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International Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
Publisher's Home Page: https://www.svedbergopen.com/

Research Paper Open Access

A Smart Portable Dual-Mode IoT Framework for Real-Time Water Quality Intelligence Using Embedded Edge Analytics

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Abstract
Safe and clean water remains a major global concern as rising industrial activities, rapid urban growth, and environmental pollution continue to contaminate water resources. These challenges threaten public health, ecosystems, and sustainable development, highlighting the urgent need for effective water quality monitoring, management strategies, and advanced treatment technologies to ensure water security.. This paper presents a smart, portable, and cost-effective Internet of Things (IoT)-based water quality monitoring system for real-time assessment of key parameters such as pH, turbidity, and Total Dissolved Solids (TDS). The proposed system is implemented using an ESP32 microcontroller integrated with multi-parameter sensors and an OLED display for real-time local visualization.

In addition, the system incorporates Wi-Fi-enabled cloud connectivity for remote monitoring, data logging, and temporal trend analysis, enabling ubiquitous access to water quality information. A key contribution of this work is the development of a dual-mode operational framework with embedded edge-level analytics, allowing the system to function independently in local mode while simultaneously supporting cloud-based monitoring. This hybrid architecture reduces dependency on continuous internet connectivity and enhances system robustness in resource-constrained and rural environments.

The proposed system is battery-powered, compact, and optimized for low-cost deployment, making it suitable for scalable environmental monitoring applications. Experimental evaluation demonstrates that the system achieves real-time response with an average latency of less than 2 seconds, along with stable sensor performance across different water samples after calibration. The results validate the effectiveness of the proposed framework for reliable and continuous water quality monitoring.

The system can be further extended to support predictive analytics and large-scale IoT-based smart water management systems, making it a viable solution for sustainable environmental monitoring and public health applications.

Keywords—IoT, Water Quality Monitoring, ESP32, pH Sensor, Turbidity, TDS, Embedded Systems, Smart Environment.

I. Introduction

Water is one of the most essential natural resources for human survival, agriculture, industrial production, and ecosystem sustainability. However, rapid industrialization, urban expansion, improper waste disposal, and agricultural runoff have significantly contributed to the deterioration of water quality worldwide. Contaminated water can contain harmful biological, chemical, and physical pollutants that pose serious risks to human health and aquatic ecosystems. Therefore, continuous monitoring of water quality has become a critical requirement for effective water resource management and environmental protection.

Traditional water quality monitoring relies on manual sampling and subsequent laboratory analysis. Although these methods offer high analytical accuracy, they are resource-intensive, time-consuming, and expensive, which restricts their applicability for continuous and real-time monitoring. Moreover, delays between sample collection and result generation can hinder the timely identification of contamination incidents, thereby reducing the effectiveness of rapid intervention and mitigation efforts.Recent advancements in the Internet of Things (IoT), embedded systems, wireless communication, and cloud computing have enabled the development of smart environmental monitoring solutions. IoT-based water quality monitoring systems facilitate real-time data acquisition, processing, transmission, and visualization, allowing stakeholders to access critical information remotely. Such systems improve operational efficiency, reduce monitoring costs, and support data-driven decision-making.

Among the various water quality indicators, pH, turbidity, and Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) are widely recognized as key parameters for assessing water quality. The pH value indicates the acidity or alkalinity of water, turbidity reflects the presence of suspended particles, and TDS measures the concentration of dissolved substances. Continuous monitoring of these parameters provides valuable insights into water safety and suitability for domestic, agricultural, and industrial applications.

In recent years, microcontroller platforms such as ESP32 have gained significant popularity for IoT applications due to their low cost, integrated Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities, low power consumption, and high computational efficiency. Combined with cloud platforms and edge computing techniques, ESP32-based monitoring systems can perform local data processing while simultaneously enabling remote access to sensor data. This approach improves system responsiveness, reduces communication overhead, and enhances reliability in resource-constrained environments.

To address the limitations of existing monitoring approaches, this paper proposes a Smart Portable Dual-Mode IoT Framework for Real-Time Water Quality Intelligence Using Embedded Edge Analytics. The proposed system integrates pH, turbidity, and TDS sensors with an ESP32-based embedded platform to provide continuous monitoring and intelligent data handling. The framework supports dual-mode operation by offering both local visualization through an OLED display and remote monitoring through cloud connectivity. Embedded edge analytics enables preliminary processing and validation of sensor data before transmission, thereby improving efficiency and reducing unnecessary network traffic.

The major contributions of this work are summarized as follows:

1. Development of a portable and battery-powered water quality monitoring device suitable for field deployment.
2. Integration of multiple water quality sensors for real-time measurement of pH, turbidity, and TDS parameters.
3. Implementation of dual-mode monitoring through local OLED-based display and cloud-based remote access.
4. Incorporation of embedded edge analytics for efficient data processing and intelligent decision support.
5. Provision of a scalable and cost-effective architecture suitable for smart environmental monitoring and water management applications.

II. Literature Review

Recent studies highlight the growing interest in IoT-based water monitoring systems. Prior work has demonstrated the use of wireless sensor networks and cloud platforms for real-time monitoring. However, most existing systems lack portability and cost efficiency.

Research gaps identified include:

- Limited portability of systems
- Lack of integrated local display
- Sensor calibration challenges
- Limited rural applicability

This work addresses these gaps by developing a compact and energy-efficient solution.

Recent advancements in the Internet of Things (IoT) have accelerated the development of smart water quality monitoring systems designed to overcome the limitations of conventional laboratory-based methods. By enabling real-time sensing, wireless data transmission, and remote monitoring of parameters such as pH, turbidity, temperature, and TDS, these systems provide continuous and efficient water quality assessment. The convergence of embedded systems, cloud platforms, and wireless sensor networks has further enhanced the scalability, reliability, and effectiveness of environmental monitoring applications.Early works in this domain primarily utilized Wireless Sensor Networks (WSNs) for environmental monitoring. These systems relied on distributed sensor nodes to collect data and transmit it to a central base station. Kumar and Das [9] highlighted the effectiveness of WSNs in environmental applications, demonstrating their ability to support large-scale monitoring. However, such systems often suffered from high power consumption, limited computational capability at sensor nodes, and lack of real-time data analytics.

With the advancement of IoT technologies, researchers began integrating microcontroller-based platforms such as Arduino and ESP32 for water quality monitoring. M. R. Islam et al. [11] proposed a portable IoT-based water quality monitoring device capable of measuring key parameters and transmitting data to cloud platforms. Similarly, Singh and Verma [7] demonstrated an ESP32-based environmental monitoring system leveraging built-in Wi-Fi capabilities for real-time data communication. Although these systems improved connectivity and reduced cost, they often lacked intelligent local processing and edge-level decision-making capabilities.

Cloud-based architectures have also been widely adopted for remote monitoring applications. Singh et al. [10] developed an IoT and cloud-integrated water monitoring system that enabled data visualization and remote access through web dashboards. Al-Saadi et al. [5] further extended this concept by integrating cloud computing for scalable water quality monitoring. However, cloud-only systems face challenges such as network dependency, communication latency, and potential data loss in areas with poor connectivity, particularly in rural environments.

To address data accuracy and reliability issues, several researchers have focused on sensor calibration and signal processing techniques. Zhang et al. [8] discussed the challenges of sensor drift and calibration in water quality monitoring systems, emphasizing the need for continuous correction mechanisms. These challenges remain critical in real-world deployments, where environmental factors can significantly affect sensor performance.

Recent studies have introduced the concept of edge computing in IoT systems, where data processing is performed closer to the data source. Shi et al. [24] and Chen et al. [23] highlighted that edge computing reduces latency, improves response time, and minimizes cloud dependency. In the context of water quality monitoring, edge-based processing allows preliminary analysis and anomaly detection at the device level, thereby improving system efficiency and reliability.

Machine learning-based approaches have also been explored for predictive water quality analysis. Pal et al. [26] proposed a smart water monitoring system combining IoT sensors with machine learning algorithms to predict contamination levels. Similarly, Hossain et al. [37] developed a hybrid IoT and machine learning framework for intelligent water quality assessment. Although these approaches provide high accuracy, they often require significant computational resources and are typically implemented at the cloud level rather than at the edge.

In addition, portable and low-cost water quality monitoring systems have gained attention for rural and remote applications. Islam et al. [11] and Ghayvat et al. [22] emphasized the importance of affordability and portability in real-world deployment scenarios. However, many existing systems still rely on single-mode operation, either local display or cloud connectivity, limiting their flexibility and usability in diverse environments.

From the literature review, it is evident that although substantial progress has been made in IoT-based water quality monitoring systems, several limitations still exist. These include lack of dual-mode operation (local + cloud), limited edge intelligence, dependency on continuous internet connectivity, and insufficient portability for field deployment. Furthermore, very few systems integrate real-time embedded analytics with multi-parameter sensing in a compact, battery-powered architecture.

To overcome these limitations, the proposed work introduces a Smart Portable Dual-Mode IoT Framework with Embedded Edge Analytics, which integrates local OLED-based monitoring and cloud-based remote access while performing lightweight processing at the edge. This hybrid approach enhances system responsiveness, reduces communication overhead, and ensures reliable monitoring even in intermittent network conditions.

III. Proposed Methodology

A. System Overview

The proposed system is a Smart Portable Dual-Mode IoT Framework designed for real-time water quality monitoring using embedded edge analytics. The architecture integrates multiple water quality sensors with an ESP32 microcontroller, enabling both local (offline) monitoring through an OLED display and remote monitoring through cloud connectivity. The system is optimized for portability, low power consumption, and real-time responsiveness, making it suitable for both rural and urban water quality assessment applications.

The framework follows a layered architecture consisting of:

1. Sensing Layer

2. Edge Processing Layer
3. Communication Layer
4. Cloud and Application Layer

B. Sensing Layer

The sensing layer is responsible for acquiring physical and chemical parameters of water. The following sensors are integrated:

- **pH Sensor:** Measures acidity/alkalinity of water, indicating chemical balance.
- **Turbidity Sensor:** Measures water clarity by detecting suspended particles.
- **TDS Sensor (Total Dissolved Solids):** Measures concentration of dissolved salts and minerals.

These sensors continuously collect analog signals from water samples. The raw sensor outputs are fed into the ESP32 microcontroller through analog input channels. Proper calibration techniques are applied to ensure measurement accuracy and stability under varying environmental conditions.

C. Edge Processing Layer (ESP32-Based Embedded System)

The core processing unit of the system is the ESP32 microcontroller, which performs both data acquisition and initial processing. The ESP32 is chosen due to its:

- Dual-core processing capability
- Low power consumption
- Built-in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity
- Compatibility with IoT platforms

Edge Analytics Functions:

At the edge level, the system performs:

- Signal conditioning and noise filtering
- Conversion of analog sensor values into calibrated digital readings
- Threshold-based anomaly detection (e.g., unsafe pH or turbidity levels)
- Basic decision-making for alert generation

If any parameter exceeds predefined safety thresholds, the system immediately triggers a local alert on OLED display, ensuring real-time feedback even without internet connectivity.

D. Dual-Mode Operation

A key feature of the proposed system is dual-mode functionality, which enhances reliability and usability.

1. Local Mode (Offline Mode)

- Sensor data is displayed in real-time on a 0.96-inch OLED display
- Alerts are generated locally for abnormal water conditions
- System operates independently without internet connectivity

2. Cloud Mode (Online Mode)

- ESP32 transmits data to cloud platforms (e.g., IoT dashboards)
- Remote monitoring is enabled through web/mobile applications
- Historical data is stored for trend analysis and visualization

This dual-mode approach ensures continuous monitoring even in low-connectivity environments.

E. Communication Layer

The ESP32 communicates with the cloud using Wi-Fi-based MQTT or HTTP protocols. The communication layer is responsible for:

- Real-time transmission of sensor data
- Secure data exchange between device and cloud server
- Periodic updates at defined time intervals

The lightweight communication protocol ensures minimal latency and reduced power consumption, making the system efficient for battery-powered operation.

F. Cloud and Application Layer

The cloud layer provides remote access, storage, and visualization of water quality data. The collected sensor data is:

- Stored in cloud databases
- Visualized using dashboards and graphs
- Used for trend analysis and historical comparison

Users can access the system through web or mobile interfaces, enabling real-time monitoring from any location.

G. System Workflow / Methodology

The operational flow of the system is summarized as follows:

1. Sensors collect real-time water quality parameters (pH, turbidity, TDS).
2. Analog signals are sent to the ESP32 microcontroller.
3. ESP32 processes and calibrates sensor data using embedded algorithms.
4. Data is displayed locally on OLED in real time.
5. If internet is available, data is transmitted to the cloud server.
6. Cloud platform stores and visualizes data for remote monitoring.
7. If abnormal values are detected, alerts are generated both locally and remotely.

H. Algorithmic Flow (Edge Processing Logic)

The decision-making process at the edge can be summarized as:

- Read sensor values
- Apply calibration factors
- Compare with threshold limits:
    - pH range: 6.5 – 8.5
    - TDS: < 500 ppm (drinking water standard)
    - Turbidity: < safe NTU level
- If values exceed limits:
    - Trigger alert (OLED + cloud notification)
- Else:
    - Continue normal monitoring cycle

I. Advantages of Proposed Architecture

The proposed system provides several advantages:

- Real-time dual-mode monitoring (local + cloud)
- Reduced dependency on continuous internet connectivity
- Low-cost and portable design suitable for field deployment
- Edge-level processing reduces cloud load and latency
- Scalable architecture for multi-node expansion

A. System Architecture

The proposed system consists of:

- ESP32 microcontroller
- pH, turbidity, and TDS sensors
- OLED display module
- Wi-Fi-based IoT communication
- Cloud platform (ThingSpeak/Blynk)

B. Working Principle

1. Sensors collect water quality parameters
2. ESP32 processes analog data
3. Data displayed locally on OLED
4. Data transmitted to cloud server
5. Dashboard visualizes real-time trends

C. Hardware Design

- Low-cost sensor integration
- Battery-powered portable unit
- Waterproof enclosure

D. Software Implementation

- Embedded C/C++ programming
- IoT dashboard integration
- Threshold-based alert system

A. Implementation Overview

The proposed Smart Portable Dual-Mode IoT Framework was implemented using a hardware-software co-design approach. The system integrates embedded sensing, edge processing, and cloud communication to enable real-time water quality monitoring. The prototype was developed using an **ESP32 microcontroller**, interfaced with pH, turbidity, and TDS sensors, along with a 0.96-inch OLED display for local visualization. The implementation focuses on achieving:

- Real-time data acquisition
- Low-power embedded processing
- Dual-mode communication (local + cloud)

- Portable and field-deployable design

B. Hardware Implementation

The hardware prototype consists of the following components:

1. ESP32 Microcontroller

The ESP32 serves as the central processing unit. It handles sensor data acquisition, calibration, edge processing, and communication with cloud platforms. Its built-in Wi-Fi module enables seamless IoT connectivity.

2. Water Quality Sensors

- **pH Sensor:** Measures hydrogen ion concentration to determine acidity or alkalinity.
- **Turbidity Sensor:** Measures water clarity based on light scattering caused by suspended particles.
- **TDS Sensor:** Measures dissolved solids concentration in ppm.

3. OLED Display

A 0.96-inch OLED display is used to show real-time sensor readings. It provides immediate local feedback without requiring internet connectivity.

4. Power Supply

The system is powered using a rechargeable battery unit (5V supply), making it portable and suitable for field deployment.

C. Software Implementation

The system software is developed using Embedded C/C++ in Arduino IDE for ESP32 programming.

Key Software Modules:

1. **Sensor Data Acquisition Module**
   - Reads analog signals from sensors
   - Converts raw values into digital format
2. **Calibration Module**
   - Applies calibration equations for pH, turbidity, and TDS
   - Ensures accuracy under varying environmental conditions
3. **Edge Processing Module**
   - Filters noisy sensor data
   - Compares values with threshold limits
   - Generates local alerts if contamination is detected
4. **Communication Module**
   - Sends data to cloud using Wi-Fi (HTTP/MQTT protocol)
   - Ensures periodic real-time updates
5. **Display Module**
   - Updates OLED display with live sensor readings

D. Experimental Setup

The system was tested using multiple water samples, including:

- Tap water
- Borewell water
- Filtered drinking water
- Contaminated/adjusted sample (for testing threshold conditions)

Each sample was analyzed for:

- pH level
- Turbidity (NTU)
- TDS (ppm)

The sensor readings were observed in both local and cloud modes.

E. Sample Observations

Table 1: Sample Water Quality Readings

Water Sample	pH Value	Turbidity (NTU)	TDS (ppm)	Status
Tap Water	7.2	3.5	180	Safe
Borewell Water	7.8	5.2	420	Moderate
Filtered Water	7.0	1.2	90	Safe
Contaminated Water	5.9	12.5	780	Unsafe

F. Results and Analysis

The experimental results demonstrate that the proposed system is capable of accurately monitoring water quality parameters in real time. The system successfully detected variations in pH, turbidity, and TDS values across different water samples.

Key Observations:

- The system effectively identified unsafe water conditions when parameter thresholds were exceeded.
- Real-time OLED display ensured immediate local feedback.
- Cloud integration enabled remote monitoring and historical data tracking.
- Sensor readings showed consistent trends with expected water quality levels.

G. Performance Evaluation

The system performance was evaluated based on the following metrics:

1. Accuracy

The sensor readings showed acceptable accuracy after calibration, with minimal deviation from expected values.

2. Response Time

The system achieved near real-time response with an average latency of less than 2 seconds for data updates.

3. Power Efficiency

Due to ESP32's low-power architecture, the system demonstrated efficient battery usage suitable for field deployment.

4. Connectivity Stability

Wi-Fi-based communication provided stable data transmission under normal network conditions.

H. Discussion

The results confirm that the proposed dual-mode IoT framework provides a reliable and efficient solution for real-time water quality monitoring. The integration of edge analytics significantly reduces dependency on cloud processing and ensures continuous operation even in intermittent network conditions.

Compared to traditional monitoring systems, the proposed approach offers:

- Improved portability
- Reduced cost
- Real-time decision-making capability
- Dual-mode flexibility (offline + online)

However, minor variations in sensor readings were observed due to environmental noise and sensor calibration limitations, which can be further improved using advanced filtering or machine learning-based correction techniques.

IV. Results and Discussion

The system enables:

- Real-time monitoring of water parameters
- Portable and field deployment capability
- Accurate sensor-based measurements
- Cloud-based analytics and visualization

The results demonstrate improved accessibility and usability compared to traditional systems.

A. Overview

This section evaluates the overall performance of the proposed Smart Portable Dual-Mode IoT Framework for Real-Time Water Quality Monitoring using Embedded Edge Analytics. The system is analyzed in terms of accuracy, response time, reliability, power efficiency, and communication effectiveness. Additionally, a comparative discussion with existing IoT-based water quality monitoring systems is presented to highlight the advantages of the proposed approach.

B. Accuracy Analysis

The accuracy of the system depends primarily on the calibration of pH, turbidity, and TDS sensors. After proper calibration using standard solutions, the system demonstrated reliable readings across different water samples.

- The pH sensor showed stable performance within the range of ±0.2 deviation.
- Turbidity measurements closely matched expected variations in suspended particles.
- TDS readings remained consistent for both low and high mineral concentration samples.

The results confirm that the system is suitable for practical environmental monitoring applications where moderate accuracy is acceptable for real-time decision-making.

C. Response Time and Real-Time Performance

One of the key objectives of the proposed system is real-time monitoring. The ESP32-based architecture ensures fast processing and minimal latency.

- Average sensor acquisition and processing time: < 2 seconds
- OLED display refresh rate: near real-time updates
- Cloud data transmission delay: 1–3 seconds depending on network conditions

The inclusion of edge processing significantly reduces computation delays by eliminating unnecessary cloud dependency for basic decision-making tasks.

D. Power Consumption and Portability

The system is designed for portable and field-deployable applications using a battery-powered setup.

- ESP32 low-power operation mode reduces energy consumption
- Sensor modules operate efficiently under 5V supply
- Average system runtime: 6–10 hours on standard rechargeable battery (depending on usage)

The compact design ensures easy deployment in rural, industrial, and remote monitoring environments.

E. Communication Performance

The system uses Wi-Fi-based communication (HTTP/MQTT protocols) for cloud connectivity.

Observations:

- Stable data transmission under normal network conditions
- Minimal packet loss during periodic updates
- Dual-mode operation ensures continuous functionality even during network failure

The system automatically continues local monitoring when cloud connectivity is unavailable, ensuring uninterrupted data acquisition.

F. Comparative Analysis with Existing Systems

The proposed system is compared with conventional IoT-based water quality monitoring approaches.

Feature	Traditional IoT Systems	Proposed System
Local Monitoring	Limited or absent	OLED-based real-time display
Cloud Dependency	High	Moderate (dual-mode support)
Edge Processing	Rare	Implemented
Portability	Medium	High (battery-powered compact design)
Real-Time Alerts	Cloud-based only	Local + cloud alerts
Cost Efficiency	Moderate to high	Low-cost design

The comparison clearly shows that the proposed system provides improved flexibility, reliability, and usability compared to traditional single-mode IoT solutions.

G. Advantages of Proposed System

The major advantages observed are:

- Dual-mode operation (local + cloud monitoring)
- Reduced dependency on internet connectivity
- Real-time edge-based decision making
- Portable and low-cost architecture
- Scalable for large-scale deployment
- Suitable for rural and urban water quality assessment

H. Limitations

Despite its advantages, the system has some limitations:

- Sensor accuracy may degrade over long-term usage without recalibration
- Dependence on Wi-Fi for cloud communication in remote areas
- Limited advanced analytics at edge level (currently threshold-based only)
- Battery life constraints for continuous long-term deployment

These limitations provide scope for further improvement using advanced techniques such as machine learning-based calibration and energy optimization strategies.

V. Technical Novelty

The proposed system introduces:

- Dual-mode monitoring (local + cloud)
- Portable and battery-operated design
- Integrated OLED display for on-site use
- Scalable modular architecture
- Cost-effective implementation

VI. Applications

- Rural water quality assessment
- Smart city infrastructure
- Environmental monitoring
- Industrial water management
- Educational and research use

VII. Conclusion

This paper presents a novel IoT-based portable water quality monitoring system that addresses key limitations of existing solutions. The integration of embedded systems, real-time sensing, and cloud analytics ensures efficient monitoring and decision-making. The system is scalable, affordable, and suitable for diverse real-world applications.

VIII. Future Scope

- Integration of AI-based predictive analytics
- Addition of more sensors (temperature, conductivity)
- Mobile app development
- GPS-based location tracking
- Large-scale deployment in smart cities

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