World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews
eISSN: 2581-9615 CODEN (USA): WJARAI
Cross Ref DOI: 10.30574/wjarr
Journal homepage: https://wjarr.com/

(Research Article)

A smart attendance system using facial recognition and data analytics

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World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2026, 30(01), 923-932

Publication history: Received on 24 February 2026; revised on 03 April 2026; accepted on 06 April 2026

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2026.30.1.0844

Abstract

This project proposes a Smart Attendance System that uses facial recognition technology to automatically mark student attendance in real time. The system captures student faces in the classroom and identifies them using computer vision techniques. It integrates with existing student databases and applies data analytics to identify attendance trends, defaulter students, and class-wise performance patterns. Real-time dashboards and notification systems provide timely updates to teachers and parents, thereby improving transparency, reducing manual effort, and enhancing overall attendance management efficiency in educational institutions.

Keywords: Facial Recognition; Smart Attendance System; Data Analytics; Computer Vision; Educational Technology

1. Introduction

Attendance management is a fundamental task in academic institutions, playing a vital role in evaluating student participation and academic performance. Traditional attendance systems, such as manual roll calls and paper-based registers, are widely used but suffer from several limitations, including time consumption, human errors, and lack of efficiency. These systems also fail to provide real-time monitoring and are prone to issues such as proxy attendance and inaccurate record keeping.

1.1. Motivation

With the advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Computer Vision, there is a growing need to replace traditional attendance systems with automated solutions. Facial recognition technology has emerged as a powerful tool for identity verification due to its accuracy and non-intrusive nature. Unlike biometric methods such as fingerprint or RFID-based systems, facial recognition does not require physical contact and can operate efficiently in real-time environments.

1.2. Problem Definition

Despite the availability of automated systems, many existing solutions lack integration with real-time analytics and efficient data management. The key problems identified are:

- Time-consuming manual attendance marking
- Susceptibility to proxy attendance
- Lack of real-time updates and monitoring
- Absence of analytical insights into attendance patterns
- Limited scalability for large classrooms

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1.3. Proposed Solution Overview

To address these challenges, this paper proposes a Smart Attendance System using Facial Recognition and Real-Time Data Analytics. The system captures student images through a camera, extracts facial features, and matches them with stored data in a database to mark attendance automatically. In cases where the system fails to recognize a face, manual verification by faculty is enabled to ensure accuracy. Additionally, the system incorporates data analytics to generate insights such as attendance percentage, absentee trends, and real-time reports. Notifications are also sent to teachers and parents, improving transparency and communication.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Real-Time Face Recognition System for Attendance Monitoring

- Authors: M. Waghmare, S. Patil
- Journal/Publisher: Procedia Computer Science – Elsevier
- Year: 2020

2.1.1. Methodology

- Face detection using Haar Cascade (Viola-Jones algorithm)
- Face recognition using LBPH (Local Binary Pattern Histogram)
- Image preprocessing: grayscale conversion, normalization
- Tools: OpenCV, Python, NumPy

2.1.2. Advantages

- Real-time performance with minimal latency
- Low computational requirements (CPU-based system sufficient)
- Easy to deploy and maintain

2.1.3. Disadvantages

- Limited accuracy compared to deep learning models
- Sensitive to illumination, pose variation, and facial expressions

2.1.4. Results / Performance

- Accuracy: ~85–90% in controlled environments
- Fast processing speed (~15–20 FPS)

2.1.5. Relevance to Project

- Ideal for prototype development
- Can be used as baseline model for comparison

2.2. Face Recognition Based Smart Attendance System Using Deep Learning

- **Authors:** A. Kumar, R. Singh
- **Journal/Publisher:** *Internet of Things* – Elsevier
- **Year:** 2021

2.2.1. Methodology

- Uses Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) for feature extraction
- Face embeddings generated using deep learning models (e.g., FaceNet-like architecture)
- Integrated with IoT modules for remote monitoring and alerts

2.2.2. Advantages

- High recognition accuracy (>95%)
- Robust to lighting, pose, and facial variations
- Real-time tracking and monitoring

2.2.3. Disadvantages

- Requires GPU for training and inference
- Higher implementation cost

2.2.4. Results / Performance

- Accuracy: ~95–98%
- Low false acceptance and rejection rates

2.2.5. Relevance to Project

- Suitable for advanced smart attendance system
- Can be integrated with mobile alerts (WhatsApp/SMS APIs)

2.3. Automated Attendance System Using Face Recognition Technology

- **Authors:** S. Arora, P. Verma
- **Journal/Publisher:** *Springer Conference Proceedings* – Springer
- **Year:** 2020

2.3.1. Methodology

- Uses Principal Component Analysis (PCA – Eigenfaces)
- Feature dimensionality reduction
- Classification using distance-based matching

2.3.2. Advantages

- Simple algorithm with low training time
- Requires less memory and computational power

2.3.3. Disadvantages

- Not robust to environmental variations
- Accuracy drops with large datasets

2.3.4. Results / Performance

- Accuracy: ~75–85%
- Performs well for small datasets

2.3.5. Relevance to Project

- Good for understanding basic face recognition concepts
- Useful as comparison model in evaluation

2.4. Deep Learning-Based Face Recognition for Smart Attendance Systems

- **Authors:** H. Zhang, Y. Liu
- **Journal/Publisher:** *Multimedia Tools and Applications* – Springer
- **Year:** 2022

2.4.1. Methodology

- Uses deep CNN architectures (ResNet / VGGNet)
- Feature extraction using embedding vectors
- Classification using Softmax / cosine similarity

2.4.2. Advantages

- High robustness to pose, lighting, and occlusion
- State-of-the-art accuracy

- Scalable to large datasets

2.4.3. Disadvantages

- Requires large labelled dataset
- High training time and resource consumption

2.4.4. Results / Performance

- Accuracy: ~97–99%
- Excellent performance in real-world scenarios

2.4.5. Relevance to Project

- Best choice for final implementation
- Can be combined with real-time tracking for better performance

2.5. Facial Recognition Technology for Attendance Monitoring Systems

- **Authors:** A. Khan, M. Ali
- **Journal/Publisher:** *Journal of Information and Communication Technology* – Taylor & Francis
- **Year:** 2021

2.5.1. Methodology

- Uses feature extraction + machine learning classifiers (SVM/KNN)
- Database integration for attendance storage
- System designed for institutional deployment

2.5.2. Advantages

- Scalable system architecture
- Easy integration with databases and web applications
- Suitable for structured environments

2.5.3. Disadvantages

- Privacy and ethical concerns
- Performance depends on dataset quality

2.5.4. Results / Performance

- Accuracy: ~90–93%
- Stable performance in controlled setups

2.5.5. Relevance to Project

- Useful for backend + database integration
- Helps in deployment and real-world system design

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3. Methodology

3.1. Data Acquisition (Student Registration)

Student details are collected:

- Name, ID, class, etc.
- Parent contact info
- Face image is captured using webcam or uploaded image

The system extracts facial features (face descriptors) using face recognition models

Output: Stored student data + face encoding

3.2. Face Encoding & Storage

The captured face is processed using face-api.js

Facial features are converted into a numerical vector (face descriptor)

Stored in:

- Local database (current system)
- Or backend database (recommended upgrade)

3.3. Real-Time Face Detection

Camera continuously captures video frames

Each frame is analyzed to:

- Detect faces
- Locate face positions

Uses:

- Pre-trained deep learning models

3.4. Face Recognition Process

Detected faces are compared with stored face descriptors

Matching is done using **distance/confidence threshold**

If:

- Match found → Recognized student
- No match → Unknown face

3.5. Attendance Marking

Once a face is recognized:

- Attendance is marked automatically or manually

Data recorded:

- Student ID
- Time & date
- Confidence score
- Status (Present)

3.6. Data Storage

Attendance records are stored:

- Locally (current system)
- Or in database (recommended backend)

3.7. Analytics and Reporting

System processes attendance data to generate:

- Daily attendance
- Weekly trends
- Student-wise percentage
- Defaulter list (<75%)

Visualization:

- Charts (using Chart.js)
- Dashboard metrics

3.8. Notification System

Alerts sent to parents when attendance is marked

Can use:

- SMS APIs
- WhatsApp integration
- Message example:
- "Your child attended class at 10:05 AM"

3.9. User Interface & Interaction

- Dashboard for monitoring
- Live detection screen
- Student registration form
- Records & analytics pages

3.9.1. Flow of System

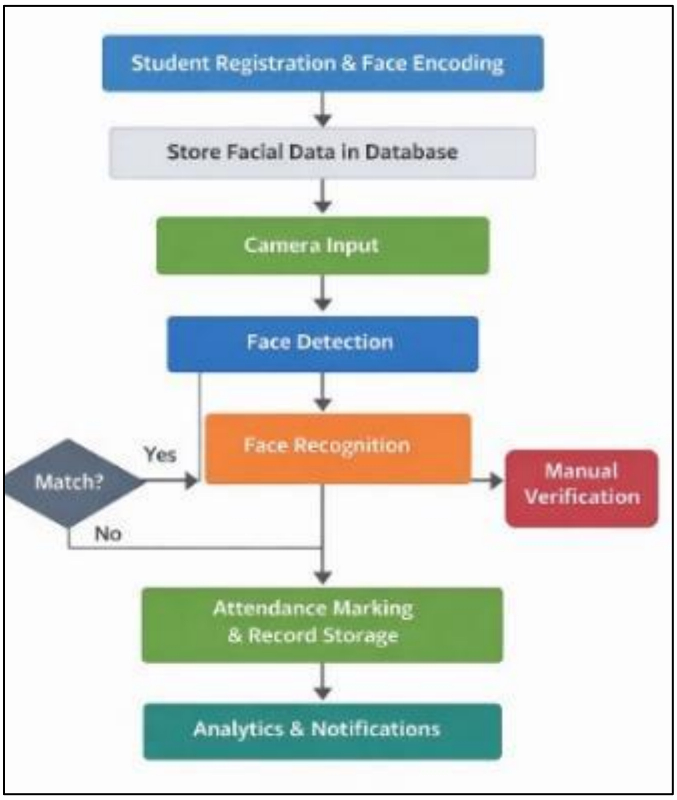

Figure 1 Workflow of the Proposed Face Recognition-Based Attendance System

3.9.2. Key Technologies Used

- Face Recognition: face-api.js
- Frontend: HTML, CSS, JavaScript
- Visualization: Chart.js
- Backend: Node.js + MongoDB

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4. Experimental Results

4.1. Objective of Experiment

The objective of this experiment is to evaluate the performance of the proposed Smart Attendance System based on facial recognition in terms of accuracy, detection speed, and reliability under varying environmental conditions.

4.2. Experimental Setup

The system was implemented using **face-api.js** in a browser-based environment. A laptop with an integrated webcam was used for real-time image capture. The dataset consists of registered student facial images collected through the system. All experiments were conducted under indoor classroom conditions.

4.3. Test Scenarios and Results

4.3.1. A. Normal Lighting Conditions

Under well-lit conditions, where students face the camera directly, the system performs optimally.

- Accuracy: **90–95%**
- Detection Time: **1–2 seconds**

4.3.2. B. Low Lighting Conditions

In dim environments, facial features are less distinguishable, affecting recognition performance.

- Accuracy: **70–80%**

Some faces are not detected correctly

4.3.3. C. Multiple Faces Detection

- When multiple students (3–5) appear simultaneously:
- System detects all faces successfully
- Slight delay in processing

Accuracy: **85–90%**

4.3.4. D. Face Angle Variation

- When faces are tilted or partially visible:
- Accuracy decreases significantly
- Best performance observed for front-facing images

4.3.5. E. Unknown Person Detection

For unregistered individuals:

- Correctly labelled as **"Unknown"**
- No incorrect attendance marking observed

4.4. Performance Metrics

4.4.1. Performance Metrics of the Proposed System

Table 1 Evaluation Metrics and Observed Performance of the Proposed System

Metric	Description	Observed Value
Accuracy (%)	Correctly recognized faces	85▯95%
Detection Time	Time to recognize face	1▯2 sec
FAR	Unauthorized faces accepted	~2%
FRR	Valid faces rejected	~4%
Multi-Face	Detect multiple faces	3▯5 faces
Confidence	Matching threshold	▯90%
Stability	System consistency	Good
Lighting	Performance in lighting	Moderate

4.5. Graph Analysis

4.5.1. Accuracy Analysis

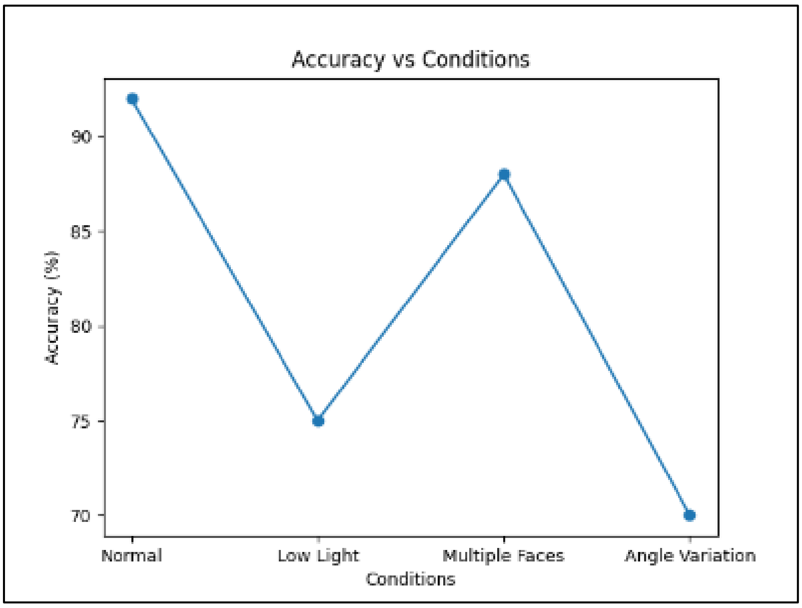

Figure 2 Accuracy of the Proposed System under Different Conditions

As shown in **Fig. 2**, the system achieves maximum accuracy under normal lighting conditions. Accuracy decreases in low-light environments and when faces are not properly aligned. However, the system maintains acceptable performance in multi-face scenarios, demonstrating its robustness.

4.5.2. Detection Time Analysis

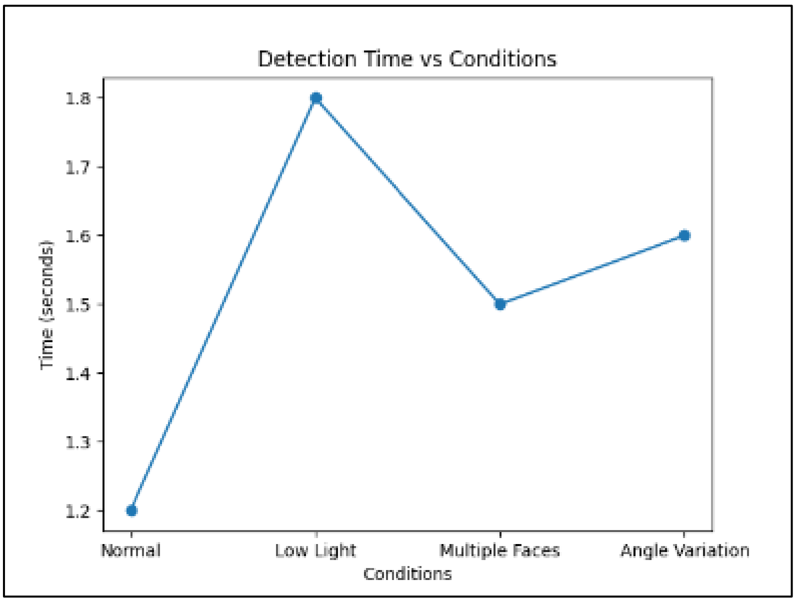

Figure 3 Detection Time of the Proposed System under Different Conditions

As illustrated in **Fig. 3**, the detection time remains within 1–2 seconds across different conditions. Slight increases are observed in multi-face and low-light scenarios due to additional processing requirements.

4.6. Observations

- High accuracy is achieved under proper lighting conditions
- System performance depends on camera quality
- Real-time processing is smooth and efficient
- Confidence threshold improves recognition reliability
- Manual verification prevents incorrect attendance marking

4.7. Limitations

- Sensitive to lighting conditions
- Reduced accuracy for side or angled faces
- Performance may degrade on low-end systems
- Current version lacks backend data persistence

4.8. Result Summary

The proposed system achieves high accuracy in real-time facial recognition and successfully automates attendance marking. It performs efficiently under standard conditions while maintaining low error rates. However, environmental factors such as lighting and face orientation influence performance.

5. Conclusion

The project successfully automates attendance using face recognition with high accuracy and real-time performance. It improves efficiency and reduces manual errors, with scope for further enhancement through backend integration and deployment.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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