European Journal of AI, Computing & Informatics

Vol. 1 No.1 2025

Review **Open Access**

Research on Integrated Control Strategies for Autonomous Robot Navigation: Trajectory Tracking and Intelligent Path Planning in Dynamic Environments

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Received: 01 April 2025
Revised: 06 April 2025
Accepted: 18 April 2025
Published: 21 April 2025

Abstract: With the rapid development of intelligent manufacturing and automation technologies, automated robots have become crucial in both industrial and service sectors. Trajectory tracking technology ensures that robots follow predefined paths accurately, while path planning is responsible for determining the optimal route for robots to navigate through complex environments. The integration of these two technologies is particularly important in dynamic settings, as it directly impacts the stability and operational efficiency of robots. Current research focuses on enhancing the autonomy and flexibility of robots in uncertain environments through advanced algorithms such as model predictive control and sampling-based path planning. This paper provides a comprehensive review of the state-of-the-art in automated robot trajectory tracking and path planning technologies, discusses the challenges faced in practical applications, and explores future research directions. The role of visual perception in improving the efficiency of path planning is also highlighted, with particular attention to the impact of real-time object detection technologies on autonomous navigation.

Keywords: autonomous robots; trajectory tracking; path planning; integrated control; real-time perception

1. Introduction

The rapid development of automated robotics has revolutionized both industrial and service sectors, contributing significantly to increased productivity and operational efficiency. Automated robots are now integral components in tasks ranging from manufacturing to logistics, healthcare, and even customer service. Central to the effective deployment of these robots is the capability to precisely navigate through complex environments, which is where trajectory tracking and path planning technologies come into play.

Trajectory tracking ensures that robots follow predefined paths with high accuracy, which is crucial for tasks requiring precision, such as assembly lines or autonomous delivery systems. On the other hand, path planning is responsible for determining the optimal route for robots to take while avoiding obstacles and adapting to the surrounding environment. The challenge arises when these two technologies must operate together, especially in dynamic environments where obstacles and conditions constantly change. The integration of trajectory tracking and path planning is thus essential for enabling robots to autonomously navigate through such environments in real time, ensuring both safety and efficiency [1].

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive review of the latest developments in integrated control strategies for autonomous robot navigation. We focus on how trajectory tracking and path planning can be seamlessly integrated to enhance the robot's ability to operate autonomously in dynamic, uncertain environments. By exploring key concepts, algorithms, and challenges in the field, we also aim to highlight the promising future directions for research in this area. Specifically, we will discuss how visual perception technologies, such as real-time object detection, can be integrated into the planning and tracking framework to further improve navigation capabilities [2]. Through this review, we aim to offer valuable insights into the integration of these critical technologies and their potential for advancing autonomous robot systems.

2. Core Concepts and Technical Foundations

Trajectory tracking ensures that robots move accurately along a predefined path, which is essential for applications requiring high precision. This process involves controlling the robot's position and minimizing the deviation between the actual and desired trajectory. Traditional control methods such as PID (Proportional-Integral-Derivative) control are commonly used in simpler environments. PID works by adjusting the robot's position based on the error between its current position and the desired trajectory. However, it may struggle to handle non-linear systems and dynamic conditions. For more complex and dynamic environments, Model Predictive Control (MPC) is often used. MPC predicts and optimizes the robot's trajectory by solving an optimization problem in real-time, considering system constraints and uncertainties. This makes MPC more suitable for environments where the conditions are constantly changing.

Path planning, on the other hand, focuses on determining the optimal route for the robot to travel from its starting point to its goal, avoiding obstacles along the way. Path planning algorithms can be broadly divided into sampling-based methods and graph search methods. Sampling-based methods, such as Rapidly-exploring Random Trees (RRT) and Probabilistic Roadmaps (PRM), randomly sample the environment to explore potential paths. These methods work well for high-dimensional and complex spaces with obstacles but may face challenges when the environment changes dynamically. Graph search methods, like the A* algorithm and Dijkstra's algorithm, search for the shortest path on a graph that represents the environment. These methods are effective in static environments but often require modifications in dynamic settings to account for new obstacles or changing conditions.

Visual perception plays a critical role in enabling robots to adapt to dynamic environments. By using object detection techniques such as YOLOv8, robots can recognize and classify objects in their surroundings in real time. This allows them to adjust their trajectory and avoid obstacles as they navigate through dynamic environments. The integration of visual perception with path planning algorithms enables robots to make quick decisions and update their paths as necessary. In this way, robots can respond to unexpected changes in their environment, enhancing their autonomy and efficiency in complex, uncertain situations.

3. Integration of Trajectory Tracking and Path Planning

In autonomous robots, trajectory tracking and path planning are often considered as two separate tasks, but their tight integration is crucial for enhancing robot autonomy. Trajectory tracking ensures that the robot moves precisely along a predetermined path, while path planning is responsible for determining the optimal route to reach the goal while avoiding obstacles [3]. The synergy between these two tasks is particularly important in dynamic environments, as environmental changes may affect the robot's movement. To achieve seamless integration between trajectory tracking and path planning, integrated control frameworks are required, where optimization algorithms coordinate both tasks. For example, Model Predictive Control (MPC) can simultaneously handle both path planning and trajectory tracking requirements, allowing real-time optimization so that the robot can maintain precise tracking while adjusting its path in response to environmental changes.

The system architecture for integrated control strategies typically involves the interplay of data flow, feedback loops, and control decisions. In such an architecture, the output of path planning feeds into the trajectory tracking system, while the feedback from trajectory tracking influences real-time adjustments to path planning. The efficiency of data flow and stability of feedback loops are crucial to ensure the system operates smoothly. By integrating these control modules, the robot can achieve continuous and stable navigation even in dynamic environments, without requiring a full restart or new path planning for every change. This integration reduces redundant calculations, increases system responsiveness, and enhances the robot's decision-making capabilities [4].

In dynamic environments, balancing multiple tasks and ensuring real-time responsiveness in both trajectory tracking and path planning presents a significant challenge [5]. The robot must handle both tasks simultaneously while maintaining responsive behavior. For example, when a new obstacle appears in the environment, path planning needs to adjust the robot's route quickly, while trajectory tracking must make real-time adjustments to the movement path to ensure the robot stays on the new path. In such cases, multitasking becomes critical. Integrated control strategies need to be flexible enough to manage multiple tasks at once, ensuring both real-time responsiveness and system stability.

Table 1 presents a summary of the key aspects involved in the integration of trajectory tracking and path planning. It highlights their individual objectives, key algorithms, environmental considerations, and the critical role of real-time feedback and task balancing in dynamic environments.

Table 1. Key Aspects of Integrating Trajectory Tracking and Path Planning.

Aspect	Trajectory Tracking	Path Planning	Integration
Objective	Ensure accurate movement along a predefined path.	Find the optimal path for the robot to reach its goal.	Combine accurate tracking with optimal path planning.
Key Algorithm	PID Control, Model Predictive Control (MPC)	RRT, A*, Dijkstra, PRM	MPC, Real-time path adjustments based on trajectory feedback.
Environment Type	Works well in controlled or predictable environments.	Suitable for complex, static, or dynamic environments.	Works in dynamic, uncertain environments, requiring continuous adaptation.
Feedback Loop	Provides real-time updates based on actual position vs. target.	Updates based on new obstacles or environment changes.	Feedback from trajectory tracking influences real-time path replanning.
Real-Time Adjustment	Adjusts robot movement based on tracking errors.	Updates the path when unexpected obstacles appear.	Balances multiple tasks, adjusting both tracking and path in real time.
Task	Focuses on movement accuracy and error correction.	Focuses on obstacle avoidance and route optimization.	Balances trajectory tracking and path planning tasks simultaneously.

4. Challenges in Autonomous Robot Navigation

Autonomous robot navigation is a complex task that involves various challenges related to perception, planning, real-time computation, and adaptation to dynamic environments [6]. These challenges can significantly impact the accuracy, stability, and overall performance of robots. The main challenges in autonomous robot navigation include perception and planning difficulties, real-time computing bottlenecks, and navigating in uncertain and complex environments.

One of the primary challenges in autonomous robot navigation is the perception and planning aspect. Accurate perception is essential for effective path planning and trajectory tracking. However, factors such as sensor noise, limited sensor range, and environmental changes, such as lighting conditions or moving objects, can hinder the robot's ability to perceive its surroundings accurately. These factors introduce uncertainties into the planning process, making it difficult to ensure precise and reliable navigation. Additionally, dynamic changes in the environment, such as the appearance of obstacles or unexpected alterations in terrain, require constant updates to the path and tracking strategies. Effective integration of visual perception and object detection technologies, such as YOLOv8 (as discussed earlier), can help mitigate these challenges by providing real-time, reliable information about the environment, but even these systems are not immune to limitations like sensor drift and noise.

Another significant challenge is related to real-time processing and computational bottlenecks. Autonomous navigation involves the processing of large amounts of data, including sensor inputs, environment maps, and decision-making algorithms. The robot must process this data in real time to adjust its trajectory and path continuously. The complexity of the algorithms required for path planning, trajectory tracking, and real-time decision-making puts considerable strain on computational resources. Many modern autonomous robots rely on high-performance computing systems to meet these demands, but limitations in processing power and memory can still lead to delays or even system failure if not properly addressed. Efficient data processing and algorithm optimization are critical to overcoming these bottlenecks and enabling real-time navigation [7].

Lastly, uncertainty and complex environments pose significant challenges for autonomous robot navigation. Robots often operate in environments where obstacles are unpredictable and dynamic, such as urban streets, factory floors, or natural landscapes. These environments may have unpredictable changes such as moving obstacles, varying terrain, or changing weather conditions, all of which increase the difficulty of path planning and trajectory tracking. Additionally, robots must be able to adapt to uncertainties, such as sensor inaccuracies or unexpected system failures. To ensure safety and stability, robots need to employ robust control and decision-making strategies that can handle these uncertainties, maintain safe navigation paths, and prevent accidents.

Addressing these challenges requires continued research in sensor technologies, real-time data processing, and robust control strategies. The development of adaptive, intelligent systems capable of handling environmental uncertainties and computational constraints will be essential for the future of autonomous robot navigation.

5. Advances in Autonomous Robot Navigation Technologies

Recent advancements in autonomous robot navigation technologies are primarily driven by improvements in algorithms and sensing capabilities, along with their integration into real-world applications. One significant development is the use of visual perception technologies like YOLOv8, which enhances the accuracy and responsiveness of path planning. YOLOv8 excels in real-time object detection, allowing robots to dynamically detect and avoid obstacles. Vision-based object detection enables robots to perceive their environment and provide critical information for real-time path adjustments, making navigation safer and more efficient in unpredictable settings [8].

Emerging algorithms such as Model Predictive Control (MPC) and deep reinforcement learning (DRL) are also transforming autonomous navigation. MPC enables real-time optimization of robot trajectories by predicting future states and handling multiple constraints, making it especially effective in dynamic environments. DRL further enhances autonomy by allowing robots to learn optimal navigation strategies through trial and error, adapting to new environments with minimal supervision. Additionally, cooperative multi-robot systems are proving valuable in large-scale applications like warehouse management, where multiple robots can work together to improve efficiency and reliability in path planning and trajectory tracking.

These advancements are having a profound impact on both industrial and service sectors. In autonomous driving, the integration of visual technologies like YOLOv8 and advanced algorithms enables vehicles to navigate complex environments safely and efficiently. In intelligent warehousing, autonomous robots benefit from path planning and trajectory tracking technologies to navigate dynamic spaces and avoid obstacles. The combination of these technologies ensures that robots can perform tasks reliably, even in environments with constant changes. As these technologies evolve, they will continue to shape the future of robotics and automation, leading to more efficient and autonomous systems in a wide range of applications.

6. Future Directions

The future of autonomous robot navigation lies in the continuous evolution of integrated control frameworks and advancements in robotics technology. One promising direction is the integration of deep learning and perception-based planning. In the coming years, robots are expected to use advanced neural networks that not only enhance perception but also directly influence decision-making and path planning. By combining deep learning models with real-time environmental understanding, robots can become more adaptable, learning optimal navigation strategies from experience and improving their performance in dynamic, complex environments.

Furthermore, the drive towards enhanced robot autonomy will focus on enabling robots to perform tasks with minimal human intervention. This will require a higher level of precision in both perception and decision-making systems. As robots gain better sensory capabilities and integrate them with advanced decision-making algorithms, their ability to navigate autonomously in complex and unpredictable environments will improve dramatically. This development will pave the way for fully autonomous robots capable of handling a wide range of industrial and service applications.

However, several technical challenges remain, particularly in terms of hardware limitations and algorithmic complexity. Future advancements will need to address these issues, with innovations in sensor technology, data processing speeds, and real-time algorithm optimization. Overcoming these challenges will be crucial for realizing the next generation of fully autonomous robots that can operate efficiently in ever-changing real-world environments.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, we explored the key technologies of trajectory tracking, path planning, and integrated control strategies in autonomous robot navigation. We discussed the importance of seamlessly combining these elements to improve robot performance in dynamic environments. Advanced algorithms, such as model predictive control and deep reinforcement learning, have shown promise in enhancing the autonomy and adaptability of robots, allowing them to make real-time decisions and navigate more efficiently.

Looking ahead, the future of autonomous navigation will rely on further advancements in integrated control frameworks, where deep learning and perception-based planning play a critical role in improving robot autonomy. Challenges related to hardware limitations, real-time processing, and environmental uncertainty must be addressed to ensure that robots can operate reliably in increasingly complex scenarios. Future research should focus on developing more sophisticated perception systems, optimizing decision-making algorithms, and enhancing robot cooperation in multi-agent environments to further advance autonomous navigation capabilities.

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