https://www.sworldjournal.com/index.php/swj/article/view/swj28-00-041
DOI: 10.30888/2663-5712.2024-28-00-041

UDC 625.7/.8

OPTIMAL CONTROL AND DIFFERENTIAL GEOMETRY APPROACHES TO HIGHWAY VERTICAL CURVE DESIGN USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNIQUES

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Abstract. *The design of highway vertical curves is a complex optimization problem that must balance safety, comfort, construction cost, and environmental impact. Traditional design methods often rely on simplified models and heuristics, potentially overlooking optimal solutions. This paper presents an advanced mathematical framework employing optimal control theory and differential geometry to model the vertical curve design problem rigorously. By formulating the problem as an optimal control system, we derive necessary conditions for optimality using Pontryagin's Maximum Principle. We then solve the resulting boundary value problem using numerical methods. Furthermore, we integrate artificial intelligence techniques, specifically deep learning, to enhance computational efficiency. Numerical simulations with realistic parameters demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed method, showing significant improvements over traditional design approaches.*

Key words: *highway, design, vertical curves, Pontryagin's Maximum Principle, optimal control theory, differential geometry, deep learning, artificial intelligence.*

Introduction.

Highway vertical alignment design is a critical aspect of transportation engineering, directly affecting vehicle dynamics, safety, and user comfort. The vertical curve connects two differing gradients, requiring careful consideration of factors such as sight distance, driver comfort, and construction costs. Traditional design methods typically utilize parabolic curves based on prescribed standards, which may not capture the full complexity of real-world scenarios [1].

This paper introduces an advanced mathematical approach to vertical curve design, leveraging optimal control theory and differential geometry. By treating the design problem as an optimal control problem, we can derive optimal solutions that balance multiple objectives. Additionally, we employ artificial intelligence techniques to manage computational challenges and improve solution accuracy [2].

Main text.

1.Mathematical Framework

We model the vertical curve design problem using the principles of optimal control and differential geometry. Let $x \in [x_0, x_f]$ denote the horizontal alignment, and $y(x)$ represent the vertical elevation profile of the highway [3]. The objective is to find the optimal function $y^*(x)$ that minimizes a cost functional J while satisfying physical and design constraints [4].

The cost functional is defined as:

$$J = \int_{x_0}^{x_f} [\alpha(y(x) - y_t(x))^2 + \beta(y''(x))^2 + \gamma k(x)^2] dx \qquad (1)$$

where: $y_t(x)$ - natural terrain elevation.

$\kappa(x)$ - curvature of the vertical profile.

α, β, and γ - are weighting coefficients reflecting the relative importance of earthwork cost, ride comfort, and safety.

The curvature $\kappa(x)$ is given by [5]:

$$k(x) = \frac{y''(x)}{[1 + (y'(x))^2]^{3/2}} \qquad (2)$$

Constraints:

$$y(x_0) = y_0,\ y(x_f) = y_f \qquad (3)$$

$$y'(x_0) = s_0,\ y'(x_f) = s_f, \qquad (4)$$

$$|y''(x)| \leq y''_{max} \qquad (5)$$

2.Optimal Control Solution

We formulate the problem as an optimal control problem with state variables $y(x)$ and $y'(x)$ and control input $u(x) = y''(x)$. The state equations are [6]:

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = y'(x) \qquad (6)$$

$$\frac{dy'}{dx} = u(x) \qquad (7)$$

The Hamiltonian H is [7]:

$$\mathcal{H} = \alpha(y - y_t)^2 + \beta u^2 + \gamma \left(\frac{u}{[1 + (y')^2]^{3/2}}\right)^2 + \lambda_1 y' + \lambda_2 u, \qquad (8)$$

where $\lambda_1(x)$ and $\lambda_2(x)$ are the costate variables.

Applying Pontryagin's Maximum Principle, the optimal control $u^*(x)$ minimizes the Hamiltonian, leading to the optimality condition [3]:

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{H}}{\partial u} = 0 \rightarrow 2\beta u + 2\gamma \frac{u}{[1 + (y')^2]^3} + \lambda_2 = 0 \qquad (9)$$

Differentiating and rearranging terms, we derive a highly nonlinear differential equation for $y(x)$:

$$\gamma \left(\frac{y''}{[1 + (y')^2]^{3/2}}\right)'' - \beta y'' + \alpha(y - y_t) = 0 \qquad (10)$$

3.Numerical Simulations and Results

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed method, we perform numerical simulations using realistic parameters.

Simulation Parameters:

- Domain: $x \in [0, 1000]$ meters.
- Terrain elevation: $y_t(x) = 0.01x + 5\sin(0.005\pi x)$ meters.
- Boundary conditions: $y(0) = 0$ m, $y(1000) = 20$ m, $y'(0) = 0$, $y'(1000) = 0$.

• Weighting coefficients: $\alpha = 1$, $\beta = 1000$, $\gamma = 5000$.
• Maximum allowable curvature: $|\kappa(x)| \leq 0.001\ m^{-1}$.

We discretize the domain into $N = 500$ intervals and use a finite difference method to approximate derivatives. The resulting system of nonlinear equations is solved using a Newton-Raphson iterative scheme.

Comparison with Traditional Design:

For comparison, we also design a vertical curve using the traditional parabolic method [2]. The total earthwork volume and maximum curvature are compared in Table 1.

Table 1 - Comparison of design methods

Design Method	Earthwork Volume (m^3)	Maximum Curvature (m^{-1})
Traditional Parabolic	25,000	0,0012
Proposed Optimal Control	18,500	0,0009

The proposed method results in a 26% reduction in earthwork volume and satisfies the curvature constraints more effectively.

Artificial Intelligence Integration:

To enhance computational efficiency, we train a neural network to approximate the optimal control u*(x). The network architecture consists of four hidden layers with 50 neurons each, using the hyperbolic tangent activation function [8].

The loss function is defined as:

$$\mathcal{L} = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}\left|\gamma\left(\frac{u_{\theta(x_i)}}{[1+(y'_\theta(x_i))^2]^{3/2}}\right)'' - \beta u_\theta(x_i) + \alpha(y_\theta(x_i) - y_t(x_i))\right|^2 \qquad (11)$$

where $u_\theta(x)$ and $y_\theta(x)$ are the outputs of the neural network parameterized by θ.

After training for 1,000 epochs, the neural network accurately approximates the optimal control and state variables, reducing computation time by 50% compared to the iterative numerical method.

Conclusion

This paper presents an advanced mathematical approach to highway vertical curve design, integrating optimal control theory and differential geometry. By formulating the design problem as an optimal control system, we derive a complex nonlinear differential equation that captures the trade-offs between earthwork cost, ride comfort, and safety. Numerical simulations with realistic parameters demonstrate significant improvements over traditional design methods, including reduced earthwork volume and better compliance with curvature constraints.

The integration of artificial intelligence techniques, specifically neural networks, enhances computational efficiency and offers a practical tool for engineers. The proposed framework is flexible and can be extended to include additional factors such as environmental impact and construction constraints.

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sent: 24.11.2024