



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication: A survey

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Abstract

The rapid growth of Fog Computing has brought a paradigm shift in data processing and communication, presenting various benefits such as reduced latency, efficient data processing, enhanced scalability and the ability to operate effectively in resource-constrained environments. However, the technology introduced complex privacy and security issues. This paper conducted a thorough exploration of privacy and security issues associated with fog-to-fog (F2F) communication within the broader framework of fog computing. It initiated by providing a background of fog computing, its architecture and the core characteristics of fog computing. This survey aimed to discuss the state-of-the-art of privacy and security concerns in fog-to-fog communication. The survey also proposed the areas of future research to equip researchers, practitioners, policy makers and the decision makers with solid knowledge, offering guidance in navigating the complex landscape of privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog (F2F) communication. The survey also aimed to discuss the existing privacy and security research gaps in fog-to-fog (F2F) communication. The findings of this review underscore privacy and security issues in F2F communication, providing valuable insights into recommended countermeasures to strengthen the overall security framework.

Keywords: Fog Computing; F2F; Privacy; Security; Fog-to-Fog Communication; Internet of Things (IoT); Cloud Computing; Artificial Intelligence; AI

1. Introduction

Fog Computing refers to extending cloud services to edge computing [1]. It's a concept of distributed computing and its main aim is to simplify the processing and configuration of computing ecosystem and storage devices between the end points and the data centres [2]. This exchange of data between fog nodes has revolutionized data processing and real time data processing. The Internet of Things (IoT) computational operations such as data analysis are executed by utilizing the distributed computing infrastructure – the Fog Computing. [3], [4]. Internet of Things (IoT) functions as an intelligence engine, enabling the acquisition of vast and huge data and facilitating automation across various domains. [5], [6]. The devices in IoT rely on cloud infrastructure to enhance the adaptability, ensure the systems are stable, bolster fault tolerance and facilitate more communications [7], [8], [9], and because of the huge expansion of these IoT devices [10], the cloud handles huge sensitive data, Fog computing was then proposed to overcome the problems of cloud computing [11]. When fog-enabled devices are in operation, they perform local assessments of time-sensitive data, including alarm statuses, device conditions, fault alerts, and other critical information [12], [13].

This architecture brings numerous advantages, including reduced latency [14], [15], enhanced real-time capabilities, and efficient bandwidth utilization. However, as fog computing escalates to meet the ever growing demands of various applications, from IoT, VANETs, smart cities, industrial automation, and healthcare, it also brings the concern of privacy and security issues. Fog computing introduces a decentralized computing paradigm that challenges the traditional security models that relied mostly on centralized controls [16]-[20]. The proximity of these computing resources closer

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to the edge raises questions about how data security and privacy can be ensured. Ensuring secure and dependable communication is imperative in addressing the challenges posed by the ever-evolving environment [21], [22]. The presence of vast amounts of data underscores the need for real-time solutions, a requirement that can be fulfilled by integrating cloud computing technologies into IoT networks [23], [24].

In this paper, a detailed examination of the privacy and security issues [25] in fog computing more specifically to fog-to-fog communication. The survey aims to offer an in-depth understanding on fog-to-fog communication and the potential privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication. To achieve the survey's objective, we begin by presenting the general overview of fog computing and its impact in addressing privacy and security concerns in cloud computing arena. We will examine the general characteristics of fog computing, its benefits and explore their relevance in privacy and security issues within the realm of cloud computing. The paper also analyzes proposed solutions that address the privacy and security concerns in the field of cloud computing.

The findings of the paper will contribute immensely to the existing body of knowledge by equipping researchers, practitioners, policy makers and decision-makers with valuable insights in privacy and security issues in fog computing while offering a roadmap for navigating these critical concerns and fostering the responsible deployment of this technology. This knowledge will help inform research and development of very robust frameworks to address and support the improvements of trustworthy and secure fog-to-fog communication that prioritizes data protection.

This survey paper makes significant contributions:

1.1. Contextualizing Fog Computing

The paper provides a comprehensive overview of fog computing explaining its role in extending cloud services and simplifying the processing and storage of data between end points.

1.2. Privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication

The paper delves into the core focus of the survey, which is the privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication.

1.3. Countermeasures to privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication

The paper also discusses insightful countermeasures of privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication.

1.4. Open research gaps in fog-to-fog communication

The paper outlines open research gaps in privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication.

The paper is enumerated as follows: Section I and II provides a concise introduction and overview of key concepts related to fog computing including its architecture. Section III conducts a comprehensive survey of the relevant literature and other related work. Section IV outlines the methodology adopted for this survey paper. Section V presents the findings and analysis derived from the study. Section VI presents an in-depth exploration of the existing body of knowledge of Fog-to-Fog Communication. Section VII offers a comprehensive discussion of the findings. Section VIII presents open research gaps and future direction and finally the concluding remarks of this review paper.

2. Motivation

The motivation behind conducting this survey lies in the high escalation of Internet of Things (IoT) devices and increasing high demand for real-time data processing and the critical need to address privacy and security concerns within fog computing ecosystem. Fog Computing focuses on real-time data processing and increased adoption in applications like Internet of Things (IoT), Vehicular Ad hoc Networks (VANETs), smart cities, smart contracts and industrial automation. Understanding and mitigating these privacy and security issues will guide practitioners, researchers and all stakeholders in ensuring data protection and trust in this rapidly evolving landscape of fog computing.

2.1. Overview of Fog Computing

Fog Computing was formally introduced by Cisco as an extension of cloud computing which is close to the IoT devices in a network [26]. Cloud computing has many benefits including high valuable and efficient computing resources with an affordable price [27]-[30]. According to [31], numerous cloud services are readily accessible in contemporary commercial offerings; however, they may not be well-suited for addressing latency and portability requirements.

Examples of such applications include Wearable Computing, Smart Grids, Connected Vehicles [32] and Software Defined Networks (SDN) [33]. Fog aims to provide a decentralized computing paradigm that particularly extends the capabilities of cloud computing [34] as shown in Fig 1. The architecture processes, aggregates and transmit data hence saving time and resources.

2.2. Fog Computing Architecture

In this section, we discuss the architectural framework of fog computing. Given that a multitude of data originates from edge devices, sensors [35], and applications on a daily basis, it is imperative to acknowledge that these data-producing devices are typically characterized by simplicity and limited computational resources, rendering them ill-equipped to undertake essential analytics or machine-learning tasks [36]-[39]. Cloud computing offers robust capabilities for managing computing tasks. However, its distance can result in latency issues. Connecting endpoints directly to the cloud isn't viable due to privacy, security, and legal concerns associated with transmitting raw data over the internet. [40].

In Fog Computing, we look at the "fog" layer from the point of view of devices like gateways, routers, and others [41]. This "fog" layer is like a middle step that helps limit the data sent to the cloud and makes decisions based on specific rules programmed into the fog node. Fog Computing is used in different fields like industrial IoT, vehicle networks, smart cities, and smart buildings [42] as shown in Fig 2 below.

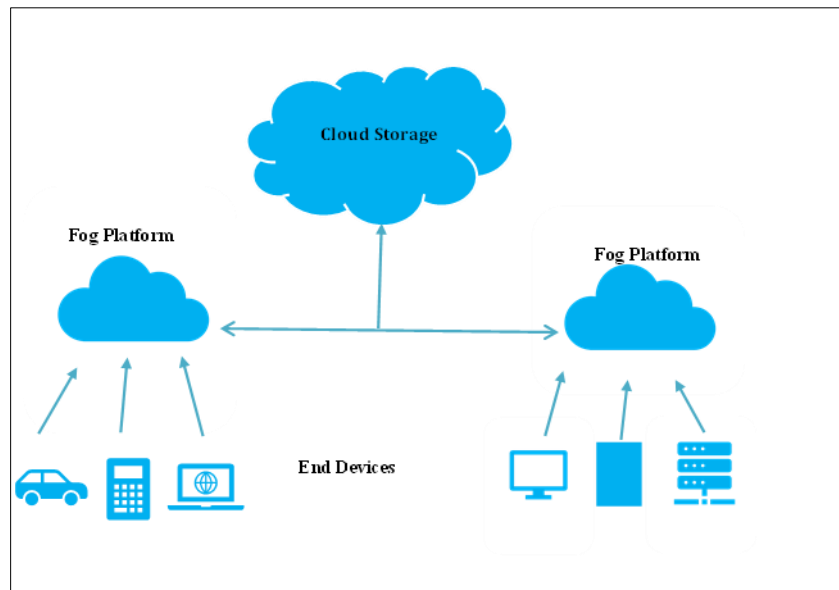


Figure 1 Fog Computing Overview

2.3. Characteristics of Fog Computing

The characteristics of fog computing makes it a valuable paradigm for applications requiring low latency [43], real-time processing, and distributed computing, such as IoT, smart cities, and automation. It is characterized by several key features [44], [45]:

Heterogeneity: Fog Computing leverages virtualization to provide a versatile platform. This enables it to offer diverse computing, storage, and networking services tailored to the requirements of various applications and devices. Heterogeneity allows fog computing to bridge the gap between resource-constrained IoT devices and the robust infrastructure found in traditional Cloud Data Centers[46]-[48].

Edge Location: Fog Computing's emphasis on edge locations brings services closer to the end-users or devices. This proximity significantly reduces latency, ensuring a seamless user experience for applications like gaming, video streaming, and augmented reality. Fog Computing optimizes bandwidth usage and decreases the load on centralized data centers. Edge location is particularly crucial in scenarios where network bandwidth [49]-[51] is limited or where real-time decision-making is required, such as autonomous vehicles, VANETS or industrial automation. [52], [53].

Geographical Distribution: Fog Computing's geographical distribution is in stark contrast to the centralized nature of traditional Cloud Computing. It focuses on distributing services widely across different locations and regions. This

approach enhances the resilience and redundancy of services, as they can continue to operate even if certain locations are affected by disruptions or failures [54]-[56].

Large-Scale Sensor Networks: Fog Computing plays a critical role in managing large-scale sensor networks used in applications like environmental monitoring and Smart Grids [57]-[61]. These sensor networks generate vast amounts of data that require distributed computing and storage resources for processing and analysis.

Extensive node count: Fog Computing's extensive geographical distribution often leads to a large number of interconnected nodes, such as edge devices, gateways, and Fog Nodes. This multitude of nodes contributes to the overall scalability of the Fog Computing architecture, allowing it to adapt to various workloads and traffic patterns. It also necessitates effective management and monitoring tools to ensure the smooth operation of the distributed system. [58]-[66].

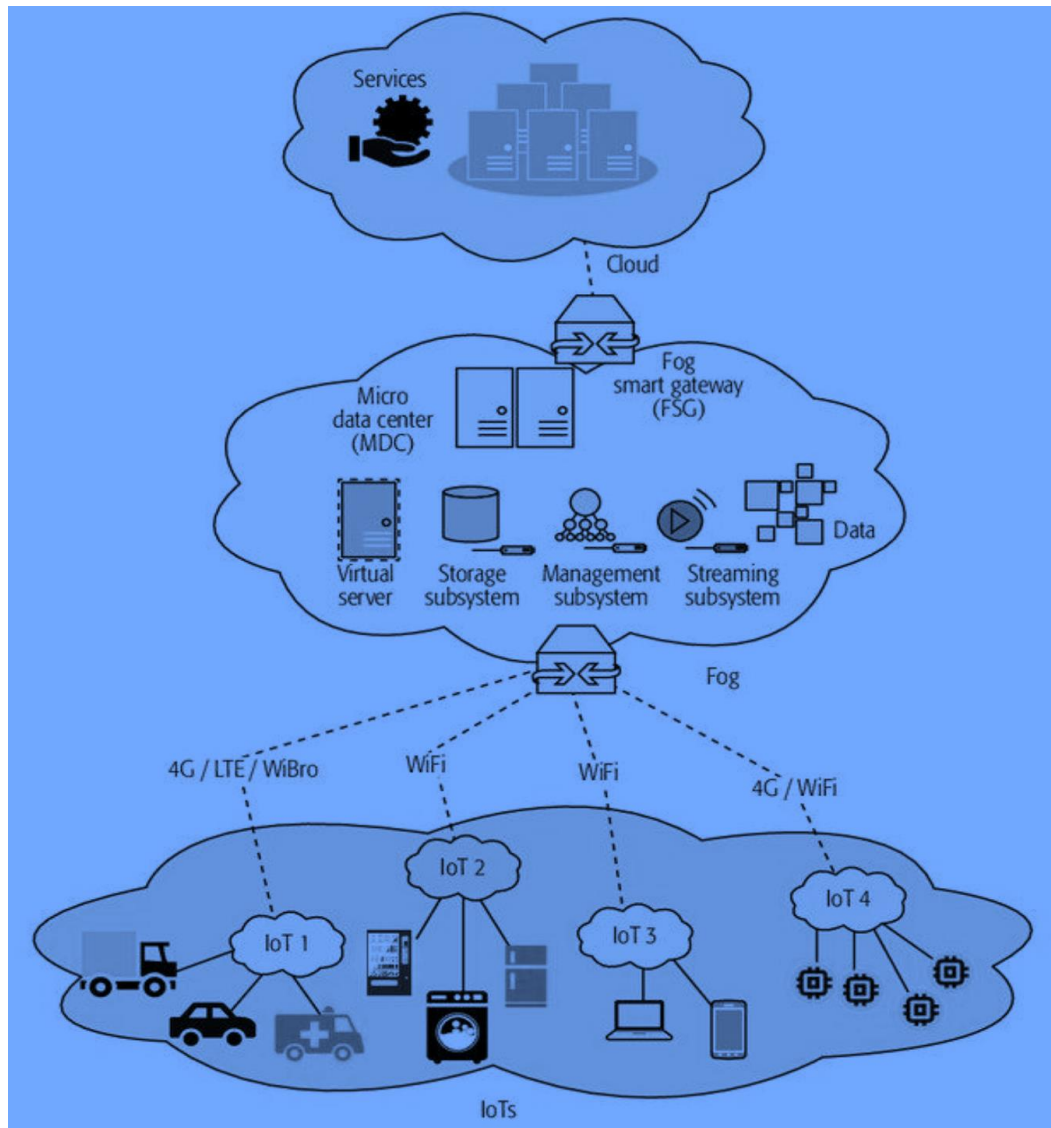


Figure 2 The Fog Components and Integration

Mobility Support: Many Fog Computing applications involve direct communication with mobile devices, which may change their location frequently. To support this mobility, Fog Computing incorporates techniques such as the Locator/ID Separation Protocol (LISP). LISP decouples the identity of a host from its location, ensuring that the host can move between different network segments without changing its IP address and where a distributed directory system is employed to maintain up-to-date mappings between host identities and their current locations [67]-[71].

Real-Time Interactions: Fog Computing is well-suited for applications that require real-time interactions and rapid decision-making. These applications include autonomous vehicles that rely on immediate sensor data analysis, industrial automation systems that need low-latency control, and augmented reality applications that demand responsive user experiences [72], [73].

2.4. Related Work

Over the last years, many scholars have extensively explored the privacy and security concerns within the domain of Fog computing, predominantly providing a broad overview of these privacy and security issues. To underscore the significance of the subject matter addressed in our article, "Privacy and Security Issues in Fog-to-Fog Communication," this section focuses on a thorough examination of prior research conducted in the field of fog computing. In the **Table 1** below, we present a survey of research papers, outlining their key objectives, key lessons learned and valuable contributions published from 2020 to 2023.

Table 1 Comparative Analysis of Review Papers.

Ref.	Year	Aims and Objectives	Lesson Learned	Key Contribution
[74]	2023	The objective of this article is to comprehensively address the risks, challenges, and potential solutions associated with security in fog computing. It also sheds light on ongoing research within the realm of fog computing.	Overview of threats in fog computing paradigm, and that threats remains a big demand for security and confidentiality measures.	The paper outlines the risks, issues and solutions that are linked to security in fog computing. It then includes information on ongoing research projects, covering security and safety concerns in fog computing paradigm.
[75]	2023	The main objective of this paper is to address the technical challenges and research gaps in fog computing. It offers a comprehensive perspective and aims underscores the significance of security and privacy issues prioritization in fog computing.	Fog Computing has capabilities of making good decisions and trying better service in the future with the help of various protocols used to maintain IoT.	The article summarizes the latest advances and developments in the realm of fog computing. It offers insights on the solutions to security and privacy issues, more particularly to data management issues associated with fog computing.
[76]	2023	The paper gives in-depth insights on possible hazards within interconnected systems. The article expounds security threats, vulnerabilities and privacy concerns.	Fog or Cloud Based IoT Systems [77] security measures must be strengthened to keep up with the ever-evolving cybersecurity landscape.	The paper highlights the extensive demand for comprehensive privacy and security to support Fog and Cloud Computing.
[78]	2023	The paper discusses cloud computing with particular emphasis on the paradigms that preceded the fog computing emergence. It also identifies the key challenges associated with fog computing to provide information to researchers in this evolving field.	The research highlights the prominence of security, privacy, application, and communication challenges within the contributions made by scholars in the field.	The paper discusses cloud computing, proposed taxonomy and furnishes an in-depth analysis of how security, privacy, application, and communication challenges feature in the scholarly contributions.
[79]	2022	This paper presents a list of security and privacy in fog computing paradigm. It also expounds dangers that exist in cloud, fog and edge computing paradigms.	Fog computing is prone to various numerous security and privacy concerns.	The article discusses the privacy and security issues in fog computing ecosystem. The article also highlights the existing dangers in cloud, fog and edge computing.
[80]	2022	The objective of this article is to give the state-of-the-art in fog computing architectures, security	Fog computing security challenges and the	The paper gives insights on the security challenges countermeasures in fog

		challenges and the existing countermeasures to guide researchers to find comprehensive information and solutions in fog computing.	corresponding countermeasures.	computing, hence helping researchers with solutions in fog computing systems.
[81]	2022	The main objective of this paper is to discuss the implementation of fog computing and proposing efficient approach for encryption to strengthen security on fog computing.	Efficient encryption approach for providing security in fog computing.	The article suggests an effective encryption method to enhance security within the domain of fog computing.
[41]	2021	The objective of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the privacy and security challenges associated with fog computing.	Fog computing paradigm confidentiality and security issues	The article discusses the confidentiality concerns and issues in fog computing; and suggests methods for mitigating these difficulties in fog computing.
[82]	2021	The primary objective of this article is to offer an extensive exploration of the privacy and security concerns associated with Fog computing. The paper aims to do a thorough survey of the existing literature on Fog computing, aiming in synthesizing the current state-of-the-art knowledge regarding the security and privacy challenges.	Fog computing categories; network services and communications, Data processing (inside Fog node), and IoT device's privacy (end-user device)	The paper recognizes that the conventional privacy and security solutions tailored for Cloud computing cannot be directly transplanted to the Fog computing domain due to its unique characteristics. The paper also underscores the essential need for context-specific solutions to address security and privacy challenges in the Fog environment.
[83]	2021	The paper organized recent studies and examined fog computing, identified challenges related to their design and highlighted areas for further research and future opportunities.	Fog computing progress will lead to additional paradigms to enhance service delivery.	The paper addressed fog computing research status, highlighted areas of further research, and future opportunities.
[84]	2021	The paper identifies and discusses the security challenges in fog computing. It also gives insights on blockchain approach to mitigate the security concerns.	Blockchain technology [85] can be used to mitigate the privacy and security concerns in fog computing.	The paper discusses the security and privacy challenges in fog computing. The paper provides overview on how Blockchain can mitigate most of these challenges.
[86]	2021	The article explores the security access control technology within the context of fog computing. It examines its essential components and a detailed analysis of two key dimensions: extended access and hidden access. It aims to provide users with a broader range of flexible access control options in fog computing environments	Ensuring the security of user data in fog computing environments necessitates robust collaboration and communication among various functional modules.	The research examines security access control technology in fog computing, hence efficient and effective protection mechanism of data security.
[87]	2021	The article conducts a comprehensive examination of the challenges and concerns faced by Fog computing, with a specific focus on privacy and security issues.	The paper highlights the challenges encountered within the landscape of security and privacy issues in fog computing and IoT.	The significant contribution of this paper lies in the introduction of an area privacy protection algorithm that safeguards location privacy hence maintaining low

				computational and communication overhead.
[88]	2021	The paper explains blockchain, its architecture, and its security. It further explains how Blockchain application is applied in IoT security including fog computing and generic Security requirements for fog computing.	The paper discusses how blockchain application is applied in fog computing to enhance security.	This paper emphasizes the important role of the blockchain technology in strengthening security in IoT and fog computing. The paper also gives insights on improving security in IoT and fog computing.
[89]	2021	The paper conducts a comparative study of existing fog architectures then perform a critical analysis of different authentication schemes in Fog computing. It also highlights some key strategies of enhancing the IoT devices.	The adoption of computational centric architectures, more secured payment systems can help in designing and deploying distributed, decentralized systems	This paper's key contribution lies in its affirmation that the absence of a standardized architecture for Fog computing, particularly in trust management and privacy that lead to potential security threats to the IoT.
[90]	2020	The study explores fog computing, highlighting its concerns and challenges. The paper also introduces future research areas discussed.	Fog computing plays a critical in making IoT technologies and networks work efficiently.	The study provided a summary of fog computing, highlighting its challenges and key points, as it gives future research direction.
[91]	2020	The study offers a thorough examination of fog and edge computing, aiming to create a foundation for solutions in the domain of Internet of Things, Fog computing and cloud environments.	The use of advanced technologies such as the Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) help enhance fog computing.	The article laid the groundwork for solutions in research related to Internet of Things, Fog computing and cloud environments. It explored the tools for these environment setups.
This Paper	2023	The paper explores privacy and security concerns in fog-to-fog (F2F) communication within the fog computing framework. It offers comprehensive understanding of complex landscape of privacy and security in fog-to-fog communication.	The privacy and security issues in Fog-to-Fog (F2F) Communication.	This paper extensively explores privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog (F2F) communication within the fog computing framework. It provides a thorough background on fog computing, discusses current concerns in F2F communication, and identifies research gaps.

3. Research Methodology

In this survey paper, we analyse existing literature on privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog (F2F) communication. The research methodology involved a comprehensive review of academic papers, conference proceedings, and relevant publications. The rigorous selection process aimed to provide a holistic and up-to-date overview of the current state of research in this field. Available research work for the last three years (2020 - 2023) where examined to identify the relevant literature. The methodology employed to establish privacy and security issues in Fog-to-Fog Communication (F2F) comprised three distinct steps:

3.1. String Searching

On 7th November, 2023, a search string was conducted using the Boolean Operators effectively retrieve the literature that is related to the study. The keywords included in the search string include "Fog-to-Fog Communication", "F2F" "Fog Computing", "Privacy", "Security", "F2F-IoT". Boolean operators such as "OR", "AND" were utilized to enhance the search through advanced search. To broaden the search scope by retrieving the articles containing any of the specified

keywords, “OR” Boolean operator was employed. “AND” operator was then employed to narrow down the search and obtain the articles that included the specified keywords. These Boolean operators ensured more focused and specified selection of the literature. This string search approach gave room for more comprehensive and systematic literature exploration related to privacy and security issues in Fog-to-Fog (F2F) Communication. Figure3 explains the search process.

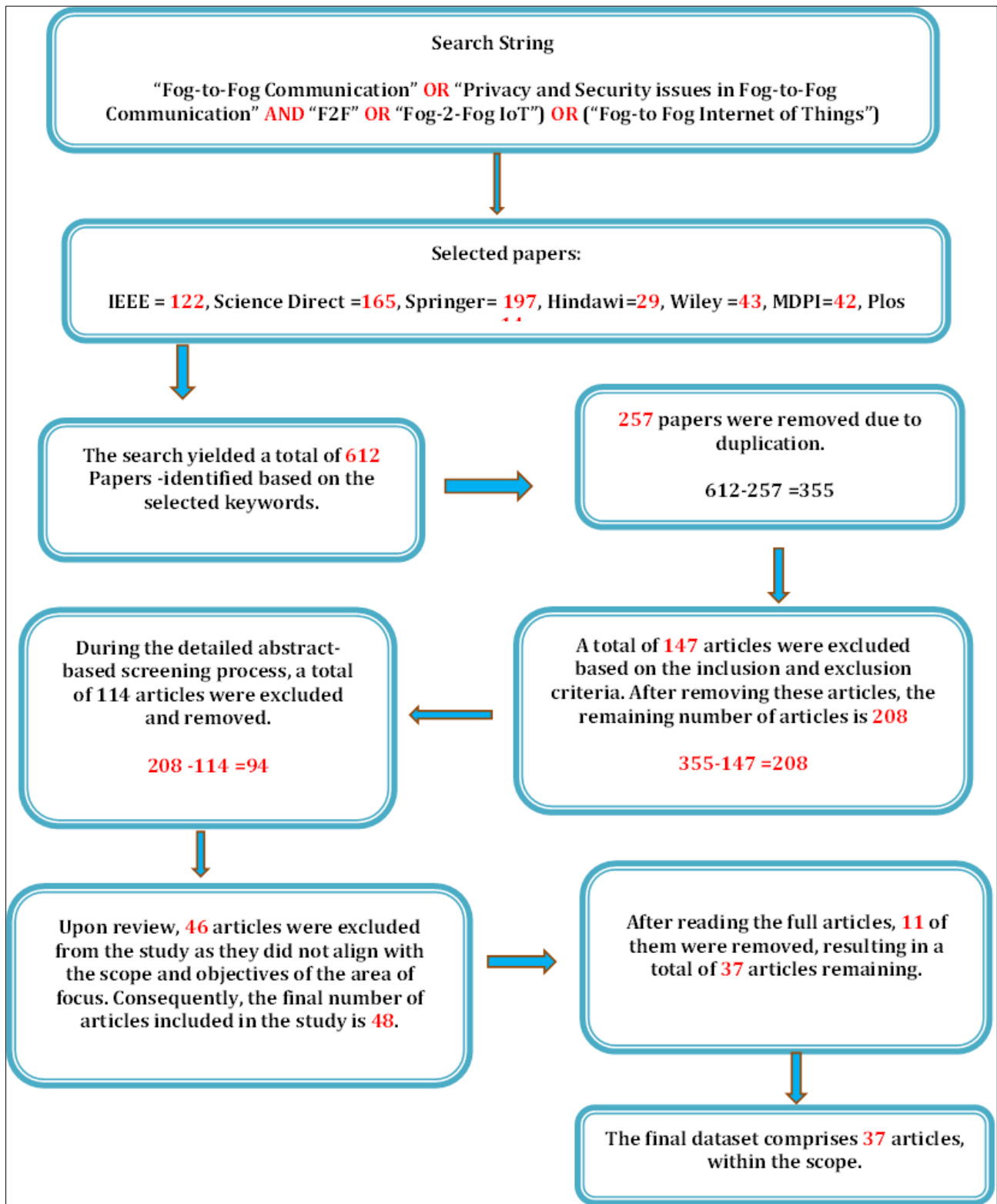


Figure 3 The selection and screening process

3.2. Data Sources

In this study, the data sources encompassed selection of articles from the most renowned academic databases, namely, the IEEE, ScienceDirect, Springer, Hindawi, Wiley, MDPI and Plos. The academic databases were chosen because of their extensive collection of excellent scholarly articles relevant to the area of study. Table 2 shows the selected databases and the number of scholarly articles after the string search.

Table 2 Selected Databases

Database Name	Database URL	Number of Articles
IEEE	https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/	122
ScienceDirect	https://www.sciencedirect.com	165
Springer	https://www.springer.com	197
Hindawi	https://www.hindawi.com	29
MDPI	https://www.mdpi.com/	42
Plos	https://plos.org	14
Wiley	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/	43

3.3. Screening of the papers

The screening process was applied to the articles identified during the string search process as explained above. The first step involved assessments based on the abstract content, the keywords and the titles to examine their relevance with the area of study. The papers that met the predefined search criteria were then subjected to more detailed review to determine their alignment with privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication. In the process, articles that provided significant insights into the privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication were analyzed further, and the papers that did not align with the scope and objective of the study were excluded. This in-depth screening of papers process ensured that relevant articles were included in the study hence contributing immensely to the robustness of the research study.

4. Analysis of the Reviewed Literature

This section offers a thorough examination of the findings derived from the reviewed survey papers. Fog computing has received substantial attention from researchers, resulting in a diverse array of perspectives and topics. Scholars have made significant contributions to fog computing, particularly in the domains of privacy, security, data management, and communication. In this paper, we undertake an in-depth analysis of the current state of security and privacy issues in Fog-to-Fog (F2F) within the realm of fog computing. Researchers have demonstrated a strong emphasis on fog computing, and this survey, in particular, delves extensively into the specific aspects of privacy and security in Fog-to-Fog Communication. **Table 1** provides clear examination of existing literature, and comparative analysis with the paper.

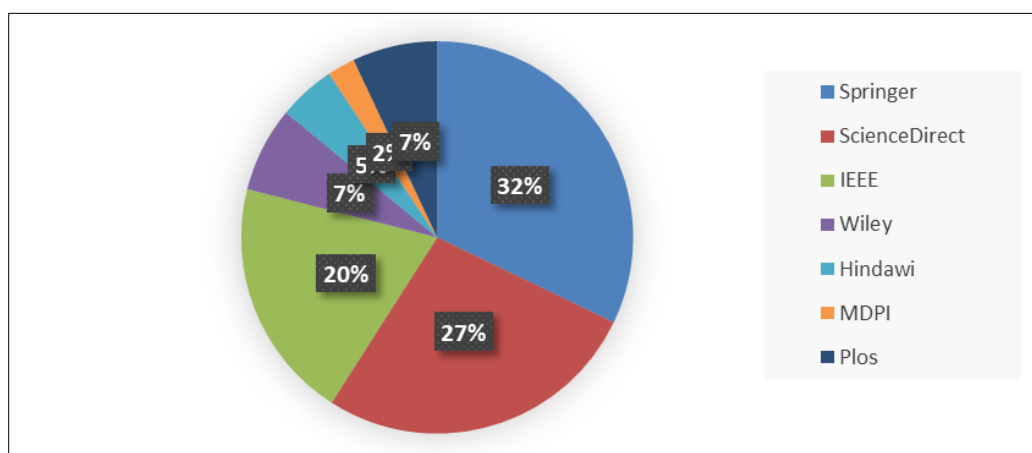


Figure 4 Article Selection Analysis.

4.1. Privacy and Security Issues in F2F Communication

Following the extensive review, the study identified several research gaps in privacy and security concerns in within the domain of fog-to-fog communication. Many researchers have focused so much on Fog Computing. According to [92], many applications in fog computing are primarily driven by the desire for efficient services and user satisfaction, often overlooking the importance of security requirements or treating them as secondary considerations. The privacy and security concerns in fog computing have not received adequate attention [93], leading to potential vulnerabilities and risks within this emerging technology. The insufficient focus on security aspects in fog computing may expose systems and data to various threats, including unauthorized access, data breaches, and other cyber threats [94], [95].

Many experts are working to find answers for different aspects of fog computing. But, the problem of privacy and security in fog-to-fog communication is still a big challenge in both academic and industrial setting [96]. As indicated in [97], fog computing presents several challenges in terms of security and privacy. These challenges encompass restricted network visibility, inadequacies in detecting attacks, the lack of user-selective data collection, virtualization issues, challenges related to multitenancy, and issues arising from malicious fog nodes. It is crucial to effectively handle mutual authentication, secure key exchange, and anonymity to ensure sufficient security and privacy in the tiers of fog computing [92]. Access control stands out as a widely employed preventive strategy, aiming to safeguard against unauthorized access and mitigate the impact of security breaches in fog ecosystem [98].

4.2. Trust issues in Fog-to-Fog Communication

Establishing and maintaining trust in fog computing is very crucial in ensuring data integrity, availability and confidentiality. Authors in [99] defines trust as a two-way process between fog node and a device to ensure robust security between them. Secure communication forms the bedrock of a trusted relationship among devices as highlighted in [100], [101]. The most common trust issues in fog computing are summarized in Table 3.

- Trust in Node Authentication: Trust in Node Authentication addresses the challenge of verifying the authenticity of fog nodes. Effective authentication is important in establishing trust in IoT devices [102], [103].
- Trust in Data Integrity: Trust in data integrity revolves around the ability to trust that data remains unmodified or untampered during the data transmission. The privacy-preserving techniques help in enhancing trust [104], [105], [102].
- Trust in access control: Trust in access control is paramount in ensuring that only authorized fog nodes communicate with each other. If trust in access control is compromised, then data and communication will be prone to unauthorized access [105], [102].
- Trust in Encryption: Trust in Encryption emphasizes on the importance of trusting the encryption methods for the data in transit [100].
- Trust in Identity Management: This involve trusting the accuracy and reliability of fog node identities in fog communication [106].
- Trust in Redundancy and failover mechanisms: Trust in Redundancy and failover mechanisms focuses on the reliability of mechanisms that maintain service availability [107]-[109]. A robust trust evaluation model is proposed in [110].

4.3. Authentication and Authorization

Fog nodes must be able to authenticate each other to ensure that communication is only established between trusted entities. [122] defines authentication as to identify every connected fog node as a verified node. It further defines authorization as to describe the privileges of each connected node. Authentication in fog nodes can be used to reduce latency [123].

Authentication is very important as weak authentication mechanisms can lead to unauthorized access and potential security breaches [102]. Unauthorized fog nodes attempting to communicate with each other could compromise the overall security of the fog computing environment. Effective access control mechanisms are essential to prevent unauthorized access. Only the authorized users can have access to the specified network resources. They are implemented to strengthen trust [104], [105], hence enhance enhancing privacy and security in fog ecosystem.

5. Data Privacy

As data is transmitted between fog nodes, there is a risk of interception. Without proper encryption mechanisms, attackers could eavesdrop on the communication, leading to unauthorized access to sensitive information. Fog nodes are required to share data with the devices they want to share their data [124]. To make sure the privacy of users in

fog-to-fog communication, it's important to figure out ways to recognize obfuscation [125]. Obfuscation means intentionally making information unclear or hard to understand. In fog computing and IoT, this might involve hiding sensitive details to protect user privacy. This strengthens confidentiality of the user information in transit.

Recognizing obfuscation is like being proactive to protect the privacy of IoT users. It helps fog computing systems tell the difference between efforts to keep sensitive data safe and actions that might try to misuse or harm user privacy [126], [127]. This is crucial for finding the right balance between keeping data safe and making sure the system works as intended. Creating strong methods to spot and handle obfuscation is in line with the main aim of respecting user privacy in fog computing. It ensures that privacy measures work well without getting in the way of how IoT systems are supposed to function.

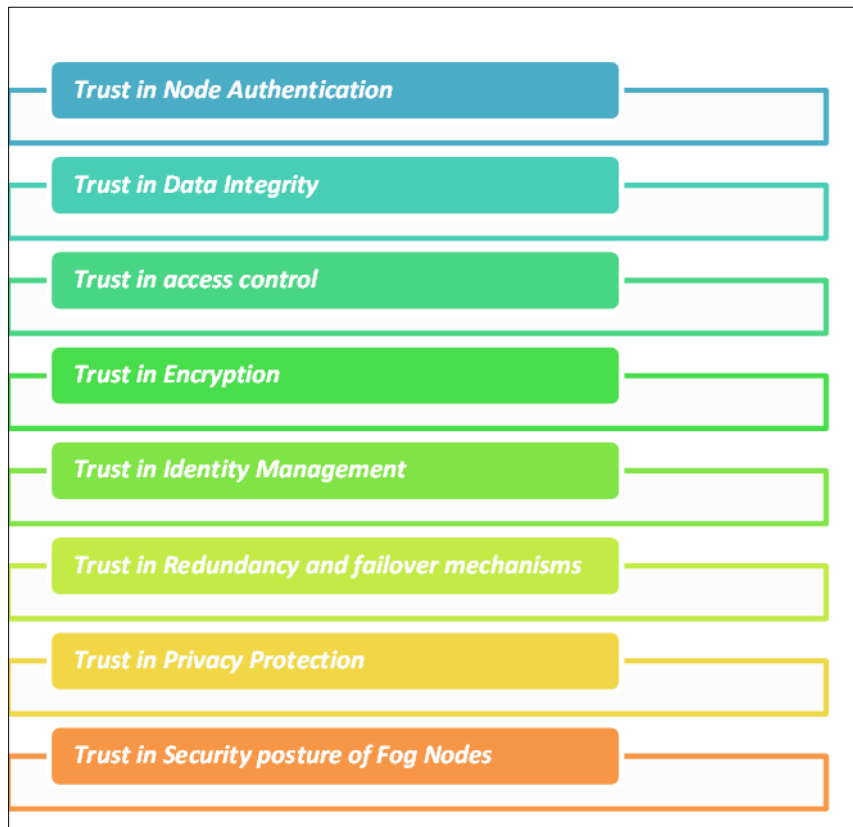


Figure 5 Graphical Overview of Trust issues in Fog-to-Fog Communication

Trust in Privacy Protection: Users must trust that their data is handled in privacy and secured manner, erosion of trust can lead to concerns about privacy and security violations [11],[110].

Trust in Security posture of Fog Nodes: This highlights the necessity to trust the privacy and security measures that are implemented on individual fog nodes.

Table 3 Summary of Trust Issues in Fog Computing

S/No	Trust Criteria	Issue	Explanation
1	Trust in Node Authentication	Lack of trust in the authenticity of communicating fog nodes.	Effective authentication mechanisms are essential for establishing trust between fog nodes. If nodes cannot reliably authenticate each other, the entire communication system's security is compromised [112].
2	Trust in Data Integrity	Inability to trust that data has not been tampered with during transmission.	Ensuring the integrity of data requires trust in the mechanisms in place to detect and prevent tampering [113]. Without this trust, the data's reliability is undermined.

3	Trust in Access Control	Insufficient trust in the access control mechanisms governing fog-to-fog communication.	Trust in access controls is necessary to ensure that only authorized fog nodes can communicate with each other [114]. If this trust is compromised, unauthorized access may occur.
4	Trust in Encryption	Lack of trust in the encryption methods used to secure data in transit.	Encryption is a fundamental component of securing communication [115]. Trust in the encryption algorithms and key management practices is essential to guarantee the confidentiality of the data being transmitted.
5	Trust in Identity Management	Lack of trust in the accuracy and reliability of fog node identities.	Trust in the identity management system is crucial to prevent identity spoofing and unauthorized access [116], [117]. If identity information is compromised, trust in the entire communication system is at risk.
6	Trust in Redundancy and failover mechanisms	Inability to trust the reliability of redundancy and failover mechanisms.	Redundancy and failover mechanisms are critical for maintaining service availability [118], [119]. If these mechanisms are not trustworthy, the system may fail to recover from disruptions, impacting the overall trustworthiness of the communication infrastructure.
7	Trust in Privacy Protection	Lack of trust in the privacy measures implemented to protect user data.	Users must trust that their data is handled in a privacy-preserving manner [120]. If this trust is eroded, it can lead to concerns about data misuse and privacy violations.
8	Trust in Security posture of Fog Nodes	Inability to trust the security measures implemented on individual fog nodes.	Each fog node contributes to the overall security of the communication system. If there is a lack of trust in the security posture of individual nodes, the entire system's security is compromised [121].

5.1. Integrity of Communication

Ensuring the integrity of communication in fog-to-fog settings means making sure that the information shared between different fog nodes doesn't get messed with or changed during the exchange [128]- [132]. It's like keeping a promise that the data stays accurate and reliable. To tackle this, we use clever tools like encryption, which is like a secret code that only the right fog nodes can understand. We also check for any unusual changes in the communication patterns and have ways to confirm that the messages are genuine and haven't been tampered with. It's a bit like sending a letter in a locked box with a special key that only the intended recipient has, making sure nobody messes with the contents along the way. All these measures are essential to build trust and keep the information safe as it moves between fog nodes in a fog computing system.

5.2. Resource Constraints

Fog nodes often have resource constraints, including limited processing power and memory [133], [134]. This can make it challenging to implement robust security measures, and attackers may exploit these limitations to compromise the security of fog-to-fog communication.

5.3. Denial of Service (DoS) Attack

Malicious actors might intentionally overwhelm or flood the communication channels between fog nodes, disrupting normal operations. It's akin to a traffic jam on the information highway, preventing legitimate data from flowing smoothly [135]. This not only impacts the availability and reliability of services but also creates a vulnerability where sensitive information might be exposed due to the communication breakdown.

5.4. Dependency on Network Infrastructure

Fog computing relies on network connectivity, and disruptions in the network can impact communication between fog nodes. Redundancy and failover mechanisms need to be in place to address these concerns. Implementations of systems like Intrusion Prevention Systems (IPS) in fog computing have strengthened trust [136].

Table 4 below provides a structured overview of the privacy and security concerns in fog-to-fog communication, detailing the domain, sub-domain, issue, and an explanation for each concern.

Table 4 Structured overview of privacy and security issues

S. No	Privacy and Security Domain	Privacy and Security Sub-Domain	Privacy and security Issue	Explanation
1	Data Privacy	Data Transmission	Data Interception	Unencrypted data transmission between fog nodes can be intercepted by malicious actors, leading to unauthorized access [137] and many potential data breaches.
2	Data Integrity	Data Transmission	Data Tempering	Unauthorized modification of data during transmission between fog nodes can compromise its integrity, affecting the authenticity and trustworthiness of the communicated data [138].
3	Identity Management	Authentication	Insufficient Authentication	Unauthorized modification of data during transmission between fog nodes can compromise its integrity, affecting the authenticity and trustworthiness of the communicated data.
4	Identity Management	Authentication	Identity Spoofing	Insufficient identity verification mechanisms may allow malicious nodes to impersonate legitimate fog nodes, leading to unauthorized access and potential manipulation of communication [139].
5	Access Control	Authorization	Access Control Vulnerabilities	Inadequate access controls may allow unauthorized fog nodes to gain access to sensitive data or services, posing a significant security risk [140], [141].
6	Data Privacy	Data Transmission	Data Leakage	In the absence of proper data protection measures, unauthorized exposure of sensitive information during communication can lead to privacy violations and legal consequences [142].
7	Resource Management	DoS Attacks	Resource Exhaustion Attacks	Overloading fog nodes with excessive communication requests can lead to denial of service [143], impacting the availability of services and disrupting normal operations.
8	Configuration Management	Fog Node Configuration	Insecure Fog Node Configuration	Poorly configured fog nodes introduce vulnerabilities [144], enabling attackers to exploit weaknesses and compromise the overall security of fog-to-fog communication.
9	Encryption Management	Key Management	Lack of Encryption Key Management	Inadequate management of encryption keys can result in unauthorized access to encrypted data [145], undermining the confidentiality of fog-to-fog communication.
10	Interoperability	Standardization	Interoperability Challenges	Lack of standardized protocols and inconsistent implementations can introduce interoperability issues [146], potentially leading to security vulnerabilities in fog-to-fog communication.

11	Privacy	Metadata	Privacy violations through metadata	Inadvertent exposure of sensitive information through metadata can lead to privacy violations, even if the actual content is encrypted[147], [148].
12	Forensic Analysis	Forensic Capabilities	Limited Forensic capabilities	The distributed and resource-constrained nature of fog nodes may limit the ability to conduct thorough forensic analysis, hindering the identification and mitigation of security incidents [149].
13	Network Dependency	Network Connectivity	Dependency on external networks	Fog computing's dependence on external networks introduces risks related to network stability and connectivity [150], impacting the reliability and security of fog-to-fog communication
14	Update Management	Security updates	Inadequate update mechanisms	The lack of a robust mechanism for applying security updates may allow vulnerabilities in fog node software to persist [151], exposing the communication to potential exploitation.

5.5. Countermeasures in Fog-To-Fog Communication

5.5.1. Data Privacy and Transmission Security

To safeguard data during transmission, it's crucial to use end-to-end encryption. This means the data is protected throughout its journey between fog nodes. Implementing secure communication protocols like TLS/SSL and strong authentication mechanisms ensures that only authorized fog nodes can access and exchange data securely [152], [153].

5.5.2. Data Integrity

To maintain data integrity, cryptographic techniques such as digital signatures play a key role. They act like virtual fingerprints, assuring that the data hasn't been altered during its journey. Implementing checksums or hash functions provides a quick way to detect any unauthorized changes, allowing for timely responses [154].

5.5.3. Identity Management and Authentication

Strong identity management and authentication methods are crucial. Fog nodes need to reliably verify each other's identities before engaging in communication. This involves secure key exchange protocols and, for an extra layer of security, the integration of biometric or multi-factor authentication methods [155]-[159]. With the help of user credentials like passwords, authentication is achieved.

5.5.4. Access Control and Authorization

Robust access controls ensure that only authorized fog nodes can access sensitive data or services. Role-based access control (RBAC) structures limit access based on user roles, and regular reviews and updates of access control policies help maintain a secure environment [160], [161]. Network segmentation adds an extra layer of protection. Access control is essential in preserving privacy and security in fog-to-fog communication.

5.5.5. Resource Management and Denial of Service (DoS) Protection

To protect against resource exhaustion attacks and ensure the availability of services, implementing rate limiting, traffic filtering, load balancing, and detection and response mechanisms for denial of service (DoS) attacks are essential countermeasures [162].

5.5.6. Configuration Management

Security vulnerabilities often stem from poorly configured fog nodes [163]. Implementing security best practices, conducting regular security audits, and employing automated tools for configuration management and security compliance help maintain a secure configuration.

5.5.7. *Encryption Key Management*

Proper encryption key management involves establishing a robust system [164]. This includes secure key generation, storage, and distribution. Regularly rotating encryption keys and using hardware security modules (HSMs) enhance the overall security of fog-to-fog communication.

5.5.8. *Interoperability Challenges*

Overcoming interoperability challenges requires adherence to standardized communication protocols [165], [166]. Active participation in standardization efforts fosters compatibility, and implementing middleware solutions facilitates seamless communication across diverse fog computing environments.

5.5.9. *Privacy Concerns through Metadata*

Safeguarding against privacy violations through metadata involves minimizing the collection and storage of unnecessary metadata [167]-[171]. Techniques like data anonymization or pseudonymization add an extra layer of protection. Regular reviews and updates of privacy policies ensure alignment with evolving privacy standards.

5.5.10. *Limited Forensic Capabilities*

The challenge of limited forensic capabilities necessitates adaptive strategies [172]. Implementing logging mechanisms for relevant security events, integrating security information and event management (SIEM) solutions, and considering the use of distributed forensic tools ensure comprehensive investigative capabilities.

5.5.11. *Inadequate Update Mechanisms*

Addressing the vulnerability stemming from inadequate update mechanisms demands a systematic approach [174]. Establishing a proactive process for timely application of security updates, leveraging automated patch management tools, and conducting regular vulnerability assessments are indispensable for maintaining a secure fog computing environment.

5.5.12. *Dependency on External Networks*

Mitigating risks associated with dependency on external networks requires a resilient strategy [175]-[177]. Implementing redundancy and failover mechanisms ensure operational continuity during network disruptions. Exploring edge computing solutions that function autonomously during intermittent connectivity further enhances the reliability and security of fog-to-fog communication. Implementations of systems like Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) in fog computing enhance security threat elimination [179].

Table 5 provides a quick reference on the key countermeasures to address privacy and security concerns in fog-to-fog communication.

Table 5 Summary of the key countermeasures

S/No	Domain Area	Countermeasure
1	Data Privacy and Transmission Security	Implement end-to-end encryption (e.g., TLS/SSL). Use secure communication protocols [179]. Enforce strong authentication.
2	Data Integrity	Apply cryptographic techniques (e.g., digital signatures) Implement checksums or hash functions for unauthorized changes [180].
3	Identity Management and Authentication	Deploy strong mutual authentication methods Utilize secure key exchange protocols Integrate biometric or multi-factor authentication [181]-[183]
4	Access control and Authorization	Implement role-based access control (RBAC) [184] Regularly review and update access control policies. Use network segmentation.

5	Resource Management and DoS protection	Implement rate limiting and traffic filtering. Use load balancing. Deploy detection and response mechanisms for DoS attacks [185].
6	Configuration Management	Follow security best practices for configuring fog nodes. Conduct regular security audits. Use automated tools for configuration management [186]
7	Encryption Management Key	Establish a robust key management system [187]-[189] Regularly rotate encryption keys Use hardware security modules (HSMs)
8	Interoperability Challenges	Adhere to standardized communication protocols Participate in standardization efforts Implement middleware solutions for compatibility [190].
9	Privacy concerns through metadata	Minimize collection of unnecessary metadata Implement data anonymization or pseudonymization [191]-[194]. Regularly review and update privacy policies
10	Limited Forensic Capabilities	Implement logging mechanisms for security events Integrate SIEM solutions for centralized log analysis [195] Consider distributed forensic tools
11	Inadequate update mechanisms	Establish a systematic process for applying security updates Use automated patch management tools Conduct regular vulnerability assessments [196].
12	Dependency on external networks	Implement redundancy and failover mechanisms [197] Explore edge computing solutions for autonomous functionality during connectivity issues

5.6. Open Research Gaps and Future Directions

The present research gaps in Fog-to-Fog Communication lie at the intersection of the rapid technological advancements and the implementation challenges. Fog computing has presented a promising paradigm for decentralized computing, gaps persist in optimizing resource allocation and workload distribution in the dynamic fog ecosystem.

There's need for standardized protocols and robust frameworks to bolster the interoperability among the heterogeneous fog nodes. If fog devices are linked to the system, they could potentially initiate attacks triggered by alterations in signals or movements within the cloud environment. The privacy preserving techniques, especially data-intensive applications, require further exploration to strike an equilibrium between efficient data processing and protecting sensitive information.

The future of fog-to-fog communications will lead to address the several ever evolving challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities. The key avenue involves advancing the protocols, machine learning and artificial intelligence algorithms tailored for fog ecosystem hence enabling more advanced and intelligent decision making at the edge. Scholars and practitioners should also focus on developing more dynamic and adaptive resource management strategies.

This will optimize the allocation of the computational resources within fog network. Integration of blockchain technology to bolster security, transparency and trust in fog ecosystem is also an area ripe for exploration. Energy efficient communication protocols, resilient fault tolerant mechanisms and sustainable fog infrastructure are also very important for long term viability of fog-to-fog communication.

6. Conclusion

Privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication underscores the critical importance for comprehensive strategies to safeguard and protect sensitive information in a decentralized computing environment. The identified issues, ranging from various forms of trust, authentication, authorization, access control, DoS attacks, dependency on external networks, emphasize on the multifaceted nature of privacy and security issues in fog-to-fog communication. Implementing robust countermeasures as outlined in this discussion is essential in mitigating these issues. It's very crucial to address the privacy and security concerns in the ever-evolving digital era of fog computing. This concerns when fully addressed will be fundamental in building trust and realizing the full potential of fog-to-fog communication in diverse industry domains.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declares that there are no competing interests.

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