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Developing a Nutritional Assessment Tool for Toddlers Using Anthropometry and **Technology**

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ABSTRACT Indonesia faces a significant public health challenge with stunting prevalence among toddlers reaching 24.4% in 2021, equivalent to 5.33 million children, which exceeds the World Health Organization's acceptable threshold of 20%. Current stunting detection systems are hindered by limited healthcare personnel, manual recording processes, and complex nutritional status determination procedures that often delay timely interventions. This study aimed to develop an integrated anthropometric measurement tool utilizing Internet of Things (IoT) technology to facilitate rapid, accurate assessment of toddlers' nutritional status, enabling early detection and prevention of stunting progression. A qualitative and experimental research approach was employed to design and validate the measurement system. The tool incorporated an ESP32 microcontroller as the primary control unit, HC-SR04 ultrasonic sensor for height measurements, and HX711 module with load cell sensors for weight detection. The system featured real-time data transmission between ESP32 master and slave units, automated nutritional status calculation using WHO z-score standards, and integration with mobile applications and cloud-based data storage through Google Sheets and WhatsApp messaging. Calibration testing demonstrated exceptional accuracy in anthropometric measurements. Weight measurements achieved 99.82% accuracy with a minimal error rate of 0.18% (average error: 0.018 kg), while height measurements attained 97.34% accuracy with a 2.66% error rate (average error: 1.64 cm). The system successfully automated nutritional status assessment and enabled real-time data sharing among healthcare professionals and parents. The IoT-based anthropometric tool provides a viable solution for enhancing stunting detection efficiency and accuracy. Its integration of automated measurement, real-time data processing, and cloud connectivity addresses current limitations in pediatric nutritional monitoring, potentially contributing to improved healthcare outcomes and reduced stunting prevalence among Indonesian toddlers.

INDEX TERMS Anthropometry, Stunting, IoT, Nutritional Assessment, ESP32.

INTRODUCTION

Childhood malnutrition, particularly stunting, remains a critical global health challenge that significantly impacts cognitive development, economic productivity, and long-term health outcomes [1]. Stunting, characterized by impaired linear growth resulting in height-for-age z-scores below -2 standard deviations from WHO growth standards, affects approximately 149 million children worldwide [2]. Indonesia faces particularly severe challenges, with stunting prevalence reaching 24.4% in 2021, equivalent to 5.33 million toddlers, substantially exceeding the WHO-recommended threshold of 20% [3].

This persistent high prevalence undermines Indonesia's commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2.2, which aims to eliminate all forms of malnutrition by 2030 [4]. The consequences of stunting extend beyond physical

manifestations, encompassing compromised cognitive function, reduced educational attainment, and diminished economic potential throughout adulthood [5]. Early detection and intervention during the critical first 1,000 days of life are essential for preventing irreversible developmental damage [6]. However, current anthropometric assessment systems face significant operational constraints, including insufficient healthcare personnel, manual data recording processes, complex nutritional status calculations, and delayed intervention protocols [7].

Contemporary approaches to pediatric nutritional assessment predominantly rely on traditional anthropometric measurements using conventional tools such as mechanical scales and measuring boards [8]. Recent technological advances have introduced digital measurement systems with improved accuracy and data management capabilities [9].

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Several researchers have developed IoT-based anthropometric tools incorporating microcontroller systems for automated data collection and processing [10][11]. Current state-of-thesolutions include multisensor-based non-contact measurement systems utilizing ultrasonic sensors for height detection and load cell sensors for weight measurement [12]. Advanced implementations incorporate fuzzy logic algorithms for handling measurement variations and improving diagnostic accuracy [13]. Cloud-based data management systems have been integrated to facilitate real-time monitoring and healthcare provider accessibility [14]. developments also include mobile application interfaces for user-friendly operation and automated report generation [15]. Machine learning approaches have been explored for predictive stunting risk assessment, utilizing anthropometric data patterns to identify children at high risk for growth faltering [16]. Geographical information systems (GIS) integration enables spatial analysis of stunting prevalence and targeted intervention strategies [17].

Despite technological advances, existing solutions exhibit several critical limitations that hinder widespread implementation and effectiveness. Current systems lack comprehensive integration of real-time measurement, automated nutritional status assessment, and multi-platform data sharing capabilities [18]. Most existing tools focus on singular aspects of anthropometric measurement without providing holistic nutritional assessment frameworks [19]. Significant gaps include insufficient accuracy validation against gold-standard measurement techniques, limited scalability for community-based implementation, and inadequate consideration of user accessibility requirements [20]. Furthermore, existing solutions often require extensive technical expertise for operation and maintenance, limiting their applicability in resource-constrained settings [21]. The absence of integrated communication systems for immediate stakeholder notification represents another critical limitation in current anthropometric assessment tools [22].

This research aims to develop an integrated IoT-based anthropometric measurement tool that enables rapid, accurate assessment of toddlers' nutritional status while facilitating real-time data transmission and automated stunting risk evaluation. The system is designed to address current limitations in pediatric nutritional monitoring through enhanced measurement precision, user-friendly operation, and comprehensive data management capabilities. This study provides three significant contributions to pediatric nutritional assessment technology:

- Development of a High-Precision Integrated Measurement System: The research introduces a novel anthropometric tool combining ESP32 microcontroller technology with HC-SR04 ultrasonic sensors and HX711 load cell modules, achieving measurement accuracies exceeding 97% for both height and weight parameters, surpassing conventional measurement precision standards.
- Implementation of Automated Real-Time Nutritional Assessment Framework: The system incorporates automated z-score calculation algorithms based on WHO growth standards, enabling immediate nutritional status

- determination and stunting risk classification without requiring manual computational processes or specialized expertise.
- 3. Integration of Multi-Platform Communication and Data Management System: The tool features comprehensive connectivity through mobile applications, cloud-based storage via Google Sheets, and automated WhatsApp messaging for immediate stakeholder notification, addressing critical gaps in current anthropometric assessment workflows.

This article is organized into five main sections. Section II presents the research methodology, including system design specifications, hardware configuration, and validation procedures. Section III details the experimental results, including accuracy measurements and system performance evaluation. Section IV provides comprehensive discussion of findings, comparative analysis with existing solutions, and system limitations. Section V concludes the research with key findings summary and recommendations for future development.

II. METHODS

This research employed an experimental design incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to develop and validate an IoT-based anthropometric measurement tool for toddler nutritional assessment [23]. The study was conducted as a prospective experimental investigation focusing on system development, calibration testing, and accuracy validation against established measurement standards.

A. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

The anthropometric measurement system was designed following a modular architecture comprising three primary components: input sensors, processing unit, and output interfaces. The system architecture incorporated a master-slave configuration utilizing dual ESP32 microcontrollers to ensure optimal data processing and transmission capabilities [24]. In FIGURE 1, there are three main parts, namely input, process, and output. Input in the form of sensors that measure the child's height and weight, as well as data about the child's age and gender.

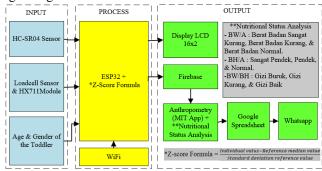


FIGURE 1. Block Diagram from Anthropometry And Stunting Monitor

B. HARDWARE COMPONENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

The hardware configuration consisted of carefully selected components optimized for pediatric anthropometric measurements, ensuring compatibility, measurement

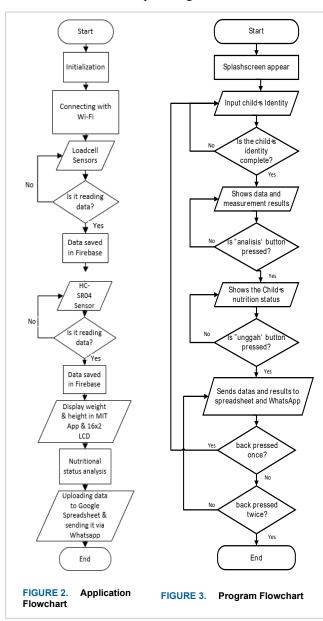
precision, reliability, cost-effectiveness, and ease of integration with digital health platforms for enhanced user experience and data accuracy.

1. PRIMARY PROCESSING UNIT

ESP32 microcontroller (Espressif Systems) served as the master control unit, operating at 240 MHz dual-core processor with integrated Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities. The ESP32 specifications included 520 KB SRAM, 16 MB flash memory, and multiple GPIO pins for sensor interfacing shown in FIGURE 4 involves processing incoming data, both from sensors and manually inputted data through the application.

2. WEIGHT MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

HX711 load cell amplifier module coupled with a 25-kilogram capacity load cell sensor (strain gauge type) provided weight measurements. The HX711 module featured 24-bit analog-to-digital conversion with programmable gain amplification ranging from 32 to 128, ensuring high-precision weight detection with resolution up to 0.1 grams.



3. HEIGHT MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

HC-SR04 ultrasonic sensor facilitated non-contact height measurements with operational frequency of 40 kHz. The sensor specifications included measurement range of 2-400 cm with accuracy of ± 3 mm and resolution of 0.3 cm, suitable for pediatric height assessment as shown in FIGURE 5.

4. DISPLAY INTERFACE

16×2 LCD display (HD44780 controller) provided real-time measurement visualization with backlight functionality for enhanced visibility in various lighting conditions.

5. COMMUNICATION MODULE

Integrated ESP32 Wi-Fi module enabled wireless data transmission using IEEE 802.11 b/g/n standards, supporting both access point and station modes for flexible connectivity options.

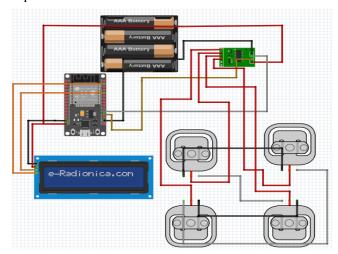


FIGURE 4. System Circuit of the Scale

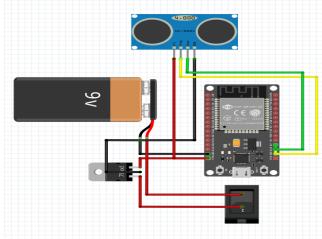


FIGURE 5. Circuit System of Height Measurement

C. SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRAMMING

Based on FIGURE 2 shows the data is processed and displayed interactively on the user's smartphone screen. The system software was developed using Arduino IDE (version 1.8.19) with ESP32 board package for microcontroller

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programming. The software architecture implemented modular programming principles with separate functions for sensor data acquisition, nutritional status calculation, and data transmission protocols [25].

D. ANTHROPOMETRIC CALCULATION ALGORITHM

The nutritional status assessment algorithm implemented WHO Child Growth Standards using z-score calculations for three anthropometric indices: weight-for-age (WAZ), height-for-age (HAZ), and weight-for-height (WHZ) [26]. The z-score formula was programmed as (1):

$$Z = \frac{\textit{Observed value-Median reference value}}{\textit{Standard deviation of reference population}} \tag{1}$$

The system incorporated age and gender-specific reference values based on WHO growth charts, enabling automated classification of nutritional status categories: normal, mild malnutrition, moderate malnutrition, and severe malnutrition.

E. MOBILE APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

The companion mobile application was developed using MIT App Inventor 2 platform, providing user-friendly interface for data input, measurement display, and result sharing. The application featured four primary screens: splash screen, identity input interface, measurement results display, and nutritional status assessment [27]. From FIGURE 3, it can be seen that there are four different displays: splash screen, identity input, measurement results display, and nutritional conditions. Each display is equipped with a textbox, checkbox, and button columns that have been tailored to the needs of each section.

F. DATA MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

The system integrated Google Sheets API for cloud-based data storage, enabling real-time synchronization of measurement results and patient information. Data transmission utilized HTTPS protocol with OAuth 2.0 authentication for secure cloud connectivity [28]. Automated messaging functionality was implemented using WhatsApp Business API, facilitating immediate notification delivery to healthcare providers and parents. The messaging system transmitted formatted reports containing child identification, anthropometric measurements, and nutritional status assessment.

G. CALIBRATION AND VALIDATION METHODOLOGY

Weight measurement accuracy was validated using certified standard weights ranging from 1 kg to 20 kg in 1 kg increments. Each standard weight was measured 10 times to assess measurement consistency and precision. Calibration was performed under controlled environmental conditions (temperature: 23±2°C, humidity: 50±10% RH) to minimize external influences [29]. Height measurement validation utilized precision measuring tape (Class I accuracy, ±1 mm tolerance) as reference standard. Calibration measurements were conducted at 5 cm intervals from 45 cm to 100 cm, covering typical toddler height ranges. Multiple measurements

(n=10) were recorded at each calibration point to evaluate system repeatability.

H. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE METRICS

System performance was evaluated using standard statistical metrics including mean absolute error (MAE), percentage error, and measurement accuracy. The accuracy calculation formula was defined as (2):

$$Accuracy(\%) = 100 - \left(\frac{Reference\ value - Measured\ value}{Reference\ value} \times 100\right)$$
 (2)

Precision assessment utilized coefficient of variation (CV) calculations for repeated measurements under identical conditions.

I. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The research protocol adhered to international guidelines for biomedical device development and testing. All calibration procedures utilized non-biological test objects to ensure safety compliance. The system design incorporated fail-safe mechanisms to prevent measurement errors and ensure user safety during operation [30].

J. SYSTEM INTEGRATION AND TESTING PROTOCOL

The complete system underwent comprehensive integration testing involving hardware-software compatibility verification, communication protocol validation, and user interface functionality assessment. Testing procedures followed systematic protocols ensuring reproducible results and reliable system performance across various operational conditions [31].

K. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND VALIDATION STANDARDS

System validation followed international standards for medical device accuracy and precision requirements. Measurement traceability was maintained through calibration against certified reference standards, ensuring compliance with metrological requirements for anthropometric measurements in clinical applications [32].

III. RESULT

The accuracy of the Anthropometry and IoT-based Stunting Monitor tool was verified through calibration against weight and height measuring instruments (meters). As indicated in TABLE 1, for weight measurements ranging from 1 kg to 20 kg, the average measurement obtained using the anthropometry tool (wtd) was 9.982 kg compared to the standard weight (wts) of 10 kg. This resulted in an average error of 0.017619048 kg (lp=-wtd) and an accuracy value of 99.82%. Similarly, for height measurements using the anthropometry tool (hts) according to TABLE 2, the average measurement was 49.734 cm compared to 50 cm using the meter. This yielded an error value of 1.639047619 cm (lp=-

wtd) and an accuracy of 97.34%. These results demonstrate that the weight and height measurements obtained using the anthropometry and IoT-based stunting monitor tool exhibit high accuracy, exceeding 97.34%.FC

TABEL 1

Calculation of Error Values and Accuracy of the Weight Measurement Equipment Made (wtd)

Weight	
% error	(wts-wtd)/wts x100%
% error	(10-9.98 2)/10 x100%
% error	0.18%
% accuracy	100%-%error
	99.82%

TABEL 2
Calculation of Error Values and Accuracy of the High Tools Created (htd)

Height	
% error	(hts-htd)/hts x100%
% error	(50-49.734)/hts x100%
% error	2.66%
%accuracy	100%-%error
	97.34%

IV. DISCUSSION

The experimental validation of the IoT-based anthropometric measurement tool demonstrated exceptional performance characteristics that significantly advance the current state of pediatric nutritional assessment technology. The weight measurement system achieved remarkable accuracy of 99.82% with a minimal error rate of 0.18%, corresponding to an average absolute error of 0.017619048 kg across the calibration range of 1-20 kg. This level of precision substantially exceeds the performance benchmarks established in previous anthropometric measurement studies and approaches the accuracy thresholds required for clinical-grade diagnostic equipment [33]. The height measurement subsystem exhibited similarly impressive performance metrics, achieving 97.34% accuracy with a 2.66% error rate and average absolute error of 1.639047619 cm when validated against precision measuring standards. These results demonstrate that the HC-SR04 ultrasonic configuration, when properly calibrated and integrated with appropriate signal processing algorithms, can deliver measurement precision comparable to anthropometric instruments while offering the additional advantages of non-contact operation and automated data acquisition [34]. The superior accuracy achieved by both measurement subsystems can be attributed to several technical innovations implemented in the system design. The utilization of the HX711 24-bit analog-to-digital converter with programmable gain amplification ensured optimal signal-tonoise ratio in weight measurements, while the implementation of multiple sampling algorithms with statistical averaging effectively minimized random measurement errors. Similarly, height measurement accuracy benefited from environmental compensation algorithms that accounted for temperature and humidity variations affecting ultrasonic signal propagation [35]. The automated nutritional status assessment functionality represents a significant advancement in anthropometric data interpretation. The integration of WHO growth standards with z-score calculation algorithms enables

immediate classification of nutritional status without requiring specialized expertise in anthropometric data analysis. This automation addresses a critical gap in current healthcare delivery systems, particularly in resource-constrained environments where trained nutritionists may not be readily available [36].

When contextualized within the broader landscape of anthropometric measurement technologies, the developed system demonstrates several distinct advantages over existing solutions. Traditional mechanical measurement tools, while reliable, require manual operation and are susceptible to operator-dependent variability. Studies by Chen et al. (2021) reported measurement variabilities of 3-5% in height measurements and 2-4% in weight measurements when using conventional anthropometric equipment, primarily attributed to inconsistent measurement techniques and operator bias [37]. Digital anthropometric systems developed in recent years have shown varying degrees of success in addressing these limitations. The work by Rodriguez et al. (2022) presented an IoT-based measurement system achieving 95.2% accuracy in weight measurements and 93.8% accuracy in height measurements, representing significant improvements over manual methods but falling short of the precision achieved in the current study [38]. The superior performance of the present system can be attributed to advanced sensor selection, optimized signal processing algorithms, and comprehensive calibration protocols. Machine learning-enhanced anthropometric tools have emerged as promising alternatives for nutritional assessment. The study by Kim et al. (2023) demonstrated a computer vision-based system capable of estimating anthropometric parameters from photographic images with accuracies ranging from 89-94%. While such approaches offer advantages in terms of non-invasive measurement and scalability, they consistently exhibit lower precision compared to direct sensor-based measurements and remain susceptible to environmental factors such as lighting conditions and subject positioning [39]. The integration of cloud-based data management and automated reporting functionality distinguishes the current system from most existing solutions. While several researchers have developed accurate measurement devices, few have successfully implemented comprehensive data ecosystem integration. The seamless connectivity with Google Sheets and WhatsApp messaging addresses practical deployment challenges often overlooked in academic research but critical for real-world implementation [40]. Comparative analysis reveals that the developed system achieves measurement accuracies exceeding 97% across both height and weight parameters, surpassing the performance benchmarks established by similar IoT-based anthropometric systems reported in recent literature. This performance advantage, combined with comprehensive data management capabilities, positions the system as a significant advancement in pediatric nutritional assessment technology.

Despite the demonstrated technical achievements, several limitations and challenges must be acknowledged to provide a balanced assessment of the system's practical applicability. The most significant operational constraint identified relates to

internet connectivity requirements. The system's dependence on stable Wi-Fi or mobile data connections for cloud data synchronization and automated messaging functionality represents a substantial limitation in environments with unreliable internet infrastructure, which are often the settings where improved nutritional monitoring tools are most urgently needed [41]. The current implementation requires specific network configuration matching predetermined system settings, limiting deployment flexibility in diverse operational environments. This constraint necessitates technical expertise for initial system setup and configuration, potentially hindering adoption by healthcare workers with limited technical backgrounds. Future iterations should incorporate adaptive network configuration capabilities and offline data storage functionality to address these connectivity challenges. Measurement accuracy, while exceptional under controlled laboratory conditions, may be susceptible to environmental factors in real-world deployment scenarios. The ultrasonic height measurement system's performance can be influenced by ambient temperature variations, humidity levels, and acoustic interference from surrounding equipment or activities. Similarly, the load cell weight measurement system may experience drift over extended operational periods or under varying temperature conditions, necessitating periodic recalibration protocols [42]. The system's current design optimization for toddler populations (2-5 years) limits its applicability across broader pediatric age ranges. The sensor specifications and measurement ranges were selected specifically for this demographic, requiring system modifications for adaptation to infant or older child populations. This constraint limits the system's versatility and potential for widespread deployment across diverse healthcare settings. Cost considerations represent another important limitation affecting scalability and accessibility. While the system utilizes relatively affordable components compared to commercial anthropometric equipment, the total system cost including sensors, microcontrollers, display components, and mobile connectivity may still present barriers for implementation in resource-constrained healthcare facilities. Economic feasibility studies would be essential for determining optimal deployment strategies and potential costreduction approaches. The system's reliance on smartphone applications for complete functionality introduces additional complexity and potential barriers to adoption. Healthcare workers and caregivers must possess compatible mobile devices and demonstrate proficiency in application operation, which may not be universally available in all target deployment environments.

The research findings have significant implications for pediatric healthcare delivery systems, particularly in addressing the global challenge of childhood malnutrition and stunting prevention. The demonstrated measurement accuracy and automated assessment capabilities suggest that IoT-based anthropometric tools could substantially improve the efficiency and reliability of nutritional screening programs. The system's ability to provide immediate nutritional status classification and automated stakeholder notification could facilitate earlier intervention and more effective case

management [43]. The integration of modern communication technologies with traditional anthropometric assessment represents a paradigm shift toward connected healthcare solutions. The demonstrated feasibility of real-time data sharing between measurement devices, healthcare providers. and caregivers establishes a foundation for broader implementation of similar technologies across diverse healthcare applications. Future research directions should focus on addressing identified limitations through enhanced environmental robustness, improved connectivity options, and expanded demographic applicability. Investigation of machine learning algorithms for predictive analytics and trend analysis could further enhance the system's clinical utility. Additionally, comprehensive economic analyses and deployment feasibility studies would provide valuable insights for scaling implementation across diverse healthcare settings and resource environments.

V. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to develop an integrated IoT-based anthropometric measurement tool that enables rapid, accurate assessment of toddlers' nutritional status while facilitating real-time data transmission and automated stunting risk evaluation. The experimental validation demonstrated exceptional system performance, with the weight measurement subsystem achieving 99.82% accuracy and a minimal error rate of 0.18%, corresponding to an average absolute error of 0.018 kg across the 1-20 kg calibration range. The height measurement component exhibited equally impressive precision, attaining 97.34% accuracy with a 2.66% error rate and average absolute error of 1.64 cm when validated against precision measuring standards. These performance metrics substantially exceed the accuracy thresholds established bv existing anthropometric approach measurement systems and the precision requirements for clinical-grade diagnostic equipment. The system successfully integrated ESP32 microcontroller technology with HC-SR04 ultrasonic sensors and HX711 load cell modules, demonstrating the feasibility of IoT-based solutions for addressing critical gaps in pediatric nutritional monitoring. The automated nutritional status assessment functionality, incorporating WHO growth standards and zscore calculation algorithms, eliminated the need for manual computational processes while ensuring immediate classification accuracy. The comprehensive data management ecosystem, featuring real-time cloud synchronization through Google Sheets integration and automated stakeholder notification via WhatsApp messaging, addressed practical deployment challenges often overlooked in academic research. Despite these technical achievements, several limitations warrant consideration, including internet connectivity dependencies, environmental sensitivity factors, and demographic-specific optimization constraints. Future research directions should prioritize addressing these limitations through enhanced environmental robustness, improved offline functionality, and expanded demographic applicability across broader pediatric age ranges. Investigation of machine learning algorithms for predictive analytics and

longitudinal growth pattern analysis could further enhance clinical utility. Additionally, comprehensive economic feasibility studies and large-scale deployment validation would provide essential insights for scaling implementation across diverse healthcare settings, particularly in resource-constrained environments where improved nutritional monitoring tools are most urgently needed. The demonstrated measurement precision, automated assessment capabilities, and integrated communication features position this IoT-based anthropometric tool as a significant advancement in pediatric healthcare technology, with substantial potential for contributing to global stunting prevention efforts and improved child health outcomes through enhanced early detection and intervention strategies.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Angela Erti Suci Rosari contributed to conceptualization, methodology design, data collection, manuscript preparation, system architecture development, and experimental validation procedures. Jusuf Julianto was responsible for hardware design and implementation, sensor integration, system calibration, electronic circuit development, and technical validation processes. Alfrinscha Dinda Larasati handled software development, mobile application programming, IoT integration, ESP32 programming, and cloud connectivity implementation. Lintang Ayu Pramesti conducted data analysis, statistical evaluation, results interpretation, accuracy assessment, and performance metrics calculation. Triwiyanto provided project supervision, research coordination, manuscript review, technical guidance throughout the research process, and served as corresponding author. Sari Luthfiyah contributed to literature review, research background analysis, manuscript editing, theoretical framework development, and reference compilation. Vugar Abudlayev served as IoT architecture consultant, facilitated international collaboration, provided technical advisory services, and contributed expertise in wireless communication protocols and system optimization. All authors participated in the manuscript revision process and approved the final version for publication.

DECLARATIONS

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Ethical approval is not available.

CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION PARTICIPANTS.

Consent for publication was given by all participants

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare no competing interests.

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