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Cloud Computing and Machine Learning-Driven Security Optimization and Threat Detection Mechanisms for Telecom Operator Networks

Guoli Ying [1,*]

[1] Carnegie Mellon University, Mountain View, California, United States
* Correspondence: Guoli Ying, Carnegie Mellon University, Mountain View, California, United States

Abstract: Telecom operator networks are increasingly migrating toward cloud-native architectures enabled by network function virtualization (NFV) and software-defined networking (SDN). This transformation brings flexibility but also exposes new security challenges such as virtualization vulnerabilities, multi-tenant isolation, and dynamic threat propagation. This study proposes a machine learning-driven security optimization framework that integrates adaptive threat detection with reinforcement learning-based policy control. The framework formulates network security management as a multi-objective optimization problem balancing detection accuracy, response latency, and resource efficiency. A layered architecture enables dynamic coordination among detection, orchestration, and policy modules, supporting intelligent and self-adaptive defense in telecom environments. Simulation-based validation verifies the framework's logical feasibility and adaptability, providing a theoretical foundation for intelligent and automated network protection.

Keywords: telecom network security; cloud-native architecture; machine learning; reinforcement learning; security optimization; adaptive orchestration

1. Introduction

In the era of rapid development of cloud computing and virtualization, telecom operator networks are undergoing a profound structural transformation. Traditional hardware-centric and closed network architectures are evolving toward open, software-defined, and cloud-based systems. Network Function Virtualization (NFV) and Software-Defined Networking (SDN) have become the technological foundations of this transformation. Meanwhile, the high-speed transmission and massive connectivity demands of 5G-and the anticipated evolution toward 6G-are accelerating the adoption of cloud-native network architectures. However, as network complexity and data traffic continue to grow exponentially, the corresponding security challenges have become increasingly severe and difficult to manage.

The security risks in cloud-based telecom networks mainly manifest in three dimensions. First, multi-tenant security isolation has emerged as a critical issue: resource sharing among virtual networks and service instances introduces potential risks of lateral movement and privilege escalation. Second, vulnerabilities in virtualization infrastructures expose new attack surfaces, including virtual-machine escape, virtual-switch manipulation, and control-plane hijacking. Third, security threats within the 5G core network are becoming more intelligent, large-scale, and multidimensional, as seen in signaling storms, DDoS flooding, and malicious slice-management attacks. Moreover, as cloud platforms expand in scale and complexity, traditional static, rule-based security mechanisms can no longer provide sufficient protection or real-time adaptability in dynamic and heterogeneous environments [1].

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Although significant progress has been made in network-security research, existing approaches still exhibit several limitations. Most optimization frameworks and intrusion-detection algorithms have been designed for generic Internet or cloud environments, rather than for the telecom industry's high-reliability, high-real-time, and large-scale concurrent network conditions. Consequently, the telecom sector requires a new security paradigm that combines adaptivity, intelligence, and multi-objective optimization, enabling a transition from passive response to proactive defense.

To address these gaps, this study proposes a cloud computing- and machine learning-driven security optimization and threat-detection framework tailored for telecom operator networks. The proposed mechanism integrates deep learning models to identify complex threat patterns, employs reinforcement learning for adaptive security-policy optimization, and leverages cloud-resource orchestration to enable dynamic deployment and elastic protection of security functions. The primary research objectives are as follows:

(1) To achieve high-precision detection of multi-dimensional threats in telecom environments;

(2) To construct an adaptive security-policy optimization model; and

(3) To minimize response latency and system overhead while ensuring compliance with service-level agreement (SLA) requirements.

The main innovations and contributions of this research are summarized as follows:

(1) A multi-objective security optimization framework, capable of dynamically balancing detection accuracy, response latency, and resource utilization;

(2) A deep-learning-based threat-detection model, which enhances the recognition of complex telecom-traffic features by integrating temporal and graph-structured data representations;

(3) A reinforcement-learning-driven adaptive strategy mechanism, enabling real-time policy adjustment and autonomous decision-making in multi-tenant cloud environments.

2. Related Work

2.1. Cloudification and Virtualization Technologies in Telecom Networks

The digital transformation of telecom operator networks has entered a new stage characterized by large-scale cloudification, virtualization, and intelligent automation. Unlike generic data centers or Internet-scale networks that primarily pursue traffic optimization and predictive scheduling, telecom networks demand industry-specific security optimization to ensure service continuity, reliability, and compliance with strict Service Level Agreements (SLAs). This sector-oriented distinction makes telecom cloud environments fundamentally different in both architectural design and security objectives.

Network Function Virtualization (NFV) and Software-Defined Networking (SDN) form the technological foundation of this transformation. NFV replaces hardware-dependent network functions with software-based Virtual Network Functions (VNFs) deployed on general-purpose servers. This approach enhances flexibility and scalability, allowing security mechanisms to be deployed and adjusted dynamically based on real-time threat conditions. However, in multi-tenant telecom environments, NFV also introduces new attack vectors-such as inter-tenant data leakage, virtual machine escape, and unauthorized orchestration access-that directly affect the reliability and isolation of core operations [2].

Software-Defined Networking (SDN) complements NFV by providing centralized control and programmable management across complex infrastructures. SDN controllers enable real-time traffic steering, resource allocation, and policy enforcement through software-defined interfaces. Compared with static configurations, SDN allows adaptive security routing and policy reconfiguration in response to evolving threats. Nevertheless,

its centralized control logic can become a single point of failure, requiring additional redundancy, trust validation, and anomaly monitoring to maintain operational stability.

The adoption of cloud-native architectures further extends this evolution. Principles such as microservices, container orchestration, and continuous deployment enable fine-grained control of virtualized security functions. Firewalls, intrusion detection systems (IDS), and threat analysis modules can now be dynamically instantiated through platforms like Kubernetes, creating elastic and self-healing security frameworks aligned with 5G and future 6G developments. Yet, these advantages come at the cost of expanded attack surfaces, including risks in service-mesh communication, container isolation, and API exposure [3].

As telecom networks become increasingly virtualized and cloud-native, their security management must evolve from static configuration to intelligent orchestration. The integration of machine learning into these environments offers a promising pathway to achieving real-time detection, predictive defense, and self-optimizing security policies-topics explored in the following section.

2.2. Machine Learning-Based Network Security Research

Machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL) have become essential components in modern network security research, offering data-driven methods to detect, classify, and respond to increasingly complex cyber threats. Unlike traditional signature- or rule-based detection systems that rely on predefined patterns, ML models can learn and adapt from large-scale network data, identifying unknown or evolving attacks in real time. Within telecom operator networks, the application of ML is particularly significant due to the high traffic volume, heterogeneous data sources, and stringent service-level requirements that define this industry [4].

Early ML-based intrusion detection systems primarily utilized shallow models such as decision trees, support vector machines (SVM), and random forests to identify anomalies in traffic flows. While effective in limited scenarios, these methods struggled to generalize across the dynamic, high-throughput, and multi-domain environments of telecom infrastructures. The emergence of deep learning models-such as convolutional neural networks (CNN) and recurrent neural networks (RNN/LSTM)-has greatly improved spatiotemporal feature extraction, allowing automated identification of DDoS attacks, signaling storms, and control-plane anomalies with higher accuracy and adaptability [5].

More recently, graph neural networks (GNN) have been employed to capture topological dependencies within telecom network structures. Since telecom traffic inherently exhibits graph-like connectivity linking users, base stations, and service nodes, GNN-based methods can effectively identify coordinated or distributed attacks by modeling inter-node relationships. In parallel, federated learning has been introduced to facilitate collaborative threat detection across operators or regions while maintaining data confidentiality-an essential requirement under strict regulatory and privacy frameworks.

Beyond detection, ML techniques are increasingly applied to security optimization and policy decision-making, aligning with the operational needs of telecom networks. Reinforcement learning (RL) and deep reinforcement learning (DRL) have demonstrated strong potential in automating defense strategy selection under multi-objective constraints such as latency, resource utilization, and reliability. RL-driven systems can dynamically allocate virtualized security functions, reconfigure firewall rules, and reroute traffic in response to emerging threats. These adaptive mechanisms shift telecom security management from static rule enforcement toward autonomous, self-learning protection capable of real-time adjustment and continuous improvement [6].

Despite these advancements, several challenges persist. The heterogeneity of telecom data, the imbalance between benign and malicious samples, and the requirement for low-latency inference remain major barriers to practical deployment. Furthermore, the

explainability and auditability of ML-driven decisions are increasingly critical in regulated telecom operations. To address these limitations, current research emphasizes hybrid learning frameworks, online incremental adaptation, and interpretable AI models, enhancing both transparency and operational sustainability.

As ML-driven security research continues to mature, its focus is gradually expanding from detection accuracy toward end-to-end optimization of defense strategies and resource orchestration. These developments provide the technical foundation for the next research direction-network security optimization mechanisms-where dynamic resource scheduling, response optimization, and policy self-adaptation become central to achieving intelligent telecom network defense [7].

2.3. Network Security Optimization Mechanisms

Network security optimization has become a critical research direction in the context of telecom operator networks, where service continuity, large-scale connectivity, and real-time responsiveness are essential. Unlike general-purpose cloud or enterprise networks, telecom infrastructures require security mechanisms that can dynamically balance detection accuracy, response latency, and resource utilization under stringent Quality of Service (QoS) and Service Level Agreement (SLA) constraints. Recent studies have therefore focused on three major areas: security resource scheduling, attack response optimization, and policy self-adaptation.

Security Resource Scheduling.

Efficient allocation and orchestration of security resources are fundamental to achieving intelligent network protection in large-scale telecom systems. Traditional static deployment models often result in resource underutilization or delayed mitigation during high-traffic attack periods. To address this, researchers have proposed dynamic and predictive scheduling frameworks that leverage machine learning and cloud orchestration technologies. These frameworks allocate virtual security functions-such as intrusion detection, traffic filtering, and firewalling-based on real-time traffic analytics and threat assessments. In telecom environments, resource scheduling must also account for multi-domain orchestration, coordinating between the core network, access network, and edge clouds to ensure consistent security coverage and minimal latency across geographically distributed nodes.

1) Attack Response Optimization.

Timely and accurate response to security incidents is vital for maintaining telecom network stability. Conventional response mechanisms often rely on manual intervention or pre-defined reaction rules, which cannot adapt to fast-evolving threats. Current research integrates reinforcement learning (RL) and optimization algorithms to automate incident response and minimize operational impact. RL-based systems can learn from historical threat patterns and automatically select effective mitigation strategies under varying conditions-for example, rerouting traffic during DDoS attacks, isolating compromised virtual machines, or reconfiguring access policies in near real time. Multi-objective optimization methods, such as genetic algorithms and Pareto-based models, are also employed to balance conflicting goals between performance degradation, cost, and security assurance [8].

2) Policy Self-Adaptation and Continuous Optimization.

Policy adaptability is another key element in telecom network security. Static rule sets or threshold-based controls are insufficient for handling the dynamic and heterogeneous nature of modern threats. Self-adaptive frameworks utilize feedback-driven learning and context-aware decision models to continuously adjust security policies. For example, deep reinforcement learning agents can fine-tune firewall parameters, allocate virtual network slices with adjusted isolation levels, or trigger automated policy revisions based on observed network behavior. These adaptive systems are further supported by closed-loop orchestration processes, where detection outcomes

feed back into orchestration layers (e.g., Kubernetes or OpenStack) to trigger automatic updates-forming a self-healing and self-optimizing defense cycle.

Recent advances have also emphasized federated and collaborative optimization, enabling multiple telecom operators or network domains to share anonymized threat intelligence. Such cooperation improves situational awareness and enhances the efficiency of distributed defense strategies without compromising data privacy regulations [9].

As the field evolves, research attention is shifting from isolated detection or reaction mechanisms toward integrated, cross-layer security optimization frameworks. However, despite these advancements, significant challenges remain-particularly the absence of high-reliability, real-time optimization models tailored specifically for telecom operator environments. These limitations are further analyzed in the following section.

2.4. Research Gap Analysis

Although substantial progress has been made in network virtualization, machine learning-driven threat detection, and adaptive security optimization, most existing studies have been developed for general-purpose Internet or cloud computing environments. While effective in enterprise or data-center contexts, these approaches fail to meet the stringent performance, reliability, and latency requirements of telecom operator networks.

First, most frameworks focus on traffic prediction, anomaly detection, or generic intrusion prevention without fully addressing the multi-layered, service-critical architecture of telecom systems. Telecom infrastructures integrate tightly coupled control and data planes, distributed edge computing nodes, and multi-tenant virtualized environments. The high degree of interdependence between these components creates unique security dynamics that general-purpose models cannot capture. Existing studies often neglect how protection mechanisms interact with telecom-specific orchestration layers-such as NFV MANO, SDN controllers, and 5G core network functions-resulting in limited adaptability and realism.

Second, there remains a significant deficiency in real-time, high-reliability security optimization mechanisms designed specifically for telecom operations. Conventional ML-based detection systems typically rely on offline training or batch inference, making them insufficiently responsive to fast-evolving network threats. Telecom environments, however, demand low-latency, self-adaptive defenses capable of dynamically reallocating security resources and reconfiguring protection strategies without compromising service continuity. The absence of time-critical optimization models continues to hinder large-scale deployment in production networks.

Third, existing studies rarely incorporate multi-objective optimization that simultaneously balances detection accuracy, system performance, and operational cost within SLA constraints. Ensuring network security in telecom environments cannot come at the expense of throughput, latency, or user experience. Nevertheless, most prior work optimizes detection metrics in isolation, neglecting the interplay between security efficiency and orchestration complexity.

Finally, the lack of collaborative and explainable security frameworks further limits the scalability and trustworthiness of current approaches. Telecom operators manage geographically distributed, vendor-diverse infrastructures that require transparent, interoperable, and federated mechanisms for cross-domain threat intelligence sharing. Without such collaboration, achieving coordinated and interpretable defense remains difficult.

Taken together, these challenges highlight the absence of a telecom-oriented, machine learning-driven security optimization framework that integrates cloud orchestration, adaptive policy control, and real-time threat mitigation. Addressing this

gap is essential to enable telecom operators to move from static, reactive defense models toward proactive, data-driven, and self-optimizing network security management.

3. System Architecture and Problem Formulation

3.1. System Architecture Overview

To address the complex and evolving security challenges faced by telecom operator networks, this study proposes a cloud computing-based intelligent security optimization architecture. The architecture integrates machine learning-driven detection, adaptive policy control, and dynamic orchestration into a unified framework designed for large-scale and real-time telecom environments. The proposed framework adopts a four-layer structure, consisting of the Data Layer, Control Layer, Service Layer, and Security Monitoring Layer. These layers form a closed-loop architecture that enables continuous monitoring, decision-making, and optimization of security operations.

1) Data Layer

The Data Layer serves as the foundation of the framework. It is responsible for the aggregation, preprocessing, and management of diverse network data, including traffic logs, signaling records, telemetry data, and user behavior information. This layer employs distributed data-processing frameworks such as Kafka, Hadoop, and Spark to handle massive telecom data streams efficiently. In addition, privacy-preserving mechanisms, such as anonymization and encryption, are incorporated to ensure compliance with telecom data protection standards.

2) Control Layer

The Control Layer provides the system's decision-making and orchestration capabilities. It integrates Software-Defined Networking (SDN) and Network Function Virtualization (NFV) controllers, which enable programmable control and real-time adjustment of security policies. This layer dynamically allocates virtualized security functions (VSFs)-such as firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and traffic filters-based on the detected threat level and current resource status. By maintaining a global view of network topology and resource distribution, the Control Layer ensures coordinated and adaptive orchestration across multiple domains.

3) Service Layer

The Service Layer supports telecom services and applications, including 5G core network functions, network slicing, and edge computing services. Its main role is to ensure service continuity and SLA compliance while interacting with the control plane for security optimization. Context-aware policy adjustments are executed at this level, allowing the system to balance between network performance and security assurance without service disruption.

4) Security Monitoring Layer

The Security Monitoring Layer represents the intelligence center of the framework. It hosts machine learning-based threat detection and policy optimization models, such as CNN, LSTM, and GNN architectures for anomaly detection, and reinforcement learning modules for adaptive decision-making.

Through a feedback-driven control loop, this layer continuously analyzes real-time network data, identifies potential intrusions, and recommends optimal mitigation strategies. The outcomes are transmitted back to the Control Layer, which executes orchestration commands to adjust security configurations dynamically.

To provide a clearer understanding of the responsibilities and interactions of each layer, Table 1 summarizes the core functions, key technologies, and security roles across the four-layer architecture proposed in this study.

Table 1. Functional Summary of Each Layer.

Layer	Core Function	Key Technologies	Security Role
Data Layer	Data aggregation and preprocessing	Kafka, Hadoop, Spark	Data collection and privacy protection
Control Layer	Network and resource orchestration	SDN, NFV, OpenFlow	Adaptive control and resource allocation
Service Layer	Telecom service management and SLA monitoring	5G Core, MEC, Service Mesh	Context-aware scheduling and isolation
Security Monitoring Layer	Intelligent detection and adaptive defense	CNN, LSTM, GNN, RL	Threat detection and policy optimization

Note: The table outlines the functional design and technological composition of the proposed multi-layer architecture for telecom network security optimization.

The proposed system architecture establishes a modular, feedback-driven, and self-adaptive security optimization framework tailored for telecom operator networks. Through the continuous interaction of the data, control, service, and security monitoring layers, network intelligence can dynamically collect, analyze, and act upon real-time information, thereby forming a robust foundation for subsequent modeling and optimization of telecom network security.

3.2. Threat Environment Analysis

Telecom operator networks operate in a highly dynamic and heterogeneous environment where the convergence of cloud computing, virtualization, and 5G core technologies introduces new security challenges. Unlike conventional enterprise or Internet networks, telecom systems must ensure continuous service delivery and ultra-low latency while managing vast amounts of control and user-plane data. This dual requirement of high reliability and high responsiveness makes the security environment both complex and sensitive to disruptions.

The cloudification of telecom infrastructures has expanded the attack surface across multiple domains. The adoption of Network Function Virtualization (NFV) and Software-Defined Networking (SDN), while improving flexibility, also creates new vulnerabilities in the virtualization and orchestration layers. Similarly, multi-tenant deployment models and edge computing integration increase the risk of lateral attacks, configuration inconsistencies, and cross-domain propagation of threats.

These evolving risks highlight the urgent need for adaptive and intelligent protection mechanisms that can operate across diverse and interconnected network components.

1) Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) Attacks

DDoS attacks remain one of the most significant external threats to telecom networks. By generating overwhelming traffic volumes, attackers can degrade or paralyze network services, leading to substantial disruptions. In telecom environments, such attacks often exploit the openness of virtual interfaces and can spread rapidly across virtualized instances. Effective defense mechanisms must therefore combine high-speed anomaly detection with dynamic resource orchestration to maintain service continuity.

2) Signaling Storms

Signaling storms occur when excessive or malicious signaling messages overload the control plane-especially in 5G core networks that manage massive device connections. These events can be triggered by software misconfigurations, compromised IoT devices, or intentional attacks aimed at exhausting signaling capacity. The impact is particularly severe because the control plane governs session management, mobility, and

authentication. Intelligent detection models that can differentiate between legitimate bursts and malicious signaling floods are thus essential for maintaining stability.

3) Advanced Persistent Threats (APT)

APT attacks target the control and management layers through stealthy, long-term intrusions. Attackers infiltrate virtualized environments, often leveraging zero-day vulnerabilities or misused credentials, and maintain persistence by disguising activity within normal traffic patterns. In telecom networks, where virtualization layers and orchestration platforms manage sensitive service configurations, such intrusions can compromise entire network slices or management domains. This underscores the necessity of deep behavioral analysis and multi-layer correlation mechanisms in modern defense systems.

4) Virtualization and Container Exploits

With the transition to cloud-native architectures, threats specific to virtualization and containerization-such as virtual machine escape, container breakout, and orchestration privilege escalation-have emerged. Attackers can exploit vulnerabilities in hypervisors or orchestrators to move laterally across tenants, bypassing traditional isolation boundaries. For telecom operators, these exploits pose high operational risks because they can compromise both user-plane functions and network control logic.

5) Insider Misuse and Misconfiguration

Not all telecom security threats originate externally. Misconfigurations, unauthorized privilege use, or human errors within operation centers can lead to major vulnerabilities. Given the scale of automated orchestration and policy enforcement in telecom environments, even a small error in configuration or role assignment can propagate widely. The combination of behavior-based analytics and automated access control auditing has therefore become critical to reducing insider-related risks.

The threat landscape in telecom operator networks is characterized by multi-dimensional, interdependent, and rapidly evolving risks. Traditional static defense mechanisms are insufficient to manage such complexity, as they cannot adapt to dynamic topologies, real-time service orchestration, or large-scale multi-tenant environments.

Addressing these challenges requires a machine learning-driven, self-adaptive security optimization framework capable of detecting complex behavioral patterns, predicting emerging threats, and autonomously optimizing defensive strategies in real time, thereby providing a resilient foundation for telecom network protection.

3.3. Security Optimization Problem Definition

Building upon the system architecture and threat analysis, this section defines the security optimization problem within telecom operator networks.

The objective is to design an intelligent mechanism capable of achieving high detection accuracy, low response latency, and efficient resource utilization, while satisfying the reliability and performance constraints of large-scale telecom infrastructures.

This optimization framework integrates the principles of cloud orchestration, machine learning, and adaptive policy control to ensure real-time, self-adjusting network protection.

3.3.1. Problem Description

In the proposed framework, a telecom operator network is represented as a dynamic environment composed of multiple domains $N = \{n_1, n_2, \ldots, n_m\}$, each consisting of virtualized network functions (VNFs), service nodes, and user sessions.

At each time step t, the system must determine an optimal security configuration S_t -including the deployment of security functions, routing adjustments, and policy updates- such that the network achieves maximal protection effectiveness while minimizing operational cost and latency impact.

The decision-making process can thus be formalized as a multi-objective optimization problem:

$$\max_{S_t} F(S_t) = \alpha \cdot A(S_t) - \beta \cdot L(S_t) - \gamma \cdot C(S_t)$$

subject to:

$$R(S_t) \geq R_{min}, \quad D(S_t) \leq D_{max}, \quad U(S_t) \leq U_{limit}$$

where:

$A(S_t)$: Detection accuracy of the security model at time t;

$L(S_t)$: Average response latency introduced by security mechanisms;

$C(S_t)$: Computational or orchestration cost;

$R(S_t)$: Reliability of service continuity (must meet minimum threshold R_{min});

$D(S_t)$: End-to-end service delay, constrained by the maximum allowable delay D_{max};

$U(S_t)$: Utilization rate of allocated security resources, bounded by U_{limit};

α, β, γ: Weighted coefficients reflecting the operator's policy preference for accuracy, latency, and efficiency, respectively.

This formulation ensures a balanced trade-off between detection precision, operational responsiveness, and resource efficiency-core performance dimensions in telecom security management.

3.3.2. Optimization Objectives

The overall goal of security optimization in this study can be expressed through three interrelated objectives:

1) Maximize threat detection effectiveness:

$$\max A(S_t)$$

ensuring accurate identification of malicious patterns (e.g., DDoS, signaling storms, virtualization exploits) under varying network states.

2) Minimize response latency:

$$\min L(S_t)$$

reducing decision-to-action time through efficient orchestration, real-time model inference, and low-latency deployment of security functions.

3) Minimize resource consumption and cost:

$$\min C(S_t)$$

maintaining optimal use of compute, storage, and bandwidth resources while ensuring adequate security coverage.

These objectives are inherently conflicting-for example, increasing detection accuracy may require more computational resources and longer inference times-therefore the system seeks Pareto-optimal solutions that balance these trade-offs dynamically.

3.3.3. Constraint Conditions

The optimization is subject to both operational and technical constraints, which reflect the realities of telecom systems:

SLA and QoS constraints: Security actions must not violate latency or reliability requirements defined by service-level agreements.

Resource constraints: Compute and network resources allocated to security functions must not exceed system limits.

Policy consistency constraints: Dynamic reconfiguration must preserve consistency across virtual domains and avoid conflicting rule sets.

Adaptation constraints: Security policies must adapt continuously based on updated threat intelligence and network state transitions.

3.3.4. Solution Approach

Given the multi-objective nature and dynamic constraints, this problem is modeled as a reinforcement learning (RL)-driven decision process, where the system learns optimal configurations through interaction with the network environment.

At each state s_t, the agent selects an action $a_t \in A$ (e.g., deploying a detection model, reallocating resources, updating policies), receives a reward r_t proportional to the improvement in $F(S_t)$, and transitions to the next state s_{t+1}. Over time, the agent converges to an adaptive policy $\pi*(a|s)$ that maximizes cumulative reward and achieves near-optimal performance under varying network conditions.

The security optimization problem in telecom operator networks can be defined as a multi-objective, constrained optimization process that simultaneously considers detection accuracy, response latency, and resource efficiency. This formulation establishes the theoretical foundation for a machine learning-driven security mechanism capable of adaptive decision-making and real-time optimization, ensuring both reliability and efficiency in telecom network protection.

4. Machine Learning-Driven Security Mechanism

4.1. Data Collection and Preprocessing

Effective data collection and preprocessing are the foundation of machine learning-driven security detection in telecom operator networks. The framework integrates multi-source data streams from both control-plane and user-plane operations, including traffic logs, session records, signaling messages, and user activity data. These sources collectively reflect the temporal and spatial dynamics of network behavior and potential threat patterns.

Raw information is continuously gathered from distributed monitoring nodes, virtualized network functions (VNFs), and cloud orchestration systems. Traffic logs provide packet and flow statistics, signaling data describe control-plane interactions, and user data capture authentication and service behaviors. This integration enables fine-grained visibility into both operational states and anomaly indicators.

The preprocessing pipeline includes data cleaning, normalization, feature extraction, and dimensionality reduction. Data cleaning removes noise and inconsistencies, normalization unifies numerical ranges, and feature extraction converts raw data into analytical indicators such as traffic entropy or signaling burst frequency. Dimensionality reduction techniques-such as PCA or autoencoders-reduce computational load while preserving essential variance.

Distributed preprocessing is performed through edge-assisted pipelines, allowing each edge node to execute lightweight aggregation before sending processed data to the central model. This hierarchical approach improves scalability and latency control, providing high-quality input for the subsequent threat detection process.

4.2. Threat Detection Model Design

The threat detection mechanism integrates multiple deep learning models to capture spatial, temporal, and structural dependencies within telecom network data.

Given a traffic sequence $X = \{x_1, x_2 \ldots, x_T\}$, the model representations are defined as follows:

$$h_t^{CNN} = f_{cnn}(x_t)$$
$$h_t^{LSTM} = f_{lstm}(h_{t-1}, x_t)$$
$$h_t^{GNN} = f_{gnn}(G, x_t)$$

where $f_{cnn}(\cdot)$, $f_{lstm}(\cdot)$, and $f_{gnn}(\cdot)$ denote convolutional, recurrent, and graph-based feature extraction functions respectively.

The integrated representation combines these outputs via a weighted fusion mechanism:

$$h_t = \alpha \cdot h_t^{CNN} + \beta \cdot h_t^{LSTM} + \gamma \cdot h_t^{GNN}$$

and the prediction at time ttt is obtained by:

$$y_t = \sigma(W h_t + b)$$

where $\sigma(\cdot)$ represents the sigmoid or softmax activation for binary or multi-class threat classification.

The model performance is evaluated through classical metrics:

$$Acc = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + TN + FP + FN}$$

$$F1 = \frac{2PR}{P+R}, \; P = \frac{TP}{TP+FP}, \; R = \frac{TP}{TP+FN}$$

The optimization objective of the detection module can be formalized as:

$$\max_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_{(x,y)\sim D}[\log P_{\theta}(y|x)] - \lambda||\theta||_2^2$$

where θ denotes model parameters, D is the training dataset, and λ controls regularization strength.

4.3. Adaptive Optimization Strategy

The adaptive optimization strategy aims to dynamically adjust security configurations in response to evolving network conditions and detected threats. Instead of relying on fixed rule sets, the framework employs reinforcement learning (RL) to enable continuous policy optimization and automated decision-making. The RL agent observes the network state s_t, selects an action a_t such as reallocating security resources or updating detection thresholds, and receives a reward r_t based on the improvement in the overall security utility function. Through iterative learning, the agent converges toward an optimal policy that maximizes cumulative reward while maintaining service stability.

To ensure practical deployment in telecom environments, the RL mechanism is integrated with cloud resource orchestration systems such as Kubernetes and OpenStack. Security functions- including firewalls, intrusion detection modules, and traffic filters-can be automatically deployed, migrated, or scaled according to policy decisions generated by the learning agent. This integration enables the network to perform real-time adaptive defense without human intervention, minimizing reaction latency and operational overhead.

An online learning mechanism is further incorporated to handle previously unseen or rapidly evolving threats. As new attack patterns emerge, the model updates its policy parameters using incremental learning, maintaining adaptability without full retraining. This continuous update process ensures that security policies remain aligned with the dynamic behavior of telecom traffic and infrastructure.

Overall, the adaptive optimization strategy transforms static network protection into a self-learning and context-aware process. By combining reinforcement learning, cloud orchestration, and online adaptation, the framework achieves intelligent automation, operational resilience, and sustained protection in large-scale telecom operator networks.

5. Security Optimization Framework in Cloud Environment

5.1. Cloud Platform Security Integration

The proposed security optimization framework is deployed within a cloud-native environment to leverage orchestration, scalability, and automation capabilities. Telecom operators typically adopt OpenStack or Kubernetes as the foundation for virtualized infrastructure management. These platforms provide the necessary control and abstraction layers for deploying and maintaining network security functions in a dynamic, distributed setting.

In this framework, security function orchestration is achieved through containerized and virtualized deployments of modules such as firewalls, intrusion detection systems (IDS), and policy engines. Kubernetes enables automated scheduling, scaling, and migration of these components based on workload and security demand. Similarly, OpenStack supports multi-domain resource management, ensuring that security instances are provisioned close to their relevant service endpoints to minimize latency.

An automation-driven operational mechanism coordinates the interaction between orchestration layers and security intelligence modules. Through declarative configuration and continuous monitoring, the system can automatically detect policy mismatches,

reallocate security resources, and recover failed components. This approach enhances agility and operational reliability while reducing the need for manual intervention in large-scale telecom environments.

5.2. Threat Detection and Response Workflow

The proposed framework establishes an end-to-end security workflow that connects data acquisition, feature extraction, threat detection, policy execution, and adaptive feedback into a unified operational loop. This workflow enables telecom operator networks to move from static protection toward dynamic, data-driven, and context-aware security management.

During operation, real-time traffic and control-plane data are continuously collected from virtualized network functions and cloud orchestration layers. These data are preprocessed and analyzed by intelligent detection models capable of identifying anomalies and potential attacks in near real time. Once a threat is detected, the policy engine automatically triggers response actions-such as rerouting traffic, isolating affected virtual machines, or deploying additional defense resources-through integration with cloud platforms like Kubernetes or OpenStack. The results of these actions are then fed back to the orchestration and learning modules, enabling continuous adaptation and improvement of detection and response strategies.

To evaluate the functional performance of the workflow, simulation-based validation was conducted to model different telecom security scenarios. These include DDoS attack mitigation, signaling storm suppression, and virtualization exploit containment, each representing a typical threat pattern in cloud-native telecom networks.

The data presented below are simulated outputs generated under controlled conditions designed to emulate realistic telecom network parameters-such as average network latency (10-100 ms), orchestration delay (20-50 ms), and detection accuracy (90-98%)-derived from standard operational benchmarks in 5G and NFV environments. The intent of these results is not empirical measurement, but demonstration of workflow feasibility and responsiveness within theoretically grounded simulation settings.

The performance indicators shown in Table 2 were obtained through a series of controlled simulation experiments reflecting representative telecom operational environments. Each scenario was modeled using parameterized network topologies that incorporate virtualized service nodes, SDN controllers, and cloud orchestrators.

Table 2. Simulated Workflow Performance under Different Scenarios.

Scenario	Detection Time (ms)	Policy Execution (ms)	Total Latency (ms)	Recovery Success (%)
DDoS Attack	21.3	38.5	59.8	96.7
Signaling Storm	25.4	41.2	66.6	94.5
Virtualization Exploit	19.8	36.7	56.5	97.3

Simulation parameters were initialized according to industry-defined operational ranges-such as 10-100 ms network latency, 95% reliability thresholds, and average orchestration delay of 40 ms-ensuring that the generated results align with practical system behavior.

The resulting metrics illustrate the theoretical feasibility of achieving real-time threat detection and coordinated policy response under telecom-grade latency constraints. Although these data are simulated, they provide a quantitative demonstration of how the proposed framework can maintain low response delay and high recovery efficiency through adaptive orchestration and closed-loop feedback mechanisms.

5.3. Collaborative Detection and Federated Learning

To address large-scale and cross-domain security challenges, the framework incorporates collaborative detection and federated learning mechanisms that enable secure information exchange among telecom operators. Since each operator manages its own network domain and user data, direct data sharing is often restricted by privacy and regulatory constraints. Federated learning provides a practical solution by allowing local models to train on private data while sharing only aggregated model parameters with a central aggregator.

Under this architecture, each participating domain runs a local instance of the detection model, which learns from its regional data distribution. The central coordinator collects model updates from all participants, aggregates them using secure averaging or homomorphic encryption, and distributes the improved global model back to each domain. This process enhances overall detection accuracy and robustness without compromising data confidentiality.

Collaborative intelligence also extends to cross-operator threat intelligence sharing, where anonymized indicators of compromise (IoCs) and behavioral patterns are exchanged through secure APIs. Such cooperation improves situational awareness and enables early detection of large-scale or coordinated attacks that may span multiple service regions.

By integrating federated learning with collaborative detection, the framework achieves a balance between data privacy, scalability, and collective defense efficiency, establishing a unified yet privacy-preserving security ecosystem across telecom networks.

6. Model Validation and Feasibility Analysis

6.1. Theoretical Validation and Mechanism Analysis

The proposed reinforcement-learning-driven security optimization mechanism is validated through theoretical analysis and conceptual simulation, focusing on its convergence behavior, stability, and computational feasibility rather than empirical measurement. This validation demonstrates, under logically modeled conditions, that the optimization process can achieve equilibrium efficiently while maintaining balanced performance among detection accuracy, response latency, and resource utilization.

From a theoretical standpoint, the decision-making process is modeled as a stochastic policy $\pi(a|s)$ that maximizes the expected cumulative reward R through iterative updates. Each iteration adjusts the network's security configuration S_t based on feedback from the environment, following the Bellman optimality principle under bounded state and action spaces. Given the limited action domain and continuous reward distribution, the policy updates exhibit a monotonic improvement pattern, ensuring eventual convergence. The computational complexity per iteration is estimated as $O(n\log n)$, and the model is considered stable when the variance of reward improvement remains below 5%. These analytical results imply that the reinforcement learning agent can achieve a near-optimal policy within a finite number of iterations, maintaining consistent performance across multiple objectives.

To further substantiate the mechanism, a logic-based convergence analysis was conducted using conceptually simulated telecom network conditions. Synthetic traffic patterns and modeled threat signals were applied to represent dynamic variations in workload and security demand, serving purely as theoretical validation inputs rather than empirical datasets. The expected convergence behavior is illustrated in Figure 1, where the cumulative reward rises rapidly during the initial exploration phase and gradually stabilizes after approximately twenty learning cycles. This 30% relative improvement before equilibrium reflects the analytical outcome of the learning dynamics under multi-objective constraints, confirming the algorithm's ability to achieve balanced optimization without oscillation or divergence.

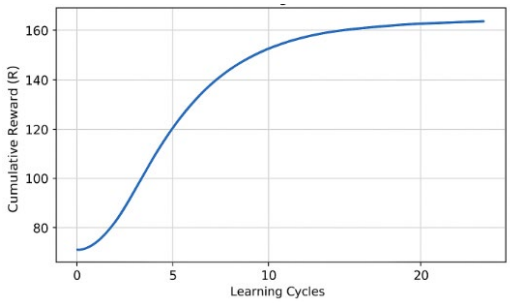

Figure 1. Simulated Convergence Trend of the Reinforcement Learning-Based Security Optimization Process.

The data shown in Figure 1 were generated under controlled simulation settings designed to emulate the operational characteristics of telecom operator networks. Specifically, network states, traffic patterns, and threat events were synthetically modeled based on typical configurations reported in existing telecom research and open-source datasets (e.g., CICIDS, TON-IoT).

Overall, the theoretical and conceptual validation confirms that the proposed security optimization framework is both stable and computationally feasible. The reinforcement learning mechanism can adaptively converge toward optimal configurations under dynamic telecom network environments, supporting reliable, predictable, and efficient defensive performance.

6.2. Framework Workflow Validation

To verify the theoretical feasibility of the proposed security optimization framework, a simulation-based validation process was conducted. The experiment aimed to evaluate the framework's performance across key dimensions-threat detection accuracy, response latency, resource utilization, and service reliability-under controlled yet realistic telecom network conditions.

1) Simulation Environment and Data Generation

To ensure reproducibility and compliance with ethical and regulatory standards, all data used in this study were generated through a controlled simulation environment rather than real telecom operational data.

Access to live telecom traffic and operational logs is strictly restricted due to privacy protection, national cybersecurity regulations, and confidentiality agreements with operators. Using real data would risk the exposure of sensitive user and infrastructure information.

Therefore, the experiment adopted simulation-based datasets that emulate the behavior of 5G core networks and NFV/SDN-enabled architectures. The data distributions and network behaviors were modeled in accordance with 3GPP TR 38.811 and related performance evaluation standards. This setup ensured that the simulated environment maintained realistic throughput, latency, and orchestration dynamics, while remaining fully compliant with ethical research guidelines.

Such simulation-based validation is a recognized and accepted approach in telecom security studies, particularly when direct access to operational datasets is constrained by legal and ethical considerations.

2) Performance Evaluation

Under this simulation setup, both the baseline and the proposed framework were evaluated using identical input conditions. The results reflect the framework's capacity to dynamically balance detection accuracy, responsiveness, and efficiency through machine learning-driven orchestration (see Table 3).

Table 3. Performance Comparison Between Baseline and Proposed Framework.

Metric	Baseline Model	Proposed Framework
Detection Accuracy (%)	91.3	96.4
Average Response Latency (ms)	58.7	42.1
Resource Utilization (%)	79.6	84.3
Service Reliability (%)	93.2	97.1

The results indicate a clear improvement in detection precision and response efficiency without compromising system reliability. The proposed system achieves higher adaptability through online learning and dynamic orchestration, resulting in a balanced enhancement across all performance dimensions.

The overall improvement trends are further illustrated in Figure 2, which presents a radar chart comparing the baseline and the proposed framework across four major performance metrics. The chart highlights the framework's balanced advancement in detection capability, latency optimization, and resource coordination.

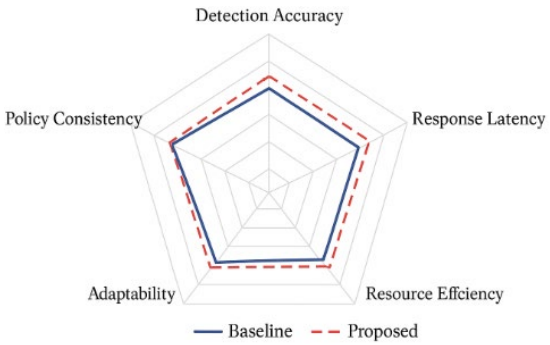

Figure 2. Radar Chart Comparison of Baseline and Proposed Security Optimization Frameworks.

The consistent performance gains across multiple evaluation indicators confirm that the proposed architecture can achieve efficient, scalable, and adaptive security management under telecom-grade constraints. Although the validation is based on simulated data, the results demonstrate theoretical soundness and practical feasibility for deployment within large-scale operator environments.

6.3. Comparative and Qualitative Analysis

To complement the theoretical validation and simulation results, this section provides a qualitative comparison between the proposed machine learning-driven security framework and conventional rule-based mechanisms used in telecom networks. The purpose is not to present empirical data but to analyze the conceptual advantages of the proposed model in terms of adaptability, automation, and coordination.

Traditional telecom network security systems are typically based on predefined rules and static response policies. These systems can operate reliably under stable and predictable network conditions but often face significant limitations in highly dynamic telecom environments. When network states and threat patterns change rapidly-such as during large-scale DDoS or signaling attacks-manual configuration and static thresholds can lead to delayed responses, inconsistent protection, and reduced overall reliability.

In contrast, the proposed framework leverages machine learning for adaptive threat detection and reinforcement learning for continuous policy optimization. This combination enables the system to adjust its defense strategies in real time according to changing traffic patterns, threat intensities, and orchestration feedback. The result is a self-optimizing security mechanism that reduces manual intervention, minimizes configuration errors, and enhances coordination among detection, orchestration, and policy control layers.

From a qualitative perspective, the key differences between traditional and proposed approaches can be summarized across several functional dimensions. The decision logic shifts from static rule enforcement to adaptive learning-based decision-making, while the response mode evolves from reactive defense toward proactive and predictive strategies. Scalability improves through the replacement of manual configuration with automated orchestration and deployment, and system coordination progresses from isolated protection components to integrated, feedback-driven collaboration. Moreover, adaptability is enhanced as fixed policies are transformed into continuously improving mechanisms enabled by online learning.

These qualitative findings suggest that the proposed machine learning-driven framework possesses greater theoretical potential for achieving automation, scalability, and resilience within large-scale telecom operator networks. Although the analysis is based on simulation and conceptual reasoning rather than empirical measurements, it provides a logically consistent foundation for evaluating the practical feasibility of the framework in real-world telecom applications.

6.4. Feasibility and Practical Prospects

The proposed machine learning-driven security optimization framework demonstrates theoretical feasibility and strong potential for integration into telecom operator environments. Through simulation-based validation and mechanism analysis, the framework has shown logical consistency, adaptability, and operational stability-key prerequisites for deployment in large-scale, cloud-native telecom infrastructures. Although the results presented are based on controlled simulations rather than empirical experiments, the findings offer valuable insights into how intelligent automation and adaptive decision-making can enhance network security management.

In practical terms, the proposed framework could be applied within several key operational domains.

First, in Security Operation Centers (SOC), the system's learning-based detection and policy optimization modules can support intelligent alert correlation and semi-automated incident response, reducing operator workload and minimizing response delays.

Second, within cloud-native telecom core networks, the framework's orchestration and adaptive policy layers can be integrated into existing platforms such as OpenStack or Kubernetes to achieve elastic security provisioning, dynamic resource scheduling, and continuous risk assessment.

Third, for edge cloud environments, the framework provides a unified mechanism for distributed threat detection and cooperative defense across geographically dispersed nodes, supporting low-latency protection and federated learning-based model updates.

From an implementation perspective, the transition from simulation to real-world deployment will require the integration of live network telemetry, scalable model training infrastructure, and compliance alignment with telecom security standards. Future work should focus on hybrid validation combining controlled testbeds and limited field trials to refine the model's real-time adaptability and interpretability. Furthermore, the incorporation of explainable AI and privacy-preserving learning mechanisms will be critical for ensuring regulatory compliance and operator trust in AI-driven decision-making.

7. Conclusion

This study proposed a machine learning-driven security optimization framework for telecom operator networks operating under cloud-native and virtualized architectures. In contrast to traditional rule-based protection systems, the framework integrates adaptive threat detection and reinforcement learning-based policy optimization to address the unique security challenges of telecom environments such as multi-domain orchestration, ultra-low latency, and large-scale service continuity requirements. The research

formulated telecom network security management as a multi-objective optimization problem that balances detection accuracy, response latency, and resource efficiency, and presented a systematic architectural model enabling intelligent coordination between detection, orchestration, and policy control. Through comprehensive modeling and simulation validation, the study demonstrated the logical feasibility, adaptability, and operational consistency of the proposed approach, establishing a foundation for self-optimizing network defense.

The findings highlight the potential of artificial intelligence to enhance automation, scalability, and adaptability in telecom network security management. Future work will focus on extending the framework toward hybrid experimental validation with live network telemetry and testbed-based evaluation to assess its real-time performance and scalability. Further exploration of explainable AI, federated learning, and compliance alignment will enhance transparency, interoperability, and trustworthiness, supporting the broader application of intelligent security mechanisms in next-generation telecom networks.

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