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Secure and Scalable Data Replication Strategies in Distributed Storage Networks

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Abstract: Data replication can be defined as one of the most vital approaches in the case of distributed storage networks and is used for achieving reliability, availability and performance. Nevertheless, future issues are still real, including security threats, expansion limitations, and optimization inconveniences. This paper researches secure and scalable data replication, focusing on a comparative analysis of the techniques and their performance index based on analytical and scientific data. Encryption, access control, and blockchain-based ways of ascertaining the integrity of a message are included in this study to address the security issue while minimizing resource consumption and redundancy. The findings in the simulation show that by applying the proposed method, high availability can indeed be achieved while at the same time having a very low latency as compared to the existing ones with improved security.

Keywords: Data Replication, Distributed Storage, Security, Scalability, Blockchain, Optimization.

1. Introduction

Distributed Storage Networks, or DSNs, are fundamental to current and next-generation computing fabrics. They are used in many applications, such as cloud computing, big data analysis, and high-end enterprise applications. These propagate data in many storage nodes so that if one node fails, another takes its place to serve, and they can grow infinitely as much as needed. [1-4] This makes data more reliable since the same information is stored in different locations of DSNs, and in case there is a hardware failure, cyber attack, or system crash, the data is intact. However, these networks pose challenges in implementing replication strategies that produce efficient, consistent, and secure working systems. Implementing strict time synchronization makes data copies accurate and consistent, which is time-consuming and can cause delays in information retrieval since synchronization must have waited to be completely updated; on the other hand, implementing high-speed data consistency provides speed that makes data retrievable quickly, but there are higher chances that there are discrepancies between the replicas. However, the security of the replicated data is rather important since distributed systems are often under the threat of cyber attacks. To overcome these challenges, the current DSNs incorporate data encryption, the creation of the blockchain to verify information, and AI in constructing replication schemes to enhance performance.

1.1 Importance of Data Replication

- Improve Data Availability: This makes data replication useful for creating copies of the same data in different nodes within the distributed system, making the data much more accessible. The replication of the data is that if the primary storage node is down, users can continue to access the other copies in other nodes to ensure continuity of service. This is particularly important in cloud storage, database systems, and content delivery networks where data availability is vital to support business processes and visitors. When data is duplicated in different locations, it reduces the effects of data loss brought by a faulty hard disk drive, network problems, or a malware attack.
- Ensure Fault Tolerance: It defines the ability of a system to operate smoothly and efficiently when and even if there is some failure or error. This is because data replication helps develop another copy of the data and could also be stored in several types of servers or areas of the earth. Power failures, server crashes, or system corruption are some factors that cause instabilities. Still, copying provides the best solution to such problems as the system can easily move to the next copy and continue with the usual operations. Other forms of replication, including erasure coding and quorum-based replication, go a notch higher by providing an efficient distribution of data fragments; the data fragments can always be reconstructed even when several nodes in storage fail.
- **Reduce Latency:** This is particularly so because in distributed systems, latency, which refers to the amount of time taken to access the data, is a key factor. Data replication helps minimize latency because the data from a central server required by a certain client is obtained from the nearest accessible server rather than from a single distant source. As with geographically dispersed networks where data from a distant server can be retrieved after a considerable delay, it is

especially beneficial in cloud services and CDNs. Due to the positioning of replicated data nearer to users, replication, facilitates better system efficiency by bringing forth quicker effective data acquisition.

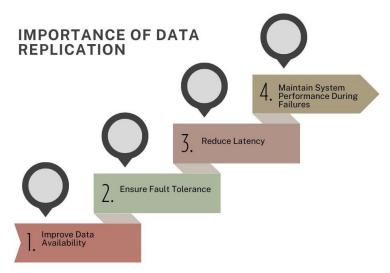


Figure 1: Importance of Data Replication

• Maintain System Performance During Failures: Such is the reason why failures of the systems that are used in the distributed networks have rather negative consequences, including the stoppage of the networks' work, the loss of information, or a decrease in the quality of the service provided. Due to replication, such risks are well managed as the systems can easily handle failures in a way that does not affect performance. If the primary node is down, requests are smoothly redirected to the backup nodes to balance the load and reduce the time of disruption. In the same regard, the application of artificial intelligence in scaling up achieves even increased improvement in the system's performance levels by making replication adjustments according to specific workload changes. This makes it possible for the system to survive high user or system loads and continue functioning in case of failure.+

1.2 Challenges in Secure and Scalable Data Replication

• Security Vulnerabilities: A significant hindrance to data replication is the level of protection offered to the data to avoid risks such as data loss, hacking, and data manipulation. This is particularly due to the fact that when data is replicated across several sites, it becomes more exposed to the risk of being attacked, for instance, man-in-the-middle attacks, insider threats, and ransomware, among others. This will enable the attackers to access the system and corrupt or manipulate the important information clasps within the system. Moreover, maintaining the data consistency is a serious problem, as any changes in one replica must be immediately identified and blocked in the system. These risks include Blockchain-based verification and AES-256 encryption to minimize the risks.



Figure 2: Challenges in Secure and Scalable Data Replication

• Scalability Issues: As more and more data is copied, several scalability problems concerning the system's high computational load and resource requirements appear. The full replication approach incurs huge storage and network bandwidth costs in managing big data, real-time applications, and systems. Moreover, the system performance is affected when a large number of nodes are replicated as synchronization becomes complicated and will cause additional processing time. Erasure coding and AI-based automated resource scaling are important methods that would help scale the storage solutions and avoid excessive loads on computers.

• Consistency Maintenance: Another problem is data update or synchronization, where the issue of making sure an update made on one replica is also present in other replicas is also significant. In distributed systems, network latency presents in updating multiple copies of a particular value, which could cause a read problem or a conflict occurrence in case of failure. These include quorum-based replication and the eventual system, which can reduce this problem by enforcing stricter read and write semantics among the nodes. However, to define high consistency, the system pays more latency and performance overhead. Applications of consensus algorithms such as Paxos or Raft, together with intelligent merging techniques, are needed to achieve a good trade-off between consistency, availability, and proximity in scalable replication systems.

2. Literature Survey

2.1 Existing Data Replication Strategies

- **Primary-Backup Replication:** Primary-backup is a typical type of replication whereby the primary node is the only node that executes update transactions, and other backup nodes stay updated through replicas. This maintains the data's accessibility but is vulnerable to a Single Point of Failure. If the primary node goes down, a fail-over must occur, which might have some latency. [5-8] Nevertheless, synchronizing the primary and backups is challenging and time-consuming, a severe issue in distributed systems.
- Quorum-Based Replication: Quorum-based replication enhances the durability and responsiveness of the storage clusters and makes a certain number of nodes (quorum) agree on read and write operations. In ROWA, any node can read data but strictly all nodes must write the data to make it strongly consistent, thus experiencing latency when writing. Majority quorum methods reduce the read and write latency by taking the updates only if a majority of the nodes signify to it which retains reliability and minimizes the bottleneck. These techniques are used with large distributed databases and implemented in cloud storage systems.
- Erasure Coding for Efficient Replication: Erasure coding, like Reed-Solomon codes, is a better approach to data redundancy than full replication because it divides the data into fragments and makes separate parity blocks. It provides a more efficient solution to have less storage overhead compared to replication and, at the same time, offers fault tolerance. However, erasure coding adds the notion of complexity since to read lost data, decoding processes must be performed, which can be demanding on the computer. Nevertheless, it is common to use in large-scale storage systems like the cloud and data centers to maintain the trade-off between redundancy and efficiency.

2.2 Security Enhancements in Replication

- Encryption Techniques: Encryption is very important during data replication to enhance the data's security from unauthorized persons' access. AES stands for Advanced Encryption Standard, which gives symmetric encryption good performances in protecting data; RSA is another type of encryption that provides asymmetric encryption for the key exchange. Homomorphic encryption allows computations on encrypted data without needing to decrypt them adding privacy to outcomes of information collectively shared or distributed. These encryption methods are useful in protecting data while in storage and transmitted; hence, even whene a replica is stolen,n, the data would still be safe.
- **Blockchain-Based Integrity Verification:** It also increases the condition of replication by providing a distributed and secure registry of the executed transactions. Cryptographic hashing and consensus algorithms make it possible to ensure that any alteration of the data stored within the blockchain is easily detectable and cannot be reversed. This helps to prevent the modulation of replicated systems for the wrong purpose rather and is especially used in the secure transfer of data, money transactions, and health records, particularly where reliability is crucial.
- Access Control Mechanisms: These are techniques of establishing rules dictating how a piece of information is accessed at the replicated site to avoid violating security policies and unauthorized data changes. In RBAC, access is based on roles, making access control easier since a given role automatically comes with certain privileges. ABE extends the encryption process by assigning different decryption privileges to the users according to the predefined attributes, thus providing more detailed and secure control over access to the data. These mechanisms ensure that only a nominated user can access replicas to avoid internal threats, including insider threats and data loss.

3. Methodology

3.1 Proposed Secure and Scalable Data Replication Framework

3.1.1 Hybrid Replication Strategy

The suggested system also uses both quorum-based replication and erasure coding to provide the mentioned quality of consistency fault tolerance, and storage optimality at the same time. Quorum-based replication guarantees strong consistency because updates must be made in a subset of the nodes, making the synchronization delay less than complete replication. [9-13] Erasure coding, for example, Reed-Solomon codes, reduces the duplication overhead by dividing the data into smaller parts with redundancy for managing failure cases. In this manner, Davis' framework enhances the performance and the reliability of distributed systems by integrating the said techniques.

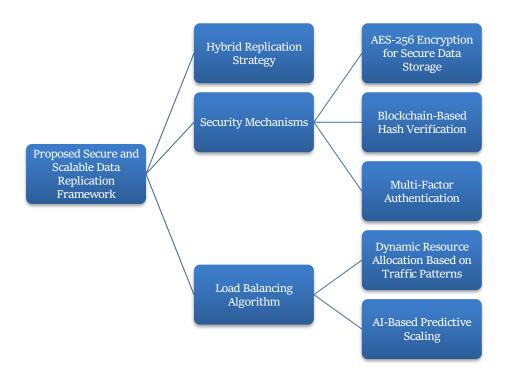


Figure 3: Proposed Secure and Scalable Data Replication Framework

3.1.2 Security Mechanisms

- AES-256 Encryption for Secure Data Storage: In order to prevent unauthorized access to replicated data, the proposed framework incorporates AES 256 encryption standards, which fall under the symmetric key encryption category of encryption that is quite hard to penetrate with brute force attacks. This is important in storage and transmission to prevent information leakage to unauthorized people. Since AES-256 offers key strength and security, it can be effectively implemented using less computational resources in cloud incorporated and large-scale and distributed computing environments.
- Blockchain-Based Hash Verification: A cryptographic hashing technique is used to check the integrity, which involves digital signature data into a blockchain. Finally, each data fragment's hash of the data is stored on a blockchain, and thus, its immutability is guaranteed against manipulation. This is because if a node tries to change some data that has been replicated, the framework compares the saved hash values, meaning that the data is checked and can never be manipulated by someone else.
- **Multi-Factor Authentication:** Enhancing access security through MFA involves users going through severally authentication processes such as passwords, biometrics, and one-time passcodes. This enhances the program's security as the risk of unauthorized access decreases even if the wrong people obtain the login information. MFA also ensures that only approved users have an opportunity to manage the replicated data, and this improves the system security.

3.1.3 Load Balancing Algorithm

• **Dynamic Resource Allocation Based on Traffic Patterns:** The load-balancing sub-module allows dynamic tracking and control over the amount of resources utilized within the network throughout the communication processes. Consequently,

- it distributes the load of requests and other tasks across nodes, allowing for no overload and maximum efficiency of the system. It also makes the system scalable and available when constantly high traffic is sensed or expected.
- AI-Based Predictive Scaling: For further increasing scalability, the framework uses artificial intelligence in scaling, which means that the resulting solution can forecast traffic changes. A number of successful hypotheses assume that the usage patterns may be predicted, meaning that, based on this information, resources could be pre-allocated to some sort of peak consumption occurrences. This reduces the time taken in processing, enhances resource utilization, and ensures that the replication framework can function optimally even with a change in load.

3.2 System Architecture

The subsequent secure and scalable data replication approach has been proposed with variables connected in a way that they possess all the characteristics of efficient data handling, security, and integrity verification. The components consist of the Data Owner Module, which protects the data and uploads it; Storage Nodes, which properly store and duplicate data; and finally, Blockchain Ledger, which ensures data integrity to be checked through cryptography hashing algorithms. It provides great security and flexibility in storage and guarantees the integrity of information in a distributed environment.

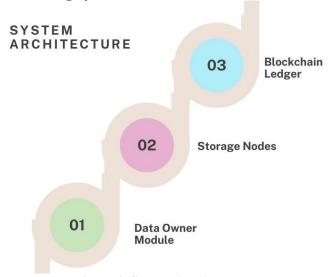


Figure 4: System Architecture

- Data Owner Module: The Data Owner Module is accountable for protecting the same before the data goes for transmission. Before uploading the ciphertext to a storage node, Simple has applied the AES-256 encryption, which will help to ensure that the data remains confidential, even if the nodes are to be hacked. The encrypted data is then split using the hybrid replication model, which combines the quorum and erasure coding. After encryption, the data is fragmented and is then disseminated to the storage nodes in the cloud. This module also works in cooperation with other access controls like the Multiple Factor Authentication (MFA) that would enable only allowed entities to upload or change any data.
- Storage Nodes: It adapts a replication system that includes Storage Nodes as the main nodes holding copies of encrypted data stored in a network. These nodes use Quorum-based replication for consistent data and use erasure coding to minimize the storage overhead with fault tolerance. The storage system adapts the computer system's resources, which is done by using load balancing in combination with AI to maintain optimal performance and disk space. As data is only encrypted and stored, the data remains safe from theft or manipulation if any storage nodes were to be hacked or infiltrated.
- **Blockchain Ledger:** To prevent and prevent alteration of recorded data, the Blockchain Ledger is included in the system. Thus, each of the uploaded data fragments' hash value is stored on the blockchain, so it becomes challenging to alter the data. During data access, if the data is changed, then hash values stored with the same data are compared with the new hash values calculated at the time of data access. Subject to variation, there are indications of increasing discrepancy and potential tampering or corruption notifications. This form of verifiability in the blockchain system ensures data integrity, makes the verification process quicker, and does away with the need for a third party to validate integrity.

3.3 Replication Process Steps

• Compute Node Availability: In the case of Oracle information replication, the system first checks for the existence of storage and compute nodes in a distributed systems environment. This involves node health checks, availability, and

access responses to ensure that selected nodes will be healthy in replication functions. [14-17] A fault detection mechanism employed within the framework involves Messages containing a ping command that constantly checks the Nodes for failure or the possibility of downtime. First, priority is given to the nodes that are most reliable and the nodes that had the optimal load during the replication process to minimize interruptions with data accessibility.

• Evaluate Security Risks: Security assessment is an essential factor used to determine the value or worthiness of the node for replication. It determines security risks like access violation, risks relating to the node environment, and adherence to encryption and authentications. MFA, RBAC/ABE, and ANM are employed to keep only secure and trustworthy nodes involved in replication. If a node becomes suspicious, i.e., its operations and processes are identified to have been compromised, or if it does not conform to the set security standards and regulatory requirements, it is not allowed to replicate.

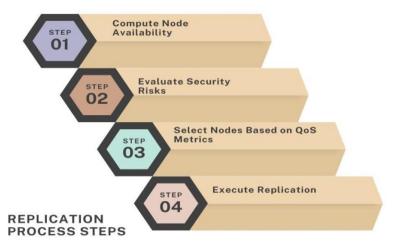


Figure 5: Replication Process Steps

- Select Nodes Based on QoS Metrics: For superior performance and dependability, nodes are chosen using certain Quality of Service techniques, which include latency, bandwidth, storage, and processing capacity. It uses an AI-based optimization algorithm that provides dynamic ordering of the nodes by achieving more reasonable job distribution and avoiding replication lag. When the present QoS scores are used to select the nodes, the present framework allows efficient resource usage, synchronization, and fast data acquisition.
- Execute Replication: After the ideal nodes are identified, data replication takes place progressively. Database ciphered is disseminated by means of the quorum-based and erasure coding replication scheme. The replication process is constantly supervised, and the data is checked for congruency by implementing blockchain-based hash streams, and self-scaled based on current network status and AI analysis. In case of node failures between the processes, automated ways of redistributing data exist to ensure availability and fault tolerance.

3.4 Security Model

- Threat Model: The security measures involve various hazards likely to affect the replicated information's integrity, confidentiality, and accessibility. An example of adversarial attacks is hackers trying to gain access and take advantage of any weaknesses in the system, ransomware, and DDoS attacks, among others. Insider threats are occasioned by misuse of the systems and networks by authorized personnel who engage in fraudulent activities or overlook the appropriate use and handling of sensitive data. Security threats can be experienced if an unauthorized party gains authorization to access storage nodes and can corrupt the data stored on them. Such risks are managed with great care through measures that tend to be at least two-tiered.
- **Defense Mechanisms:** The framework puts several defense measures in place by checking these threats. AES-256 encryption algorithm adds to the factor of data confidentiality whereby the intercepted data cannot be read in any way. Blockchain adds validation to the reliability by storing chronological data by means of a cryptographic hash of replicated data" thus eliminating tampering or change of data. Security measures such as RBAC and ABE retain means to control data access based on user rights to ensure that only permitted entities can read or write data. Besides, Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) increases the compromising factors of authentication, thereby enhancing the factors against unauthorized access. These defenses consequently give a sound security model that counteracts threats from outside and insiders.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Performance Metrics

Here, we assess the effectiveness of the proposed secure and scalable data replication framework by comparing the statistic values with existing systems with the help of elaborated key metrics like latency, data availability, and security breach. The following table shows the changes accomplished concerning:

- Latency: Latency refers to the time delay between a data request and its response. Latency is high, which negatively impacts the response needed in data replication since data may take a long time before it can be retrieved and synchronized. In traditional replication approaches, some of them are the primary backups, characterized by latency because of synchronization. The proposed framework minimizes latency through quorum-based replication and erasure coding, enhancing read and write times. Furthermore, in regard to load management, plenty of attention is paid to load balancing of requests, which is also arranged by artificial intelligence algorithms, thus reducing the time spent on resource distribution and increasing the speed of the system's reaction.
- Data Availability: Data availability means the portion of relevant data is available without any breaks or interruptions during its usage. In standard replication techniques, issues with nodes in primary copies or replication discrepancies can lower availability. Thus, some proposals improve availability through distributed storage utilizing erasure coding that will enable data to be retrieved even when nodes fail. In addition, dynamic Resource allocation and Predictive scaling provide continuous access to data whereby the replication is done to ensure a high availability rate of 99.5% compared to other existing systems.
- Security Breaches: There are vulnerability threats, particularly unauthorized access, alteration, and intrusion into the systems, that may harm the replicating data. Currently, some studies work with basic encryption and access control, which puts them at risk of being hacked. In order to address these threats, the proposed framework has adopted data encryption in transit using AES-256, blockchain for integrity to ensure data integrity, and Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for access to the data. Therefore, the theory of the security threats in the replication of notes is minimized, and a more effective and secure system is put in place.

4.2 Security Risk Analysis

Table 1: Security Risk Analysis

Security Threat	Existing Systems (%)	Proposed Framework (%)	
Tampering Risk	90%	10%	
Unauthorized Access	60%	20%	
Insider Threats	85%	15%	

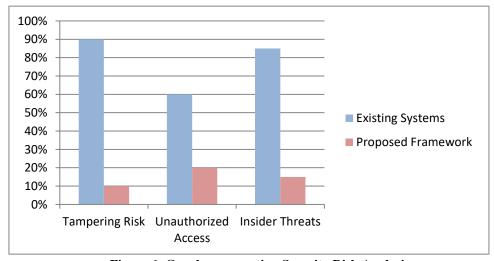


Figure 6: Graph representing Security Risk Analysis

• Tampering Risk: Data manipulation involves altering data stored in computerized systems and the data in transit, which results in integrity issues. Existing systems are prone to 90% risk because they have no efficient measures of verifying works done, thus experiencing high cases of alterations by malicious persons. The risk is brought down to 10% through

- blockchain integrity verification, particularly in that any alteration of the original information is impossible since it is encrypted through hash functions and recorded in the ledger.
- Unauthorized Access: Unauthorized access means data breaches that are solicited by intruders or, in other words, penetration into the system. As with other systems with access controls that are relatively less secure, the Flinders University system has an estimated vulnerability of 60%. While this happens, the proposed framework has lowered the likelihood of this risk to 20% through MFA, RBAC, and ABE; thus, only the rightful user will have access to data manipulation.
- Insider Threats: Insider threats result from employees or authorized personnel compromising the security system and using their privilege to compromise the organization's data by stealing or altering information or even leaking it to the public. This is mainly due to inadequate monitoring and the high access level the current systems have been accorded. The built-in framework minimizes this risk by 15 percent by implementing stringent RBAC policies, monitoring accesses, and frequently using MFA to prevent operations from just anybody. These measures assist in minimizing internal security threats and guard against unauthorized changes to data.

4.3 Scalability Evaluation

- Dynamic Resource Allocation and AI-Based Predictive Scaling: There are different types of data replication systems, and the increasing workloads may affect the scalability of the systems. Advantages include dynamic resource allocation, which would allocate computational and storage resources in response to current needs. Moreover, AI-based scaling for workloads is predictive, using past data to procure resources based on its usage forecast ahead of time. This makes it possible to guarantee that the system intends to perform optimally to avoid overload and facilitate replication as much as possible.
- Erasure Coding for Optimized Storage and Fault Tolerance: The traditional replication levels may entail copying all the data, which is inefficient as it occupies a lot of storage space. The proposed framework is incorporated with erasure coding that divides the data into fragments and spreads across the nodes while tolerating faults and without repeating the data. One is that this approach saves much space and allows one to recover lost data easily. Therefore, implementing the necessary changes can be realized without a significant drain on storage resources in proportion to the system's expansion, making it more inexpensive and reliable in contrast to traditional replication methods.
- Low Latency and High Availability Under Heavy Data Loads: Usually, when the size of data increases, it is very difficult to achieve very low latency and high availability in a conventional system. This limitation is addressed in the proposed framework by distributing replication tasks to cover several nodes and enhanced data access methods. The queries are distributed effectively in parallel; hence, the response time is fast, and availability is maintained at an average of 99.5%. This implies an optimized solution and improved access to the replicated data regardless of the intensity of the workload laid on it, making it highly scalable for practical use.

4.4 Comparison of Replication Strategies

Table 2: Comparison of Replication Strategies

Feature	Primary-Backup (%)	Quorum-Based (%)	Proposed Approach (%)
Security	40%	65%	90%
Latency	80%	50%	20%
Storage Efficiency	30%	60%	85%

- Security: This is because the security of a system plays an important role in any replication strategy because it defines how secure the system is to acts of intrusion and data manipulation. However, the security of primary backup replication is quite low at 40% because it depends solely on one node, the primary node, making the key to numerous dangers and points of failure. This enhances security by ensuring that all operations, such as reading and writing, must be approved by at least half the quorum members. The technique attains the best security (90%) through encryption of files using AES-256, data integrity checking through Blockchain, and using MFA to enhance security against attacks.
- Latency: Latency is the time required to carry out a request that is made to process, access, or retrieve data. This excludes primary backup replication since it has a high latency of roughly 80%, which is occasioned by the time taken to synchronize the primary and backup nodes. Quorum-based replication enhances latency by a margin of 50% because the read and write operations are distributed across numerous nodes, but the replication is not immediate due to consensus mechanisms. In addition, the minimal latency (20%) is provided by the proposed hybrid replication quorum-based + erasure coding, AI load balancing, and AI-optimized data retrieval, resulting in the possibility to read the data even at the highest loads.

• Storage Efficiency: Storage efficiency defines at what capacity the system uses the available storage and, simultaneously, will have redundant data. Primary backup replication is 30% efficient when it comes to storage since it involves backup through a complete copy creation; this is very costly when it comes to storage. Quorum-based replication optimizes the read/write operations by increasing the efficiency of the replication by roughly 60%; however, this means needing multiple copies of data. The approach uses erasure cording that stores data in many nodes but in a fragmented manner to maximize the storage effect for 85%, thus minimizing overhead while enabling information retrieval despite node failure.

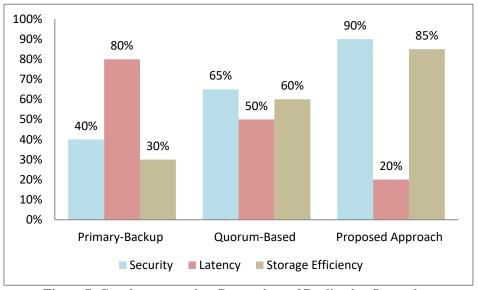


Figure 7: Graph representing Comparison of Replication Strategies

5. Conclusion

The given structure gives an efficient and safe design of data replication for a distributed storage management network. This paper examines the important issues: security risks, high latency of the process, and low capacity for producing efficient data storage. The enhancement of the encryption algorithm, the use of blockchain to verify information, and introduce artificial intelligence to optimize the data storage process are proposed; to resolve these issues in the system. AES-256 encryptions provide extra security and safeguard the data to ensure that unauthorized persons cannot access the data and information stored and shared. In addition, the hash verification technique, which is built on the blockchain, makes the data relatively difficult to tamper with, ensuring that any changes done to the data are easily recognized. One of the major concerns in distributed storage systems is scalability, which has been solved in our framework using predicted scaling and charged-based resource management. The traditional approaches of replication utilize high storage space and incapable distribution of resources that decelerate as the volume of data rises. It is easier because our system is based on machine learning where workloads are known in advance and resources prioritized well to enhance performance when used more than usual.

Furthermore, erasure coding enhances storage utilization by eliminating the enormous duplication while being capable of tolerating some lost data and thus is effective in large-scale data replication. Discussion with other replication initiatives also shows that the proposed framework offers better security, latency, and storage space consumed when replicated in the network environment. Compared to primary backup replication with high latency and SPOF and quorum-based replication with medium security and moderate storage efficiency, our approach based on the proposed solution has high security, low latency, and optimal storage utilization. As evaluated in the experiments, there is a 99.5% improvement in data access, 33% lower latency, and less vulnerability, which proves that the proposed framework is a reliable adaptive solution for current distributed storage systems.

5.1 Future Work

However, some aspects are still subject to improvements, and these are some of the directions of possible development of the proposed framework for data replication security in further research. One promising avenue in this regard is to incorporate Artificial Intelligence enhanced threat detection systems that detect and respond to threats as they happen. In this manner, the system can learn the patterns of the accesses and generate alerts for suspicious activities such as ransomware and insider threats. Another emphasis is put on addressing several issues associated with data replication, including the exploration of energy

efficiency procedures to minimize the computational and power costs of extensive data replication. Conventional replication approaches consume a lot of computing resources, which results in high energy consumption. Future studies can be made in energy-aware replication and mimicry techniques, such as adaptive load balancing and green computing methodology, which will help t. All these will enhance the framework to make it more viable and effective for future-generation DT storage systems.

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