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[Cover Book](#)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4>

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### Articles

#### Simulation of Priority Round Robin Scheduling Algorithm

Tri Dharma Putra, Rakhmat Purnomo

2170-2181

[PDF DOWNLOAD](#)

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11665](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11665)

Citations

Abstract views: 368

#### Classification of Tuberculosis Based on Lung X-Ray Image With Data Science Approach Using Convolutional Neural Network

Mawaddah Harahap, Alfeus P. S. Pasaribu, Dedy Ridoly Sinaga, Romulus Sipangkar, Samuel

2193-2197

[PDF DOWNLOAD](#)

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11711](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11711)

Citations

Abstract views: 150

#### Usability Evaluation of Wedding Administrative Information System using System Usability Scale

Novrisyah Hasibuan, Raissa Amanda Putri

2198-2207

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i3.11749](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i3.11749)

Citations

Abstract views: 191

## Data Mining implementation on SMUN Scholarship recipient candidates using the C4.5 algorithm

Rusdiansyah, Hendra Supendar, Nining Suharyanti, Tuslaela  
2208-2213

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11767](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11767)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 122

## Predicting Employee Attrition Using Logistic Regression With Feature Selection

Fitri Herinda Wardhani, Kemas Muslim Lhaksmana  
2214-2222

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11783](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11783)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 227

## Decision Tree Algorithm to Measure Employee Performance Discipline

Linda Marlinda, Evita Fitri , Siti Nurhasanah Nugraha , Faruq Aziz, Santoso Setiawan  
2223-2230

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11796](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11796)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 142

## Application of the AHP-ELECTRE Method for Selection OOP Based Apps Programs

Akmaludin, Adhi Dharma Suriyanto, Nandang Iriadi, Budi Santoso, Bilal Abdul Wahid  
2231-2240

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11370](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11370)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 179

## Development of Game Recognition Covid-19 Variants, Symptoms, and Vaccinations Based on RPG

Fiqih Hana Saputri, Ferawati  
2241-2247

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11584](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11584)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 77

## Web-Based Laboratory Inventory Application Using QR Code and RFID in Telecommunication Engineering Laboratories/Workshops

Nur Nabila Rabiah, Lindawati, Sarjana  
2248-2261



DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11624](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11624)

Citations < 0

Abstract views: 120

## Analysis Clustering Using Normalized Cross Correlation In Fuzzy C-Means Clustering Algorithm

Ricky Crist Geoversam Imantara Kembaren, Opim Salim Sitompul, Sawaluddin  
2262-2271



DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11666](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11666)

Citations < 0

Abstract views: 81

## Application of Certainty Factor Method in Intelligent System for Diagnosis of Periodontal Disease in Cigarette Addicts Application of Certainty Factor Method in Intelligent System for Diagnosis of Periodontal Disease in Cigarette Addicts

Ahmadi Irmansyah Lubis, Nur Yanti Lumban Gaol  
2272-2279



DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11695](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11695)

Citations < 0

Abstract views: 81

## Validation Information System Munaqasyah Exam Registration Based Android

Muhamad Alda, Fathiyah Hasyifah Sibarani, Aspiraikhani Nasution  
2280-2291



DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11737](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11737)

Citations < 0

Abstract views: 77

## Evaluation Using Black Box Testing and System Usability Scale in the Kidung Sekar Madya Application

Gede Surya Mahendra, I Kadek Andy Asmarajaya  
2292-2302



DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11755](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11755)

Citations 1

Abstract views: 215

## Implementation of Data Mining to predict sales of Bogo helmets using the Naïve Bayes algorithm

Kartika Mariskhana, Ita Dewi Sintawati, Widiarina

2303-2310

PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11768](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11768)

Citations 1

Abstract views: 131

## Information System for State-owned inventories Management at the Faculty of Computer Science

Tjahjanto, Artika Arista, Ermatita

2182-2192

PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11678](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11678)

Citations 0

Abstract views: 212

## Decision Support System for The Program Indonesia Pintar Scholarship Using Simple Additive Weighting Method

Yosep Septiana, Fitri Nuraeni, Kamelia Anisa

2311-2316

PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11786](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11786)

Citations 1

Abstract views: 183

## A New Approach to Motorcycle Theft Prevention System Based on Arduino Uno

Alex Wenda

2317-2328

PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11815](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11815)

Citations 0

Abstract views: 131

## Analysis and Design of UI/UX Mobile Applications for Marketing of UMKM Products Using Design Thinking Method

Eva Zuliana Dewi, May Fransisca, Rani Irma Handayani, F. Lia Dwi Cahyanti

2329-2339

---

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DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11505](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11505)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 365

## Forest fire predicting using Naive Bayes and KNN algorithm

Muhammad Salimy Ahsan, Zakaria Zakaria, Zulpan Hadi, Samuel Everth Andrias Kurni, Kusri  
2340-2347

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11609](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11609)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 179

## Analysis performance of content delivery network by used Rateless Code method

Sahat Parulian Sitorus, Elysa Rohayani Hasibuan, Rohani  
2348-2359

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11651](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11651)

 Citations 1

Abstract views: 121

## Classification of beetle type using the Convolutional Neural Network algorithm

Insidini Fawwaz, Tomy Candra, Delima Agustina Margareta Marpaung, Arun Dinis, M Reza Fachrozi  
2340-2348

 PDF DOWNLOAD

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 Citations 0

Abstract views: 63

## Comparison of Feature Extraction Methods on Sentiment Analysis in Hotel Reviews

Arie Satia Dharma, Yosua Giat Raja Saragih  
2349-2354

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11706](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11706)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 78

## Data Mining using clustering method to predict the spread of Covid 19 based on screening and tracing results

Allwin M. Simarmata, Riwanto Manik, Ourent Chrisin Renatta Simanjorang, Dymas Frepian Purba  
2355-2360

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 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11740](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11740)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 143

## Mobile-Based Design of Information System for Vocational Internship Activities for Vocational Students

Rizwana Alya, Ali Ikhwan  
2361-2368

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11764](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11764)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 108

## Application of the Kerthi Bali Economy in a Web-Based Geospatial Visualization Information System

I Putu Ferry Karyada, Kadek Oky Sanjaya, Made Gede Arthadana, I Gusti Agung Paramita, I Gede Aryana Mahayasa  
2369-2379

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11777](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11777)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 151

## Village fund cash credit direct assistance recipient decision support system using the Simple Multi Attribute Rating Technique (SMART) method

Harmayani Harmayani, Ardian Asti, Dicky Apdilah  
2380-2390

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11794](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11794)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 75

## Implementation of Web-based of E-Marketplace for UMKM at XYZ University

Mariza Devega, Walhidayat, Yuhelmi  
2391-2399

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11761](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11761)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 156

## Development of based learning media with App Inventor

Erwinsyah Satria, Zulkifli Musthan, Pandu Adi Cakranegara, ardian Arifin, Zulvia Trinova

2400-2406

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11611](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11611)

 Citations  0

Abstract views: 191

## **Stratified K-fold cross validation optimization on machine learning for prediction**

Slamet Widodo, Herlambang Brawijaya, Samudi Samudi

2407-2414

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11792](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11792)

 Citations  0

Abstract views: 144

## **Implementation of Generative Pre-Trained Transformer 3 Classify-Text in Determining Thesis Supervisor**

Yoga Handoko Agustin

2415-2420

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11757](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11757)

 Citations  0

Abstract views: 123

## **Comparison of Evaluation and Selection of SmartPhones Recommended AHP, Weight Sum Model, and Weight Product**

Akmaludin, Erene Gernaria Sihombing , Linda Sari Dewi, Rinawati , Ester Arisawati

2160-2169

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11366](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11366)

 Citations  0

Abstract views: 159

## **The search for alternative algorithms of the iteration method on a system of linear equation**

Aam Jon Mintase Tarigan, Mardiningsih , Saib Suwilo

2124-2424

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11817](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11817)

 Citations  0

Abstract views: 67

## **Role of Artificial Intelligence in Livestock and Poultry Farming**



Hrshitva Patel , Abdul Samad, Muhammad Hamza, Ayesha Muazzam, Muhammad Khoiruddin Harahap  
2425-2429

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11837](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11837)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 385

## The effect of Chi-Square Feature Selection on Question Classification using Multinomial Naïve Bayes

Novi Yusliani, Syechky Al Qodrin Aruda, Mastura Diana Marieska, Danny Mathew Saputra, Abdiansah  
2430-2436

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11788](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11788)

 Citations 1

Abstract views: 141

## Decision Support System for admission of new employees by applying a combination of ANP-TOPSIS Methods

Roulina Agape Purba, Nelly Astuty Hasibuan, Dito Putro Utomo  
2437-2448

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11724](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11724)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 131

## Virtual Job Fair Information System Design Based on Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality

Yuyun Khairunisa, Yeni Nurhasanah , Ratu Verlaili  
2449-2461

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11795](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11795)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 133

## Mustahiq (Zakat Recipient) Determination Application with Analytic Hierarchy Process Model

Ismail Husein, Achyar Zein, Ladia Sabrina  
2462-2468

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11825](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11825)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 111

## Review Star Hotels Using Convolutional Neural Network

Edward Sze, Handri Santoso, Djarot Hindarto

2469-2477

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11836](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11836)

 Citations 3

Abstract views: 108

## Implementation of Web Scraping for Journal Data Collection on the SINTA Website

Nelawati Adila

2478-2485

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11576](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11576)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 205

## Comparison of Main Characteristics of Food Insecurity Using Classification Tree and Random Forest

E Ramadhani, B Sartono, A F Hadi, S 'Ufa, T Akhdansyah

2486-2497

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11852](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11852)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 167

## The Information Systems at Irfan Jaya Stores Using the Rational Unified Process Method

Muhammad Irfan Rasnan Syah, Lukman

2498-2507

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11813](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11813)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 93

## Integrated service post information system to support baby growth data reporting

Syaidaturrahmi

2508-2517

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DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11839](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11839)

 Citations 0

Abstract views: 99

## Development Of Alumni Portal Application Based Android

Samsudin, Riri Syafitri Lubis

2518-2529

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11835](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11835)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 95

## The Accounting information system design of Avia Jaya Savings and Loans Cooperative Palu City

Kevin, Nina Yusnita Yamin, Lucyani Meldawati , Muhammad Afdhal

2530-2538

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11844](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11844)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 81

## Applications for Detecting Plant Diseases Based on Artificial Intelligence

Bitu Parga Zen; Iqsyahiro Kresna A, Diandra Chika Fransisca

2537-2546

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11833](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11833)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 99

## Decision Support System for selecting study programs using the AHP method

Dahfa Ramadhan, Linda Marlinda

2547-2555

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11821](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11821)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 79

## Performance Comparison of Ultrasonic Sensor Accuracy in Measuring Distance

Edward Sze, Djarot Hindarto, I Ketut Adi Wirayasa, Haryono

2556-2562

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11883](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11883)

 Citations < 3

Abstract views: 153

## Digitizing Local Archives and North Sumatera Culture through Literacy Using the E-Library Website

Intan Maulina, Muhammad Khoiruddin Harahap  
2563-2567

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11849](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11849)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 53

## Introduction to the Heritage Building Medan City Using Augmented Reality

Ali Ikhwan, Adnan Buyung Nasution  
2568-2575

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 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 104

## Automatic Plant Watering System Based on Air Temperature and Soil Humidity Using the Fuzzy Sugeno Method

Mhd Furqan, Solly Aryza Lubis, Rosa Linda Harahap  
2576-2583

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11893](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11893)

 Citations < 0

Abstract views: 63

## Usability Testing on the Simponik Website using the System Usability Scale (SUS)

Deni Saputra, Edo Ardiyan Syah, Febriyanti Darnis  
2584-2592

 PDF DOWNLOAD

DOI : [10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11916](https://doi.org/10.33395/sinkron.v7i4.11916)

 Citations < 2

Abstract views: 102

## Performance of Deep Learning Inception Model and MobileNet Model on Gender Prediction Through Eye Image

Syntia Widyayuningtias Putri Listio  
2593-2601

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Abstract views: 70

# Comparison of main characteristics of food insecurity using classification Tree and Random Forest

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**Abstract.** Since the emerging of big data era, the information and data are grown rapidly. It requires us to have ability to extract the knowledge and information that consisted in this explosion of the data. One of way that can be used for this purpose is by using machine learning method. One of purpose of machine learning implementation is to conduct classification analysis and to identify variable importance that contribute in the research. It's conducted the comparative study between two machine learning classification methods named classification tree and random forest method. This study is implemented on Indonesian Socioeconomic Survey (SUSENAS) 2020 in Aceh Province. The purpose of the study is to identify the optimum method between both and to identify the characteristics of food insecure household. The optimum method obtained by comparing the AUC value. The results obtained is random forest outperformed classification tree with the AUC value of random forest method is 0,718 and classification tree method is 0,668. The rank of variable importance of the optimum method is the type of cooking fuel used in the household, the area of house floor, education level of head of household, number of savers in a household, and the type of house floor.

**Keywords:** AUC, Classification Tree, Food Insecurity, Random Forest

## INTRODUCTION

Machine learning (ML) is an algorithm that is used to increase the accuracy of data analysis automatically. In building the model, algorithms are used in machine learning to classify and make predictions based on training data. In the machine learning process, it works more efficiently by developing its algorithm independently, making it easier for humans to work (Ethem, 2020).

The way the machine learning algorithm works is known as computational learning. This is due to the limited training data set which is limited by the opportunities in other methods in general. One of the tools to measure error in the analysis is bias-variance decomposition. Machine learning is useful for solving world problems in a scalable way. Another advantage of machine learning is working on data by improving machine or system performance and able to create their own algorithm.

The division of machine learning algorithms is generally divided into three types, namely supervised learning, unsupervised learning and reinforcement learning (Ethem, 2020). The supervised learning

\*name of corresponding author



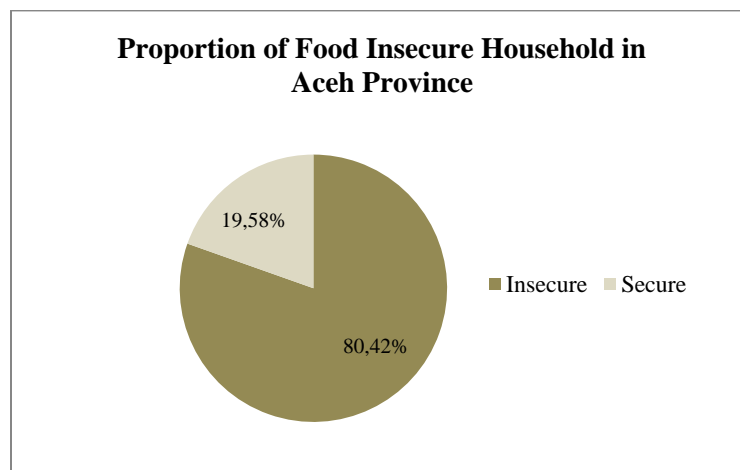
algorithm is formed by determining and labelling the desired input and output variables. Supervision is carried out through iterations that are carried out in optimizing the objective function which can monitor the output results that are affected by the new input. This algorithm can increase the level of accuracy of predictions on an ongoing basis in carrying out their duties (Mohri et al., 2012). Supervised learning algorithms are divided into two types, namely classification and regression. Regression can be used at the time of analysis for predicting or modelling purposes. While classification is more appropriate to be used to verify or classify objects into existing groups. Classification algorithms include nave bayes classifier, SVM, logistic regression, KNN, decision tree and random forest. Each method has its own advantages. Classification methods that are very often used are classification tree and random forest.

Classification Tree is a classification method with an exploratory technique that produces a decision tree. With a smaller error rate, each new tree is used to classify based on the response. Some of the advantages of tree classification include that the previous decision tree is very complex and general can be made simpler and more detailed, calculations are carried out based on needs so that it can summarize or shorten the operating process, test samples based on certain criteria

Random forest is a classification method that builds a lot of trees during training in its operation. In doing its job, the algorithm chooses a large tree-forming class. The random decision forest also makes corrections to the resulting tree in the training data set. The accuracy of the classification for the same hyper parameters and data produces different results with more than one operation even though they are carried out sequentially or at close times. This is one of the weaknesses of the random forest, the accuracy value is not stable. In this study, the classification of household indicators of food insecurity in Aceh Province will be carried out by comparing the random forest and classification tree methods based on the level of accuracy, as well as seeing the similarity of the importance variable generated from the two methods.

To conduct classification method, the class stability of response variable must first be inspected. The instability of responses variable class will make less accurate decision. Therefore, this problem should be controlled. There are a lot of ways to handle this problem, one of them is *random oversampling* method (Han et al., 2012). Random oversampling is a resampling method that works by resampling the data in so that the resulting training set contains an equal number of positive and negative, so the total of every class of the data would be equal.

This study is implemented in food insecurity data in Aceh Province 2020. The characteristics of the data can be seen on the figure below.



**Figure 1.** Percentage of food insecurity

\*name of corresponding author



Based on the socio-economy survey conducted by BPS, there are 20% of households in Aceh Province included food-insecure households. Meanwhile, 80% of households are included in food-secure households. It indicates data of food insecurity in Aceh Province 2020 is imbalanced. It will cause some issues for making decision in classification. Thus, before conducting the model, we should balance the data first using random oversampling method.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Classification is one machine learning methods built with the aim of decision making. There are two general steps in conducting classification analysis. Those are training and testing steps. The data is first split into training and testing data. Training step is a series of process for model building by using a set of training data with the known response variable category. While, testing step is used to evaluate the performance of classification model by using testing data. (Ghatak, 2017)

### Classification Tree

Classification and Regression Tree (CART) is a non-parametric model that results a decision tree in a form of binary tree. Decision tree obtained is called classification tree when the response variable is categorical data. Otherwise, when the response variable is numerical data, the tree obtained is called regression tree. (L Breiman, 1993) Classification tree is binary recursive partitioning method because it always divides a group of data into two partitions. Each partitioned data is called as a node. The result of data partitioning is represented in a tree structure (L Breiman, 1993). This research (Lewis, 2000) named the origin node (root) by parent node. Parent node can be partitioned to children node. Children node can be partitioned to additional children node. Based on (L Breiman, 1993) classification tree is constructed by iterative selection of  $\chi = root(t)$  and all  $s \in sons(t)$ ,  $t \in T$ .

The algorithm for classification tree in general is divided into these steps as below (L Breiman et al., 1984):

1. Find each variable's best split. For each variable with K different values there exist K-1 possible splits. Find the split, which maximizes the splitting criterion. The resulting set of splits contains best splits (one for each variable).
2. Find the node's best split. Among the best splits from Step 1, find the one, which maximizes the splitting criterion.
3. Split the node using best node split from Step 2 and repeat from Step 1 until stopping criterion is satisfied.

As splitting criterion, we used Gini's impurity index, which is defined for node t as (L Breiman et al., 1984):

$$i(t) = \sum_{ij} C(i|j)p(i|t)p(j|t) \quad (1)$$

where  $C(i|j)$  is cost of misclassifying a class  $j$  case as a class  $i$  case (in our case  $C(i|j) = 1$ , if  $i \neq j$  and  $C(i|j) = 0$  if  $i=j$ ).  $p(i|t)$  and  $p(j|t)$  respectively is probability of case in class  $i(j)$  given that falls into node  $t$ .

The Gini impurity criterion is type of decrease of impurity, which is defined as follow:

$$\Delta i(s, t) = i(t) - pL i(t_L) - pR i(t_R) \quad (2)$$

where  $\Delta i(s, t)$  is decrease of impurity at node  $t$  with split  $s$ ,  $pL$  ( $pR$ ) are probabilities of sending case to the left (right) child node  $tL$  ( $tR$ ) and  $I(tL)$  ( $I(tR)$ ) is Gini impurity measure for left (right) child node. In order to enhance generalization of decision tree we used pruning with combination of cross-validation error rate estimation. The algorithm for pruning works as follows (L Breiman et al., 1984).

\*name of corresponding author



1. Randomly split training data into  $C$  folds.
2. Select pruning level of tree (level 0 equals to full decision tree).
3. Use  $C-1$  folds for creation of  $C-1$  new pruned trees and estimate error on last  $C$ -th fold.
4. Repeat from Step 2 until all pruning levels are used.
5. Find the smallest error and use the pruning level assigned to it.
6. Until pruning level is reached, remove all terminal nodes in the lowest tree level and assign decision class to parent node. Decision value is equal to class with higher number of cases covered by node.

### Random Forest

Random Forest is a developed CART algorithm by implementing *bootstrap aggregating (bagging)* process and random feature selection. Random Forest is a classification model which is built from the aggregating of single classification tree. The algorithm of Random Forest can be explained as below (Leo Breiman, 2001).

Let  $D = \{(x_1, y_1), (x_2, y_2), \dots, (x_N, y_N)\}$  denote the training data, with  $x_1 = (x_{i,1}, x_{i,2}, \dots, x_{i,p})^T$   
For  $j = 1$  to  $J$ :

1. Take bootstrap sample  $D$  of size  $N$  from  $D$ .
2. Using the bootstrap sample.  $D_j$  as the training data fit a tree.
  - a) Start with all observation in single node.
  - b) Repeat the following steps recursively for each node until the stopping criterion is met: (i) Select  $m$  predictor at random from the  $p$  available predictors.
3. Find the best binary split among all binary splits in the predictor from step 1.
4. Split the node into two descendant nodes using the split from step 2.

### Imbalanced Data

Imbalanced data is the data distribution of each class differs substantially where, again, the main class or classes of interest are rare. The class imbalance problem is closely related to cost-sensitive learning, wherein the costs of errors, per class, are not equal (Han et al., 2012). An imbalanced training set may result in a classifier that is biased towards the majority class. When the trained model is applied to a test set that is similarly imbalanced, it would yield an optimistic accuracy estimate (Ghatak, 2017).

There are several ways to handle imbalanced data issue, one of them is *Random Oversampling (ROS)* (Burnaev et al., 2015). Oversampling can change the training data distribution so that the rare class is well represented. Oversampling works by resampling the positive so that the resulting training set contains an equal number of positive and negative (Han et al., 2012).

### Receiver Operating Characteristics and Area Under the Curve

Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROC) curve are visual tool that can be used to compare two classification models. ROC curves show the trade-off between the *True Positive Rate (TPR)* and the *False Positive Rate (FPR)*. Suppose there is a testing data and a model, TPR is the proportion of positive classes that correctly labelled by the model. While, FPR is the proportion of negative classes that are mislabelled as positive by the model. Given that  $TP$ ,  $FP$ ,  $P$ , and  $N$  are respectively the number of true positive, false positive, positive, and negative classes. we know that  $TPR = \frac{TP}{P}$ , which is sensitivity. Furthermore,  $FPR = \frac{FP}{N}$ , which is  $1 - specificity$ . For a two-class problem, an ROC curve allows us to visualize the trade-off between the rate at which the model can accurately recognize positive classes versus the rate at which it mistakenly identifies negative classes as positive for different portions of the test set. Any increase in  $TPR$  occurs at the cost of an increase in  $FPR$ . The area under the curve (AUC) is a measure of the accuracy of the model (Han et al., 2012).

\*name of corresponding author





The vertical axis of n ROC curve represents TPR. The horizontal axis represents FPR. To plot an ROC curve for a model, it can be started at the bottom left corner, where  $TPR = FPR = 0$ . The actual class label at the top of the list is then inspected. If there is a true positive (i.e., a positive class that was correctly classified), then  $TP$  and thus  $TPR$  increase. On the graph, the point is moved up and plotted. Otherwise, the model classifies a negative class as positive, there is a false positive, and so both  $FP$  and  $FPR$  increase. On the graph, the point is moved right and plotted. This process is repeated for each of the test classes in ranked order, each time moving up on the graph for a true positive or toward the right for a false positive (Han et al., 2012).

### Variable Importance Score

A measurement that be used to determine the variable importance in classification analysis is *Mean Decrease Gini (MDG)*. MDG is a ratio between the sum of reduced which is caused by the  $s$ -th predictor variables and the number of trees that formed. The enhancement of MDG means that the predictor variable has a great contribution for building a classification tree. MDG is formulated as below (Zani et al., 2005):

$$MDG_s = \frac{1}{k} \sum_t [\Delta(s, t) I(s, t)] \quad (3)$$

With  $k$  is the number of trees that formed,  $\Delta(s, t)$  is reduced impurity which is caused by the  $s$ -th predictor variables in the  $t$ -th node.  $(s,)$  is the indicator function which is 1 if the  $s$ -th predictor variable is used in partitioning and otherwise is 0.

## METHOD

### Data

This study uses secondary data, namely the Aceh province SUSENAS data in 2020 which is sourced from BPS Aceh. The data observations used is 12,971 households consists of output indicators, namely the status of food insecurity and input data which are indicators of food insecurity. The variables used can be seen in the Table 1 as follows

**Table 1.** Variables Explanation

No	Type of Variable	Definition
1	Food Insecurity Status (Ballard & Cafiero, 2013)	A scale that can describe the inability of households or individuals to access the food they need on a regular basis. It's measured using FIES (Food Insecurity Experience Scale) with 2 categories; YES and NO.
<b>Social Assistance Program Receiver Status</b>		
2	BPJS (Wardani, 2018)	Social Health Insurance
3	BPNT (Wardani, 2018)	Food aid
4	PKH (Rahmansyah et al., 2020)	Government assistance
5	KKS (Sunarti, 2006)	Identity of non-welfare family
6	KIP (Pusat Penelitian Kebijakan Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017)	Identity of education assistance receiver
7	PIP (Pusat Penelitian Kebijakan Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017)	Education assistance receiver
8	Jamkesda (Wardani, 2018)	Health insurance provided by local government
9	Local Government Assistance (PETUNJUK TEKNIS:	Local Government Assistance

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*PENGENTASAN DAERAH RENTAN  
RAWAN PANGAN/PERTANIAN  
KELUARGA TAHUN 2021, 2021)*

**Supporting Activities of Household**

10	Cooking Fuel (Lewis, 2000)	Type of cooking fuel used by the household
11	Sanitation Eligibility (Cecilia, 2015)	The eligibility of sanitation of the household
12	Source of Drinking Water (Cecilia, 2015)	The source of drinking water consumed by household member
13	Internet access (Pujilestari & Haryanto, 2020)	Internet accessibility
14	Drinking Water Eligibility (WFP & Pangan, 2015)	Drinking Water Eligibility
15	Electricity (Sulemana et al., 2019)	Electricity accessibility

**Head/member of Household Characteristics**

16	Head of Household Education Level (Irawan et al., 2019)	The level of Education of Head of Households
17	Illiteracy Number (Hapsari & Rudiarto, 2017)	Illiteracy number in the household
18	Vulnerability of Household's Head (Wardani, 2018)	Head of household is woman with the member of household 0-14 years old
19	Non-outpatient with sick status (BPS, 2006); (Damayanti et al., 2018)	Non-outpatient with sick status

**Socio/economy of Household**

20	Number of Saver (Irawan et al., 2019)	The number of household member that have saving
21	Land Asset (Million & Muche, 2020)	Land asset status
22	Transfer Receiver (Magaña-Lemus et al., 2016)	Transfer receiver status

**Physical Condition of Household**

23	Type of Floor (Umniyyah, 2018)	Type of floor of household
24	Floor Area (Damayanti et al., 2018); (BPS, 2007)	Area of house, discretization with CHI-MERGE
25	Type of Wall (Umniyyah, 2018)	Type of wall of the house
26	Type of Roof (Umniyyah, 2018)	Type of roof of household

**Research Procedure**

Research procedure to conduct this study is shown below:

1. Conducting data exploration in descriptive form. It aims to see the characteristics of the data used.
2. Split the data into training data and testing data. 70% training data to form the model and 30% testing data to check the accuracy of the formed model.
3. Perform data resampling. Data resampling aims to overcome training data and full data which have different amounts of data between classes. Data resampling was done using random oversampling method.
4. Creating Classification Tree

\*name of corresponding author



- a. Tuning hyper-parameters  
In the Classification Tree, the hyper-parameters used are minsplit and cp. The minsplit used starts from 50 to 1000, while the Cp value used is 0.
- b. Seeing the most optimum model  
The most optimum model is seen from the resulting AUC value. The higher the AUC value, the better the model formed.
5. Creating Random Forest
  - a. Tuning hyper-parameter  
In the Random Forest, the hyper-parameters used are mtry and ntree. The mtry used starts from 500 to 2000, the Ntree used starts from 2 to 5.
  - b. Seeing the most optimum model  
The most optimum model is seen from the resulting AUC value. The higher the AUC value, the better the model formed.
6. Comparing Classification Tree and random forest methods. The comparison between Classification Tree and random forest method is seen based on the resulting AUC value. The method with the highest AUC value is the best method.
7. Get the importance variable score. The importance variable score can show how big the contribution of the predictor variables in explaining the criteria for food insecurity in a household.
- 8.

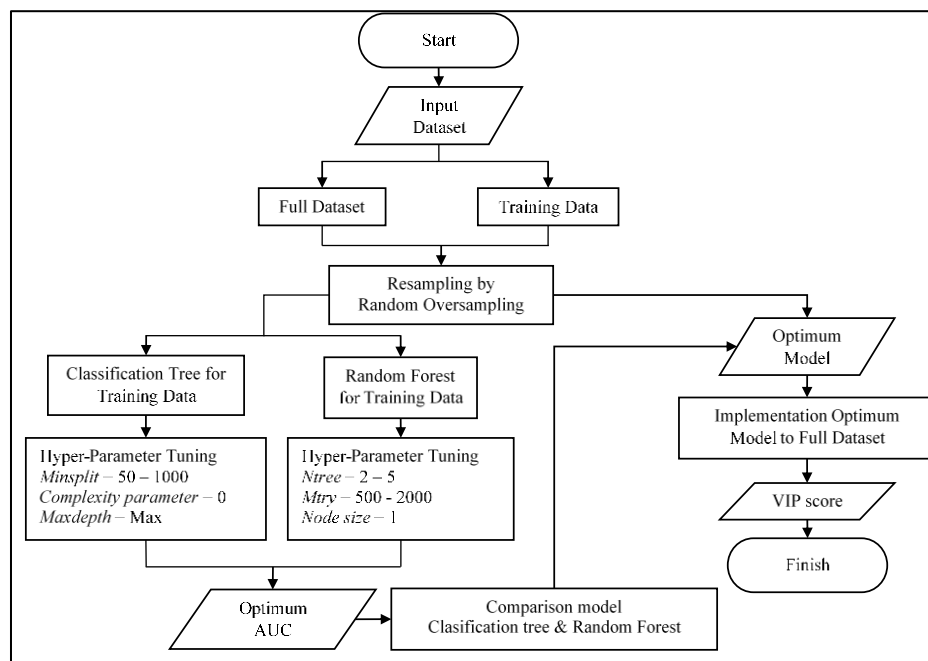


Figure 1. Flowchart of Random Forest Aceh Province 2020

## RESULT

### Data Overview

To conduct classification analysis, the dataset is split into training and testing data. In this study, the training data used are 70% of all surveyed households. Training data is used to build the model and determine the optimum model. While, the testing data is used to extract the information from the model. In 2020, the socio-economy survey was conducted in 12.971 households in Aceh Province. Based on the survey, it's obtained there are 2.540 households with food insecurity and the other 10.431 are secure. From the splitting data, training data obtained consists of 1.778 households with food insecurity and other

\*name of corresponding author



7.303 households are secure. This shows the unstable proportion between response variable categories which indicate a problem called imbalanced data. The issue of imbalanced data can lead to less accurate model obtained(Ghatak, 2017). Therefore, this issue should be addressed first. The Table. 2 below shows the food insecurity overview of original data and the *random oversampling* data.

Table 2. Food insecurity overview

Data/Status	Original		Resample	
	Insecure	Secure	Insecure	Secure
Full dataset	2540	10431	10431	10431
Training	1778	7302	7302	7302

One method that can be used to deal with imbalanced data is by applying *resampling* using *random oversampling*. *Random oversampling* is implemented in both training data and full dataset. It's aimed to result a balance data which have stable response variable categories proportion(Ghatak, 2017). For training data, it's obtained 7.302 observations for each category of response variable; food insecure and secure households. While for full data, it's obtained 10.431 observations for each category of response variable.

## DISCUSSIONS

### Comparison Classification Tree and Random Forest

Both in classification and random forest method, hyper-parameter tuning must be done first in order to obtain the fit model of the algorithm. In classification tree, the hyper parameter that was tuned is *minsplit* which is a multiple of 50 started from 50 to 400 and continued with a multiple of 100 started from 400 to 1000. Parameter Cp is set to 0. This is done with the aim of obtaining classification tree results that are easy to interpret. In this research, goodness of model is measured by AUC. The greater AUC obtained indicates the better model. Hyper-parameter tuning for classification tree is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Hyper-Parameter Tuning in Classification Tree

<i>Minsplit</i>	AUC Aceh 2020
50	0.647365
100	0.6699939
200	<b>0.6778106</b>
250	0.6757721
300	0.6758495
350	0.6762406
400	0.6748726
500	0.6779809
600	0.6766103
700	0.6759526
800	0.6758941
900	0.6757161
1000	0.6757161

\*name of corresponding author



Table 3 shows that AUC value for every *minsplit* changed started from 50-1000 tend to be constant. However, the highest AUC among those is found when *minsplit* is 200, which is 0,678. Thus, classification tree at a *minsplit* of 200 is determined as the optimum classification tree model.

The hyper parameter in random forest method that tuned are *n tree* and *m try*. The *n tree* used are 500, 750, 1000, 1250, 1500, 1650, 1750, and 2000. While, *m try* used are 2, 3, 4, and 5. The AUC values obtained are various as is shown in Table 4 below

Table 4. Hyper-Parameter Tuning in Random Forest

<i>Ntree</i>	<i>Mtry</i>			
	2	3	4	5
500	0.7165	0.7161	0.7081	0.7017
750	0.7173	0.7148	0.7102	0.7019
1000	<b>0.7184</b>	0.7154	0.7075	0.7021
1250	0.7154	0.7156	0.7090	0.7014
1500	0.7161	0.7163	0.7087	0.7014
1650	0.7160	0.7161	0.7100	0.7013
1750	0.7161	0.7156	0.7094	0.7005
2000	0.7154	0.7160	0.7093	0.7010

As the AUC values in classification tree, hyper parameter tuning parameter in random forest with various *n tree* and *m try* also tend to be constant. Table 4 indicates the optimum AUC value is 0,718 at the *n tree* of 1000 and *m try* is 2. This indicates that the random forest method is optimum when *n tree* is 1000 and *m try* is 2.

Based on the comparison of both methods, the optimum AUC value is obtained from random forest method with the AUC value is 0,718. This indicates that random forest can improve the level of accuracy more than classification tree does.

#### 4.1. VIP Score of Optimum Method

Variable Importance (VI) score is a value that indicates how much the contribution of predictor variables towards the response variable. Hence, based on the VI score obtained, it can be identified how capable the predictor variables are in explaining the criteria of food insecurity case. VI score used in this study is the VI score obtained from the optimum method, which is random forest that implemented in the over-sampling full dataset. It's obtained the VI score for food insecurity case in Aceh Province in 2020. The VI score can be seen in Figure 1 below.

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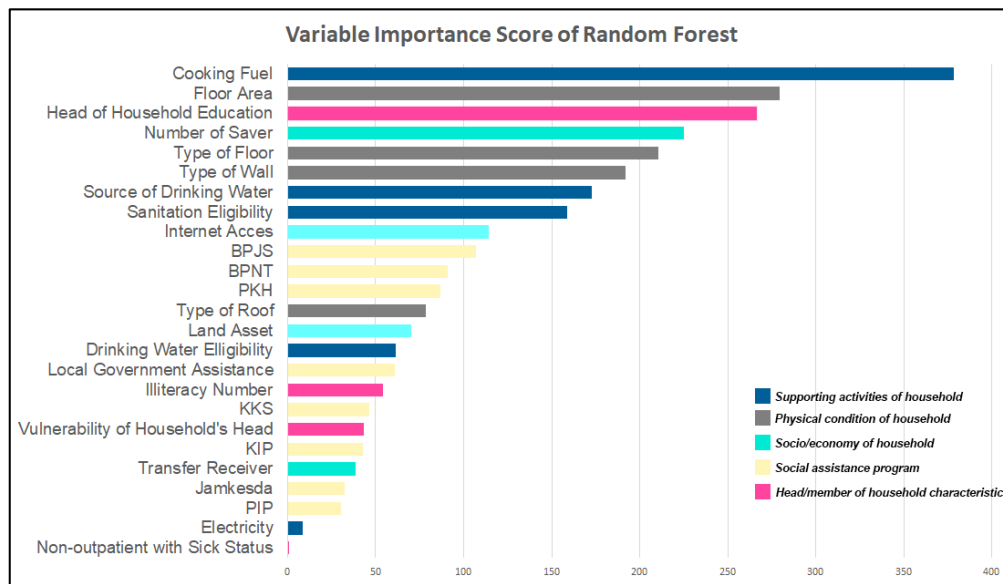


Figure 2. Variable Importance Score Food Insecurity Aceh 2020

Figure 1 shows VI score of food insecurity case in Aceh Province 2020. It seems the majority at the top 10 indicators of food insecurity are from supporting activities of household and physical condition of household. Supporting activities of household category is consists of cooking fuel, head of household education, source of drinking water, and sanitation eligibility. Meanwhile, the physical condition of household which consists of floor area, type of floor, and type of wall. Therefore, those variables become determinant of food insecurity case in Aceh Province 2020.

### CONCLUSION

This research purposed to compare both classification method which are classification tree and random forest. Besides, this research also purposed to identify indicators of food insecurity in Aceh Province 2020. It is obtained that the optimum method based on the optimum value of AUC is Random Forest, which is 0.7184 with *n<sub>tree</sub>* is 1000 and *m<sub>try</sub>* is 2 for training data. The optimum model obtained is then implemented to full dataset for identifying indicators of food insecurity Aceh Province 2020 based on the rank of VI score. It seems the majority at the top 10 indicators of food insecurity are from supporting activities of household and physical condition of household. Supporting activities of household category is consists of cooking fuel, head of household education, source of drinking water, and sanitation eligibility. Meanwhile, the physical condition of household which consists of floor area, type of floor, and type of wall. Therefore, those variables become determinant of food insecurity case in Aceh Province 2020.

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