RESEARCH PAPER

Healing Through Voices: An Empathetic Digital Solution for Combating Loneliness and Alleviating Emotional Trauma

[1*] Dr. Raja Rajeswari Sethuraman, [2] Dr. B. Bala Vijaya Priya, [3] Dr. R. Bhuvaneswari, [4] Ms. R. Anuja

[1*]Assistant Professor (SG), Department of Computer Applications, Dr. Mahalingam College of Engineering and Technology, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India. Mail Id: rraji.raji22@gmail.com. Orcid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8923-4572

[2]Assistant Professor (SS), Dr. Mahalingam College of Engineering & Technology, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India. Mail Id: bbvp85@gmail.com

[3]Assistant Professor (SG), Dr. Mahalingam College of Engineering & Technology, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India. Mail Id: bhuvanram@drmcet.ac.in

[4]Assistant Professor, Dr. Mahalingam College of Engineering & Technology, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India. Mail Id: anujaramalingam96@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: rraji.raji22@gmail.com

Abstract

Loneliness has emerged as a pervasive psychological and social challenge in the modern era, affecting individuals across generations, cultures, and geographic boundaries, including Gen Z populations. Despite widespread adoption of mobile technologies and social media platforms, many individuals continue to experience emotional insecurity and social isolation due to the lack of meaningful interpersonal interaction. Existing digital platforms primarily emphasize visual or text-based communication, often compromising privacy and genuine emotional connection.To address this gap, this paper presents the design and conceptual framework of **"*Empathizer*,"** a privacy-preserving mobile application that facilitates anonymous, voice-only human interaction through internet-based audio calls. The application enables users to engage in real-time conversations without sharing personal contact information, media files, or documents. Safety is ensured through session-based communication, user-controlled call termination, and fixed maximum interaction duration of 30 minutes per session. This study explores the logical architecture, functional design, and potential psychosocial impact of the proposed system as a digital intervention for reducing loneliness and emotional distress. The findings suggest that ethically designed, voice-centric mobile technologies can foster empathetic human engagement while maintaining privacy, thereby serving as a supportive tool for emotional well-being in contemporary society.

keywords: loneliness reduction, anonymous voice communication, privacy-preserving mobile application, digital emotional support, human-centered social technology.

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1. Introduction

Ratan Tata suffered from loneliness at his old age. He said, "You don't know what it is to be lonely until you spend time alone wishing for companionship…" (Bloomberg, 2022). He initiated a start up to establish a human bonding among senior citizens and young graduates thereby overcoming loneliness at the old age.

Loneliness has emerged as a significant psychological and societal concern in contemporary society (Smeets et.al.2026), affecting individuals across age groups (Tang et.al.2023), cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds, including younger generations such as Gen Z. Despite unprecedented growth in mobile technologies and online social platforms, a growing number of individuals continue to experience emotional isolation and reduced interpersonal connection. Loneliness is commonly defined as a subjective experience arising from a discrepancy between desired and actual social interaction, often accompanied by emotional distress and a sense of social deprivation (Victor et al.,2005).

Empirical studies consistently report a strong association between loneliness and adverse mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, and increased suicide risk (Kapoulea et.al.,2023 & Hu et.al.,2026). Social disconnection has been shown to exert effects on physical health comparable to well-established risk factors such as smoking and obesity, emphasizing its

severity as a public health concern. The MCC researchers found a strong correlation between loneliness and mental health concerns. In the report, 81% of adults who were lonely also said they suffered with anxiety or depression compared to 29% of those who were less lonely (Ross, 2024). While various helplines and mental health services exist, their effectiveness is often limited by accessibility barriers and the reluctance of individuals to seek help during moments of acute emotional vulnerability.

Contemporary social media platforms aim to facilitate connectivity (Ciftchi et.al.,2023); however, they predominantly rely on visual or text-based interactions and typically require prior acquaintance or identity disclosure. Such platforms often fail to provide emotionally safe spaces for individuals who lack existing social networks or who seek empathetic interaction without fear of judgment or privacy violations. Moreover, the availability of image sharing, video calls, and document exchange increases the risk of misuse, discouraging vulnerable users from engaging openly.

To address these limitations, this paper proposes **"Empathizer,"** a privacy-centric mobile application designed to enable anonymous, voice-only human interaction. The application facilitates real-time audio communication over internet connectivity without requiring personal identification, contact information, or media sharing. User safety is ensured through session-based interactions, time-limited calls, and complete user control over call termination. By prioritizing auditory communication, the proposed system seeks to restore the warmth of human conversation while preserving anonymity and emotional security.

This paper presents the conceptual design, system architecture, and intended psychosocial impact of the Empathizer application as a digital intervention for alleviating loneliness. The study argues that ethically designed, voice-focused mobile technologies can foster empathetic social engagement and serve as a supportive mechanism for emotional well-being in modern society.

2. Related Work

The use of digital mobile technology that addresses the loneliness has evolved in recent years. Bruehlman-Senecal et.al (2020) suggested the smart phone based intervention (Nod) through pilot randomized control trail that deals the loneliness among college students with the support of mobile applications. Despite, the interference focused on skill based psychological exercise rather than face-to-face interaction; it described the possibility of mobile platforms as tools for handling loneliness. Gunnes, Loe and kalseth (2024) performed a survey that examines the importance of ICT technologies in handling loneliness and social isolation among older adults. They also identified that the mobile technologies is enhanced the social engagement and emotional well being, also the study provides a comprehensive division of ICT based interference applicable for all age group. Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, 19th and 21st Surgeon General of the United States says that "Lacking social connection is as dangerous as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day" (2023).

Thangavel et.al (2022) analyzed the advantages of ICT tools that aimed at reducing the loneliness and social isolation, that further emphasize the importance of the user-centered approach in digital interventions. This study also highlights the limitations of existing system that deals with the anonymity, lack of privacy and real time interventions in current digital systems. Aslan et.al (2025) and Kahn et.al.(2022) investigated the psychological linking of friends through social media, loneliness, life satisfaction, and depression among college students. Their findings indicate the importance of social connectivity in mitigating psychological distress that handles the loneliness; life satisfaction through social support in future oriented motivation. Further, Piko et.al (2025) demonstrated the digital behaviours and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) that deals with the relationship between social comparison and maladaptive online engagement. Together these studies reinforce the significance of digital and voice interaction intended at reducing social isolation by social support and technological mediated interaction. Mu, et.al (2025) examined the workplace loneliness among civilian police and investigated that the loneliness plays a vital role in social support and individual commitment. This study also emphasize that the reduction in social support leads to increase feelings of loneliness; which also leads to psychological disengagement and negative emotional outcomes. The study further described that the absence of social interaction is not only leads to loneliness it further deals the individual psychological experience that shaped by the human interaction. All these studies explained the need for social support, emotionally safe communication technology to mitigate loneliness, focused on meaningful interpersonal communication.

In addition, a systematic review has conducted on voice-based assistants and loneliness

among elder adults reported that the voiced based assistants have a positive impact on reducing loneliness and emotional companionship. This paper provides the importance of auditory interaction in fostering social presence. This study strongly supports the effectiveness of voice based assistance models for loneliness reduction.

3. Problem Statement

Loneliness is an important and critical issue irrespective of age groups, cultures, and geographic regions that significantly affects the emotional well being and mental health. Most people tend to commit suicide just because they do not receive a human support on that particular crucial moment of their choice. A study of Shaw found, that "deaths due to suicide are associated with loneliness and more strongly with indicators of objective isolation such as living alone" (2012). Though help lines are available to people it is not fully effective because, a human being should be again available to motivate the concerned individual to dial the available contacts at the crucial moment.

It is the responsibility of human beings to establish rapport among them to enable social interaction (Wen et.al.,2024). Multiple social platforms are available nowadays-facilitating connection among the people. However, that connectivity happens only through acquaintance. People who suffer loneliness due to the loss of intimate or acquainted souls could not benefit from social media platforms as they do not have their contacts. Social media platforms boast connecting millions of people officially but not personally for everyone. It creates only shallow rapport between people. Moreover emotions cannot be healed just through texting the words. Human comfort and warmth can be acquired by tone, availability, interaction, exchange of emotions and ideas not just by sharing images or stories over internet. Social media promotes constant connectivity with the people but not an empathetic bonding. It lacks deep human bonding giving birth to loneliness. An individual cannot feel intimate bonding though he claims to have more than 1000 friends in the Face book or Instagram (Aslan et.al., 2025). Moreover, people's data is under risk as they share their photos or images to the unknown people.

Few other platforms like *Discord* support conversation (Zheng et.al.,2023) but also have the facilities of video calling. Many news channels or reports have never failed to mention the disadvantages of sharing images or connection through video calls to the strangers. They challenge the security of innocent people. People interact with the other using social media platforms just in the intention of establishing a human contact but a few people do not properly handle it. Despite the wide availability of digital applications and social media platforms, many individuals still experience the emotional isolation. Most of the social media platforms are based on text based interaction, or video based interaction that may not provide the safe and judgement free environment for human who experience the loneliness, particularly in situation like those reluctant to disclose their identity.

In considering all these challenges there is a need for secure, privacy preserving technology that provides real time emotional support without exposure of individual identity, data sharing, and visual judgement. In order to facilitate a safe interaction among human beings, overcome loneliness, support people with humanity, this paper proposes a novelty of launching a mobile app named **"*Empathizer*".** This app would heal the unhealed souls longing for human companionship. This app through Wi-Fi at no specific charges connects people widely enabling them to interact with each other.

4. Research objectives and Hypotheses

4.1 Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to design a privacy preserving mobile application that facilitate with the voice-based communication to mitigate loneliness. The precise objectives are:

i) To design a digital application for voice-based communication that connect a person and a healer (any human being) who are available in online.

ii) To evaluate the effectiveness of voice based communication that fosters emotional connection and reduce the loneliness.

iii) To inspect the privacy and safety features, that includes the absence of text, video and any other document sharing in enhancing user engagement.

iv) To measure the impact of limited time based user interaction sessions for safety and sustained usage.

4.2. Research Hypotheses

H1: Users are engaged in anonymous voice based communication using peer to peer companions will report loneliness reduction compared to pre-interaction state.

H2: Privacy preserving features that include anonymity and the absence of video or text sharing will positively influence user's comfort to engage.

H3: Voice only interaction will facilitate high-level emotional connection rather than text based communication.

H4: Time limited and user control session will ensure safety without affecting user commitment.

5. Proposed System: Empathizer

Empathizer is a mobile application that provides voice based communication technology. Unlike other mobile application Empathizer, do not have provisions to share any documents or images. So, people will never be the victims for any temptations. Once when people are connected to talk with each other, they can be free to share their ideas or views. As a note of a disclaimer, it is the individual's responsibility as not to share their original data to the strangers. The objective of this application is to eradicate loneliness that people suffer due to lack of friends or relatives.

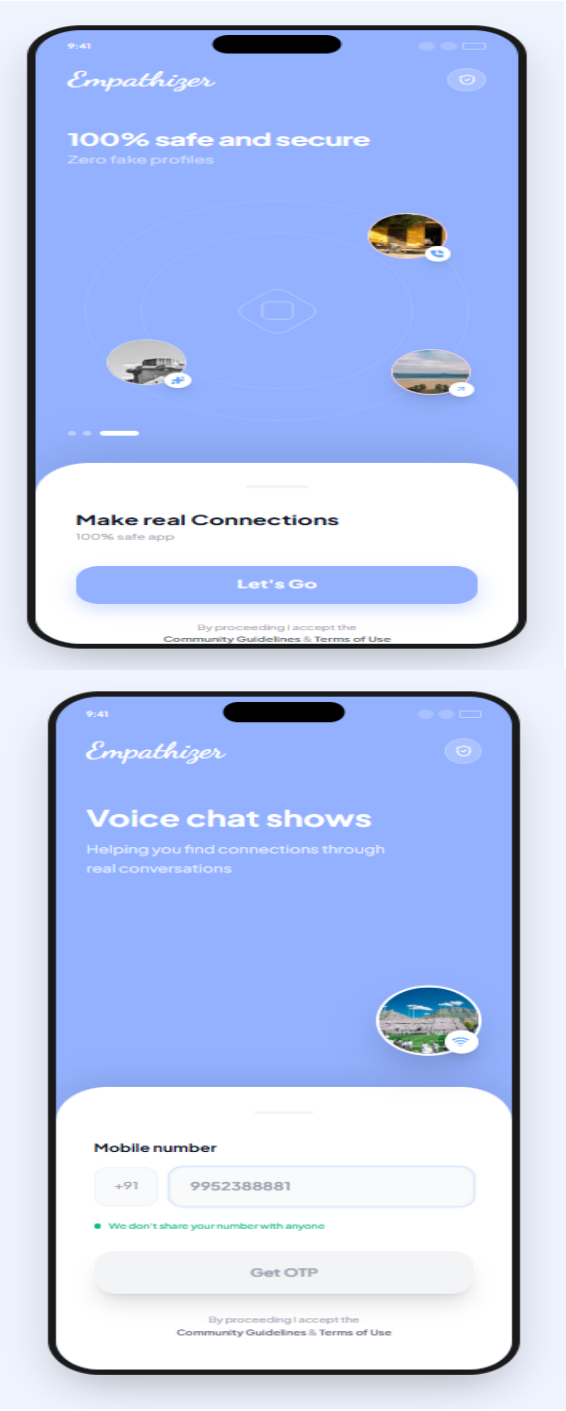
This application is designed bothering about the security of the people, so the call gets disconnected every 30 minutes. Next time, when the person enters the app, again a new image and a name have to be registered. List of members available online will be displayed on the screen and people could select anyone randomly to talk for a while. This application has multilingual interaction support, allows users to select their preferred language. Talking with human beings is possible through this app for all the 24 hours without any fear for security. This technology provides emotionally appropriate response with more safety constraints.

6. System Architecture of Empathizer

The proposed system Empathizer has been created upon privacy centric and ethically considered that prioritizes human safety while minimizing identity exposure related risk. This system follows the client server architecture for real time voice based communication using internet connectivity. Unlike other communication models this system restrict to share text or images and provides the flexibility to create a profile while user enter into the application. This system has three layers that comprises of mobile application layer, session coordination layer and secure voice communication engine that enforce privacy safety and ethical interaction by design.

6.1 Mobile Application Layer

The mobile application layer act as interface between user and the Empathizer system, which is designed to be intuitive and emotionally intrusive. At first, the user has to create their own profile using their mobile number. Once they receive one-time password(OTP) they have the privilege to set their nickname, profile picture and date of birth, also they can select their preferred language as well. The mobile interface also shows the list of healers (human beings) available in online and it provides simple control for initiating and terminating voice call. The absence of text, image and video call sharing reducing the risk and allow the users freely communicate with one another. This design also emphasizes the user autonomy and immediate call termination at any point during interaction. The below images represent the user profile creation in ***Empathizer*** application.



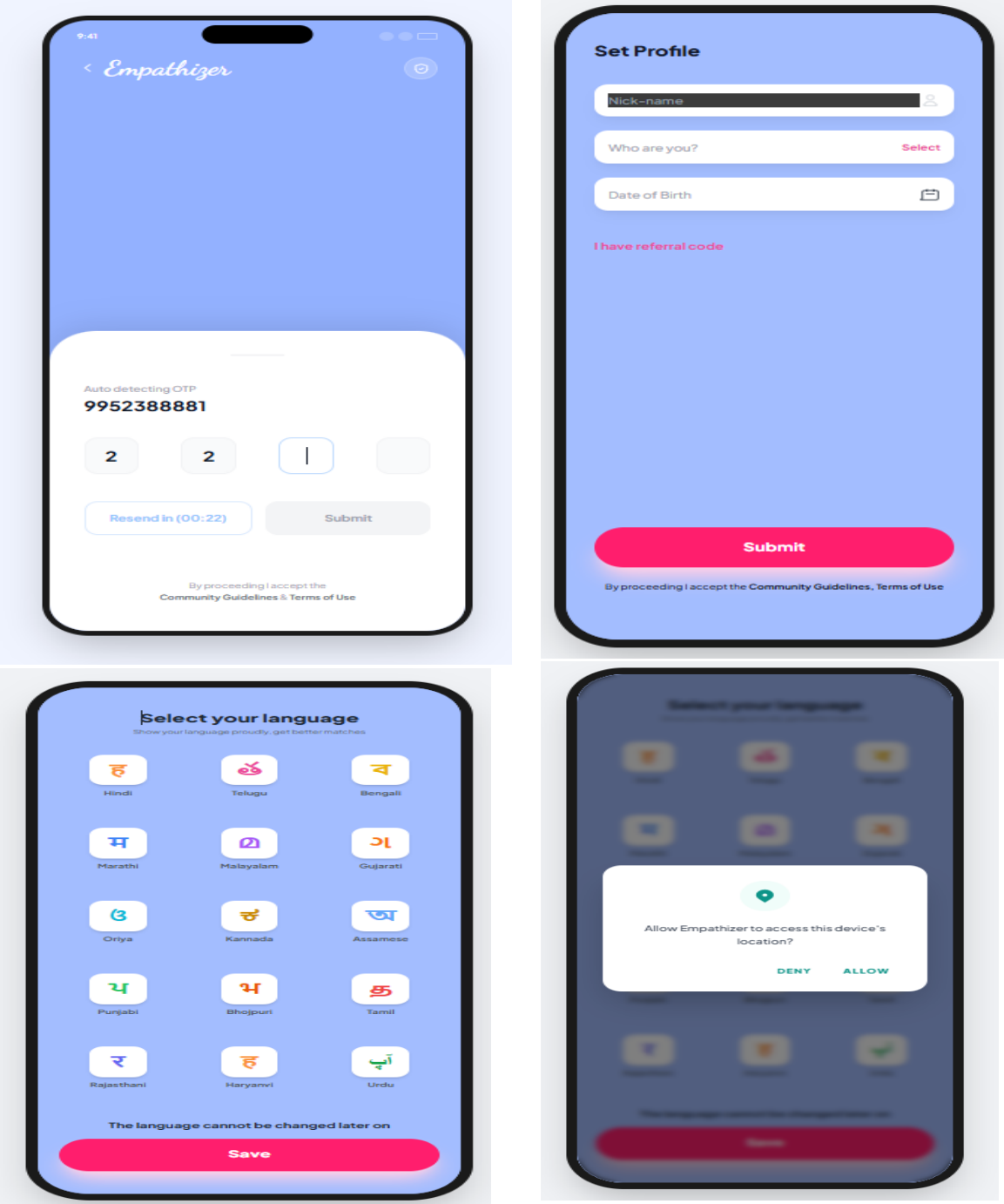


Figure 1: Empathizer User profile creation and Language selection

6.2 Session Cordination Layer

This layer provides the central control that manages the user availability, session initiation, and maintains the conversation timing. When a user initiates the request to communicate the server, it validates the user's profile and gives list of available healers online with language preference. The server generates the session specific token that remain only valid for the time duration, which is 30 minutes. After the time duration, the call is terminated by the system. This time bound conversation is strictly followed to prevent the users from overdependence, Potential misuse and prolonged exposure. Most important fact in this system is, the server does not maintain any call history or conversation meta data beyond the live session there by adhering data minimization and follows ethical principles.

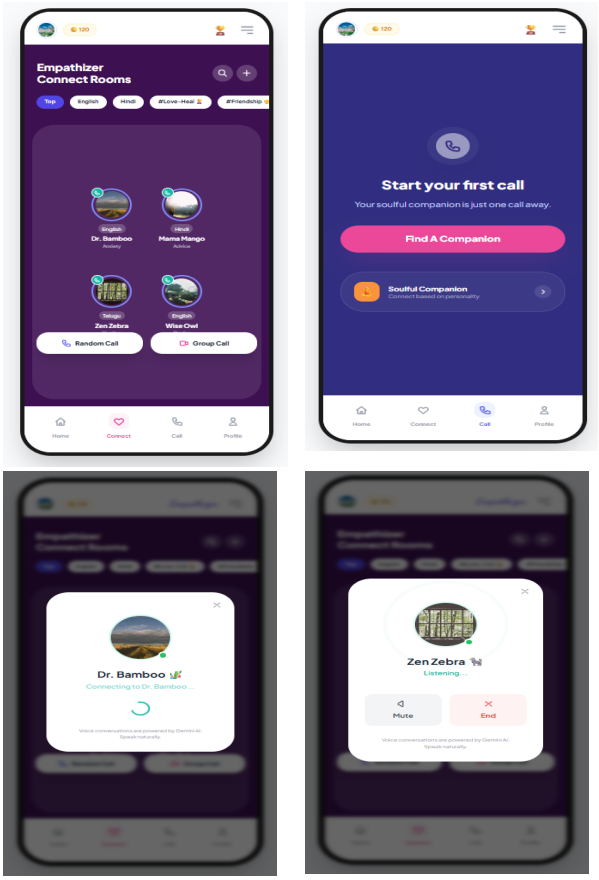


Figure 2: Empathizer voice call generation

6.3 Voice communication Engine

This layer is the core technological component of our system that enables real time internet based conversation, which uses Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology. This system provides encrypted audio transmission with low latency to ensure natural conversation flow that maintains communication security. Conversations made in real time, there is no recorded or stored communications, which is eliminating data leakage, and surveillance related issues. The end to end encrypted audio streaming protects the conversation from unauthorized interception. By ensuring interaction exclusively to voice, this system provides the emotional cues through tone, rhythm and pauses which also reduces security issues.

Figure:3 Empathizer: Conversation between healer and a person who feels lonely

7. User Interaction Workflow

The typical user interaction begins only when the user creates their profile and starts communication. The interaction initiates through voice communication and concludes when the phone call indicates termination or automatic disconnection of the session at the 30th minute after communication begins. This workflow minimizes cognitive load that facilitates immediate, emotionally supportive interaction. Below diagram represents the overall flow of the proposed system.

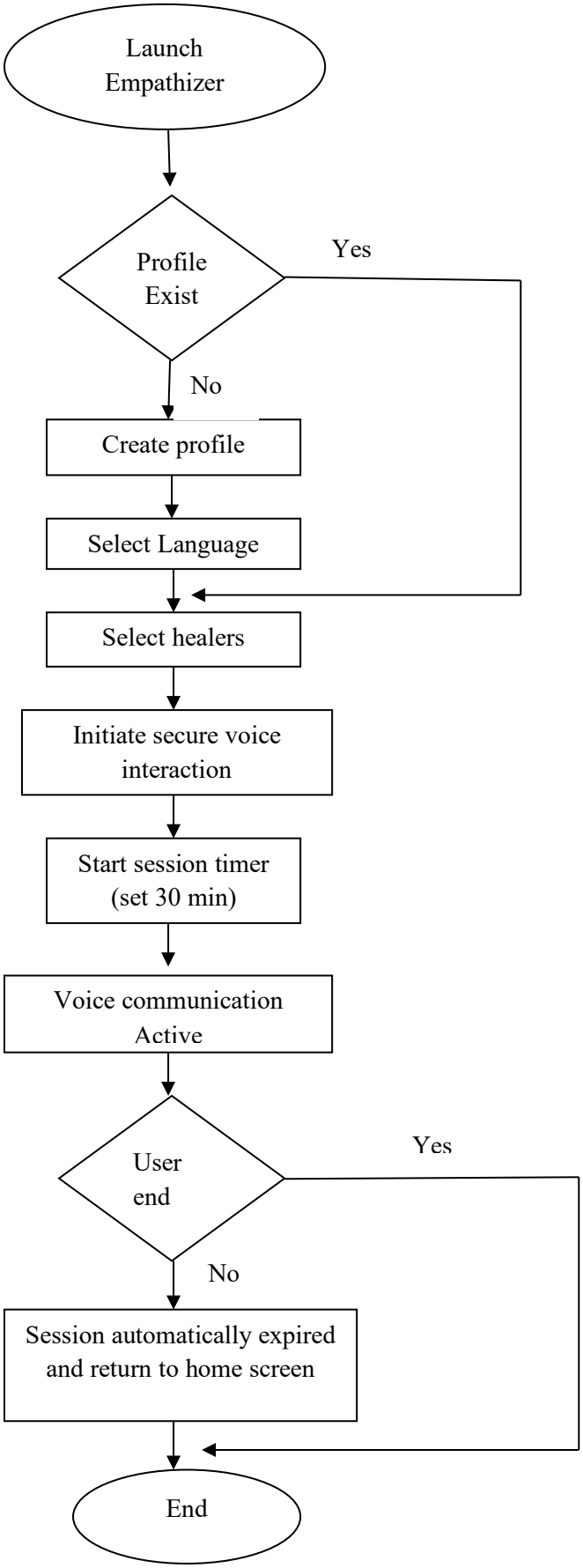

Launch Empathizer
Profile Exist
Yes
No
Create profile
Select Language
Select healers
Initiate secure voice interaction
Start session timer (set 30 min)
Voice communication Active
User end
Yes
No
Session automatically expired and return to home screen
End

Figure 4: Overall flow of the proposed system

8. Expected outcomes and discussion

This proposed system expected to reduce loneliness by enabling empathetic human conversation in secure digital environment. Voice based communication gives emotional bonding than in text based communication fostering truth and presence. The combination of time bound session and hiding identity of the user will comfort them to actively engage in conversation while maintain ethical safeguards. Below table represents the algorithm for the proposed system.

Algorithm for *Empathizer*

Input: User device with internet connection
Output: Secured, Voice only interaction session

Step1: Launch the mobile application "***Empathizer***"
Step2: Check whether the user have account
- If the account exists then proceed to next step
- If the profile does not exist prompt the user to create their profile with minimal identity disclosure

Step3: Validate the profile and establish the connection with session coordination server
Step4: Retrieve the list of available healers who is eligible for communication
Step5: Allow the users to select their preferred language
Step6: Generate a session with token that sets the limit as 30 minutes
Step7: Start the voice communication and activate the session timer
Step 8: Enable real time Voice communication and monitor the session duration
Step9: Allow the user to terminate the call or voluntarily disconnect it by the 30th minute of interaction
Step 10: Close the session without storing any of the conversation details.
Step11: Return the user to home screen.

9. Evaluation and discussion

The evaluation of the proposed system was conducted by interface walkthrough and function validation approach with screen shots. The on boarding and informed agreement clearly shows the ethical guidelines and system boundaries, gives the privacy condition to the users. The language selection and profile creation reproduce the interaction flow that minimizes the effort particularly for users experiencing emotional vulnerability. The healer selection interface provides the role based engagement that allows the user to choose interaction context aligned with their emotional needs. During active interaction sessions, the live voice interaction screen reinforces enhancing the sense of conversational presence while avoiding visual exposure. Automatic session termination mechanism further provides the safety by preventing over dependency. Collectively the evaluated interface explains that the system designed effectively and balances empathetic engagement.

10. Limitations of the study

Despite the strength, the proposed system also has some limitation, that includes the need for stable internet connectivity and lack of clinical validation of psychological outcomes. This system only provides a short term emotional support and does not replace the mental health intervention.

11. Conclusion and Future enhancement

This paper presented an ***empathizer*** a mobile application which enabled voice based connection through unknown human interaction. By allowing time bound anonymous voice communication, this system prioritizes emotional safety, privacy and dignity. The proposed system carefully designed to foster empathetic social engagement and serve as a digital mobile technology for handling loneliness in this society. In future, the system may integrate emergency helpline and additional features for differently abled persons and multilingual expansion.

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