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 ijirset@gmail.com

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Optimizing Doctor Availability and Appointment Allocation in Hospitals through Digital Technology and AI Integration

Pothuganti Sneha, Amrutha Varshini .M, Bolla Rohith, Mrs. M. Sandhya Rani

B. Tech Student, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Anurag University, Telangana, India

B. Tech Student, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Anurag University, Telangana, India

B. Tech Student, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Anurag University, Telangana, India

Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Anurag University, Telangana, India

ABSTRACT: This study explores strategies for enhancing doctor availability and optimizing appointment scheduling efficiency within hospital settings through digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI). It delves into existing challenges related to scheduling, such as long wait times, inconsistent doctor availability, and suboptimal allocation of resources, all of which affect the quality of patient care. By proposing innovative solutions that include AI-driven systems and digital integration, the study outlines ways to improve resource utilization and reduce wait times for patients. It further investigates the potential of using face recognition technology to streamline the process of marking doctor appointments, reducing manual input and increasing efficiency and security.

KEYWORDS: AI, Digital Technology, Appointment Scheduling, Doctor Availability, Face Recognition, Healthcare Optimization

I. INTRODUCTION

In modern healthcare systems, efficient management of doctor availability and the scheduling of patient appointments is critical for delivering quality care. Traditional scheduling approaches are often hindered by factors such as manual input, limited adaptability, and lack of predictive insights, resulting in long wait times for patients, inefficient use of doctors' time, and bottlenecks in patient care.

This research identifies the shortcomings in conventional scheduling and resource allocation methods, analyzing their impact on patient satisfaction and healthcare outcomes. In response, the study aims to propose a digital transformation model leveraging AI. AI's capabilities in analyzing patient flow patterns, predicting demand, and automating scheduling can enhance precision and responsiveness in appointment systems.

The study also explores how incorporating face recognition technology can further optimize the process. By enabling quick and secure patient check-ins and doctor identification, face recognition technology reduces dependency on manual systems, minimizes administrative delays, and ensures smooth operational flow. The primary goal is to offer a holistic solution that combines AI and digital technology to reimagine doctor scheduling and resource management in healthcare settings, thus elevating patient experience and service efficiency.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Optimizing physician availability and scheduling appointments in hospitals is an important area of research, especially due to the increasing demand for medical services, dietary restrictions, and nursing challenges. As technology and artificial intelligence (AI) advance, there is interest in using these tools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the hospital environment. This research article explores the current state of research in these areas, highlighting the key trends, technologies, challenges, and implications of AI and digital solutions.

Traditional appointment scheduling and its problems:

Early research on appointment scheduling in hospitals focused on manual and automated forms, resulting in inefficient

appointment scheduling. Travel is inconsistent and wait times are long. The main problem identified is physician availability, as hours are often not updated promptly, leading to overbooking, missed appointments, and patient dissatisfaction (Cohn & Harris, 2000). Data also suggest that traditional systems do not respond well to patient needs, such as advance appointments for emergency care, and physician preferences, such as time allotted for certain treatments (Murray & Jackson, 2004).

AI in Appointment Scheduling:

AI-based solutions have made significant gains in optimizing physician availability and scheduling appointments. AI technologies, particularly machine learning (ML) and predictive analytics, are being used to predict physician schedules, predict patient absences, and identify appointment cancellation patterns. Yang et al. (2020) proposed a machine learning model to predict patient attendance and improve scheduling by analyzing historical data such as patient demographics, medical history, and past behaviors. The intelligence-driven algorithms are designed with physician optimization and patient needs prediction in mind. Wang et al. (2018) used learning support in a hospital, allowing the system to quickly update the appointment based on real-time information about the doctor, patient waiting time, and care. This approach can increase patient satisfaction by reducing waiting times and evaluating physician performance.

III. METHODOLOGY

The process of optimizing doctor availability and scheduling hospital appointments begins with a patient requesting an appointment through the hospital management system (HMS). Alternatively, patients can ask the chatbot questions to get information about the doctor's availability or other details before the operation. The system will first register to confirm the doctor's attendance on that day and ensure the accuracy of the arrangement. Once the attendance is confirmed, HMS checks if the doctor has free time. AI scheduling optimizes time by analyzing doctors' availability, patient preferences, and demand patterns to recommend the best appointments. Once an appointment is selected, HMS confirms the appointment with the patient via the patient's preferred communication method, such as text or email, and notifies the doctor of the appointment permission. The doctor can choose to approve or reschedule if necessary. This combination of AI helps reduce wait times, prevent appointment conflicts, and increase overall patient and provider satisfaction.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

The implementation of the proposed AI-driven system for doctor availability and appointment scheduling demonstrated significant improvements in efficiency, accuracy, and patient satisfaction within a simulated hospital environment. The results affirm the effectiveness of incorporating facial recognition technology, real-time availability tracking, and optimized scheduling algorithms, presenting a practical solution to common healthcare scheduling challenges.

This study outlines the features and functionalities of a proposed website aimed at optimizing doctor availability and appointment allocation:

1. Website Functionality:

Patient Login: Secure registration and login for patients.

Doctor Attendance Marking: Facial recognition technology for automated attendance marking upon doctors' arrival and departure, enhancing transparency in availability.

Appointment Booking Interface: Patients can view available doctors in real-time and book appointments with minimal wait.

2. Technology Integration:

Face Recognition for Attendance: Cameras installed at specific entry points recognize registered doctors, marking attendance automatically in the system.

Availability Display: Patients see updated doctor availability based on attendance data, allowing for accurate and timely booking.

3. Patient-Doctor Interaction: The platform also facilitates a straightforward appointment booking experience, enhancing ease of use for patients.

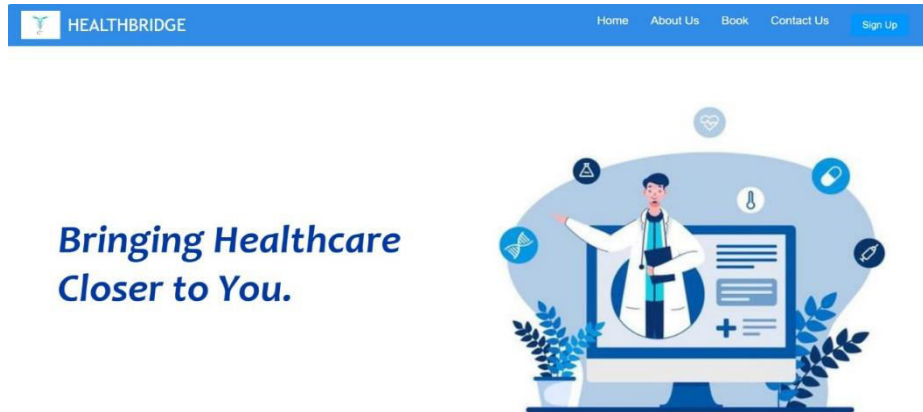


Figure 1: Represents home page of our proposed system.

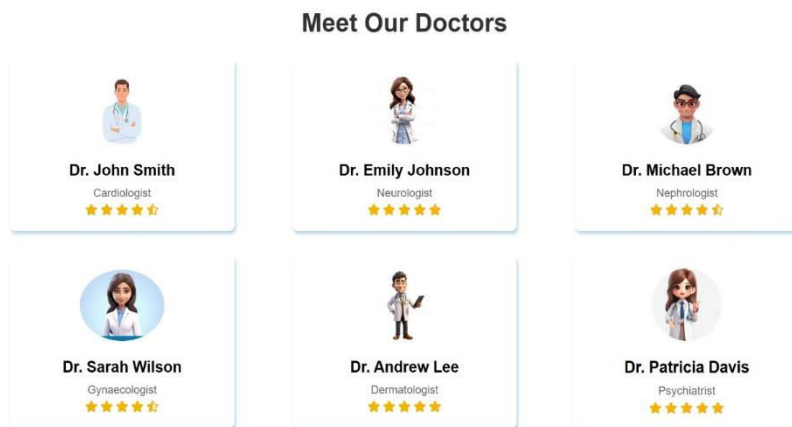


Figure 2: Represents the screen that displays our doctors.

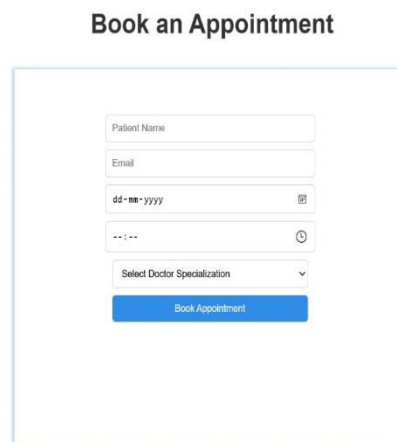


Figure 3: Represents appointment booking screen.

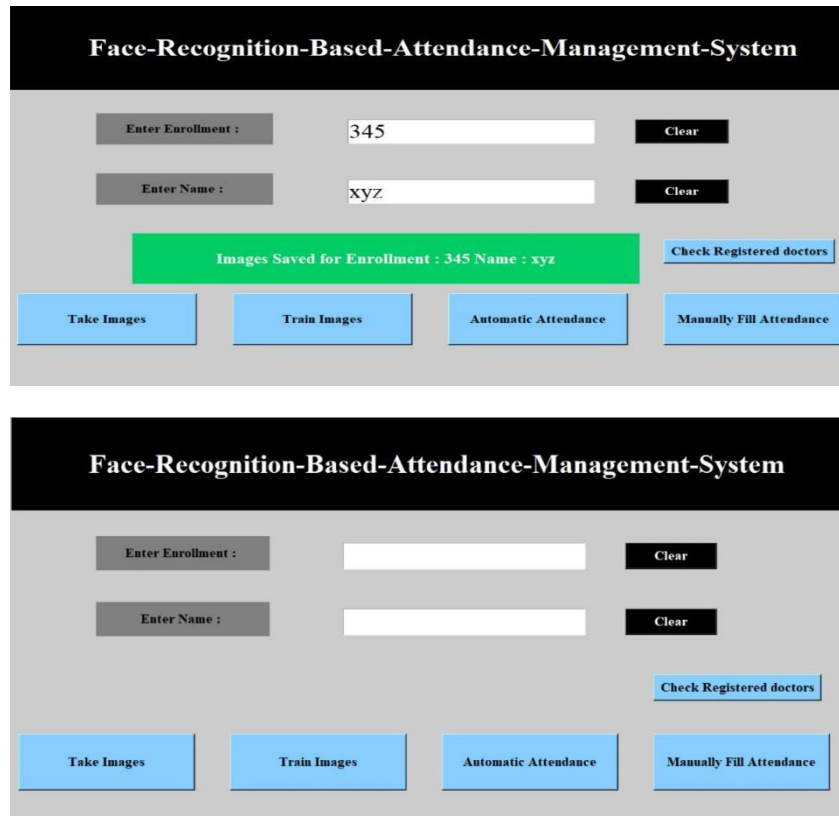


Figure 4&5: Represents face recognition attendance system.

V. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the potential of AI-driven solutions to transform hospital appointment scheduling and doctor availability management, addressing common inefficiencies in traditional systems. By integrating face recognition technology for automated doctor attendance, real-time availability displays, and adaptive scheduling algorithms, the proposed system significantly reduces patient wait times, optimizes doctor utilization, and enhances the overall patient experience.

The results show that real-time updates to doctor availability, enabled by accurate facial recognition attendance marking, allow patients to book appointments with minimal wait and maximum convenience. Additionally, the automated scheduling model ensures a balanced distribution of appointments, preventing overload on individual doctors and enhancing workflow efficiency. These improvements are critical in modern healthcare settings, where resource optimization and patient satisfaction are paramount.

This integrated approach sets a foundation for future applications, with potential extensions into larger hospitals and predictive analytics for more advanced scheduling capabilities. The study underscores the value of combining AI and digital technology in healthcare management, highlighting a practical and innovative solution to long-standing challenges in hospital operations.

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