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Innovative Face Recognition System for Efficient Access Management in Academic Institutions

Douglas Rakasiwi Nugroho[1*], Rico Aurelio Gunadi Sastra[2]
Bina Nusantara University[1,2]
Jl. Kebon Jeruk Raya No. 27, Kebon Jeruk Jakarta Barat 11530, Indonesia
Corresponding Email: douglas.nugroho@binus.ac.id[1]
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8754-9933[1]

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces a proof of concept for an innovative device aimed at enhancing administrative efficiency in academic environments through advanced facial recognition technology. Designed to a large, portrait-oriented display and an integrated camera, the device is intended to be installed at various strategic locations across the campus, facilitating streamlined access to information. By replacing traditional login methods, it enables students and faculty members to access essential information quickly and effortlessly after a brief identity verification process. This efficient approach not only minimizes time spent on routine administrative tasks but also ensures a seamless user experience. In this paper, we aim to demonstrate that this concept can be realized by combining several elements, which will be detailed in the content. Additionally, it highlights the role this technology plays in advancing campus infrastructure and fostering a more efficient, and technologically equipped academic environment. Through this initiative, the paper contributes to the broader conversation on modernizing educational institutions by integrating facial recognition into everyday campus interactions.

Keywords: Academic Institutions; Face Recognition Technology; Modernizing Education; Proof of Concept; Technology Integration

INTRODUCTION

Facial recognition technology has emerged as a transformative solution for authentication and access control, providing a seamless and secure alternative to conventional login methods (Kamil et al., 2023; Zhou, 2020). This technology has gained widespread adoption across various industries, including finance, healthcare, and public security, due to its ability to enhance security, reduce unauthorized access, and improve user convenience. In academic environments, where managing access to campus resources and ensuring efficient administrative operations are crucial, facial recognition presents an opportunity to modernize traditional authentication methods, replacing cumbersome password-based logins with a fast, automated verification system.

This paper introduces a proof of concept for an innovative facial recognition device specifically designed to enhance administrative efficiency in educational institutions. The proposed device integrates a large portrait-oriented display with an embedded high-resolution camera, strategically positioned at key locations across the campus. By eliminating the need for manual login credentials, the device allows students and faculty members to quickly verify their identity and gain immediate access to essential academic information, such as class schedules, examination details, and personalized notifications. This not only streamlines routine interactions but also minimizes delays associated with forgotten passwords or lost identification cards, which are common challenges in traditional login systems.

Beyond its primary function as an authentication tool, the facial recognition system contributes to the broader goal of digital transformation in academic institutions. As universities and colleges increasingly integrate smart technology into their operational framework, innovations like facial recognition play a pivotal role in enhancing security, optimizing administrative workflows, and fostering a more technologically advanced learning environment. The implementation of this system has the potential to improve campus resource management by ensuring that only authorized individuals can access restricted areas and academic services. Furthermore, the automation of identity verification can contribute to more efficient attendance tracking, reducing administrative burdens on educators while promoting accuracy in student records.

This paper details the functional capabilities of the proposed system and examines its implications for modernizing campus operations. By focusing on both operational efficiency and technological advancement, the research highlights how facial recognition technology can redefine user experiences within academic settings. The system's deployment is expected to improve accessibility, enhance security, and establish a more intuitive and user-friendly interaction between students, faculty, and institutional resources. Through this initiative, the study contributes to ongoing discussions on leveraging biometric authentication for educational innovation, reinforcing the need for institutions to embrace emerging technologies in their pursuit of efficiency and digital transformation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing research in this domain has explored various approaches to improving attendance management and information access in academic settings. For instance, a study by Ramalingam and Shankar in Badejo et al. (2017) investigated the use of fingerprint authentication in an attendance management system, highlighting the advantages of automated systems over traditional paper-based methods, such as increased efficiency, reduced administrative burden, and more accurate record-keeping. Similarly, another project by Pandey et al. in Kamil et al. (2023) focused on the

development of an online attendance system based on facial recognition and face mask detection, addressing both identity verification and safety compliance requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic. These studies demonstrate the growing interest and potential of biometric technologies, such as fingerprint and facial recognition, in enhancing administrative efficiency and user experience within academic environments. Building upon this foundation, a previous comprehensive review of the literature on attendance marking systems utilizing facial recognition technology conducted by Sharma et al. in Puthea et al. (2021) has provided a wealth of insights that have directly informed the development of the proposed device. The review examined the challenges and potential solutions associated with such systems in-depth, offering valuable guidance for the design and implementation of innovative facial recognition-based solutions for academic institutions.

RESEARCH METHOD

The proposed method outlines the design and functionality of a facial recognition-based system that simplifies login procedures and enhances user experience. The system allows students and staff to either register their facial data or access their personal schedules through a sequence of user interactions.

Users are first prompted to input their credentials to ensure secure access. Once authenticated, the system initiates a comprehensive facial scanning process, capturing images from multiple angles and under various expressions to ensure high accuracy in future identification attempts. First, the user faces left to provide a profile view, followed by a right profile shot. Next, a frontal image is taken, allowing for a clear view of the face. Finally, the user is prompted to smile while facing forward, which helps the system account for variations in expressions. This detailed capture process strengthens the system's ability to reliably recognize users, even in cases where facial appearances may change over time.

After successful registration, users can access their academic schedule simply by scanning their face, eliminating the need for manual logins. Instead of pressing a submit button, users can trigger the facial recognition process by smiling. When the user smiles, the system captures the image and performs face recognition to retrieve and display the user's schedule. This feature enhances convenience and streamlines the process, providing a seamless and efficient experience.

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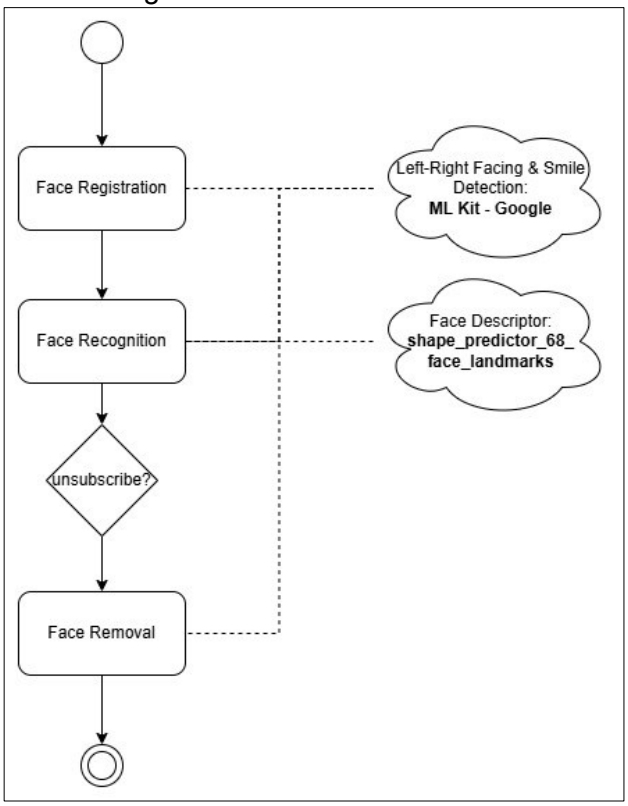
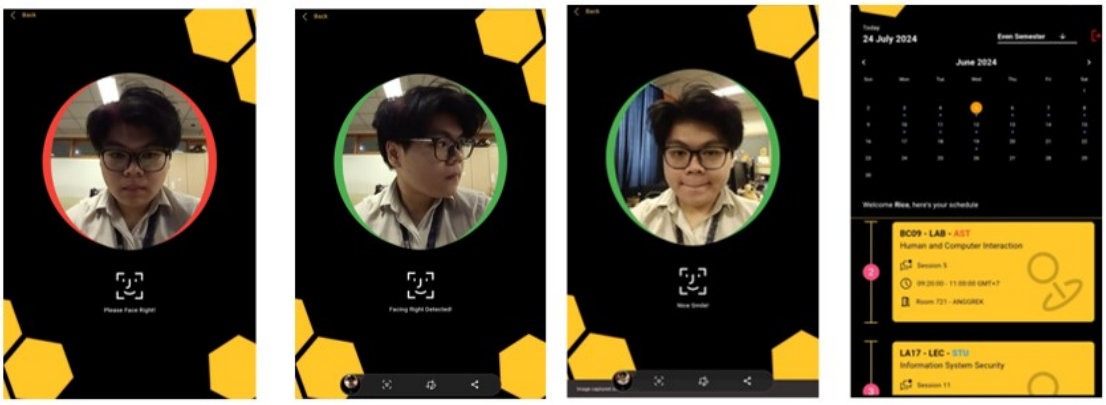
Figure 1. Proposed Method Big Picture



This method offers a streamlined approach, reducing the time and effort required for both registration and schedule retrieval. Additionally, the comprehensive data collection during the facial scanning process enhances the overall accuracy and reliability of the facial recognition system, ensuring a secure and efficient access management solution for the academic institution.

RESULTS

Figure 2. Simple Application that Asks to Face Left, Face Right, Smile, and Showing Schedule



To validate the proposed method, we developed a facial recognition system using a combination of open-source libraries and machine learning techniques. The system leverages dlib (Dlib C++ Library, n.d.) for facial landmark detection and face descriptor extraction, with custom functions created to handle registration, face recognition, and face removal processes.

The key components of the proof of concept are as follows:

Face Descriptor Extraction
The system begins by reading an image and converting it to grayscale, a step that simplifies data processing by reducing color information while retaining essential facial details. It then employs the Histogram of Oriented Gradients (HOG) method to detect faces within the image (Chou et al., 2018). This method is effective in identifying shapes and structures associated with human faces, allowing the system to locate facial regions accurately.

Once a face is detected, the system identifies specific facial landmarks, such as the positions of the eyes, nose, and mouth. Using these landmarks, the facial recognition model calculates a unique face descriptor, a numerical array that captures the distinctive features of the individual's face. This face descriptor serves as a fingerprint for facial recognition, enabling the system to distinguish one face from another based on the unique features encoded within the descriptor.

Angle and Smile Detection
To further enhance the accuracy of the facial recognition system, Google's ML Kit was integrated to verify user orientations, such as face left, face right, and smiling (ML Kit, n.d.). By analyzing the positions of the eyes and other facial landmarks, ML Kit enables the system to accurately assess the user's angle and expression. This additional layer of orientation detection improves the system's capability to recognize users in a variety of postures and moods, ensuring a more versatile interaction with the facial recognition process.

This orientation analysis allows the system to effectively capture images at various angles and expressions, providing flexibility in how users engage with it. For instance, users can trigger the recognition process simply by smiling, eliminating the need for manual actions like pressing a submit button. This hands-free feature contributes to a smoother, more natural interaction, making it easier for users to access the system without extra steps, even if they approach the camera from different angles.

The incorporation of ML Kit for smile-based recognition not only streamlines user interaction but also enhances the system's reliability in diverse conditions. By accommodating different user expressions and orientations, the system remains effective in a range of real-world scenarios, where lighting, positioning, and slight facial changes may otherwise interfere with recognition. This innovation ultimately ensures that the system maintains a high standard of accuracy and ease of use, even in less controlled environments.

Face Registration
To improve the accuracy of the facial recognition system, users have to register multiple images of their faces. This process helps the system account for variations in angles and expressions, making it easier to recognize individuals in different conditions. By capturing a range of images, the system builds a more comprehensive understanding of each user's unique facial features, enhancing the reliability of recognition.

Once these images are collected, the system generates a face descriptor for each one. A descriptor is a numerical representation that captures the distinctive characteristics of a user's face, allowing the system to differentiate between individuals effectively. These descriptors are then stored in a model file associated with the user's unique ID, serving as a reference point for future recognition attempts.

During subsequent interactions, when a user's face is scanned, the system compares the newly captured face descriptor to those stored in the model file. This comparison allows the system to accurately identify the user by matching the live scan to the pre-registered descriptors. By relying on a database of multiple facial descriptors per user, the system maintains high accuracy and ensures that users can be recognized quickly and consistently.

Face Recognition

To accurately identify a user, the system begins by calculating the Euclidean distance between the face descriptor from the newly scanned image and each of the previously registered descriptors in the database (Dlib C++ Library, n.d.). The Euclidean distance metric effectively measures how similar the new descriptor is to those already stored, providing a reliable way to compare facial features numerically. By applying this calculation, the system can narrow down the list of potential matches swiftly.

Once the distances are calculated, the system identifies the person with the smallest distance value that falls under a predefined threshold. This threshold is crucial as it sets the boundary for what is considered a close enough match, balancing both accuracy and flexibility. If the distance between the new descriptor and any stored descriptor meets this criterion, the user is successfully recognized. This method minimizes the chances of false positives by ensuring that only highly similar matches are accepted.

This approach ensures both accuracy and efficiency in the login process. The Euclidean distance calculation is computationally efficient, enabling rapid comparisons even as the database of registered users grows. As a result, users experience a seamless, nearly instant login experience, as the system swiftly identifies them based on the most similar stored descriptor. This streamlined process not only enhances user convenience but also contributes to the overall reliability of the facial recognition system in real-world applications.

Face Removal

If a user no longer wishes to use the system, they can request to have their face descriptors removed. The system checks for the user's ID and deletes the corresponding data.

Through this proof of concept, we demonstrate a fully functional system capable of registering, recognizing, and managing users via facial recognition. The system effectively streamlines the login process, allowing users to access their academic resources effortlessly. By eliminating the need for traditional username and password combinations, we improve the user experience on campus.

Furthermore, the system can play a crucial role in validating student identities during examinations. By verifying a student's identity through facial recognition, institutions can significantly reduce instances of impersonation, thereby upholding academic integrity.

To enhance security further, the authentication process can be developed to incorporate additional biometric methods, such as speaker recognition. By combining facial recognition with voice verification, we can create a multi-factor authentication system that offers a higher level of security. This dual approach not only mitigates the risk of unauthorized access but also ensures a more robust user identification process. Moreover, the system's design is adaptable, allowing for future enhancements such as integrating additional biometric features or expanding its applications beyond academics.

With ongoing advancements in machine learning and image processing, the potential for increased accuracy and broader functionality is significant.

DISCUSSION

While the proposed facial recognition system offers an efficient login solution, the accuracy of the model used in this proof of concept may be impacted by an increase in the number of registered users, as discussed in (Prabowo et al., 2020). As the system is required to differentiate between an expanding number of individuals, the complexity of the facial recognition task escalates, potentially leading to a decrease in the overall accuracy of the model (Ríos-Sánchez et al., 2024). This issue becomes particularly relevant as larger academic institutions often consist of thousands of students, faculty, and staff members who would need to be accurately identified. Addressing this would necessitate a rigorous assessment of the model's limitations under varying conditions and the development of strategies to maintain high accuracy rates.

To tackle these challenges, further refinement and optimization of the machine learning algorithms employed are essential. This could involve exploring more robust and scalable deep neural network architectures that are better suited for large datasets (Li et al., 2019). For instance, using convolutional neural networks (CNNs) specifically designed for facial recognition tasks could improve the model’s performance by enhancing its ability to capture nuanced facial features. Additionally, experimenting with ensemble learning methods or hybrid models may also offer a pathway to improve recognition rates across diverse demographic groups within the academic community. Such architectural adjustments could allow the system to scale more effectively as the user base grows, reducing the risk of performance degradation.

Moreover, techniques such as dimensionality reduction and distributed computing could be integrated to further optimize the system’s efficiency in handling larger datasets. Dimensionality reduction methods, like Principal Component Analysis (PCA), can decrease the computational load by simplifying the facial features the model must process, without significant loss of important information. Distributed computing, on the other hand, could distribute the processing load across multiple servers, enabling faster recognition times even as the database size increases. These enhancements not only improve the system's responsiveness but also contribute to a smoother user experience, which is critical in high-traffic environments like campuses.

In addition to technical challenges, the reliance on sensitive biometric data such as facial recognition information raises significant concerns regarding user privacy and data security. Appropriate safeguards and comprehensive data management policies are required to ensure the responsible handling of this information and to mitigate potential privacy risks (Hapani et al., 2018) (Kamil et al., 2023) (Brown, 2021). This could involve implementing robust encryption protocols to protect data at rest and in transit, limiting access to biometric data to authorized personnel only, and providing users with control over their personal information. Building trust is also essential, which could be achieved through clear and transparent communication about data collection, storage, and usage practices, allowing users to understand and feel secure about how their data is managed.

Despite these challenges, the proposed facial recognition system presents a promising solution for enhancing administrative efficiency and user experience in academic environments. By offering a seamless login process, this system reduces the time spent on routine administrative tasks, allowing students and faculty to focus more on academic activities. The potential for widespread adoption lies not only in its technological innovation but also in its capacity to adapt to a growing user base while safeguarding

user privacy. As the field of biometric technology continues to evolve, so does the opportunity to develop solutions that are both efficient and secure, thereby contributing positively to the modernization of educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

The proposed facial recognition system offers a practical solution for streamlining administrative processes in academic settings, enhancing efficiency and user experience. While challenges related to scalability, accuracy, and data security must be addressed, advancements in machine learning, distributed computing, and privacy safeguards can help mitigate these concerns. With continued refinement, this technology has the potential to modernize campus infrastructure by providing a seamless and secure authentication process, ultimately contributing to a more technologically equipped academic environment.

Future work needs to concentrate on optimizing the model's ability to classify and recognize individuals across tens of thousands of classes while maintaining high levels of accuracy. Achieving this requires exploring and implementing advanced machine-learning techniques and innovative model architectures. For example, incorporating deep neural networks with attention mechanisms could significantly improve the model's ability to focus on relevant facial features and enhance overall recognition performance. Similarly, ensemble methods, which combine multiple models to make more robust predictions, may help in efficiently managing the increased computational load associated with a larger number of classes.

In addition to exploring advanced architectures, it is crucial to investigate techniques for dimensionality reduction, such as Principal Component Analysis (PCA). PCA can help reduce the complexity of the data by transforming it into a lower-dimensional space while retaining most of the variance, thereby speeding up the recognition process. Furthermore, employing faster face descriptor extraction methods through efficient feature encoding can contribute to reducing processing time and improving the system's responsiveness.

To address the challenges posed by handling larger datasets, distributed computing with parallel processing should be considered. This approach would involve splitting the computational tasks across multiple processors or machines, thus accelerating data processing and enhancing scalability.

Moreover, extensive testing with diverse demographic data is essential to ensure the system's robustness and fairness. The system should be evaluated across various age groups, ethnicities, and gender representations to confirm that it performs equitably for all user groups. This will help in identifying and addressing any biases or performance discrepancies that may arise in different demographic contexts. By addressing these areas, the system can be effectively scaled and adapted to meet the needs of a large academic environment, providing accurate and efficient facial recognition services for a broad user base.

LIMITATION

The current system demonstrates promising results in facial recognition for small-scale usage, effectively managing facial recognition tasks in a controlled environment. However, to meet the demands of a large academic institution, where the user base can include thousands of students and faculty members, the system must undergo significant enhancements. The goal is to scale the system to handle a much larger number of unique individuals, each represented as a distinct class in the model.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. The research was conducted independently and without any external influences that could affect the integrity of the findings or interpretations presented. This statement reflects the commitment of the authors to uphold the highest standards of academic and ethical responsibility in conducting and disseminating this research.

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