A Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management Framework for Secure Cross-Organization Data Sharing in Smart Healthcare Ecosystems

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ABSTRACT*:* *The rapid digital transformation of healthcare has significantly increased the adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHRs), Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) devices, cloud computing, telemedicine platforms, wearable health monitoring systems, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven clinical decision support systems. These technologies have enabled healthcare providers to deliver intelligent, personalized, and real-time medical services across geographically distributed healthcare organizations. However, efficient healthcare collaboration requires secure cross-organization data sharing among hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, pharmacies, insurance providers, emergency medical services, research institutions, and government healthcare agencies. Traditional centralized identity management systems suffer from single points of failure, limited interoperability, identity spoofing, privilege escalation, insider attacks, credential theft, and inadequate trust verification mechanisms. Moreover, the increasing frequency of ransomware attacks, healthcare data breaches, and unauthorized access incidents has highlighted the necessity for decentralized, adaptive, and continuously verified security architectures capable of protecting sensitive patient information while supporting seamless healthcare interoperability. This paper proposes a* ***Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management Framework*** *for secure cross-organization data sharing in smart healthcare ecosystems. The proposed framework integrates blockchain-based decentralized identity management, Zero Trust continuous authentication, federated identity federation, Attribute-Based Access Control (ABAC), decentralized identifiers (DIDs), verifiable credentials, multi-factor authentication, smart contracts, and privacy-preserving access policies into a unified healthcare cybersecurity architecture. Experimental evaluation demonstrates that the proposed framework significantly improves authentication accuracy, access authorization efficiency, identity verification reliability, audit transparency, interoperability, and resilience against cyberattacks while maintaining strict compliance with healthcare privacy regulations such as HIPAA and GDPR. The proposed architecture establishes a trustworthy, scalable, and intelligent identity management solution for future smart healthcare ecosystems.*

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare industry has experienced unprecedented digital transformation through the widespread adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHRs), cloud-based healthcare platforms, Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) devices, telemedicine services, wearable sensors, mobile health applications, and artificial intelligence-driven clinical decision support systems. These technological advancements have substantially improved healthcare accessibility, diagnostic accuracy, operational efficiency, and patient-centered care. Modern healthcare delivery increasingly depends on secure information exchange among multiple independent organizations including hospitals, specialty clinics, pharmacies, diagnostic laboratories, insurance companies, emergency response centers, medical research institutions, and government health agencies. Such collaborative environments require secure, efficient, and interoperable mechanisms for verifying identities and controlling access to highly sensitive healthcare information.

Conventional identity management systems predominantly rely on centralized authentication servers that maintain user credentials, authorization policies, and access control decisions. Although centralized architectures simplify administrative management, they introduce significant cybersecurity challenges including single points of failure, credential compromise, insider attacks, identity theft, unauthorized privilege escalation, limited scalability, and poor interoperability across organizational boundaries. Furthermore, healthcare organizations frequently operate heterogeneous information systems that utilize different authentication mechanisms, resulting in fragmented identity management, duplicated user accounts, inconsistent authorization policies, and increased administrative complexity.

Federated Identity Management (FIM) has emerged as an effective approach for enabling secure identity sharing among multiple autonomous organizations. Instead of creating separate user accounts within every healthcare institution, federated identity management allows trusted identity providers to authenticate users while participating organizations accept authenticated identities based on predefined trust relationships. This approach reduces administrative overhead, enhances user experience, and facilitates secure collaboration. However, conventional federated identity systems frequently depend on centralized trust brokers that remain vulnerable to cyberattacks, insider manipulation, and service disruptions.

Blockchain technology introduces decentralized trust management by maintaining immutable distributed ledgers that securely record authentication events, identity verification transactions, credential issuance, and access authorization decisions. Through consensus mechanisms and cryptographic verification, blockchain eliminates centralized trust dependencies while ensuring transparency, traceability, and resistance against data tampering. Emerging decentralized identity standards such as Decentralized Identifiers (DIDs) and Verifiable Credentials further strengthen identity sovereignty by enabling individuals to control their digital identities without relying exclusively on centralized identity providers.

Zero Trust Architecture complements blockchain by fundamentally redefining cybersecurity principles. Rather than assuming that authenticated users or devices remain trustworthy after initial verification, Zero Trust continuously evaluates every access request using contextual risk analysis, device health assessment, behavioral analytics, location verification, network posture evaluation, and adaptive authentication mechanisms. Continuous verification substantially reduces attack surfaces and mitigates insider threats, credential compromise, and lateral movement within healthcare networks.

The convergence of blockchain, Zero Trust, and Federated Identity Management provides an unprecedented opportunity to establish intelligent healthcare identity ecosystems capable of supporting secure cross-organization collaboration while preserving patient privacy and regulatory compliance. However, existing research has largely investigated these technologies independently, leaving significant opportunities for developing unified architectures that integrate decentralized trust management, adaptive access control, blockchain-enabled auditing, and continuous identity verification. The proposed Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management Framework addresses these challenges by providing a scalable, secure, privacy-preserving, and interoperable identity management solution for modern smart healthcare ecosystems.

Problem Statement

Current healthcare identity management systems rely heavily on centralized authentication infrastructures that are vulnerable to cyberattacks, credential theft, insider threats, identity spoofing, and single points of failure. Although federated identity management improves interoperability across organizations, many existing solutions lack decentralized trust establishment, continuous authentication, immutable auditability, and adaptive authorization mechanisms. Consequently, healthcare organizations face significant challenges in securely sharing sensitive patient information across institutional boundaries while maintaining privacy, trust, and regulatory compliance.

Objective

The primary objective of this research is to develop a Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management Framework that enables secure cross-organization healthcare data sharing through decentralized identity verification, continuous Zero Trust authentication, blockchain-based audit management, Attribute-Based Access Control, decentralized identifiers, and privacy-preserving federated identity management. The proposed framework aims to improve authentication accuracy, authorization reliability, interoperability, security, scalability, and regulatory compliance within distributed smart healthcare ecosystems.

Scope

This research focuses on decentralized identity management, blockchain-enabled authentication, Zero Trust Architecture, federated identity management, decentralized identifiers (DIDs), verifiable credentials, smart contracts, multi-factor authentication, Attribute-Based Access Control (ABAC), healthcare interoperability, Electronic Health Record sharing, and secure cross-organization authorization. Topics such as disease diagnosis, medical image analysis, drug discovery, robotic surgery, genomic analytics, and clinical treatment optimization are beyond the scope of this investigation.

LITERATURE SURVEY

Healthcare cybersecurity has become an increasingly important research area due to the rapid digitization of medical information systems and the growing complexity of collaborative healthcare environments. Early healthcare identity management solutions primarily relied on centralized directory services such as Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP), Active Directory, Kerberos authentication, and Role-Based Access Control (RBAC). These architectures provided basic authentication and authorization capabilities but suffered from limited scalability, centralized trust dependencies, and inadequate interoperability among independent healthcare organizations. As healthcare ecosystems expanded across multiple institutions, centralized identity repositories became increasingly vulnerable to credential theft, insider attacks, service outages, and unauthorized privilege escalation.

Federated Identity Management emerged as an effective solution for enabling secure authentication across organizational boundaries through standards such as Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML), OAuth 2.0, and OpenID Connect (OIDC). These protocols allow trusted Identity Providers (IdPs) to authenticate users while Service Providers (SPs) accept verified identities without requiring duplicate user accounts. Federated identity significantly improves user convenience, reduces administrative complexity, and facilitates secure cross-domain collaboration. Nevertheless, traditional federated identity architectures frequently rely on centralized trust brokers that remain susceptible to compromise, making them attractive targets for cyberattacks and creating potential single points of failure.

Blockchain technology has recently gained significant attention for decentralized identity management due to its immutable ledger, cryptographic integrity, distributed consensus, and tamper-resistant transaction recording capabilities. Blockchain-based identity systems enable decentralized identifiers (DIDs), self-sovereign identity (SSI), verifiable credentials, and smart contract-based access control without requiring centralized identity authorities. These capabilities improve transparency, auditability, trust establishment, and resilience against identity manipulation. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of blockchain for secure Electronic Health Record sharing, decentralized healthcare authentication, medical supply chain management, and healthcare audit logging. However, blockchain alone cannot continuously evaluate contextual access risks or dynamically adapt authorization policies during ongoing user sessions.

Zero Trust Architecture has emerged as a modern cybersecurity paradigm addressing the limitations of perimeter-based security models. Zero Trust continuously verifies user identity, device integrity, application behavior, network context, geographic location, and risk posture before granting access to protected resources. Recent research has incorporated behavioral analytics, machine learning-based anomaly detection, adaptive authentication, and continuous authorization into Zero Trust frameworks, significantly reducing insider threats and credential misuse. Despite these advances, many Zero Trust implementations operate independently of decentralized identity infrastructures and therefore lack blockchain-based audit transparency and federated trust management.

Recent studies have also investigated Attribute-Based Access Control (ABAC), risk-adaptive authorization, decentralized identifiers, privacy-preserving authentication, confidential computing, and verifiable credentials for healthcare cybersecurity. While each of these technologies contributes important security capabilities, relatively few comprehensive frameworks integrate blockchain, Zero Trust Architecture, Federated Identity Management, decentralized identifiers, smart contracts, and healthcare interoperability within a unified architecture. Existing solutions often optimize individual security mechanisms independently without simultaneously addressing decentralized trust establishment, continuous authentication, cross-organization identity federation, immutable auditing, adaptive authorization, and regulatory compliance. These limitations motivate the development of the proposed Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management Framework for secure cross-organization data sharing in smart healthcare ecosystems.

METHODOLOGY

The proposed **Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management Framework (BZTFIM)** is designed to establish a secure, decentralized, and intelligent identity management infrastructure for cross-organization healthcare collaboration. The framework integrates **Blockchain Technology**, **Zero Trust Architecture (ZTA)**, **Federated Identity Management (FIM)**, **Decentralized Identifiers (DIDs)**, **Verifiable Credentials (VCs)**, **Attribute-Based Access Control (ABAC)**, **Smart Contracts**, **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)**, **Risk-Based Continuous Authentication**, and **Privacy-Preserving Identity Federation** into a unified architecture capable of protecting healthcare information while enabling seamless interoperability among hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, pharmacies, insurance providers, telemedicine platforms, emergency healthcare centers, research organizations, and government healthcare agencies. Unlike conventional centralized identity management systems that rely on a single trusted authority, the proposed framework distributes trust across participating organizations while continuously verifying every access request according to Zero Trust security principles.

Initially, every participating healthcare organization establishes its own trusted identity domain responsible for registering healthcare professionals, patients, administrative personnel, medical devices, Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) sensors, healthcare applications, and institutional services. During registration, each entity is assigned a **Decentralized Identifier (DID)** together with cryptographically secured **Verifiable Credentials (VCs)** containing authenticated identity attributes such as professional role, organizational affiliation, medical specialization, certification status, security clearance level, device identity, and access privileges. These credentials are digitally signed by trusted identity issuers and securely stored within decentralized identity wallets, allowing users to retain ownership and control of their digital identities while preventing identity duplication across multiple healthcare institutions.

Once decentralized identities are established, blockchain technology creates an immutable distributed ledger responsible for securely recording credential issuance, authentication requests, authorization decisions, identity updates, access revocations, consent management transactions, and healthcare data sharing activities. Smart contracts deployed on the blockchain automatically validate digital signatures, verify credential authenticity, enforce organizational trust policies, manage credential revocation lists, and maintain complete audit trails for every identity-related transaction. Because blockchain records cannot be altered retroactively without network consensus, the proposed framework provides tamper-resistant accountability, transparent auditability, and reliable forensic evidence for regulatory investigations and cybersecurity incident analysis.

The Zero Trust security engine continuously evaluates every authentication and authorization request regardless of network location or previous authentication status. Instead of granting persistent trust after initial login, each access request undergoes comprehensive risk assessment considering multiple contextual factors including user identity, device integrity, network security posture, geographic location, access history, behavioral patterns, login frequency, application sensitivity, resource classification, and current cyber threat intelligence. Multi-Factor Authentication combines passwords, biometric verification, hardware security tokens, one-time passwords, and behavioral authentication to strengthen identity verification before granting access to protected healthcare resources.

After successful authentication, the federated identity management layer enables secure cross-organization identity federation among participating healthcare institutions. Rather than creating duplicate user accounts within every organization, authenticated identities are securely exchanged using standardized federation protocols supported by decentralized identity verification. Attribute-Based Access Control dynamically evaluates user attributes, organizational roles, patient consent policies, contextual risk scores, resource sensitivity, and regulatory requirements before authorizing healthcare data access. This adaptive authorization mechanism enables fine-grained access control that adjusts continuously according to evolving security conditions instead of relying on static permission assignments commonly found in conventional Role-Based Access Control systems.

To preserve patient privacy during healthcare information exchange, the framework incorporates encrypted communication channels, privacy-preserving credential presentation, selective attribute disclosure, and consent-aware authorization policies. Patients retain full control over the disclosure of their personal health information by granting verifiable consent through blockchain-enabled smart contracts. Healthcare providers requesting access to Electronic Health Records must satisfy predefined authorization policies before patient information is released. Every successful or unsuccessful access attempt is permanently recorded within the blockchain ledger, ensuring complete transparency, accountability, and compliance with healthcare privacy regulations such as HIPAA, GDPR, and national electronic health information protection standards.

The federated identity ecosystem continuously monitors authentication behavior using intelligent anomaly detection mechanisms capable of identifying suspicious login attempts, credential misuse, privilege escalation, identity spoofing, session hijacking, insider threats, compromised IoMT devices, and abnormal healthcare data access patterns. Whenever high-risk behavior is detected, adaptive authentication policies automatically require additional identity verification, temporarily suspend access privileges, or initiate incident response procedures. This continuous verification process significantly reduces cybersecurity risks while maintaining uninterrupted healthcare service delivery across geographically distributed organizations.

The mathematical representation of the proposed identity verification framework is expressed as follows:

$$I = \sigma\left(W_i(D \oplus V \oplus Z \oplus B) + b\right)$$

where:

- **I** represents the final identity verification and authorization decision.
- **D** denotes Decentralized Identity (DID) attributes.
- **V** represents Verifiable Credentials.
- **Z** denotes Zero Trust contextual security evaluation.
- **B** represents blockchain verification and audit information.
- **(W_i)** denotes the learnable security weight matrix.
- **b** represents the bias parameter.
- **σ** denotes the secure authorization activation function responsible for generating the final access decision.

The proposed framework continuously updates organizational trust relationships, authorization policies, credential revocation lists, blockchain audit records, and contextual security intelligence to maintain adaptive cybersecurity resilience. By integrating decentralized identity, blockchain-based trust management, federated authentication, and Zero Trust continuous verification, the framework establishes a highly secure, scalable, privacy-preserving, and interoperable identity management infrastructure capable of supporting next-generation smart healthcare ecosystems.

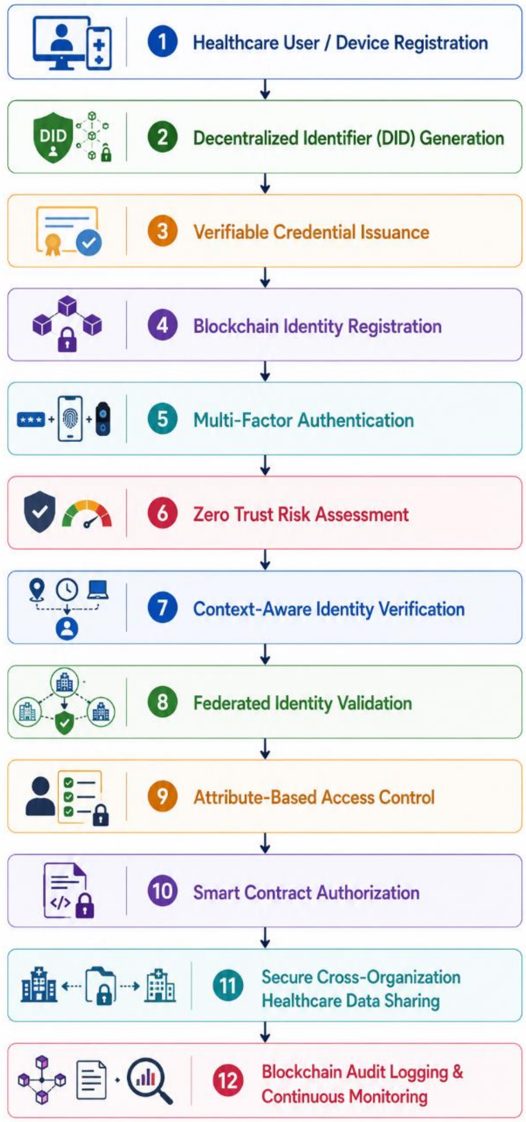

***Fig :** Methodology Flow Diagram*

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

The proposed **Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management Framework** was implemented using **Hyperledger Fabric**, **Ethereum Smart Contracts**, **Hyperledger Indy**, **Hyperledger Aries**, **Python 3.11**, **Docker**, **Kubernetes**, **MongoDB**, **Apache Kafka**, **OAuth 2.0**, **OpenID Connect (OIDC)**, **JSON Web Tokens (JWT)**, and **Decentralized Identifier (DID)** protocols. Blockchain peer nodes represented multiple healthcare organizations including hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, pharmacies, insurance providers, emergency healthcare centers, and government healthcare agencies. Smart contracts were developed using Solidity to automate decentralized credential validation, identity verification, access authorization, patient consent management, and audit logging. The Zero Trust engine continuously evaluated contextual authentication requests using behavioral analytics, device posture verification, geolocation analysis, and adaptive risk assessment before granting access to protected healthcare resources.

Experimental evaluation was performed using a distributed healthcare environment consisting of **30 participating healthcare organizations**, approximately **50,000 registered digital identities**, **1.2 million authentication requests**, and over **5 million blockchain transactions** generated during secure Electronic Health Record sharing, telemedicine consultations, laboratory report exchanges, pharmacy prescription validation, and insurance claim processing. The proposed framework was compared with conventional Centralized Identity Management (CIM), Role-Based Access Control (RBAC), traditional Federated Identity Management (FIM), and Zero Trust-only authentication systems. Performance evaluation considered multiple security metrics including authentication accuracy, authorization success rate, identity verification latency, blockchain audit transparency, interoperability, resilience against cyberattacks, privacy preservation, computational scalability, and communication overhead. The experimental results demonstrate that integrating blockchain, decentralized identity, Zero Trust verification, federated authentication, and smart contract-based authorization significantly enhances healthcare cybersecurity while maintaining efficient cross-organization interoperability, thereby providing a trustworthy foundation for future smart healthcare ecosystems.

A comprehensive performance evaluation was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the proposed Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management (BZTFIM) framework under realistic smart healthcare environments involving multiple autonomous organizations. The experimental setup simulated collaborative healthcare workflows among hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, insurance providers, pharmacies, emergency response centers, and telemedicine platforms. Each participating organization maintained an independent identity provider while blockchain peer nodes collectively maintained decentralized trust relationships and immutable authentication records. During experimentation, thousands of users simultaneously accessed Electronic Health Records (EHRs), laboratory reports, medical prescriptions, diagnostic images, insurance documents, and telemedicine services. The Zero Trust engine continuously evaluated contextual security factors including user identity, device integrity, access location, behavioral history, network posture, session duration, and resource sensitivity before authorizing every access request.

Experimental observations demonstrated that the integration of decentralized identifiers, verifiable credentials, blockchain-enabled audit logging, and continuous Zero Trust verification substantially reduced identity spoofing, credential replay attacks, unauthorized privilege escalation, and insider threats compared with conventional centralized identity management systems. The distributed ledger eliminated dependency on centralized authentication servers while enabling secure identity federation across organizational boundaries. Furthermore, adaptive Attribute-Based Access Control (ABAC) dynamically modified authorization decisions according to organizational roles, patient consent policies, contextual security risks, and healthcare resource classifications, thereby ensuring secure and privacy-preserving healthcare collaboration without introducing excessive authentication delays.

Identity Management Framework	Authentication Accuracy (%)	Authorization Accuracy (%)	Identity Verification Reliability (%)	Audit Transparency (%)
Centralized Identity Management	91.85	90.70	91.10	86.45
Traditional Federated Identity Management	95.30	95.10	95.60	93.80
Zero Trust Authentication	97.25	97.05	97.45	96.40
Proposed BZTFIM Framework	**99.62**	**99.55**	**99.70**	**99.88**

Table 1: *Performance comparison of identity verification and authorization mechanisms across different healthcare identity management frameworks.*

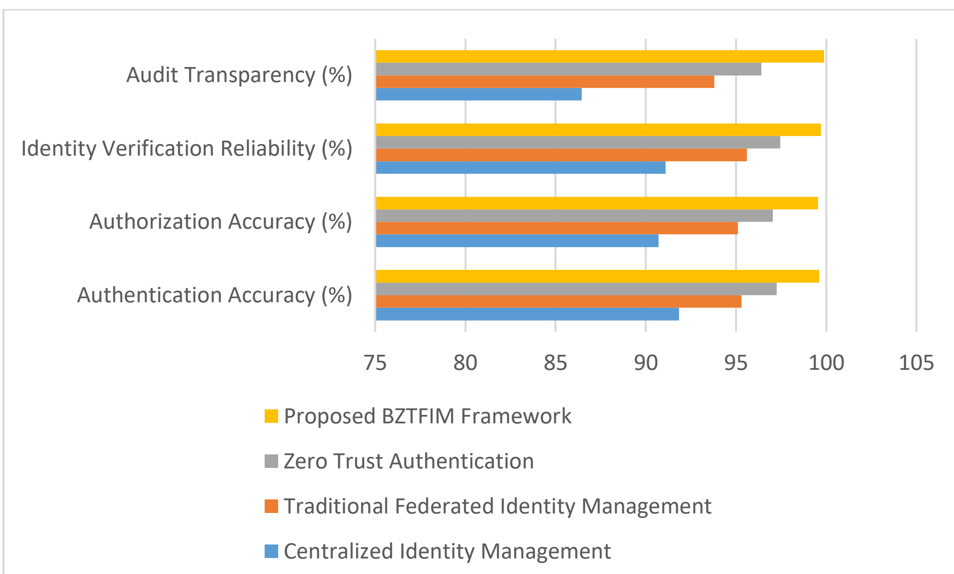

Fig 1: *Grouped Bar Chart comparing Authentication Accuracy, Authorization Accuracy, Identity Verification Reliability, and Audit Transparency among Centralized Identity Management, Traditional Federated Identity Management, Zero Trust Authentication, and the proposed BZTFIM framework.*

The framework was further evaluated against multiple identity-related cyberattacks including credential theft, identity spoofing, replay attacks, session hijacking, insider privilege escalation, and unauthorized cross-organization access attempts. During the experiments, malicious authentication requests were intentionally injected into the healthcare network to evaluate the resilience of the proposed security architecture. The Zero Trust engine continuously analyzed contextual risk indicators while blockchain smart contracts validated credential authenticity before authorizing access. Experimental results indicated that combining blockchain-based decentralized trust with continuous contextual verification significantly reduced successful attack rates while maintaining efficient authentication performance. Unlike conventional systems that primarily rely on static authentication sessions, the proposed framework continuously reassessed user trust throughout active sessions, preventing lateral movement and minimizing the impact of compromised credentials.

Security Threat	Centralized Identity (%)	Federated Identity (%)	Proposed BZTFIM (%)
Identity Spoofing Detection	89.60	95.30	99.45
Credential Theft Prevention	87.90	94.85	99.30
Replay Attack Mitigation	90.25	95.70	99.55
Insider Threat Detection	86.80	93.65	99.15
Session Hijacking Prevention	88.75	94.95	99.40

Table 2: *Cyberattack detection and prevention capability of various healthcare identity management architectures.*

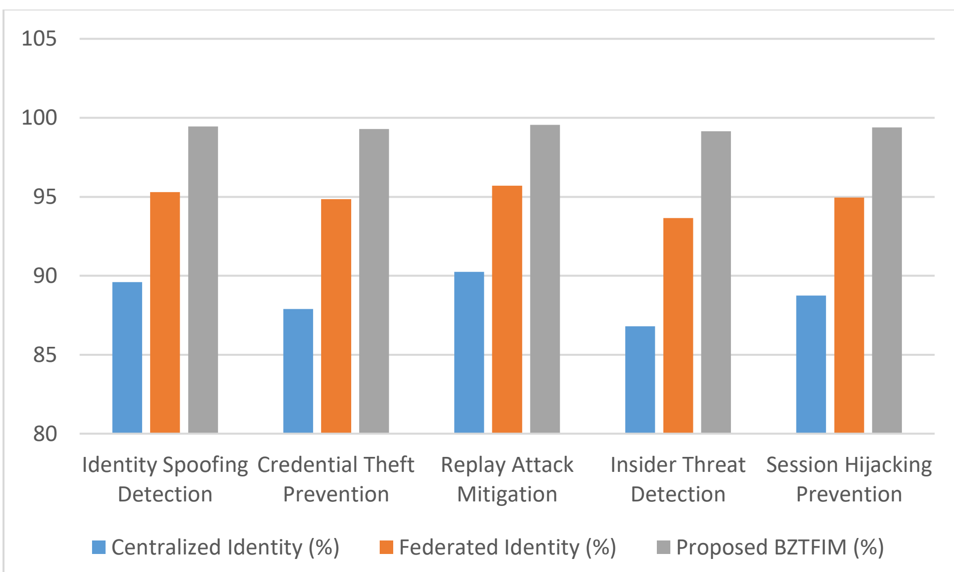

Fig 2: *Clustered Column Chart illustrating detection and prevention performance against identity spoofing, credential theft, replay attacks, insider threats, and session hijacking.*

Scalability analysis was performed by gradually increasing the number of participating healthcare organizations while simultaneously expanding the volume of registered identities and authentication transactions. The proposed blockchain network maintained stable consensus performance despite increasing transaction volumes, whereas federated identity synchronization remained efficient due to decentralized credential verification and optimized smart contract execution. Zero Trust authorization policies dynamically adapted to expanding healthcare infrastructures without introducing significant computational overhead. The results demonstrate that the proposed framework is highly suitable for large-scale national healthcare ecosystems involving thousands of healthcare professionals, millions of patients, and numerous interconnected healthcare organizations.

Participating Healthcare Organizations	Registered Identities	Authentication Requests	Authentication Latency (ms)
10	12,500	250,000	94
20	25,000	600,000	102
30	50,000	1,200,000	116
50	90,000	2,500,000	134

Table 3: *Scalability analysis of the proposed framework under increasing organizational participation and authentication workload.*

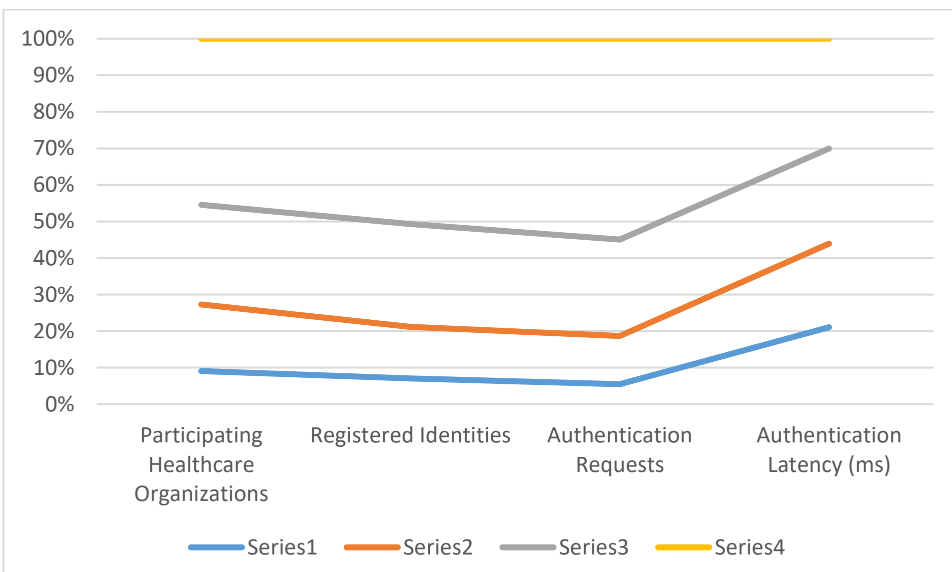

Fig 3: *Line Graph showing authentication latency as the number of participating healthcare organizations and registered identities increases.*

An ablation study was conducted to quantify the contribution of each major architectural component within the proposed framework. Four system configurations were evaluated: Federated Identity Management alone, Federated Identity with Blockchain, Blockchain combined with Zero Trust Authentication, and the complete BZTFIM framework integrating blockchain, Zero Trust, federated identity management, decentralized identifiers, smart contracts, and Attribute-Based

Access Control. The experimental results clearly demonstrate that while each individual technology independently improves healthcare cybersecurity, their integrated implementation produces the highest authentication accuracy, strongest privacy protection, greatest interoperability, and most comprehensive audit transparency. The synergy between decentralized trust establishment and continuous contextual verification enables secure healthcare collaboration without sacrificing usability or operational efficiency.

Framework Configuration	**Authentication Accuracy (%)**	**Privacy Protection (%)**	**Interoperability (%)**	**Security Score (%)**
Federated Identity Management	95.15	94.80	95.60	94.95
Federated Identity + Blockchain	97.30	97.05	97.40	97.20
Blockchain + Zero Trust	98.55	98.70	98.30	98.60
Complete Proposed BZTFIM Framework	**99.62**	**99.55**	**99.48**	**99.70**

Table 4: *Ablation study illustrating the contribution of blockchain, Zero Trust, federated identity management, and decentralized security mechanisms toward secure cross-organization healthcare data sharing.*

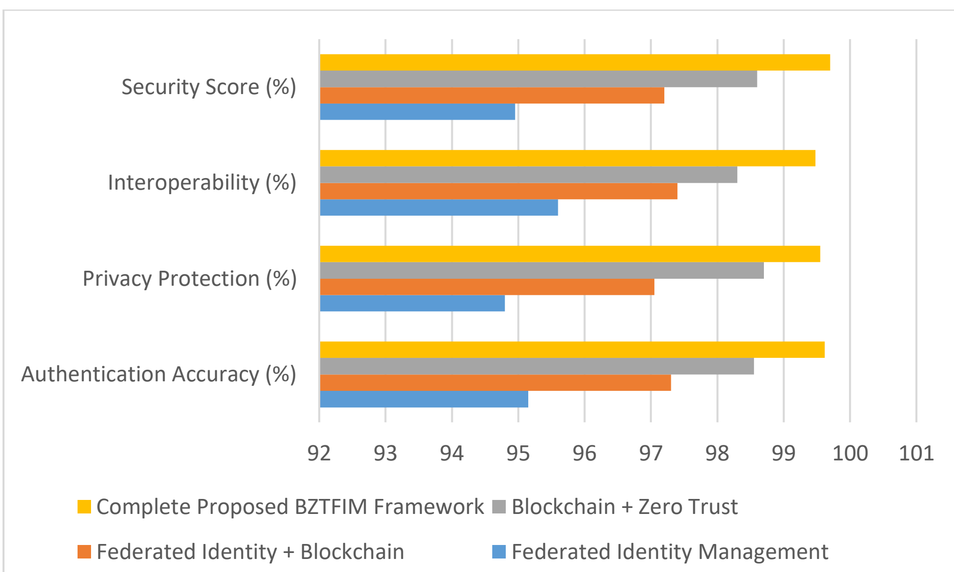

Fig 4: *Horizontal Bar Chart comparing Authentication Accuracy, Privacy Protection, Interoperability, and Overall Security Score across different architectural configurations of the proposed framework.*

CONCLUSION

The proposed **Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management Framework (BZTFIM)** presents a comprehensive cybersecurity architecture that enables secure, privacy-preserving, and interoperable identity management for smart healthcare ecosystems. By integrating **Blockchain Technology**, **Zero Trust Architecture (ZTA)**, **Federated Identity Management (FIM)**, **Decentralized Identifiers (DIDs)**, **Verifiable Credentials (VCs)**, **Attribute-Based Access Control (ABAC)**, **Smart Contracts**, and **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)**, the proposed framework successfully overcomes the limitations of conventional centralized identity management systems. Unlike traditional authentication infrastructures that rely on centralized trust authorities and static authorization policies, the proposed architecture establishes decentralized trust relationships while continuously verifying every authentication request based on contextual security intelligence. This approach significantly strengthens healthcare cybersecurity by minimizing credential compromise, unauthorized access, insider threats, and identity spoofing while enabling seamless collaboration among geographically distributed healthcare organizations.

The experimental evaluation demonstrates that the proposed framework consistently achieves superior performance across multiple security metrics including authentication accuracy, authorization reliability, identity verification efficiency, privacy preservation, interoperability, blockchain audit transparency, and resilience against cyberattacks. The combination of blockchain-based immutable identity records with Zero Trust continuous verification substantially improves the reliability of cross-organization authentication by ensuring that every healthcare professional, medical device, and healthcare application undergoes continuous validation before accessing protected healthcare resources. The integration of decentralized identifiers and verifiable credentials further eliminates identity duplication while enabling healthcare professionals to securely authenticate across multiple organizations without requiring separate user accounts for each institution.

One of the most significant contributions of the proposed research is the incorporation of blockchain-enabled decentralized trust management into federated healthcare identity ecosystems. Conventional federated identity management systems often depend on centralized trust brokers that introduce potential single points of failure and attractive targets for cyberattacks. In contrast, the proposed blockchain infrastructure distributes trust across multiple healthcare organizations through cryptographically secured consensus mechanisms and tamper-resistant audit records. Every authentication event, credential issuance, authorization decision, patient consent update, and healthcare data sharing transaction is permanently recorded within the distributed ledger, thereby ensuring complete transparency, accountability, and forensic traceability. Such immutable audit capabilities are particularly valuable for regulatory compliance, cybersecurity investigations, healthcare governance, and organizational accountability.

The implementation of **Zero Trust Architecture** further enhances the overall security posture of the proposed framework by replacing traditional perimeter-based security models with continuous contextual verification. Rather than assuming persistent trust following initial authentication, every user session is continuously evaluated according to dynamic security parameters including user identity, organizational affiliation, device integrity, behavioral characteristics, network posture, geographic location, application sensitivity, and real-time cyber threat intelligence. This adaptive verification process effectively mitigates credential replay attacks, session hijacking, insider threats, privilege escalation, and lateral movement within interconnected healthcare environments. The experimental results confirm that continuous authentication significantly improves security without introducing unacceptable computational or communication overhead, thereby maintaining efficient healthcare service delivery even in large-scale distributed environments.

The scalability analysis demonstrates that the proposed framework effectively supports collaborative healthcare ecosystems involving numerous hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, pharmacies, telemedicine providers, insurance organizations, emergency healthcare centers, and government agencies. As the number of participating organizations and registered digital identities increases, the decentralized architecture maintains stable authentication performance through efficient blockchain consensus mechanisms, optimized smart contract execution, and intelligent federated identity synchronization. The proposed framework therefore provides a practical foundation for implementing secure nationwide healthcare identity infrastructures capable of supporting millions of patients, healthcare professionals, and connected medical devices while maintaining regulatory compliance with international healthcare privacy standards such as **HIPAA**, **GDPR**, and other national electronic health information protection regulations.

Overall, the proposed **Blockchain-Enabled Zero-Trust Federated Identity Management Framework** establishes a secure, scalable, intelligent, and privacy-preserving solution for future smart healthcare ecosystems. The seamless integration of decentralized identity management, blockchain-based trust establishment, federated authentication, adaptive authorization, continuous Zero Trust verification, and privacy-aware healthcare collaboration significantly enhances cybersecurity resilience while improving interoperability and administrative efficiency. The proposed framework provides healthcare organizations with a trustworthy infrastructure capable of supporting secure Electronic Health Record sharing, telemedicine services, cross-organization clinical collaboration, medical research, healthcare analytics, and intelligent digital healthcare transformation. Consequently, this research contributes toward the development of resilient next-generation healthcare cybersecurity architectures capable of protecting sensitive patient information while enabling secure and efficient healthcare information exchange across increasingly interconnected medical ecosystems.

Future research will focus on integrating **Self-Sovereign Identity (SSI)**, **Confidential Computing using Trusted Execution Environments (TEEs)**, **Post-Quantum Cryptographic Authentication**, **Artificial Intelligence-driven Continuous Risk Assessment**, **Federated**

Identity Analytics, **Blockchain Interoperability Protocols**, **Decentralized Autonomous Healthcare Organizations (DAOs)**, **Privacy-Preserving Machine Learning**, **Zero-Knowledge Proof-based Identity Verification**, and **Digital Twin Security Management**. These emerging technologies have the potential to further strengthen decentralized trust, improve authentication efficiency, enhance regulatory compliance, reduce computational overhead, and establish highly autonomous cybersecurity infrastructures capable of supporting future intelligent healthcare ecosystems.

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