

From Sustainability Metrics to Decision Intelligence: A Framework to Integrate Green IT into Enterprise Infrastructure Planning

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Abstract: There is a constant pressure on IT businesses to be sustainable. There are already many technical solutions for energy efficient computing, but businesses make decisions without using them. Sustainability indicators are seen as performance outcomes. This paper proposes a decision-oriented framework in which indicators to be seen as explicit decision variable during infrastructure and investment planning. The framework integrates sustainability into business decision-making and determines cost exposure and performance reliability. This research is based on informatics and management decision theory. The framework uses fuzzy logic-based decision model. The model can be used in uncertainty and at times when there is not sufficient information available in IT management. Simulation based decision models can assess stability and comparative performance in different infrastructure scenarios. These can help businesses turn sustainability issues into strategic opportunities for responsible IT infrastructure design. The paper presents transitioning of sustainability from a reporting metric to a decision variable.

Keywords: Green IT, Decision Support Systems, Sustainable Infrastructure, Enterprise Decision Making, Fuzzy Logic, IT Investment Planning, Decision Intelligence

1 Introduction

The growth of the digital services has increased the energy consumption of modern IT world. Most of the world's electricity usage comes from the big data centers and enterprise computing systems. These has raised concerns about environmental sustainability and long-term economic operational viability [1], [2]. In the recent times, companies have made a strategic priority to incorporate sustainability in the planning phase which was just a technical goal.

These concerns are being addressed by Green IT. It is a multidisciplinary approach which uses energy-efficient hardware, resource allocation optimisation, intelligent workload distribution and optimal technical solutions [3], [4], [5]. Energy-aware

scheduling algorithms and virtualization techniques are used [6], [7], [8]. These techniques show that significant reductions in energy usage and carbon emissions are technically possible while maintaining operating performance.

However, in practice, it turns out that companies are not utilizing Green IT solutions [9],[10]. They simply desire to concentrate on short term cost cuts and operational sustainability instead of focusing on more long-term sustainability objectives [11]. This gap can be feasible since sustainability metrics are considered after the optimization of infrastructure is done [2], [12]. And in most of the companies, the stakeholders perceive sustainability as an addition to the infrastructure planning, but not a part of it.

In order to invest in infrastructure: uncertainty and trade-offs between multiple factors are to be considered. Example: costs, system reliability, expected performance or regulatory compliances [13]. Only under stable operating conditions, conventional evaluation methods like cost-benefit ROI analysis are used. They also need exact numerical inputs. But in reality, IT systems have varying workloads, dynamic energy pricing and even the sustainability regulations are changing [14], [15]. These things can add element to surprise and they can't be precisely pictured using deterministic decision models.

To fill these gaps, this paper proposes a decision-oriented computational framework. The primary contribution of the research is to redefine sustainability as a core decision variable explicitly in IT infrastructure design. It is not viewed just as a performance indicator of the business. It directly determines choices about investments in design. This will change the nature of the decision problem. Sustainability is integrated as a strategic metric instead of a reporting metric. Rather than treating sustainability as a secondary concern, the approach positions sustainability towards decision intelligence along with traditional business criterions such as cost, performance and risk. The framework bridges the gap between technical optimization and organizational decision-making. It also integrates informatics-based modelling methods with management-oriented decision analysis.

The research questions that guided this paper are as follows:

Research Question 1: Is it possible to use sustainability as a formal decision variable while planning infrastructure?

Research Question 2: When sustainability is added into the business, how it can govern the infrastructure investment decisions especially in times of uncertainty and conflicting business objectives?

The main contributions of this paper are:

- Proposing a decision-oriented framework for integrating sustainability into IT infrastructure planning
- A fuzzy logic-based decision model for handling uncertainty
- A simulation-based evaluation for different infrastructure configuration scenarios
- Insights into trade-offs between cost, sustainability, performance, risk and robustness

2 Background and Related Work

2.1 Green IT and Sustainable Infrastructure

Over the past ten years, the research in Green IT has risen sharply. There is rapid growth in large scale computing systems that impacts the environment. Initial research mainly focussed on enhancing hardware efficiency and power-saving capabilities through technological refinement [3]. More recent studies have widened this focus towards system-level optimization, smart resource management and sustainability-aware computing architectures [16], [17].

Green IT data centres are one of the most widely researched topics for energy efficiency. There are several power-saving techniques proposed to improve resource efficiency like dynamic voltage scaling and virtualization-based resource management [6], [2]. These approaches allow data centers to function more effectively. They also reduce computing capacity due to dynamic demand patterns.

Additional central research avenue is carbon-aware computing. It aligns computation workloads with the availability of low-carbon energy sources [15]. Organizations run computational jobs when renewable energy is available. It helps them to decrease the carbon footprint of their operations without compromising performance.

The above technical solutions are significant but their adoption in an enterprise remains negligent. Many organizations do not have access to data analytical tools. They can't assess sustainability initiatives in the context of broader business goals [11]. Sustainability improvements are thus typically done at small scale or as pilot-type initiatives.

2.2 Decision-Making in IT Infrastructure Planning

Infrastructure planning is a decision-making process that considers conflicting performance criteria under uncertainty. Classic decision models use performance metrics like CAPEX and SLA compliance [13]. These models are based on deterministic assumptions about how the system operates and how resources can be applied. However, the dynamic IT infrastructure is unpredictable. In such environments, there is no central entity that takes a decision. The decision is taken by multiple stakeholders like service providers or governance structures. This distribution has coordination issues. It also reduces the practical usefulness of these optimisation models. They have two assumptions: first there is integrated control over a unified whole system and second that there is complete visibility of its operation. System performance and operational cost are influenced by factors such as workload energy variability or regulatory changes [14]. In such environments deterministic decision models are not a good choice. Their solutions are hard to interpret or implement in practice.

More recently researchers have turned to computational decision-support systems that can account for uncertainty and allow for incomplete information. Infrastructure planning and resource management [8], [18] have utilized techniques such as multi-criteria decision analysis, simulation modelling, artificial intelligence and neural networks. Fuzzy logic is one of these promising methods. It can mathematically portray imprecise inputs with conflicting targets consistently.

2.3 Limitations of Existing Approaches

There are few limitations in this field. Firstly, most of the IT research done in sustainable computing is concentrated on optimizing individual system components. Instead, evaluation of infrastructure decisions is performed at the organizational level [12]. Second, rather than being incorporated into decision-making procedures, sustainability measurements are frequently presented as operational results [2]. Third, current decision models sometimes include assumptions about total system visibility and centralized control, which are not present in distributed organizational systems[14].

These drawbacks emphasize the necessity of an all-encompassing framework for decision-support that can incorporate sustainability factors into company infrastructure design. A crucial finding from this analysis is that it sees investment into sustainability performance as a liability. To design a framework, various performance criteria and uncertainty need to be considered.

3 Problem Formulation

The decision-oriented assessment frameworks are absent in businesses in recent times. Even though highly developed technological methods for enhancing energy efficiency exist, the absence of combined analytical tools narrows down their effectiveness in the decision-making of businesses. Metrics such as energy use, carbon footprint or cooling energy are the common tools in traditional infrastructure design to evaluate sustainability after system deployment [2]. Although they don't immediately affect the initial decision-making process, these indicators offer useful information on system performance. Due to this, sustainability is often neglected in decisions regarding budget allocation and strategic planning. To fill this gap, the paper suggests a framework where sustainability is established as a decision variable and not an outcome. The problem is reformulated to include a framework that can integrate sustainability results in infrastructure investment decisions. Sustainability is used as an input parameter that can directly compete against other infrastructure requirements such as cost, energy, performance and risk. The decision problem can be defined as the best configuration balancing cost, energy, performance, risk and sustainability in case of uncertainty. When sustainability is included in decision, problem now shifts from optimization to multi-criteria decision intelligence.

This problem contains several characteristics:

1. Multiple conflicting objectives
2. Uncertain and imprecise input data
3. Dynamic operating conditions
4. Long-term planning horizons

The classic tools of optimization do not apply well to this kind of decision problem since they necessarily demand precise numerical input data and have well-defined objective functions. However, decision models based on fuzzy logic can tolerate uncertainty and be able to resort to qualitative reasoning. This qualifies them better to be used in the infrastructure planning of complex enterprise scenarios [18].

4 Methodology

The research contribution has four major elements:

1. Decision-oriented Sustainability Framework[13],[2]
2. Fuzzy Decision Engine

3. Infrastructure-scenario based Simulation
4. Evaluation and Benchmarking Module[18]

4.1 Decision-oriented Sustainability Framework

The decision support framework is a complex decision architecture between organizational inputs, calculating decision mechanisms and infrastructural implications. There are some important variables that influence decisions of infrastructure development. These variables can be divided into four categories:

- Economic factors (operating costs and capital costs)
- Performance variables such as response time and system dependability
- Risk factors e.g. risk of service interruption, compliance with regulations
- Sustainability variables like carbon emissions and energy use

Each variable is represented by a numerical range that is created based on industry standards and empirical studies [2], [13]. Environmental performance indicators are converted into decision metrics using the sustainability integration module. An example is that carbon emission can be linked to the potential regulatory compliance risk, but the energy consumption can be described as the exposure to cost of operation. With this change, the sustainability metrics can be determined along with the traditional business metrics while making just one decision.

The Input Layer has organizational and operational factors. This input layer is processed through a fuzzy inference engine called Decision Engine which is analytical and computational layer. The Output Layer then gives strategic decision outcomes, sustainability performance forecast, risk exposure assessment and long-term strategic planning recommendations

Figure 1 shows how sustainability can be incorporated into the central decision architecture as opposed to having it as a secondary measurement criteria. It also points out that uncertainty management and organizational governance also influence the infrastructure planning results.

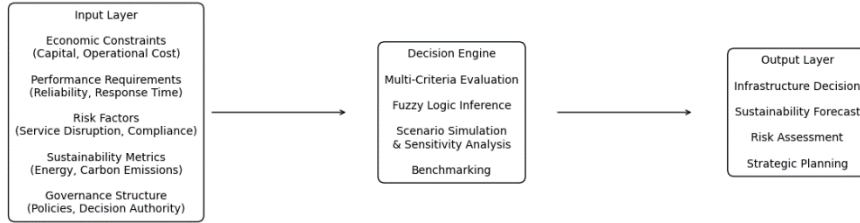


Figure 1.
Decision Framework for Sustainability-Integrated Infrastructure Planning
Source: compiled by author

4.2 Fuzzy Decision Engine

The main component of this framework is a fuzzy logic decision engine. It is able to evaluate other infrastructure arrangements in irregular cases. The decision engine consists of three main parts:

- Variable ranges that are represented by membership functions.
- Rules for inference that specify trade-offs between decision criteria
- The defuzzification that yields the final judgments scores.

Modelling of uncertainty is done using linguistic variables like low, medium, high. Fuzzy makes it possible to express preferences with language terms such as high cost or moderate risk instead of numerical terms [18].

4.2.1 Membership Functions

Membership functions like triangular or trapezoidal are used to map these linguistic variables (Low, Medium, High) into a mathematical space.

Triangular function can be described as follows:

$$\mu(x) = \begin{cases} 0, & x \leq a \\ \frac{x-a}{b-a}, & a < x \leq b \\ \frac{c-x}{c-b}, & b < x < c \\ 0, & x \geq c \end{cases} \quad [1]$$

Trapezoidal function can be depicted as follows:

$$\mu(x) = \begin{cases} 0, & x \leq a \\ \frac{x-a}{b-a}, & a < x \leq b \\ 1, & b < x \leq c \\ \frac{d-x}{d-c}, & c < x < d \\ 0, & x \geq d \end{cases} \quad [2]$$

4.2.2 Fuzzy Rules

The fuzzy system consists of rule structure which has inference rules like:

IF Cost is *Medium* **AND** sustainability is *High* **THEN** Decision is *Optimal*
IF Risk is *High* **AND** Performance is *Low* **THEN** Decision is *Poor*
 These rules show direct relation between economic and environmental objectives.

4.2.3 Defuzzification

The centroid method as shown in the Equation 3 is used to convert fuzzy outputs into a numerical score. This score is used to compare different infrastructure scenario configurations. Score is normalized to be in the range of 0-100.

$$Score = \frac{\int x \cdot \mu(x) dx}{\int \mu(x) dx} \quad [3]$$

4.3 Infrastructure-scenario based Simulation

Simulation experiment has the ability to replicate the precise real world infrastructural conditions. The simulation design has three stages:

4.3.1 Simulation Model Definition

The simulation model framework as depicted in Figure 2, defines multiple infrastructure scenarios after considering all the typical IT computing environments. Workload intensity, price of energy, risk and sustainability requirement vary in each scenario. These scenarios are tested against parameter ranges. The following input parameter ranges are obtained from literature.

- Energy consumption: 200–800 kWh [2]
- Carbon intensity: 0.4–0.9 kg CO₂ [15]
- Service Level Agreement (SLA): 92–99.9% [8]

These parameters reflect real infrastructure conditions of enterprise. These are used to simulate variability in system performance and sustainability impact. These scenarios are evaluated using fuzzy membership functions and fuzzy rule base. Simulation is then executed and results are obtained. Evaluation of results are done using defuzzification and benchmarking.

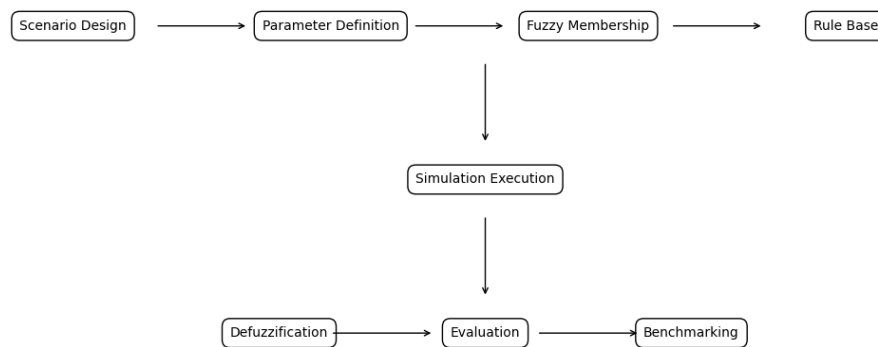


Figure 2

Simulation workflow from scenario definition to evaluation using fuzzy decision modelling

Source: compiled by author

4.3.2 Simulation Model Design and Implementation

The paper proposes different infrastructure scenarios that are tested against parameter inputs. Instead of relying on arbitrary datasets, scenarios are constructed to represent distinct decision environments, ensuring coverage of realistic enterprise contexts. The scenarios are not selected arbitrarily, they are constructed to represent distinct decision regimes commonly observed in enterprise IT infrastructure planning. Specifically, four representative scenarios are defined:

- Cost-focused: prioritizes minimal operational expenditure
- Balanced: moderate trade-off across all criteria
- Sustainability-driven: prioritizes low carbon intensity and energy efficiency
- Uncertainty-heavy: captures variability in workload, energy pricing, and SLA

The objective is representativeness of the decision space rather than quantity, ensuring that each scenario reflects a qualitatively different decision environment derived from literature on energy consumption, carbon intensity, and system performance [2], [15], [8]. The selected scenarios are shown in Table 1.

Infrastructure Scenario	Cost	Sustainability	Risk	Description
S1	Low	Low	Medium	Cost-focused system
S2	Medium	Medium	Low	Balanced configuration
S3	Medium	High	Low	Sustainability-driven
S4	Medium	Medium	High	High uncertainty

Table
Simulation Model Design

This design ensures that the evaluation captures trade-offs across multiple decision dimensions. The focus is on representativeness rather than quantity, addressing the limitations of purely data-driven approaches.

Inputs were converted to linguistic variables and evaluated using fuzzy rules. Few examples of fuzzy rules are:

IF Cost is *Medium* AND sustainability is *High* **THEN** Decision is *Optimal*

IF Cost is *Low* AND Sustainability is *Low* AND Risk is *Medium* **THEN** Decision is *Suboptimal*

IF Cost is *High* AND Sustainability is *High* AND Risk is *Low* **THEN** Decision is *Good*

IF Risk is *High* AND Performance is *Low* **THEN** Decision is *Poor*

IF Performance is *High* AND Sustainability is *Medium* AND Cost is *Medium* **THEN** Decision is *Acceptable*

Output is then converted into a normalised numerical score(decision score) using centroid defuzzification. This score is very important. It allows direct comparison across different infrastructure configurations. Each scenario is evaluated

independently, enabling comparative analysis across different infrastructure conditions.

The decision score obtained for each of the scenarios are described in the Table 2.

Infrastructure Scenario	Cost	Sustainability	Risk	Decision Score
S1	Low	Low	Medium	45
S2	Medium	Medium	Low	75
S3	Medium	High	Low	85
S4	Medium	Medium	High	68

Table 2.
Simulation Model Decision Score

The resulting scores (S1=45,S2=75,S3=85,S4=68) show comparative decision quality across different infrastructure conditions after normalization to a 0-100 scale. S3 scores highest decision score whereas S1 scores lowest decision score.

4.4 Evaluation and Benchmarking Module

The final section of the framework employs experiments in simulations to reevaluate the outcome of decisions. Comparing infrastructure setups in a variety of performance conditions, this module assists organizations in selecting the most appropriate investment strategies and benchmarking the performance of the systems.

We can evaluate the performance of the decision-support framework by four analytical techniques: Comparative benchmarking, Cost versus Sustainability trade-off, Robustness analysis, Sensitivity analysis

Comparative benchmarking can compare the proposed framework with traditional cost-based decision models. The graph is obtained by analysing identical infrastructure scenarios using both deterministic and fuzzy models. The obtained fuzzy outputs are normalized to a 0-100 scale across cost, sustainability, robustness, stability, and adaptability metrics [8],[18].

In **Cost versus Sustainability trade-off** graph, the cost values from scenario inputs are mapped to corresponding sustainability or decision scores obtained from the fuzzy model. These scores are also normalized to a 0-100 scale[2],[15].

Robustness analysis determines the stability of the model under varying operating conditions. The graph is obtained by introducing controlled input variations (10-30%) across different infrastructure scenario configurations and measuring output stability of both deterministic and fuzzy models[18].

Sensitivity analysis looks at how decision results are impacted by changes in input parameters.

The graph is obtained by varying one input parameter at a time (like cost, carbon or SLA) and recording the corresponding changes in decision scores to assess model responsiveness[18].

Sensitivity analysis can be represented by the Equation 4:

$$\Delta D = \frac{\partial D}{\partial x_i} \Delta x_i \quad [4]$$

Here, D represents Decision Outcome while x represents input variable. It shows how changes in input variable can directly affect the decision outcome. The temporal aspect of infrastructure planning receives special emphasis. In businesses, analytical models rely on short-term simulation horizons whereas IT assets function over long life cycles. This mismatch can obscure long-term operational risks and sustainability trade-offs.

5 Results and Analysis

5.1 Model Comparison

Figure 3 shows comparison of deterministic and fuzzy decision models in terms of cost, sustainability, robustness and adaptability [18]. Deterministic models show better performance in cost because it focuses on optimising just one decision criterion. Fuzzy models achieve better sustainability, robustness, and adaptability. They maintain acceptable cost levels as well.

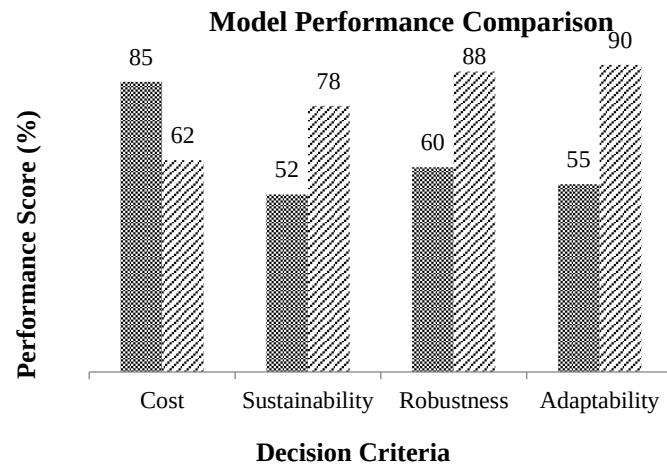


Figure 3.

Comparative performance of decision models across cost, sustainability, robustness and adaptability

Source: compiled by author

5.2 Cost versus Sustainability Trade-off

Figure 4 illustrates a slight increase in cost have significant changes in sustainability. This indicates that large sustainability benefits can be achieved efficiently without excessively increasing costs [2], [15].

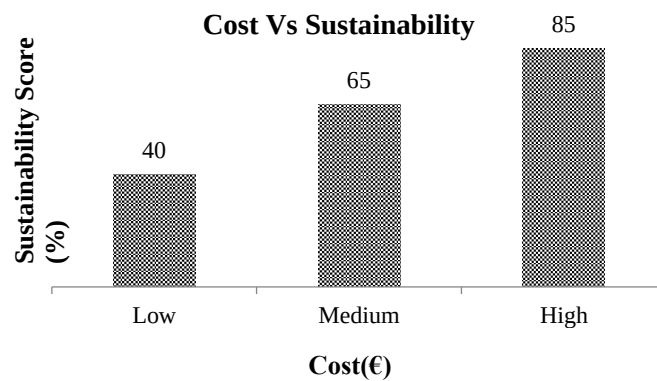


Figure 4.

Trade-off between cost and sustainability showing non-linear improvement in sustainability with moderate cost increase

Source: compiled by author

5.3 Robustness Analysis

Figure 5 shows that there is increase in input variation, the graph shows a sharp decline in case of deterministic models output stability. However fuzzy model has relatively stable outputs. This shows robustness in uncertain environments.

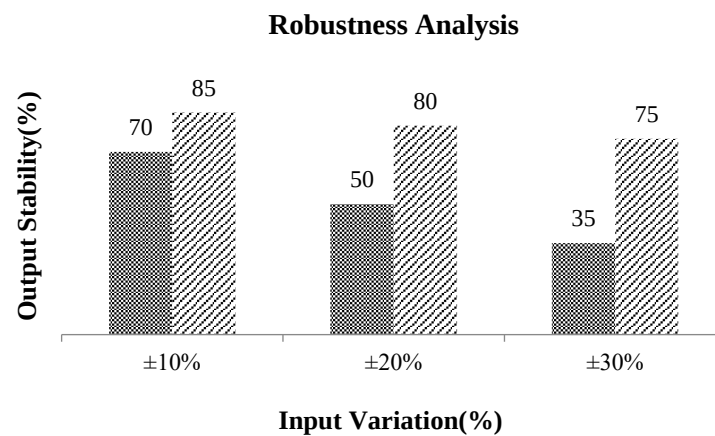


Figure 5.

Model robustness under input variation comparing deterministic and fuzzy approaches.

Source: compiled by author

5.4 Sensitivity Analysis

Figure 6 shows how change in input variables can affect decision outcomes. Sensitivity analysis reveals that deterministic models are highly sensitive to input changes, while fuzzy models maintain controlled changes in output. The fuzzy model ensures stable decision-making[18].

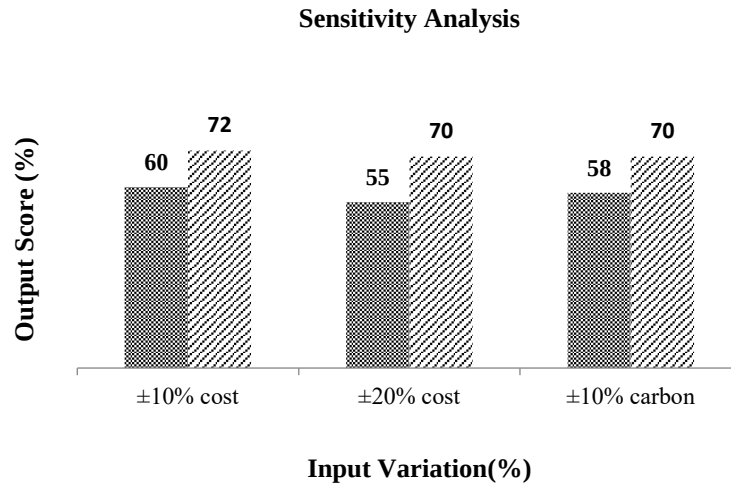


Figure 6.
Sensitivity of decision scores under input variation.
Source: compiled by author

Conclusions

The paper presents a decision-oriented computational framework for incorporating sustainability into business's IT infrastructure planning. The framework achieves 30-40% sustainability improvement without increasing cost significantly [2],[15] and 20-30% robustness under uncertainty[18]. The suggested method fills a significant gap in current Green IT research. Decisions can be taken into uncertain situations with the help of fuzzy decision model and simulations. The system is robust and stable not just because of fuzzy logic, but also by including sustainability as a decision variable. Sustainability alters the decision space [11]. The paper presents sustainability as an active component of decision intelligence rather than a passive evaluation metric.

The framework has many benefits if compared with the traditional infrastructure planning methods. Firstly, firms can assess environmental performance in addition to operational and financial factors by including sustainability into the decision-making process. Second, decision-makers can articulate preferences in qualitative terms and fuzzy logic enhances the interpretability of decision outcomes [18]. The configuration of infrastructure proposed in this framework can achieve more balanced optimization across different metrics. That means that the simulation experiments are more optimal than cost-based evaluation methods. It can also be anticipated that the framework enhances sustainability performance over the long run without raising operating costs[13],[8].

The suggested method is a useful tool for turning sustainability issues into strategic opportunities from a management standpoint. The framework also encourages a change in perspective. Here the environmental limitations are seen as catalysts for innovation risk reduction and long-term organizational resilience rather than operational costs. Future research can focus on implementing the framework with real data on infrastructure [8]. More extensive simulation tests can be also done in the future to check model performance. The introduction of the methods of machine learning can be investigated further. In addition, automated optimization of performance and adaptive decisions can be made.

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