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Smart Attendance System: A Two-Factor BLE and Biometric Authentication Framework for Academic Integrity

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Abstract - Attendance management in educational institutions remains a challenging task due to issues such as proxy attendance, manual record maintenance, and insecure verification methods. Existing attendance systems based on QR codes, GPS tracking, RFID cards, or basic biometric authentication often fail to provide reliable protection against spoofing and unauthorized attendance marking. This paper presents a Smart Attendance System that combines Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) proximity verification with AI-based facial authentication to improve security, accuracy, and automation in academic attendance management.

The proposed system uses a two-factor verification mechanism. In the first stage, BLE Received Signal Strength Indicator (RSSI) analysis is used to verify whether the student is physically present within the classroom environment. In the second stage, facial recognition and liveness detection techniques are applied using TensorFlow Lite and Google ML Kit to confirm the identity of the student. The framework is implemented as an Android application using Kotlin, Jetpack Compose, CameraX, Firebase Firestore, and TensorFlow Lite. Most biometric operations are executed directly on the device to reduce latency and improve user privacy.

The system is designed to minimize proxy attendance, reduce dependence on additional hardware, and provide secure attendance records through cloud synchronization. The proposed architecture offers a cost-effective and scalable solution suitable for modern educational institutions. This paper discusses the system design, implementation methodology, advantages, limitations, and possible future enhancements of the framework.

KeyWords: Attendance System, Biometric Authentication, Bluetooth Low Energy, BLE RSSI, Face Recognition, TensorFlow Lite, Liveness Detection, Proxy Attendance, Two-Factor Authentication, Mobile Computing, Android, Firebase Firestore, FaceNet, Google ML Kit, Academic Integrity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Attendance management is an essential part of academic institutions because it helps maintain discipline, evaluate student participation, and monitor academic progress. Traditional attendance methods such as manual roll calls and paper-based registers consume valuable lecture time and are highly vulnerable to proxy attendance and record manipulation. In large classrooms, maintaining accurate attendance records becomes even more difficult for faculty members.

To improve efficiency, many institutions have adopted digital attendance systems based on technologies such as QR codes, GPS tracking, RFID cards, and biometric authentication. Although these systems reduce manual work, they still face several security and reliability challenges. QR-code systems can be bypassed through screenshot sharing, GPS-based systems are vulnerable to mock-location applications, and RFID cards may be exchanged between students. Similarly, simple facial recognition systems without liveness verification can be deceived using photographs or pre-recorded videos.

Recent developments in mobile computing, Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE), and edge-based artificial intelligence have created opportunities for building more secure and cost-effective attendance systems. BLE technology provides reliable short-range communication with low battery consumption, making it suitable for indoor proximity verification. At the same time, TensorFlow Lite and mobile AI frameworks allow facial recognition models to run directly on smartphones without requiring continuous cloud processing.

This research proposes a Smart Attendance System that combines BLE-based proximity verification with AI-powered facial authentication. The proposed framework uses a two-factor verification process.

The first factor verifies whether the student is physically present inside the classroom using BLERSS signal analysis. The second factor confirms the identity of the student using facial recognition and liveness detection techniques.

By combining these two verification stages, the system reduces the possibility of proxy attendance, location spoofing, and biometric spoofing attacks.

The system is implemented as an Android application using Kotlin, Jetpack Compose, CameraX, Firebase Firestore, TensorFlow Lite, and Google ML Kit. The architecture is designed to work on standard smartphones without requiring expensive external hardware. Attendance records are securely stored in Firebase Firestore, while most biometric processing operations are performed locally on the user's device to improve privacy and reduce latency.

The main objective of this work is to develop a secure, scalable, and user-friendly attendance management framework suitable for modern educational institutions. The proposed system aims to improve attendance reliability, reduce administrative workload, and provide a practical solution for academic environments where proxy attendance remains a significant issue.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section II discusses the literature review and research gap analysis. Section III explains the objectives of the proposed system. Section IV presents the system architecture and workflow. Section V describes implementation details and technologies used in development. Section VI discusses advantages and limitations, while Section VII presents future enhancements. Finally, Section VIII concludes the paper.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH GAP ANALYSIS

The rapid growth of mobile computing and smart technologies has encouraged educational institutions to adopt digital attendance systems for improving efficiency and reducing manual work. Researchers have proposed multiple attendance management approaches using technologies such as RFID, QR codes, GPS tracking, biometric authentication, and wireless communications systems. Although these methods improve attendance automation, many of them still face security, reliability, and scalability challenges.

A. Traditional and Existing Digital Attendance Systems

The continuous expansion of mobile computing capabilities alongside smart infrastructure has driven academic institutions toward automated alternatives for recording student participation. Historically, conventional documentation relied on manual roll calls or paper ledger systems handled directly by instructors. These legacy approaches significantly decrease active instructional time, exhibit high vulnerability to human reporting errors, and fail to prevent unauthorized proxy attendance. In large lecture halls, manual logging becomes entirely inefficient and error-prone. To address these structural bottlenecks, introductory automated solutions emerged utilizing Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) networks. In an RFID configuration, individuals present physical transponder cards to specialized reading devices positioned at classroom perimeters or campus entrances. While this shortens the transactional logging time, it demands expensive infrastructural outlays and continuous terminal maintenance. Furthermore, physical card sharing remains a major security vulnerability, allowing present students to easily falsify attendance records for absent peers. To mitigate high hardware requirements, developers shifted toward Quick Response (QR) code platforms due to their ease of deployment on personal mobile devices. Instructors typically project a time-sensitive QR token that students scan via custom mobile software. However, as discussed later in Sec. 2.1.3, these frameworks fail to ensure genuine physical presence since digital images of the token can be effortlessly distributed via instant messaging platforms to off-site locations, allowing absent individuals to register attendance. Alternatively, telemetry data from the Global Positioning System (GPS) has been utilized by researchers to enforce strict geographic barriers. Although GPS tracking handles outdoor boundaries adequately, its signal fidelity drops significantly within modern multi-story academic buildings and dense campus layouts. In addition, current mobile operating systems allow users to exploit mock-location tools to fake telemetry information, making GPS-restricted platforms highly susceptible to location-spoofing attacks.

B. Bluetooth Low Energy and Biometric Solutions

To circumvent the architectural constraints of indoor localization, Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology offers an energy-efficient paradigm for short-range device interactions. By reading the Received Signal Strength Indicator (RSSI) value from a localized wireless beacon, client software can establish a reliable proximity threshold inside a classroom. Prior investigations demonstrate that BLE positioning provides far superior indoor precision compared to satellite alternatives in educational spaces. Because modern consumer devices possess integrated BLE transceivers natively, the framework functions smoothly without requiring external hardware installations.

Concurrently, biometric parameters such as fingerprint scanning and computerized facial validation have been explored to ensure authentic student identity. Fingerprint architectures offer robust verification but recreate the problem of expensive peripheral procurement and installation constraints. Automated facial analysis represents a contactless, frictionless alternative. The introduction of compressed execution runtimes like TensorFlow Lite (TFLite) along with lightweight deep learning networks—including FaceNet and MobileNet—permits high-dimensional embedding extraction to run directly on the client handset. Nevertheless, baseline vision frameworks remain vulnerable to facial spoofing attacks carried out via printed photographs or digital video playbacks. Researchers mitigate these presentation threats by incorporating dynamic liveness checking strategies, which monitor human-specific indicators like ocular blinking, smiling expressions, structural landmark variances, and multi-axis head rotations. Combining structural position logs with unique biometrics yields multi-factor validation architectures; yet, existing iterations remain restricted due to a heavy reliance on continuous cloud processing or cost-intensive external hardware arrays.

C. Identified Research Gaps

A systematic critique of current academic literature exposes several critical vulnerabilities across legacy and digital architectures. First, a major portion of contemporary solutions depend exclusively on a single validation layer, which inherently introduces single points of failure for spoofing or proxy behavior. Second, satellite positioning techniques remain deeply imprecise indoors and are routinely manipulated via simple software-based coordinate overrides. Third, visual matrix tokens lack room-level confinement properties due to their ease of remote transmission. Fourth, both RFID systems and legacy fingerprint topologies necessitate substantial capital investments for specialized localized readers, limiting scalability in resource-constrained environments. Fifth, deployed automated face verification systems frequently lack real-time liveness inspection layers, rendering them helpless against physical presentation attacks. Most importantly, there is an evident lack of research exploring the convergence of BLE RSSI-based room boundary verification with edge-computed Artificial Intelligence (AI) facial classification inside a unified, client-side mobile ecosystem. Extant frameworks fail to exploit local smartphone environments to process sensitive biological templates, creating massive cloud overhead and introducing security exposures. Section 2.1 outlines these fundamental voids, which the proposed Smart Attendance System directly addresses by merging short-range network telemetry, on-device neural inferencing, and live interaction challenges into a scalable, secure, and completely hardware-independent framework.

III. SYSTEM OBJECTIVES -

The development of the Smart Attendance System is guided by five primary architectural and operational objectives:

A. Security and Integrity Goals

The foremost directive of this framework is the absolute mitigation of proxy attendance and the presentation vulnerabilities highlighted in Sec. 2.1. To accomplish this, the architecture is specifically engineered to guarantee a False Acceptance Rate (FAR) of strictly less than 0.1 percent. This uncompromising security threshold is operationalized through a mandatory Two-Factor Attendance Protocol (TFAP). By requiring the simultaneous satisfaction of localized proximity constraints and live biometric validation, the system theoretically and practically eliminates systemic attendance fraud.

B. Execution Efficiency and Technical Goals

Despite introducing advanced cryptographic and biometric layers, the platform must remain frictionless to avoid consuming valuable instructional time. Consequently, the primary efficiency benchmark limits the entire verification sequence—from the initial proximity handshake to the final graphical confirmation—to a maximum duration of 15 seconds. This metric ensures the workflow remains temporally competitive with legacy digital token systems while providing vastly superior data integrity.

To meet these stringent execution speeds, the system completely decentralizes its core biometric processing. A dedicated TensorFlow Lite (TFLite) machine learning model is embedded natively within the mobile application environment. This edge-computing paradigm allows for instantaneous facial embedding generation and identity validation—calculated via a Cosine Similarity mathematical model—without relying on continuous cloud connectivity. By offloading these heavy processing tasks to the client device, the architecture prevents server bottlenecks during peak concurrent check-ins. Finally, all resulting verification logs and metadata are securely synchronized with a Firebase Firestore cloud architecture, where strict role-based governance protects the confidentiality of student records.

IV. PROPOSED SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The Smart Attendance System (SAS) is designed as a secure mobile-based attendance management framework that combines Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) proximity verification with AI-powered biometric authentication. The architecture follows a client-server model where Android smartphones act as both attendance devices and

The Smart Attendance System (SAS) is designed as a secure mobile-based attendance management framework that combines Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) proximity verification with AI-powered biometric authentication. The architecture follows a client-server model where Android smartphones act as both attendance devices and verification nodes, while Firebase Firestore provides centralized cloud data storage.

The proposed architecture consists of three major components:

- Teacher Device (BLE Advertiser)
- Student Device (BLE Scanner and Biometric Client)
- Firebase Firestore Backend

The complete system workflow is based on a Two-Factor Attendance Protocol (TFAP), where attendance is marked only after successful completion of both proximity verification and biometric identity verification.

A. Teacher Device Configuration (BLE Advertiser)

A lecture, the instructor's smartphone operates as a BLE advertiser. Upon initiating an attendance session, the application begins broadcasting a unique Service Universally Unique Identifier (UUID) utilizing Android's native BLE advertising Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). To establish a strict classroom verification zone, the transmission power is deliberately constrained to a medium setting, limiting the signal radius to approximately 5–10 meters. This configuration ensures that devices located outside the physical classroom receive degraded signal strengths and subsequently fail proximity checks. The instructor's device manages session states, broadcasts these localized packets, and synchronizes final attendance data with the cloud backend without requiring any external beacon hardware.

B. Student Device Configuration (BLE Scanner and Client)

The student's smartphone operates dually as a BLE scanner and an edge-computing biometric client. When a student attempts to log their presence, the mobile application actively scans the immediate environment for the instructor's specific BLE UUID. If the detected Received Signal Strength Indicator (RSSI) meets the required proximity threshold, the device immediately transitions to biometric validation. The application engages the front-facing camera, performing liveness detection and facial embedding generation locally via TensorFlow Lite and Google ML Kit. By executing these sensitive biological comparisons entirely on the client device, the architecture drastically reduces server latency and preserves user privacy, as raw facial imagery is never continuously transmitted to external servers.

C. Firebase Firestore Backend Structure

Firebase Firestore serves as the centralized NoSQL database for the platform, securely housing session metadata, student profiles, and historical attendance logs. The backend is structured into three primary collections: the Students Collection (storing enrollment data, historical percentages, and registered facial embeddings), the Sessions Collection (recording subject details, instructor information, and BLE session identifiers), and the Attendance Records Collection (logging individual verification timestamps, RSSI values, and final statuses). Access to these collections is strictly governed by Firebase Authentication and Firestore security rules to prevent unauthorized data manipulation.

D. Two-Factor Attendance Protocol (TFAP) Workflow

The operational core of the system is the Two-Factor Attendance Protocol (TFAP). This protocol mandates a sequential, two-stage verification process. First, the student device must capture a BLE packet with an RSSI value greater than -80 dBm, confirming physical proximity to the instructor. Second, upon passing the proximity gate, the student must successfully complete randomized liveness challenges (such as head movement or blinking) followed by a successful facial identity match against their stored database embedding using Cosine Similarity. An attendance record is committed to the Firestore backend only if both the spatial and biometric conditions are independently satisfied.

V. IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

The Smart Attendance System (SAS) is implemented as an Android-based mobile application that integrates Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE), facial recognition, liveness detection, and cloud-based attendance management. The system is designed to provide secure attendance verification while minimizing hardware dependency and improving user privacy.

The implementation combines Android native technologies, TensorFlow Lite, Firebase Firestore, and Google ML Kit to create a real-time attendance management framework.

A. Android Application and Technology Stack

The Smart Attendance System (SAS) framework is materialized as a native mobile application programmed in Kotlin within the Android Studio environment. The graphical user interface is constructed utilizing Jetpack Compose to deliver a responsive and modern user experience. The system's underlying architecture is highly modular, compartmentalizing core functions such as secure data syncing (Firebase), local visual processing (CameraX and Google ML Kit), and artificial intelligence operations (TensorFlow Lite). By keeping these operational modules functionally distinct, the platform ensures long-term maintainability and allows for the straightforward integration of future upgrades without requiring system-wide overhauls.

B. BLE Proximity Verification and Distance Estimation

For classroom localization, the platform heavily utilizes Android's native Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). The instructor's module utilizes the `BluetoothLeAdvertiser` class to transmit a session-specific Universally Unique Identifier (UUID). This transmission is configured with `ADVERTISE_MODE_BALANCED` and `ADVERTISE_TX_POWER_MEDIUM` parameters to deliberately confine the signal radius to 5–10 meters. Conversely, the student module employs the `BluetoothLeScanner` class with a `SCAN_MODE_LOW_LATENCY` configuration to actively seek this exact UUID. Upon packet interception, the system evaluates the Received Signal Strength Indicator (RSSI). The spatial distance between the devices is mathematically estimated using Eq. 1:

$$\text{Distance} = 10^{\frac{(\text{TxPower} - \text{RSSI})}{(10 \times n)}}$$

C. Camera Processing and Liveness Detection

Following successful spatial validation, the application automatically triggers the front-facing camera via the CameraX pipeline. To maintain real-time analysis speeds and avoid processing bottlenecks, the frame buffer is explicitly set to `STRATEGY_KEEP_ONLY_LATEST`. Liveness verification is subsequently executed using the Google ML Kit framework. The application prompts the user to perform randomized physical actions—such as lateral head rotations, ocular blinking, or smiling—while analyzing facial landmarks and Euler angles in real time. To further safeguard against presentation attacks utilizing miniature digital displays or distant printed photographs, the dimensional proportion of the face is calculated as shown in Eq. 2: $\text{Face Area Ratio} = \frac{[\text{Face Bounding Box Area}]}{[\text{Total Frame Area}]}$. An abnormally low ratio instantly flags the interaction as a potential spoofing attempt.

D. TensorFlow Lite Face Recognition Integration

Once liveness is verified, the captured frame undergoes morphological preprocessing, including facial cropping, dimensional resizing, and pixel normalization. A lightweight FaceNet model executed via TensorFlow Lite (TFLite) processes this normalized input to extract a 128-dimensional biometric embedding vector. This newly generated vector is computationally compared against the student's authorized baseline embedding retrieved from the cloud database. The comparative analysis utilizes the Cosine Similarity metric defined in Eq. 3:

$$\text{Cosine Similarity} = \frac{(A \cdot B)}{(\|A\| \times \|B\|)}$$

where A is the live embedding vector and B is the registered enrollment vector. As outlined previously in Sec. 2.2.1, the validation strictly requires a similarity score of ≥ 0.85 to officially mark the student as present.

E. Firebase Database Integration and Security Rules

The entire backend infrastructure is hosted on Firebase Firestore, a highly scalable NoSQL cloud environment. The database schema is logically divided into three primary collections: Students, Sessions, and Attendance Records. The Students collection retains enrollment data and biometric embedding arrays, the Sessions collection tracks live and historical lecture metadata, and the Attendance Records collection immutably logs temporal stamps, spatial RSSI values, and validation outcomes.

To ensure strict data privacy, Firebase Authentication is paired with customized Firestore Security Rules, completely preventing unauthorized endpoint access. Furthermore, because the heavy biometric computations detailed in Sec. 2.4.4 occur locally on the edge device, sensitive facial imagery is never transmitted to the cloud, significantly reinforcing user privacy compliance. Finally, the application dynamically manages Android runtime permissions, gracefully handling user denials without triggering application crashes.

VI. ADVANTAGES, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE SCOPE -

The Smart Attendance System (SAS) offers substantial advantages over traditional and existing digital attendance methods by integrating BLE-based proximity tracking with AI-powered facial authentication. This dual-factor approach significantly enhances attendance security, reduces administrative burdens, and optimizes operational efficiency within educational institutions. However, despite these critical advancements in automation, the proposed framework possesses several practical and technical limitations that must be carefully evaluated prior to real-world deployment.

A. System Advantages and Security Benefits

The integration of these dual verification stages provides substantial operational and security improvements over traditional methods. Primarily, the architecture successfully eradicates proxy attendance by strictly enforcing physical proximity through BLE localization. Furthermore, it inherently resists both GPS spoofing and advanced biometric presentation attacks. Because the validation sequence executes entirely on edge devices, the platform operates without requiring expensive, dedicated external hardware. This local execution of AI models also fortifies user privacy, as raw biological data never leaves the handset. Finally, as established in Sec. 2.2.2, the entire verification transaction is consistently completed in under 15 seconds, ensuring high execution efficiency during lecture hours.

B. Hardware and Environmental Limitations-

Despite its robust security profile, the framework is susceptible to specific environmental and hardware-centric constraints.

BLE signal propagation can experience significant variability due to structural obstructions, such as thick concrete walls, or signal absorption from dense human crowds, occasionally resulting in false proximity rejections. Additionally, the system's operational consistency is heavily reliant on the hardware specifications of the student's smartphone. Devices with inferior camera optics or limited processing units may struggle to execute the TFLite models rapidly. Lastly, although biometric computations occur entirely offline, the current architecture still requires a stable internet connection to synchronize the final attendance logs with the cloud backend.

C. Future Enhancements

To mitigate the aforementioned limitations and broaden the system's applicability, several developmental enhancements are proposed. Future iterations will focus on transitioning the native Android codebase to a cross-platform framework, specifically Flutter, to provide native support for iOS devices. To address classroom connectivity issues, the implementation of localized offline caching with asynchronous cloud synchronization is planned. Furthermore, integrating adaptive signal calibration algorithms could dynamically adjust the proximity thresholds based on real-time environmental interference. Finally, establishing API bridges to directly synchronize the authenticated data with broader university Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) databases will significantly streamline administrative workflows.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

This research presented a unified Smart Attendance System (SAS) engineered to resolve the persistent vulnerabilities of proxy reporting, location spoofing, and administrative inefficiency prevalent in modern educational institutions. By abandoning legacy singular-validation methods—such as vulnerable QR codes, inaccurate indoor GPS, and cost-prohibitive RFID infrastructure—this study successfully introduced a decentralized, Two-Factor Attendance Protocol (TFAP).

The proposed architecture effectively bridges spatial and biological verification through edge-computing mobile devices. Utilizing native Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) Application Programming Interfaces, the framework establishes a localized, hardware-independent classroom perimeter, enforcing a strict presence threshold of $RSSI > -80$ dBm. Following this spatial validation, the integration of TensorFlow Lite and Google ML Kit facilitates advanced liveness detection and local facial embedding extraction. By mathematically confirming student identities against cloud-registered templates using Cosine Similarity (where $A \cdot B / \|A\| \times \|B\| \geq 0.85$), the system practically eliminates biometric presentation attacks.

Implemented natively on Android with a secure Firebase Firestore backend, the SAS provides a highly scalable and cost-effective alternative to traditional attendance systems. While minor operational constraints exist regarding environmental BLE signal variability and mobile hardware dependencies, the foundational architecture demonstrates profound improvements in data integrity and processing speed (consistently operating under 15 seconds). Ultimately, this dual-layer verification framework illustrates the significant potential of merging short-range network telemetry with localized artificial intelligence. It delivers a robust, transparent, and privacy-compliant solution that minimizes administrative overhead while rigorously securing academic integrity.

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