

Prediction of Network Security Situation Awareness based on an Improved Model Combined with Neural Network

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Research

Keywords: Radial basis function neural network, network security situation awareness prediction, particle swarm optimization

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9 Abstract:

10 People always pay attention to the security of the network. This paper mainly analyzed the problem
11 of network security situation prediction (NSSP). The Radial Basis Function (RBF) neural network
12 was improved by the particle swarm optimization (PSO) algorithm, and a modified PSO (MPSO)-
13 RBF algorithm was obtained, which was used as the prediction model. Then, the data from National
14 Internet Emergency Center (CNCERT/CC) were used as the experimental data, and the MPSO-RBF
15 algorithm was compared with RBF and PSO-RBF algorithms. The results showed that the MPSO-
16 RBF algorithm could achieve convergence in about 50 times of iterations, showing a high
17 calculation efficiency, and the mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) value, mean square error
18 (MSE) value, and root-mean-square error (RMSE) value were small, 2.13%, 0.0005, and 0.0224,
19 respectively, showing that the algorithm had good prediction performance. The results verify the
20 reliability of the MPSO-RBF algorithm in NSSP, which is conducive to further improve network
21 security.

22 Keywords: Radial basis function neural network, network security situation awareness prediction,
23 particle swarm optimization

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26 **1. Introduction**

27 With the development of Internet technology, the network has been applied in more and more fields,
28 such as online shopping, electronic payment, smart home, and entertainment, which has brought
29 great changes to people's production and lifestyle. However, at the same time, network security has

30 also been greatly challenged. Network attacks are becoming more complex and diverse. Although
31 the current network security technologies, such as firewall [3], intrusion detection [4], and virtual
32 private network (VPN), play a role in network security, they all have defects and are not suitable
33 for the current more and more complex network environment; therefore, network security situation
34 awareness (NSSA) appears [6, 7]. NSSA evaluates the current network state by processing the
35 network security data, and on this basis, it can carry out network security situation prediction (NSSP)
36 [8]. Zhang et al. [9] optimized the wavelet neural network (WNN) with the isolation niche genetic
37 algorithm (INGA), carried out a simulation experiment, and found that the method had a higher
38 prediction accuracy. Based on the recurrent neural network (RNN), Wei et al. [10] extracted features
39 from the original time series data and verified on the RNN model after training. The results showed
40 that the method had more accurate prediction results, although the training time was long. Aiming
41 at the problem of long training time of the support vector machine (SVM) algorithm, Hu et al. [11]
42 optimized the SVM algorithm with the cuckoo search (CS), carried out distributed training on
43 MapReduce, and found that the method could effectively reduce the training time. Zhou et al. [12]
44 solved the NSSP problem with the hidden belief rule base (HBRB), improved the prediction
45 accuracy of the model based on the evidence reasoning rules, and verified the effectiveness of the
46 new method by the case study. Based on neural network, this study analyzed the NSSP problem,
47 designed an improved radial basis function (RBF) algorithm with the particle swarm optimization
48 (PSO) algorithm, and verified the effectiveness of the algorithm in solving NSSP through
49 experimental analysis, which makes a contribution to the better realization of network security.

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52 2. Method

53 2.1 Network security situation awareness prediction

54 The idea of situation awareness first appeared in the military and was used for judging the
55 military environment and situation, and then it was applied in fields such as transportation and
56 medicine and extended to the field of network security. NSSA means to collect as many network
57 security elements as possible through a series of technologies and establish corresponding
58 evaluation and prediction models to help network managers deal with risks in time. NSSP means
59 predicting the future network state and prevent network attacks based on historical situation
60 assessment data.

61 The premise of prediction is that there are some rules between adjacent data points. The
62 research shows that there is self-similarity in network traffic data. The prediction object of NSSP is
63 network security situation (NSS) value, which is a series arranged in time order, and there are some
64 rules between adjacent data points; therefore, NSSP is predictable, which is feasible.

65 At present, the methods used in NSSP are as follows: ① autoregressive moving average model
66 [13]: based on stationary time series, it forecasts the future state, but has some requirements for the
67 length of time series; ② grey theory [14]: based on grey correlation, it searches for the internal law
68 of the system, but it has poor prediction performance for data with large fluctuation; ③ time series
69 [15]: it is based on the correlation between adjacent data, but many elements need to be considered
70 in the process of modeling; ④ neural network [16]: it takes security events as input and outputs the
71 situation value to realize NSSP, but it is easy to fall into local convergence to affect the prediction
72 effect.

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75 2.2 Improved model of neural network

76 2.2.1 Radial basis function neural network

77 RBF neural network is a three-layer feedforward neural network [17]. The input layer transmits

78 the input samples to the hidden layer, and the number of nodes is the dimension of the samples,

79 which is written as $X = (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_i)$ ($i = 1, 2, \dots, m$). The hidden layer trains the samples and

80 adjusts the parameters at the same time. There are h nodes. The weight between the hidden layer

81 and the input layer is w_{ij} , and the threshold is θ_j . The commonly used activation function is the

82 Gaussian function, written as
$$\phi_j = \exp\left(-\frac{\|x - c_j\|^2}{2\delta_j^2}\right)$$
, where ϕ_j refers to the base function, c_j is

83 the data center of the j -th node, and δ_j refers to the width parameter of the j -th node. The output

84 layer responds to the input. The weight between the output layer and the hidden layer is v_{ij} , and the

85 threshold is θ_k . The output of the j -th node is written as:
$$y_j = \sum_{i=1}^h v_{ij}\phi_j + \theta_k$$
. The specific training

86 process of the RBF neural network-based NSSP model is as follows.

87 (1) The input data set $X = (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_N)$ is established. $A(L)$ is defined to accumulate the

88 vector sum of NSS samples belonging to different classes. $B(L)$ is defined to register the number

89 of NSS samples belonging to every class. L refers to the number of classes of NSS samples.

90 (2) Every sample is regarded as the possible data center, and the density indicator is calculated:

91
$$D_i = \sum_{j=1}^N \exp\left(-\frac{\|x_i - x_j\|^2}{(d_1/2)^2}\right)$$
, where d_1 is the radius of the neighbourhood that takes x_i as the
92 center.

93 (3) For every sample point x_j , the distance between x_j and c_j is calculated. If $r \leq d_2$ (d_2 is
94 a threshold), then it is classified into the corresponding class. Moreover, let $A(i) = A(i) + x_j$ and
95 $B(i) = B(i) + 1$.

96 (4) The unclassified sample is used as a new input sample X . The above steps are repeated
97 until $B(L) < M$ (M is a set threshold). Finally, L classes of NSS are obtained.

98 (5) For each class, its center of gravity is calculated, $c_i = \frac{A(i)}{B(j)}$, until the neural network
99 converges.

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102 2.2.2 Particle swarm optimization algorithm

103 For the RBF neural network, data center c_j , width parameter δ_j , weight v_{ij} , and the number
104 of nodes (h) in the hidden layer all have a significant impact on the performance of the neural
105 network. Therefore, the above parameters are optimized by a modified particle swarm optimization
106 (MPSO) algorithm in this study.

107 The PSO algorithm is an intelligent algorithm that simulates the foraging behavior of birds
108 [18]. The possible solution of the algorithm is the position of particles, and individuals update

109 positions through adjusting the individual extremum p_{best} and the global extremum g_{best} to find
 110 out the optimal solution. It is assumed that there are M particles in a D -dimensional space. In the
 111 t -th time of iteration, the position and speed of the i -th particle can be written as:

$$112 \quad x_{id}^t = \{x_{i1}^t, x_{i2}^t, \Lambda, x_{iD}^t\},$$

$$113 \quad v_{id}^t = \{v_{i1}^t, v_{i2}^t, \Lambda, v_{iD}^t\}.$$

114 The update formulas can be written as:

$$115 \quad v_{id}^{t+1} = wv_{id}^t + c_1r_1(p_{best,i}^t - x_{id}^t) + c_2r_2(g_{best}^t - x_{id}^t),$$

$$116 \quad x_{id}^{t+1} = x_{id}^t + v_{id}^{t+1},$$

117 where w is the inertia weight, c_1 and c_2 are acceleration factors, r_1 and r_2 are random
 118 numbers in (0, 1), $p_{best,i}^t$ is the individual optimal solution in the t -th time of iteration, and g_{best}^t
 119 is the globally optimal solution.

120 As the PSO algorithm is easy to fall into the local extremum and the convergence speed is slow,
 121 it is improved in aspects of inertia weight w and acceleration factors c_1 and c_2 . Firstly, w is
 122 dynamically adjusted according to the following equation:

$$123 \quad w(t) = w_{\max} - \frac{t}{t_{\max}} \times e^{\left(\frac{t_{\max}-t}{t_{\max}}\right)} (w_{\max} - w_{\min}), \quad \text{where } w_{\max} = 0.9 \text{ and } w_{\min} = 0.3. \quad w \text{ can decrease}$$

124 with the increase of t , avoiding the PSO algorithm falling into the local optimum. Then, c_1 and

$$125 \quad c_2 \text{ are adjusted according to the following equations: } \quad c_1(t) = c_{1\max} - \frac{t}{t_{\max}} \times e^{\left(\frac{t_{\max}-t}{t_{\max}}\right)} (c_{1\max} - c_{1\min}) \quad \text{and}$$

$$126 \quad c_2(t) = c_{2\max} - \frac{t_{\max}-t}{t_{\max}} \times e^{\left(\frac{t}{t_{\max}}\right)} (c_{2\max} - c_{2\min}). \quad c_1 \text{ can decrease with the increase of } t, \text{ and } c_2 \text{ can increase with}$$

127 the increase of t , improving the convergence speed of the PSO algorithm.

128

129

130 2.2.3 MPSO-RBF-based NSSP model

131 The parameters of the RBF neural network algorithm were optimized by the MPSO algorithm.

132 The steps of obtaining the NSSP model based on the MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm are as
133 follows.

134 (1) An NSS data sample set is established, preprocessed, and normalized. The data were

135 adjusted to the numbers in $[0,1]$. The formula is $x' = \frac{x - x_{\min}}{x_{\max} - x_{\min}}$, where x_{\max} and x_{\min} are
136 maximum and minimum values.

137 (2) The data set is divided into training samples and test samples.

138 (3) The structure of the RBF neural network algorithm is determined.

139 (4) The parameters of the RBF neural network algorithm are encoded and mapped to particles
140 in the particle swarm.

141 (5) The particle swarm is initialized, and the fitness value of particles is calculated.

142 (6) P_{best} and g_{best} of particles are updated.

143 (7) The position and speed of particles are updated.

144 (8) Whether the accuracy meets the requirements or whether it reaches the maximum number
145 of iterations is determined. If it does, the algorithm ends, and the optimal parameters of the RBF
146 neural network algorithm are output to establish a NSSP model.

147

148

149 **3. Case analysis**

150 **3.1 Experimental data**

151 Data in security weekly reports from National Internet Emergency Center (CNCERT/CC) from
 152 2018 to 2020 were used as the experimental data. The basic situation of network security was
 153 evaluated with five indicators, and the situation was divided into five levels: excellent, good,
 154 medium, poor, and dangerous. To facilitate calculation, the five levels were represented by numbers
 155 5-1. The data from 2018 to 2019 were used as training samples, numbered 1-104. The data in 2020
 156 were taken as testing samples, numbered 105-156, as shown in Table 1.

157

158 Table 1 Experimental data

Number	Number of hosts infected with computer malicious program in China/10000	Total number of tampered websites in China/n	Total number of websites implanted with a back door in China/n	Number of counterfeit pages for Chinese websites/n	Number of new information security vulnerabilities/n	N SS value
1	20.1	2210	827	407	219	4
2	20.15	2117	773	419	257	4

3	23.9	2435	908	333	410	4
4	25.2	867	812	384	241	4
5	21.1	1992	758	318	382	4
...
...						...
10	56.83	1427	3631	690	402	3
0						
10	49.2	461	2933	1216	481	4
1						
10	57.3	1491	3119	1260	327	4
2						
10	58.5	7138	2891	1992	230	4
3						
10	60.5	6419	2775	1266	203	4
4						
10	62.8	9829	2796	1620	215	4
5						
10	58.9	8774	2777	1479	295	4
6						
10	44.7	8218	2378	1236	354	4
7						
10	53.3	9414	1747	169	221	4
8						

9	10	54.6	7008	1681	84	221	4
0	11	50.5	1299	1395	1205	573	3
1	11	56	3363	1591	720	609	3
2	11	58.6	9636	1746	740	514	3
3	11	62.6	9140	1537	996	699	3
4	11	58.6	7529	1578	1570	554	3
...
2	15	50.3	4894	699	17727	360	4
3	15	57.1	4704	556	18114	266	4
4	15	60.9	4078	580	13861	293	4
5	15	75.8	4327	839	4374	214	4

6	15	52.3	4453	1498	4942	298	4
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161 3.2 Evaluation index

162 (1) Mean absolute percentage error (MAPE):
$$MAPE = \frac{1}{n} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{y'_i - y_i}{y'_i} \right)^2} \times 100\%$$

163 (2) Mean square error (MSE):
$$MSE = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (y'_i - y_i)^2$$

164 (3) Root mean square error (RMSE):
$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (y'_i - y_i)^2}$$

165 n is the number of samples, and y'_i and y_i are the actual value and predicted value of the
 166 sample, respectively.

167

168

169 3.3 Prediction results

170 Firstly, the convergence speed of RBF, PSO-RBF, and MPSO-RBF neural network algorithms
 171 was analyzed. The results are shown in Figure 1.

172 It was seen from Figure 1 that the initial error of the RBF neural network algorithm was large,
 173 and there were some fluctuations in the change of the error. When the number of iterations reached
 174 about 350, the algorithm converged to the optimal error. After optimization by the PSO algorithm,
 175 the initial error of the RBF neural network algorithm reduced, and the convergence speed

176 significantly accelerated, reaching convergence after 200-300 times. The MPSO-RBF neural
 177 network algorithm designed in this study not only had a small initial error but also converged after
 178 50 times and had a more stable error, which verified that the MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm
 179 had an advantage in convergence performance.

180 The prediction accuracy of different algorithms was compared. Taking samples numbered 105-
 181 115 as an example, the prediction results of different algorithms were compared, as shown in Figure
 182 2.

183 It was seen from Figure 2 that the difference between the prediction result of the RBF neural
 184 network algorithm and the actual value was the biggest, and the change was not stable. After
 185 optimization by the PSO algorithm, the prediction result of the PSO-RBF neural network algorithm
 186 was improved, but there was still a gap with the actual value. The prediction value of the MPSO-
 187 RBF neural network algorithm nearly coincided with the actual value. The prediction error of
 188 different algorithms was calculated, and the results are shown in Table 2.

189

190 Table 2 Comparison of prediction error

Sample number	RBF neural network algorithm	PSO-RBF neural network algorithm	MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm
105	0.267	0.056	0.007
106	0.312	0.067	0.012
107	0.136	0.033	0.013

108	0.232	0.051	0.021
109	0.126	0.048	0.016
110	0.213	0.042	0.022
111	0.211	0.189	0.023
112	0.188	0.094	0.017
113	0.191	0.092	0.031
114	0.125	0.033	0.028
Maximum error	0.312	0.189	0.031
Minimum error	0.125	0.033	0.007
Average error	0.2001	0.0705	0.019

191

192 It was seen from Table 2 that the error of the RBF neural network algorithm was the largest,
193 followed by the PSO-RBF neural network algorithm and the MPSO-RBF neural network function;
194 the errors of the RBF neural network algorithm were all larger than 0.1, and the average error was
195 0.2001; the errors of the PSO-RBF neural network function were about 0.1, and the average error
196 was 0.0705, which was 64.77% smaller than that of the RBF neural network algorithm; the errors
197 of the MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm were smaller than 0.1, and the average error was only
198 0.019, which was 73.05% smaller than that of the PSO-RBF neural network algorithm. The above
199 results demonstrated that the prediction result of the MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm was
200 closer to the actual value, and the MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm had a good prediction
201 performance.

202 The prediction performance of different algorithms was compared, and the results are shown
203 in Table 3.

204

205 Table 3 Comparison of prediction performance

	MAPE	MSE	RMSE
RBF neural network algorithm	5.12%	0.0032	0.0566
PSO-RBF neural network algorithm	4.36%	0.0021	0.0458
MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm	2.13%	0.0005	0.0224

206

207 It was seen from Table 3 that the MAPE value of the RBF neural network algorithm was the
208 largest, reaching 5.12%, the MAPE value of the PSO-RBF neural network algorithm was 0.76%
209 smaller than that of the RBF neural network algorithm, and the MAPE value of the MPSO-RBF
210 neural network algorithm was 2.23% smaller than that of the PSO-RBF neural network algorithm;
211 the MSE value of the RBF neural network algorithm was the largest, followed by the PSO-RBF
212 neural network algorithm and the MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm, and the comparison of the
213 RMSE value was the same. It was found from Table 3 that the parameter optimization by the PSO
214 algorithm effectively improved the prediction performance of the RBF neural network algorithm

215 and the MPSO algorithm improved the prediction performance of the RBF neural network, which
216 showed significant advantages in the solving NSSP.

217

218

219 **4. Discussion**

220 The neural network realizes intelligent calculation to solve complex problems through
221 imitating the structure and characteristics of neural networks of creatures with the help of
222 mathematical and physical methods. It takes neurons as the basic unit, has feedforward and feedback
223 structures, and has strong self-learning ability and good fault tolerance and stability, which has been
224 widely used in image processing [19], fault diagnosis [20], financial analysis [21], and automatic
225 control [22]. The classical neural network models include back propagation (BP) neural network
226 [23], Hopfield neural network [24], RBF neural network, etc.

227 RBF neural network has a simple structure and good nonlinear approximation ability, which
228 has been widely used in solving practical problems. This study improved the RBF neural network
229 algorithm with the PSO algorithm and obtained the MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm to solve
230 NSSP problem. From the perspective of the convergence performance, the MPSO-RBF neural
231 network algorithm achieved convergence after about 50 times of iterations, and its convergence
232 speed greatly improved compared with RBF and PSO-RBF neural network algorithms, which
233 effectively improved the efficiency. Then, from the perspective of the prediction performance, it
234 was found from Tables 2 and 3 that the MAPE, MSE, and RMSE values of the MPSO-RBF neural
235 network algorithm were small, and the prediction performance of the MPSO-RBF neural network

236 algorithm was significantly better than that of the other two algorithms. It was concluded that the
237 MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm was more suitable for solving the NSSP problem.

238 Although some achievements have been made in the research of NSSP in this study, there are
239 still some shortcomings that need to be solved in future works:

240 (1) comparing the performance of more neural networks in solving NSSP problem;

241 (2) further optimize the PSO algorithm to improve the performance of the RBF neural network
242 algorithm better;

243 (3) apply the MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm in the actual network environment.

244

245

246 **5. Conclusion**

247 Based on the RBF neural network, this study analyzed its usability in the NSSP problem,
248 designed an MPSO-RBF model, and carried out experiments with the weekly safety report
249 published by CNCERT/CC as the data set. The results showed that the MPSO-RBF neural network
250 algorithm designed in this study had faster convergence and smaller prediction error compared with
251 RBF and PSO-RBF neural network algorithms, with an MAPE value of 2.13%, a MSE value of
252 0.0005, and an RMSE value of 0.0224, which were smaller than the other two algorithms. The
253 MPSO-RBF neural network algorithm shows good performance in solving the NSSP problem and
254 can be further promoted and applied in practice.

255

256

257 Declarations

258 Availability of data and material

259 The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding

260 author on reasonable request.

261

262 Competing interests

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264

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267

268 Authors' contributions

269 LY designed research, performed research, analyzed data, and wrote the paper.

270

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273

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343 Figure 1 Comparison of convergence speed

344 Figure 2 Comparison of prediction results

Figures

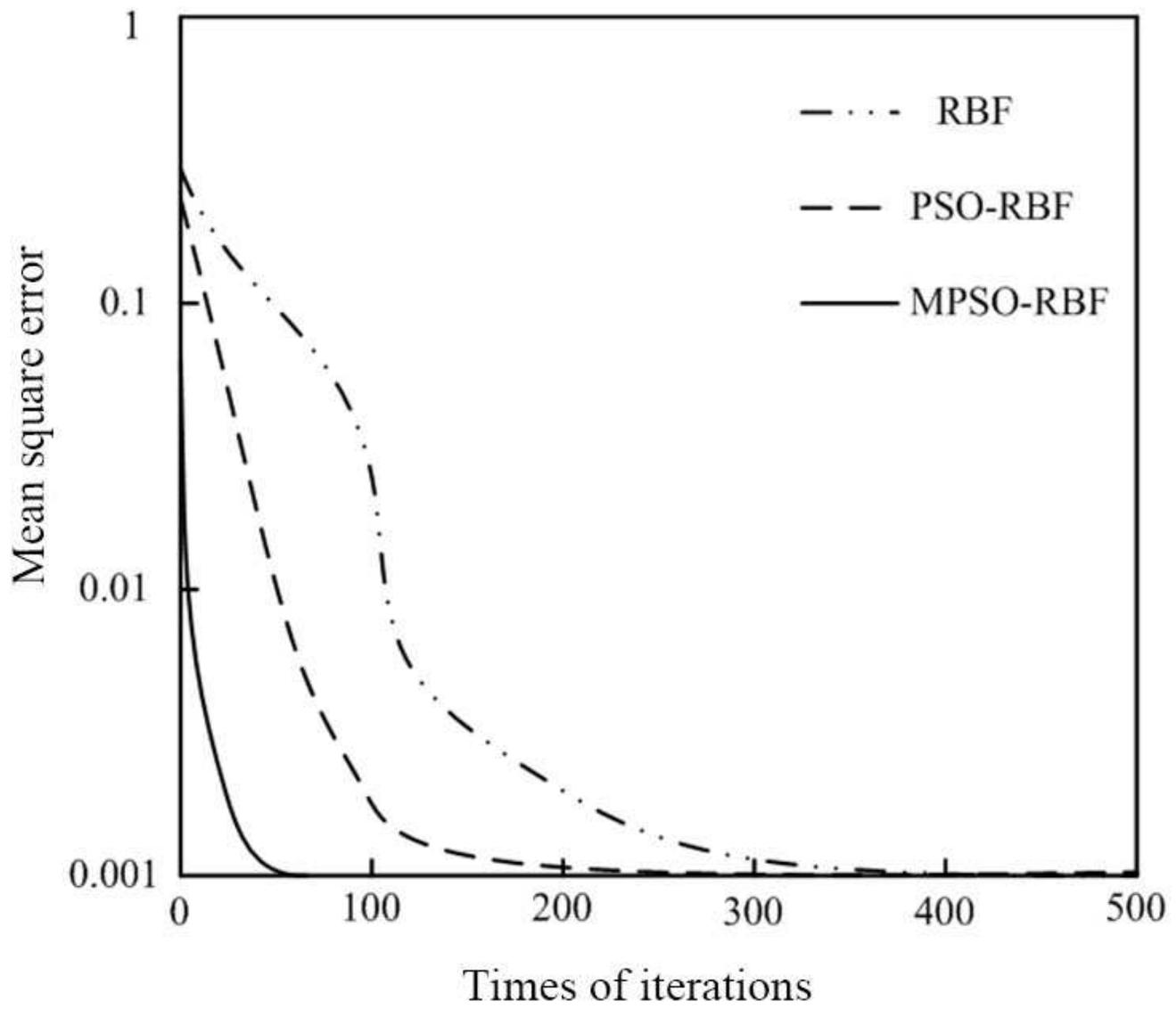


Figure 1

Comparison of convergence speed

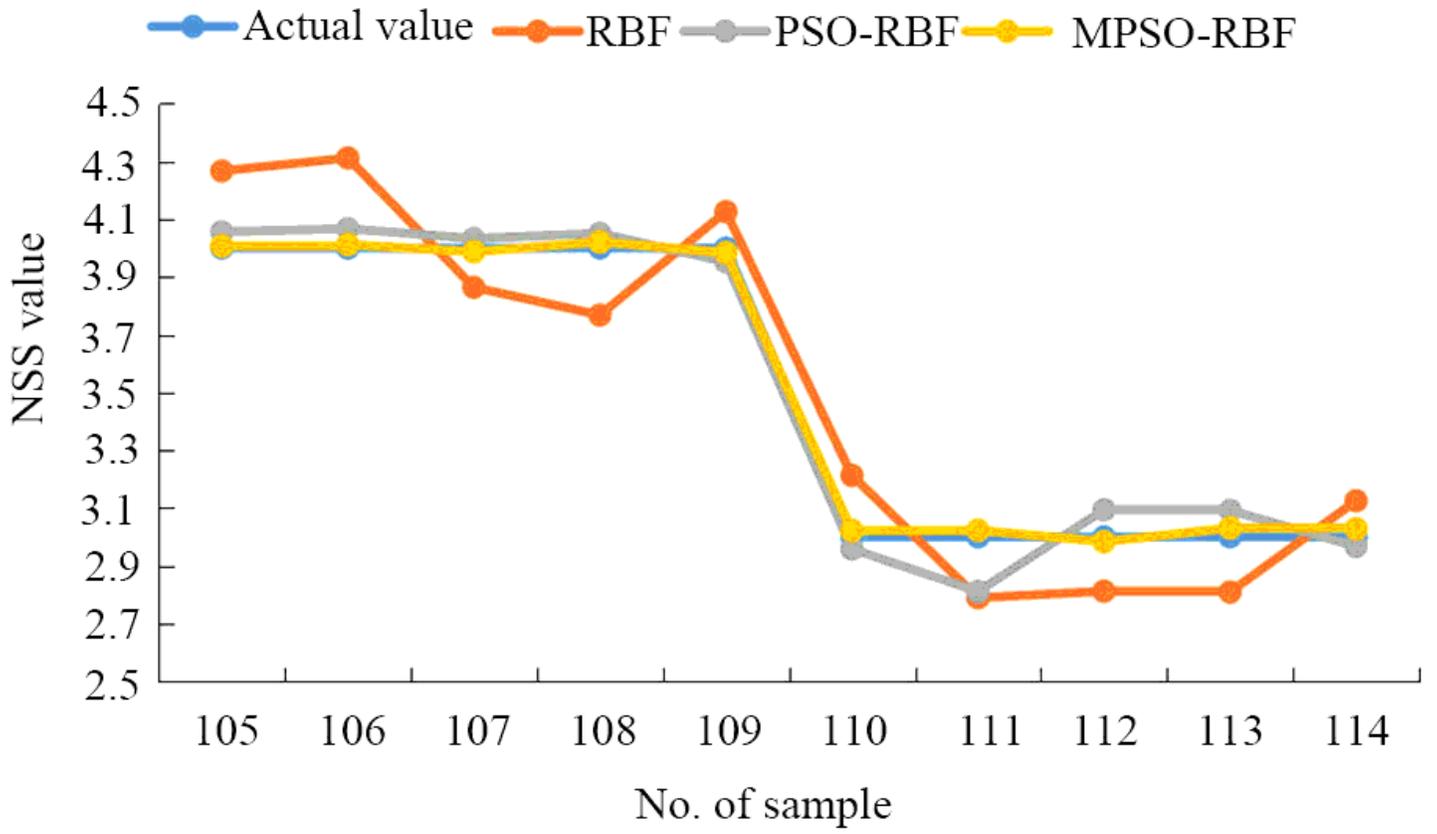


Figure 2

Comparison of prediction results