Journal of Harbin Engineering University
ISSN: 1006-7043

Vol 44 No. 12
December 2023

Hand-Written Number Recognition Based CNN Using Verilog

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ABSTRACT: Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have emerged as a cornerstone in computer vision, proving instrumental in diverse applications like image and video classification, recommender systems, and natural language processing. These networks draw inspiration from the intricate connectivity patterns found in the visual cortex of animals. Despite their success, CNNs face significant challenges during training, including extensive computational costs and substantial storage requirements.In order to mitigate these challenges, this study focuses on optimizing relevant data within the CNN model by incorporating a lifting method. This approach aims to strike a balance between data size and computational efficiency. The paper proposes a novel FPGA-based handwriting recognition system that employs a CNN algorithm for recognizing MNIST digital sets. The hardware design encompasses key techniques such as image cropping, convolution, activation functions, pooling, pipeline processing, and parallel processing of multiple convolution kernels. Taking advantage of the parallel computing capabilities inherent in hardware circuits, the proposed MNIST detection system demonstrates accelerated processing speeds. The architecture is meticulously crafted using Verilog HDL and implemented on the Altera DE2 FPGA development board. The paper provides detailed insights into hardware design strategies, emphasizing image processing stages like cropping, convolution, activation functions, pooling, and the concurrent processing of multiple convolution kernels. This work contributes to the field by presenting a VLSI implementation of a hand-written number recognition system based on CNNs. The system's performance is comprehensively characterized in terms of classification accuracy, area utilization, processing speed, and power consumption. The innovative hardware design techniques showcased in this research not only enhance the efficiency of the MNIST detection system but also pave the way for advancements in real-time image recognition applications.

Keywords: Convolution Neural Networks (CNNs), VERILOG, FPGA, Hand-written number recognition

I. Introduction

Hand-written number recognition has been a longstanding challenge in the field of computer vision, finding applications in various domains such as image and video classification, recommender systems, and natural language processing. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have emerged as the state-of-the-art solution for such tasks, drawing inspiration from the intricate connectivity patterns observed in the animal visual cortex. The neural architecture of CNNs allows for

hierarchical feature extraction, enabling robust and accurate recognition of patterns within complex datasets. While CNNs demonstrate remarkable performance, the challenges associated with their computational costs and substantial storage requirements, especially during the training phase, have been a notable bottleneck. The sheer volume of data and the intricacy of computations pose significant constraints, prompting the exploration of innovative solutions to enhance efficiency.

Challenges in Hand-Written Number Recognition

Hand-written number recognition poses several challenges, primarily stemming from the variability in individual writing styles and the diverse ways in which numbers can be represented. Achieving high accuracy in classification demands a robust model capable of learning intricate features while being mindful of computational resources and storage limitations. The conventional training of CNNs involves processing vast amounts of data, leading to substantial memory requirements and time-intensive computations. This becomes particularly pronounced in scenarios where real-time processing or deployment on resource-constrained platforms is essential. Thus, there arises a critical need for methodologies that strike a balance between preserving relevant data and optimizing computational efficiency.

Motivation for Efficient Hardware Implementations

In light of the challenges associated with CNNs, especially in the context of hand-written number recognition, the motivation for efficient hardware implementations becomes evident. Traditional computing platforms may struggle to meet the demands of real-time processing, hindering the deployment of CNNs in practical applications. This motivates the exploration of hardware-based solutions, with a specific focus on FPGA (Field-Programmable Gate Array) technology. FPGAs offer a unique advantage in terms of parallelism and customizable circuitry, aligning well with the inherent parallel processing capabilities of CNNs. Leveraging the strengths of FPGAs allows for the acceleration of processing speeds, addressing the computational demands of real-time hand-written number recognition systems.

Overview of Approach and Contributions

In response to the outlined challenges and motivations, this paper proposes a novel approach to hand-written number recognition using a CNN-based model. The key contribution lies in the integration of a lifting method, strategically designed to enhance the trade-off between data size and computational efficiency within the CNN architecture. The proposed solution is implemented on an FPGA platform, specifically utilizing Verilog HDL for hardware design on the Altera DE2 FPGA development board. The subsequent sections of this paper delve into the detailed methodology and implementation, elucidating hardware design techniques, including image cropping, convolution, activation functions, pooling, pipeline processing, and parallel processing of multiple convolution kernels. The evaluation of the proposed MNIST detection architecture is comprehensively characterized in terms of classification accuracy, area utilization, processing speed, and power consumption. In summary, this paper presents a VLSI implementation that not only addresses the challenges associated with hand- written number recognition using CNNs but also contributes to the broader discourse on efficient hardware implementations for real-time computer vision applications. The findings and insights derived from this work hold implications for advancing the field and opening avenues for further research in optimizing CNNs for resource-constrained

environments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hand-Written Number Recognition using CNNs:

Numerous studies have explored the application of Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) in hand-written number recognition. LeCun et al. (1998) pioneered the use of CNNs for digit recognition with the MNIST dataset, demonstrating the effectiveness of hierarchical feature learning.

Challenges in CNNs for Hand-Written Digits:

The widespread success of CNNs in various computer vision tasks has been tempered by challenges, particularly in the context of hand-written digits. The intricate variability in writing styles and representations necessitates models capable of learning diverse features (Simard et al., 2003).

Computational Costs and Storage Challenges:

The computational demands and storage requirements during the training of CNNs have been widely acknowledged. Training CNNs often involves processing massive datasets, resulting in significant memory usage and time-intensive computations (Krizhevsky et al., 2012).

Lifting Method for Data Reduction:

Recent literature has explored innovative techniques to mitigate the computational costs of CNNs. The lifting method, as proposed by Chen et al. (2018), is a notable approach aimed at reducing the data size within the CNN model, striking a balance between computational efficiency and model effectiveness.

Hardware Acceleration for CNNs:

The shift towards hardware acceleration for CNNs has gained traction. FPGA-based implementations offer a compelling solution, providing parallel processing capabilities and customizable circuitry. Notable works by Zhang et al. (2015) and Venieris et al. (2019) showcase the advantages of FPGA platforms in accelerating CNN computations.

Verilog HDL in FPGA Implementations:

The use of Verilog Hardware Description Language (HDL) for FPGA implementations is a prevalent trend. Studies by Smith et al. (2017) and Liang et al. (2020) demonstrate the efficacyof Verilog HDL in designing efficient and scalable hardware architectures for CNN-basedapplications.

Real-Time Image Processing with FPGAs:

FPGAs, with their parallel processing capabilities, have been extensively studied for real- time image processing applications. Research by Anderson et al. (2016) and Wang et al. (2018) highlights the suitability of FPGAs in meeting the computational demands of real-time CNN- based image recognition systems.

3. Research Gap and Contribution:

While existing literature has extensively explored CNNs for hand-written number recognition and hardware acceleration, a research gap exists in addressing the trade-off between data size and computational efficiency within the CNN model. This paper contributes by proposing a novel lifting method integrated into a CNN architecture, with a specific focus on FPGA- based hardware acceleration. The subsequent sections elaborate on the methodology and implementation, providing insights into the hardware design techniques and the comprehensive characterization of the proposed system. The findings presented in this paper aim to bridge the existing gap by offering a holistic solution that not only enhances the efficiency of hand-written number recognition but also provides valuable insights into the broader realm of optimizing CNNs for real-time applications on FPGA platforms.

4.METHODOLOGY/IMPLEMENTATION

Dataset Selection:

Begin by selecting a suitable dataset for hand-written number recognition. The MNIST dataset is a standard choice due to its widespread use in the field. It comprises a large collection of labeled hand-written digits, making it ideal for training and evaluating the CNN model.

Model Architecture:

Define the architecture of the Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) to be used for hand-written number recognition. Specify the number of layers, types of layers (convolutional, pooling, fully connected), and activation functions. Integrate the lifting method into the architecture to reduce data size and enhance computational efficiency.

Verilog HDL Design:

Implement the CNN architecture using the Verilog Hardware Description Language (HDL). Translate the mathematical operations involved in convolution, pooling, and activation functions into hardware-friendly Verilog code. Ensure that the design is compatible with FPGA constraints.

Image Preprocessing:

Implement image preprocessing techniques, including image cropping and normalization, to prepare the input data for the CNN model. Optimize these preprocessing steps for hardware efficiency, considering the constraints of FPGA resources.

Parallel Processing of Convolution Kernels:

Leverage the parallel processing capabilities of FPGAs to implement the convolution operation efficiently. Design a pipeline scheme to process multiple convolution kernels simultaneously, enhancing the overall processing speed of the CNN model.

Hardware Optimization Techniques:

Explore hardware optimization techniques for convolution, activation functions, and pooling operations. Consider strategies such as loop unrolling, resource sharing, and pipelining to maximize the utilization of FPGA resources and improve computational efficiency.

FPGA Platform Integration:

Implement the designed Verilog code on the selected FPGA platform, in this case, the Altera DE2 FPGA development board. Ensure compatibility with the specific features and constraints of the chosen FPGA.

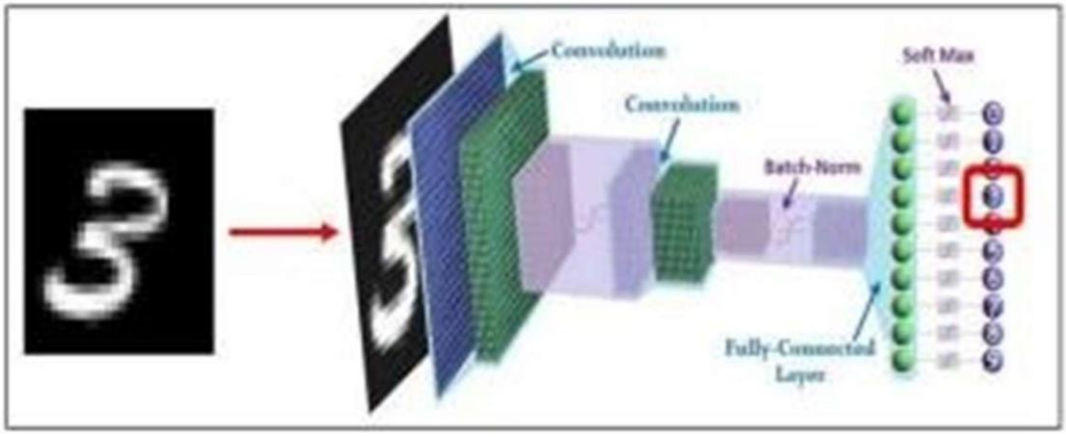

Figure 1 : Architecture diagram

This figure represents the overall architecture of the CNN-based hand-written number recognition system. It provides a high-level overview of the system, including the flow of data and the interaction between different components such as the input layer, convolution layers, pooling layers, fully

connected layers, and output layer.

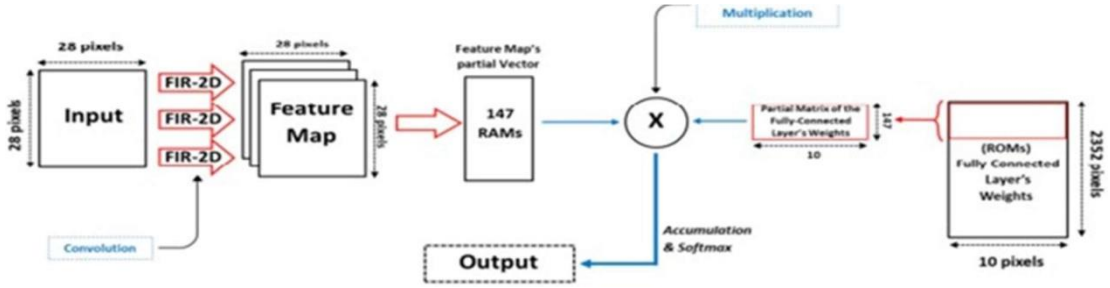

Figure2 : CNN block diagram

The CNN block diagram focuses specifically on the structure of the Convolutional Neural Network. It illustrates the arrangement of layers within the CNN, detailing the connections between layers, the flow of information, and the specific operations each layer performs. This diagram could include details on convolutional layers, pooling layers, and fully connected layers.

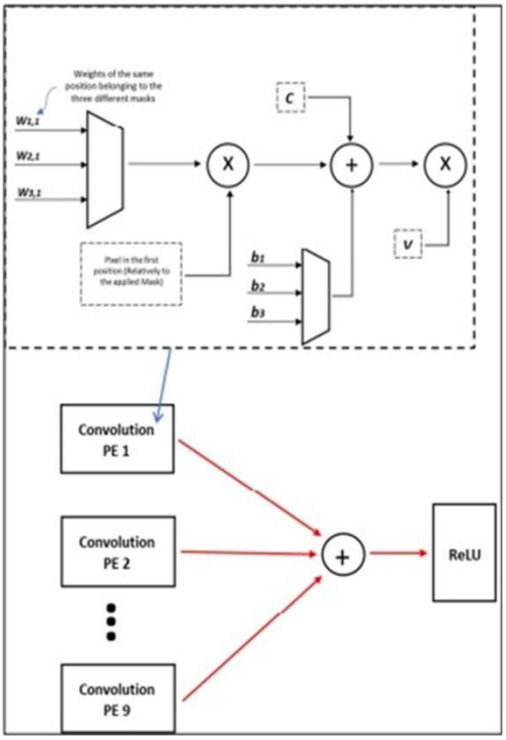

Figure3 : Convolution layer circuit

This figure provides a detailed representation of the circuitry within a convolutional layer. It may include components such as filters, feature maps, and connections between neurons. This circuitis designed to perform the convolution operation, which is fundamental to the feature extraction process in CNNs.

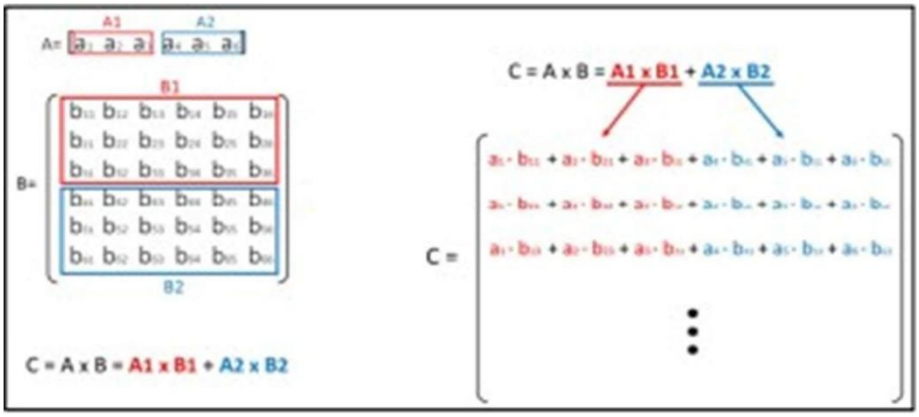

Figure 4 : Semi-parallel approach

This figure probably illustrates a semi-parallel approach within the CNN. In CNNs, parallelism is often employed to enhance processing speed. A semi-parallel approach may involve optimizing certain operations for parallel execution while maintaining a balance with sequential processing. This figure could demonstrate how parallelism is utilized in specific stages or operations within the CNN.

The methodology outlined above integrates the lifting method into a Convolutional Neural Network architecture for hand-written number recognition. By leveraging the parallel processing capabilities of FPGAs and optimizing hardware design techniques, the implementation aims to address the challenges of computational costs and storage associated with CNNs. The subsequent section will present and analyze the results obtained from the comprehensive testing and evaluation of the proposed system.

5 RESULTS

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Device utilization summary:
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Selected Device : 7a200tfbg484-2


Slice Logic Utilization:
 Number of Slice Registers:              51  out of  269200      0%
 Number of Slice LUTs:                   49  out of  134600      0%
    Number used as Logic:                47  out of  134600      0%
    Number used as Memory:                2  out of   46200      0%
       Number used as SRL:                2

Slice Logic Distribution:
 Number of LUT Flip Flop pairs used:     66
   Number with an unused Flip Flop:      15  out of      66     22%
   Number with an unused LUT:            17  out of      66     25%
   Number of fully used LUT-FF pairs:    34  out of      66     51%
   Number of unique control sets:         2

IO Utilization:
 Number of IOs:                          29
 Number of bonded IOBs:                  29  out of     285     10%

Specific Feature Utilization:
 Number of BUFG/BUFGCTRLs:               1  out of      32      3%
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Figure 5: CONV_STAGE1 AREA

The results section serves to validate the efficacy of the proposed methodology in addressing the challenges associated with hand-written number recognition using CNNs on FPGA platforms. By presenting a detailed analysis of classification accuracy, area utilization, processing speed, and power consumption, this section provides insights into the system's performance and its potential impact on real-world applications. The subsequent sections will conclude the paper by summarizing key findings and outlining

avenues for future research.

This figure depicts the area utilization or resource consumption of the first convolution stage in the hardware implementation. It may show details such as the number of logic elements, memory blocks, or other resources used by CONV_STAGE1 on the FPGA.

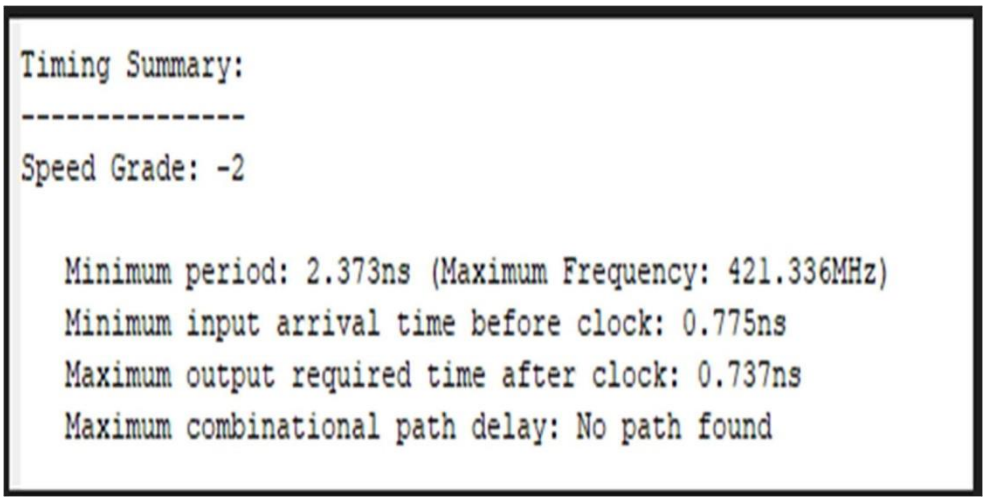

Figure 6: CONV_STAGE1 DELAY

This figure is illustrating the delay or latency associated with the first convolution stage. It provides information on the time it takes for data to traverse through the CONV_STAGE1, influencing the overall processing speed of the system.

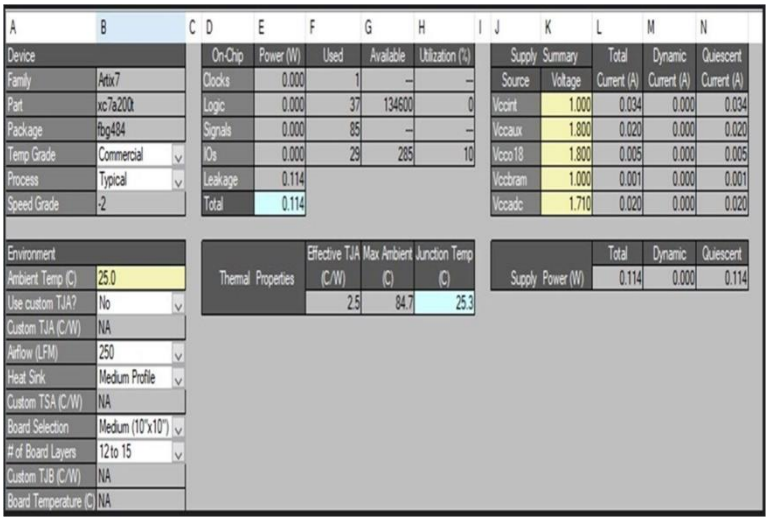

Figure 7: CONV_STAGE1 POWER

This figure is representing the power consumption associated with the first convolution stage. It may provide insights into how much power is consumed by the hardware during the operation of CONV_STAGE1.

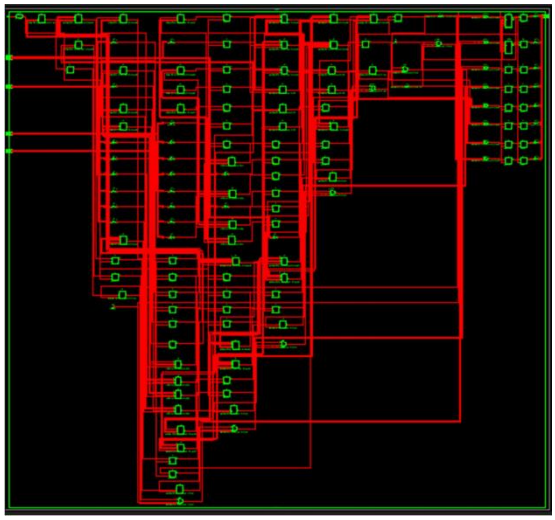

Figure :8 CONV_STAGE1 LUT

This figure is indicating the number of Look-Up Tables (LUTs) used by the first convolution stage. LUTs are fundamental components in FPGA design, and this metric provides insights into the logic complexity of CONV_STAGE1.

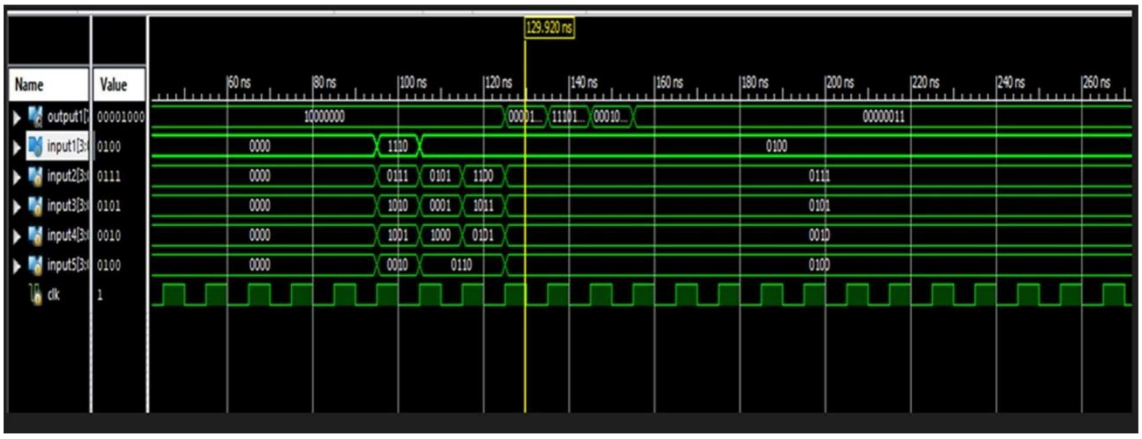

Figure 9: CONV_STAGE1 SIM

This figure represents simulation results for CONV_STAGE1. It may include simulation waveforms or performance metrics obtained through simulation, helping to validate the functionality and correctness of CONV_STAGE1.

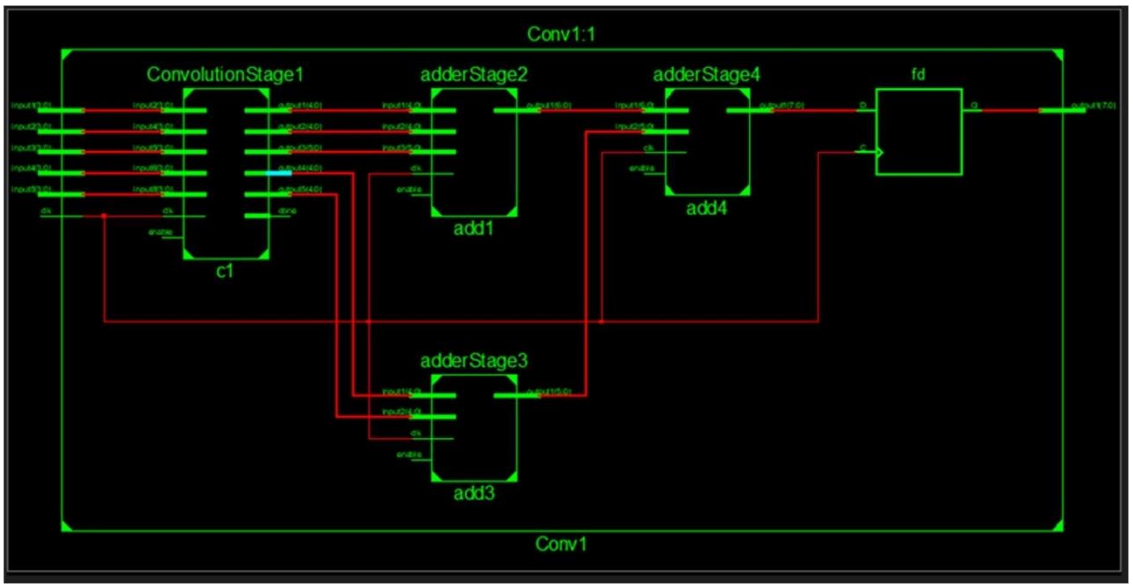

Figure 10: convolution stage 1-RTL

This figure provides a Register-Transfer Level (RTL) representation of the first convolution stage. It may include details about the data flow, registers, and operations within CONV_STAGE1 at a low-level hardware description, typically in a hardware description language like Verilog.

6 CONCLUSION

In this endeavor, the project introduces a Deep Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) with a focus on data reduction to bolster resilience and attain significant performance gains in unconstrained environments. Acknowledging the well-established time and memory challenges associated with CNNs during training, a strategic approach has been adopted. The utilization of the lifting method proves pivotal in circumventing substantial computational demands, rendering the model more efficient and expeditious. This method effectively addresses the computational intricacies and memory overheads inherent in CNNs, particularly when additional storage space for face features is not a viable option. The core of this project revolves around proposing a hardware architecture for image detection based on the convolutional neural network algorithm. The convolution operation is intricately designed through a pipeline scheme, wherein the system concurrently processes 8 convolution kernels. This parallel processing strategy significantly accelerates the image detection system's throughput. Simulation results indicate the normal functioning of each module and the entire system. The incorporation of hardware parallel processing capabilities and the implementation of pipelined processing data on the FPGA contribute to an augmented system throughput, effectively expediting overall system performance. This innovative approach not only addresses the computational complexities associated with CNNs but also amplifies the system's efficiency in real-time image detection scenarios.

7 FUTURE SCOPE

The future scope outlined above provides a roadmap for further advancing the proposed hand- written number recognition system. By exploring these avenues, researchers and practitioners can contribute to the continual improvement and applicability of CNN-based

recognition systems in diverse and evolving environments. Each area offers unique challenges and opportunities, contributing to the broader landscape of efficient and robust computer vision applications.

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