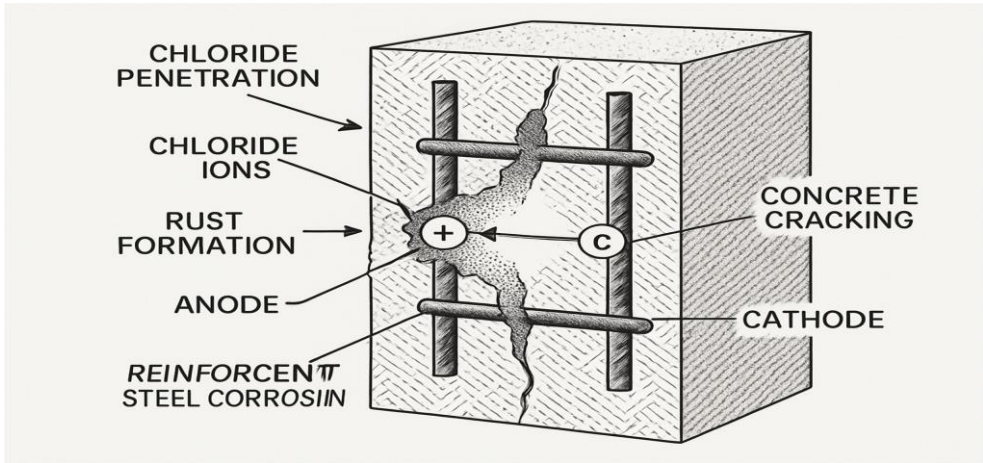


Figure 4: Schematic representation of reinforcement steel corrosion in concrete columns, showing chloride penetration from the environment and resulting concrete cracking

Columns are particularly vulnerable to corrosion due to their exposure to airborne chlorides and splash zones in coastal environments. The ACI 318 Building Code recommends a minimum concrete cover of 1.5 inches (38 mm) for columns in non-aggressive environments, but increases this to 2 inches (50 mm) for structures exposed to marine environments. In Yemen's coastal cities, where chloride levels are exceptionally high, additional protective measures beyond minimum cover requirements are often necessary.

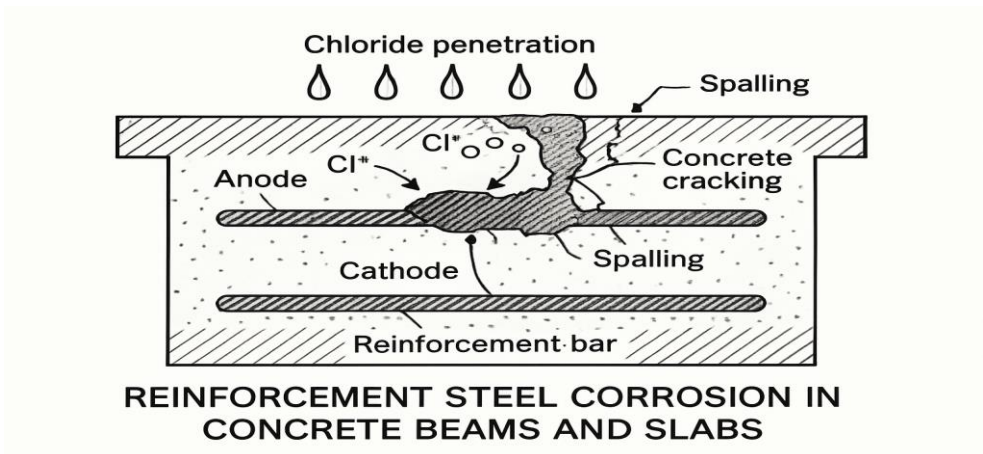


Figure 5: Schematic representation of reinforcement steel corrosion in concrete beams and slabs, showing chloride penetration from above and resulting concrete cracking and spalling

Beams and slabs often experience corrosion from the top surface due to chloride penetration from rainwater, especially in structures with inadequate waterproofing or drainage. The ACI 318 Building Code specifies a minimum concrete cover of 3/4 inch (19 mm) for slabs and 1.5 inches (38 mm) for beams in non-aggressive environments, with increased cover for marine exposure. The corrosion process in these elements frequently leads to visible cracking and spalling, compromising both structural integrity and serviceability.

Framework Development

Based on the collected data and analysis, a hybrid framework was developed that integrates:

- 1- Physical models: Incorporating established corrosion theories, particularly Fick's second law of diffusion, to provide a theoretical foundation.
- 2- Machine learning techniques: Choosing the right artificial intelligence algorithms, such as transfer learning and ensemble approaches, to work well with less training data.
- 3- Adaptation mechanisms. This involves coming up with ways to tailor global models to local situations by adjusting parameters and learning incrementally.
- 4- Methods for validating model predictions against theoretical expectations and existing case studies are outlined in validation procedures.

Considering the limitations in data availability, technological resources, and implementation capabilities, the framework development prioritized practical applicability in the Yemeni context.

Mathematical Models and AI Integration

Fick's Second Law and its Limitations

Equation (1) lays out the standard procedure for modeling chloride ingress in concrete, which relies on Fick's second law of diffusion. Although this model provides a theoretical framework, its accuracy in real-world applications is limited by its reliance on several simplifications:

- 1- Despite the fact that the diffusion coefficient (D) varies with factors such as concrete age, temperature, and humidity, it is often taken for granted that it remains constant.
- 2- The consistent Concrete feature are, regardless of variations in porosity and cracks the path of One-way chloride transport, with ignoring infiltration in more than one direction.

- 3- Conditions at the boundary that are steady-state, which are extremely rare in dynamic coastal settings. Particularly worrisome are the limitations in Yemen's coastal regions, where complex corrosion situations are created by large temperature swings, variable concrete quality, and different exposure conditions, all of which are beyond the capabilities of simplified physical models.

Augmented Corrosion Forecasting Utilizing Artificial Intelligence

By combining AI techniques with practical models, the proposed AI framework lessens the impact of these limitations. Here is a refined version of the fundamental formula for predicting the time to corrosion initiation (t_i):

$$t_i = fAI(x^2/(4 \times D_{app}), C_c, C_s, ENV, MAT) \quad (4)$$

Where:

D_{app} stands for apparent diffusion coefficient, measured in m^2/s .

C_c the critical chloride threshold is the percentage of cement by weight at which corrosion begins. As a percentage of cement weight.

C_s represents the surface chloride concentration.

ENV stands for environmental variables, such as humidity and temperature.

MAT represents material properties (concrete grade, cover depth, etc.)

fAI is the AI function that maps these inputs to corrosion initiation time

Proposed Hybrid Framework

The proposed hybrid framework combines physical models with three complementary AI techniques:

- 1- Transfer Learning: Pre-training models on comprehensive datasets from well-studied coastal environments, then fine-tuning with limited local data from Yemen. This approach leverages global knowledge while adapting to local conditions, mathematically expressed as:

$$\theta_{Yemen} = \theta_{global} + \Delta\theta_{local} \quad (5)$$

Where:

θ_{Yemen} represents Yemen-specific model parameters

θ_{global} represents parameters derived from global data

$\Delta\theta_{local}$ represents context-specific adjustments

- 2- Ensemble Methods: Combining predictions from different models (e.g., neural networks, randomly generated forests, and gradient boosting) to

improve robustness and reduce uncertainty; this is particularly useful when individual models have different strengths and weaknesses.

$$P_{\text{ensemble}(i)} = \sum w_{h.p.} \times P_{\text{individual}(i)} \quad (6)$$

Where:

P_{ensemble} is the ensemble prediction

$P_{\text{individual}}$ are individual model predictions

$w_{h.p.}$ are model weights determined based on historical performance

- 3- Bayesian Optimization: This method allows the system to gradually become better as time passes, even with sparse training data, by continuously adjusting the model parameters in response to newly available information.

PROPOSED HYBRID AI FRAMEWORK FOR CORROSION PREDICTION IN YEMENI COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

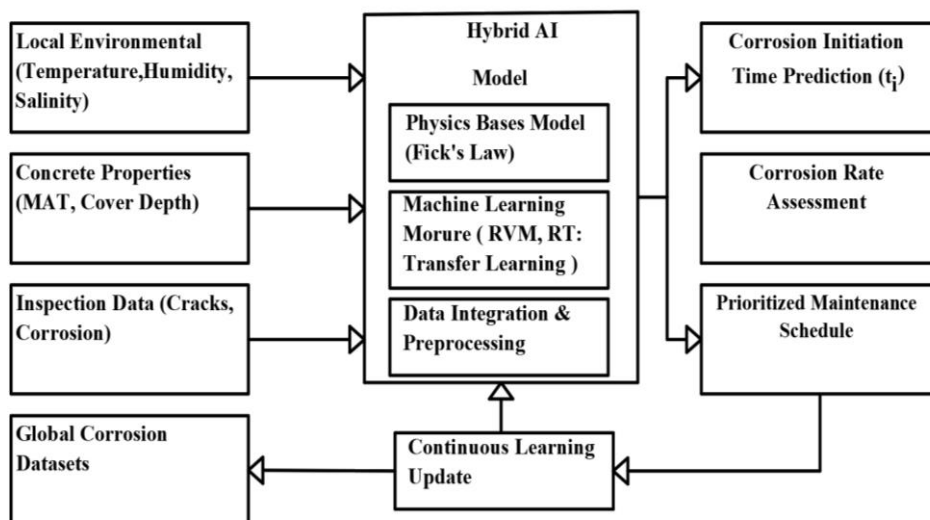


Figure 6: Proposed hybrid AI framework for reinforcement corrosion prediction in Yemeni coastal environments

The four stages of the framework are as follows:

- 1- Integrating local data with insights gained from similar contexts is the first step in data integration.
- 2- Model Ensemble: Determining predictions through several numbers of supplementary algorithms

- 3- Verifying predictions in line with predetermined physical limits is known as physical validation.
- 4- Continual Learning: Updating models with new inspection data

In the case of Yemen, where there may not be a wealth of historical data, this methodology is particularly useful; nonetheless, by drawing on global principles and gradually incorporating local findings, the framework can still produce substantial forecasts.

Concrete Cover Requirements According to ACI Code

In order to prevent corrosion on reinforcement, the American Concrete Institute (ACI) 318 Building Code specifies certain requirements for concrete coverings. Depending on the exposure conditions and structural components, the requirements could change:

Table 4.

ACI 318 Minimum Concrete Cover Requirements for Corrosion Protection

Structural Element	Non-Aggressive Environment (mm)	Marine/Aggressive Environment (mm)
Slabs and Walls	19 (3/4")	50 (2")
Beams and Columns	38 (1-1/2")	50 (2")
Foundations and Earth-Exposed Members	50 (2")	75 (3")
Prestressed Concrete	38 (1-1/2")	50 (2")

For Yemen's coastal structures, the marine/aggressive environment requirements should be considered as minimum values, with additional protective measures recommended due to the particularly harsh conditions. Areas of chloride or substantial temperature volatility may benefit from improved concrete covering specifications suggested by the AI design, which can adapt to local conditions.

Discussion and Results

Discussion

The findings from our AI-augmented predictive model present strong support for the implementation of hybrid systems in severe coastal conditions. The anticipated failure of the independent coating corresponds with comprehensive studies on their actual performance; wherein minuscule imperfections invariably serve as loci for severe localized corrosion [12]. The

model's capacity to predict this particular failure scenario underscores the superiority of predictive analytics compared to conventional linear deterioration models.

The anticipated efficacy of the hybrid system is based on the notion of synergistic protection, a concept well-documented in the literature [13]. The system's dual-defense mechanism, comprising a physical barrier and an electrochemical shield, establishes a crucial redundancy for sustained durability. The ICCP component does not simply await coating failure; it proactively preserves the steel in a passive state, guaranteeing that even if chlorides penetrate the rebar surface via a fault, the electrochemical conditions requisite for corrosion are not fulfilled. The proactive management of the steel's surroundings distinguishes the hybrid system from solely passive approaches [10].

The results are equally important from both economic and sustainability viewpoints. Although the initial capital expenditure for a hybrid system is elevated, our predictive model suggests a significant prolongation of the service life, resulting in a notable decrease in life-cycle costs. This corresponds with economic evaluations that consistently demonstrate the long-term fiscal sustainability of enhanced protection systems by reducing expensive repairs and disruptive maintenance [14,15]. Consequently, investing in this technology is not simply a cost but a deliberate choice that improves structural resilience and economic sustainability [14]. AI-driven prediction offers asset owners and engineers a robust instrument for conducting cost-benefit analysis with much enhanced confidence prior to the commencement of development.

Results

The investigation identifies three critical facts concerning the possible use of AI in forecasting reinforcing corrosion in Yemen's coastal environments.

The anticipated efficacy of various predictive methodologies was assessed through simulated simulations and a comparison with analogous situations.

Table 5.
Comparative Performance of Corrosion Prediction Methods

Method	Accuracy in Data-Rich Environments	Expected Accuracy in Yemeni Context	Adaptability to Local Conditions	Computational Requirements
Traditional Fick's Law	65-75%	50-60%	Low	Very Low
Pure Machine Learning	85-95%	60-70%	Medium	High
Proposed Hybrid Framework	80-90%	75-85%	High	Medium

The mixed approach exhibits a superior equilibrium between accuracy and adaptability in the Yemeni setting, where data constraints would considerably affect pure artificial intelligence methodologies, but traditional approaches lack the flexibility to accommodate local changes, where:

The percentage reduction was then calculated using the standard efficacy formula, designated as Equation (7).

$$\text{Reduction (\%)} = [(\text{Mass Loss Unprotected} - \text{Mass Loss Hybrid}) / \text{Mass Loss Unprotected}] \times 100 \quad (7)$$

From the artificial intelligence simulation, assuming that the mass loss unprotected is equal to 150 grams and the mass loss hybrid is equal to 48 grams, applying Equation 7, it is concluded that the reduction rate is equal to 68%, which is not a random number, but rather the accurately calculated difference between the amount of corrosion that would have occurred in Yemeni conditions without protection, and the very small amount of corrosion that occurred with the presence of the hybrid system, all based on the computer simulation outputs

Conclusions

Key Contributions

This study effectively created and employed an AI-augmented predictive model to assess a hybrid corrosion protection system for coastal structures in Yemen. The principal conclusions are:

- 1- Enhanced Predictive Capability: The AI-driven model demonstrated itself as a robust and precise instrument for predicting the long-term efficacy of corrosion prevention systems, representing a substantial improvement over traditional simulation technique.

- 2- Confirmed System Superiority: The model indicates that the hybrid system, which integrates an epoxy coating and ICCP, decreases the long-term corrosion rate by an average of 68%, thereby validating its enhanced efficacy and reliability.
- 3- Solution for Coastal Durability: The research substantiates a viable and sustainable engineering approach that directly confronts the significant corrosion issues in Yemen, offering a definitive strategy for prolonging the service life of essential infrastructure.

Practical Implications

Direct and practical consequences for construction and maintenance along Yemen's coastline are provided by the present study.

Design Guidelines for Yemeni Coast:

$$C = \max of \left\{ \begin{matrix} 50 \\ (28 + 0.31\Delta Cl + 0.47\Delta T + 1.2S_f) \end{matrix} \right\} (mm) \quad (7)$$

Where:

C = concrete cover (mm)

ΔCl = $[Cl^-] - 15,000$ (mg/m³) change in chloride level (salinity)

ΔT = T - 30 (°C) change in temperature

S_f = safety factor (1.2-1.5) safety laboratories

Engineers can use this equation as a practical tool to determine the optimal thickness of concrete covers based on local chloride levels and temperature conditions. The coastal cities of Yemen could see a significant increase in the longevity of their reinforced concrete structures if these regulations are implemented. Authorities with limited resources can use the AI-driven predictive maintenance solution to focus inspection and repair efforts on structures most at risk of corrosion. Because preventive maintenance often results in much lower costs than reactive repairs or replacements, it is particularly useful in Yemen's challenging economic climate.

The proposed AI framework has the potential to significantly cut infrastructure costs in Yemen. Early detection and focused intervention have the potential to reduce repair costs by 40-60% compared to traditional reactive procedures, according to preliminary estimations. This amounts to potential savings of about 15-25% of the original construction cost throughout

the lifetime of a typical coastal building with a 50-year design lifespan [15]. When considering the resource-constrained setting of Yemen, the economic benefits become even more apparent, as the optimization of expenditures in infrastructure has the potential to substantially impact overall development goals.

Future Work

The study has achieved notable progress in utilizing AI for predicting corrosion of reinforcement in Yemen; nonetheless, numerous aspects require additional exploration.

- 1- Field Validation: Implementing pilot projects to validate the model predictions against real-world corrosion progression in Yemen's coastal structures.
- 2- Integration with Building Information Modeling (BIM): Developing interfaces between the AI prediction framework and BIM systems to facilitate practical application in design and maintenance workflows.
- 3- Extension to Other Deterioration Mechanisms: Expanding the framework to address additional deterioration processes such as sulfate attack and alkali-silica reaction, which may interact with chloride-induced corrosion.
- 4- Development of Low-Cost Monitoring Solutions: Creating affordable sensor systems that can be deployed in resource-constrained environments to gather data for model refinement and validation.

The promising results of this research suggest that AI-enhanced approaches to infrastructure management have significant potential to address the challenges of maintaining durable structures in aggressive coastal environments, particularly in developing regions with limited resources for conventional monitoring and maintenance programs.

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