

Evaluation of solar panels for improved competency: a comparative study and appraisalment with TOPSIS

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Abstract: Solar energy holds enormous potential, where solar panels are used to transform solar radiation into electricity for the benefit of the society. But, huge variants of solar panels are available in the market and thus it is very difficult, confusing and challenging to determine, which panels possess immense potential, appropriate utility and can competently satisfy the desirability of the customers with efficient energy generation and cost reduction. The present paper aims to present an inventive approach, which can be used as decision making tool for solving the problem of selecting solar panels. Multiple criteria's are identified for evaluation. Data are collected under scrutinized multiple criteria's named as open circuit voltage, short circuit current, peak power, cost, module efficiency, weight and area in relation to the solar panels. In present study, TOPSIS methodology is adapted to determine the most influential alternative for solar panel. Final rankings of the alternatives are presented.

Keywords: Alternatives, TOPSIS, appraisalment, Solar Energy, Assessment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Solar energy generation are nowadays drawing attention and is started implementing by the societal peoples due to its significant benefits under the origins of less maintenance, low environmental effect, and a longer service life (Ahmad and Razman (2014; Gnanasekaran and Venkatachalama, 2019). But, the best advantage from the solar energy can be attained by evading inherent environmental factors, parameters and obstacles. The solar energy sources are nowadays gaining attention due to the requirement of finding appropriate alternative resources for energy, which is environmentally caring and renewable (Asakereh et al. (2014; Bączkiewicz et al., 2021). The sinking of greenhouse gases is an imperative requirement in today's scenario, which can be achieved by using solar energies. Conventionally, the society is keenly dependent on non-renewable energy resource like fossil fuels, where; the usage of fossil fuels usage is resulting in omission of harmful gas, which renders damaging effect on society (Baniasad et al.; 2015; Lak Kamari et al.; 2020). Thus, renewable energy is found as an imperative alternative for society's long-term growth. The appropriate selection of solar technology and location of implementation has a significant impact on the cost and generation of power. Solar energy is a critical component of the energy development strategy. Solar energy source is gaining attention under the marks of cost-effective and continuous source of energy (Kahraman et al., 2009; Cavallaro, 2009). The solar energy outputs estimates are required to be developed appreciably in the near future for satisfying the demands of the economy. The best utility from solar energy can be gained by evaluating many criteria's. Solar technology is the need of today scenario and important relies on the evaluation of site location, numerous criteria's and limitations (Gnanasekaran and Venkatachalama, 2019).

Choosing suitable locations for the implementation of solar energy panels is noteworthy to attain a significant influence on the amount and quality of electric energy generated. The same will profit implementers economically and socially. The selection of a favourable geographic location for the implementation of solar panels is paramount from the aspects of economic, technological, social, geographical, and environmental. The solar energies have many compensations and their importance is rising drastically due to mounting concerns for environmental issues and less utility of fossil fuels in the future (Cavallaro, 2010; Luthra et al., 2016). Solar energy sources are well recognized inexhaustible source of energy and the same are utilizing by the concerns dramatically for electricity generation and transportations (Ghasempour et al., 2019; Ahammed and Abdullahlil, 2013). The need to develop a more systematic approach to solar plant site selection, which can consider major characteristics i.e. economic, technological, social, geographical, and environmental is understood by the authors. The need of a constructive decision making provisions that would result in noteworthy cost savings and amplified electricity generation is needed in today's scenario (Luthra et al., 2016). Thus, the present study is conducted to report below mentioned two Research questions (RQ):

RQ1- What are the possible alternatives available in the market place for implementing solar panels?

RQ2- How one can evaluate number of available alternatives available in the market place in corresponding to the criteria?

The present study has done decision making, which deals with the process to achieve the target or goal in the context of making right decisions (Sahu et al., 2020b; He et al. 2021). In today's era, it is required that productive resources should be managed with limited assets in a given time to maximum benefit (Sahu et al., 2018a; Sahu et al., 2019b). Today studies are needed to be conducted for optimizing natural resources (Guo et al. 2022; Sahu et al., 2020c).

II. LITERATURE SURVEY:

Miguel Sánchez-Lozano et al. (2013) declare that the solar energy is arousing considerable interest amongst competitors because of its free availability and economic aspects. Mohsen and Bilal (1997) found that the solar plants are supremely suitable for locations having low humidity, dust and other agents, which may prevent absorption of solar irradiation. They found the location of solar plant and sunlight hours as a very imperative reason for gaining efficiency by solar energy. Nixon and Davies (2010) found installation of solar power plants, solar panels, awareness etc., as few significant aspects, which are needed for its successfully implementation and retention. Nixon et al. (2013) stated that the households consume approximately one third of all energy produced, thus studies on the evaluation of solar energy production technologies in households are very important. Pohekar and Ramachandran (2004) investigated the need of critical studies to be conducted, which can provide an overview and in-depth analysis of solar utility and their selection components. They found that the utility of solar energy has started tending to decline the greenhouse gas emissions from households in many regions of the world. Sánchez-Lozano et al. (2015) stressed on the identification of many contradictory aspects, when are needed to be considered by the experts and required to conclude, which energy production system can be the most appropriate for a household. Shiue and Lin (2012) highlighted that the cost effectiveness does not always mean convenience or the most environmentally friendly technology. They, additionally highlighted that the cheap and reliable power supply does not always directly compare with installation costs and payback. Singh et al. (2016) declared that the conflicting criteria should be evaluated for the perspective of system efficiency, where Multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) methods provide a possibility to evaluate these and other contradictory factors. MCDM is found effective to determine the optimum solution of problems, where many (contradictory) criteria's are to be attained concurrently. In MCDM contradictory objectives under the domain of conflicting criteria's are evaluated. MCDM techniques are being functional for problems with contrary and diverse objectives.

Vafaeipour et al. (2014) examined that the electricity demand is one of the main imperative requirements of every economy and the same is growing constantly. Hence the developments of solar or other renewable energy sources are required for coping industrial and economic activities as well as to fulfil the aspirations of the population growth. Toghi et al. (2015) stated that today, it is required to replace conventional electricity generation methods with renewable energies. Selection of renewable alternatives is a multi criteria decision making problem due to the existence of a range of inconsistent criteria's. Uyan (2013) declare that solar energy sources grants an opportunity to solve the climate change and economic decarbonization issues that are so pertinent today. Watson and Malcolm (2015) highlighted the need to analyze and evaluate solar energy sources, which are receiving rising interest in the politics of diverse countries and the scientific literatures. Tarwidi et al. (2016) highlighted the need of appropriate selection of solar power sources and their mediums are very important for evident power generation effectively under low cost and other constraints. It is found evident that MCDM framework or model can assist in better envisaging the plan for the acquisition of system performance and allow them to expand more speedily by rationalizing the right thing (Wang et al. 2019; Sahu et al., 2020a). In MCDM, the decision-making procedure uses the decision criterions, which are rated by each judgment maker or decision group (Kang et al., 2022; Sahu et al., 2019a). Today, Quality measures are today needed to be for benchmarked for evaluating substitute for industrial applications (Sahu et al., 2017; Bag et al., 2021a).

III. RESEARCH GAPS:

After conducting the literature survey in the field of solar energy and solar panels implementation field, it is observed that many energy related materials are developing by the researchers for reinforcing solar energy capacities, but less attention is paid in relation to its implementation under various criteria's. After understanding vast literatures, the following Research Gaps (RG) has been identified:

RG1- Little attention is paid in the literatures towards disclosing number of criteria's for evaluating solar panels.

RG2- A very less degree of research of research is done towards disclosing the available number of alternatives for implementing solar panels.

RG3- Less research is done to report the methodological procedure, which will help in evaluating number of solar panel alternatives in relation to the criteria's.

Today, there is an evident requirement of right resources in society as the same not only saves money, escalates production, improves profit margins (Bag et al., 2021b; Sahu et al., 2022). Right selection of resources will also gratifies the consumption of scarce natural resources (He et al. 2021; Sahu et al., 2018b).

IV. TOPSIS TECHNIQUE:

TOPSIS abbreviated for Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution technique (Bianchini, 2018; Sahu et al., 2016). It is found that a multi objective optimization tools lays down the synergy between multiple conflicting criteria's and helps in efficiently transforming multiple responses into the single objective optimization problem (Sudhagar et al., 2017; Saha and Mondal, 2017). Consequently; TOPSIS technique is adapted in present paper for transform the multiple responses into single response for analysis (Khan and Maity, 2017; Chitnis and Vaidya, 2018). The TOPSIS technique was proposed by Hwang and Yoon (1981) and defines Positive Ideal Solution (PIS) and Negative Ideal Solution (NIS) to generate decision results. The PIS minimizes the cost criteria and maximizes the benefit criteria; whereas, the NIS maximizes the cost criteria and minimizes the benefit criteria in TOPSIS. The below mentioned procedures is adopted for implicating the TOPSIS methodology in this study (Sahu et al., 2016; Chitnis and Vaidya, 2018)

V. MODELLING:

Following a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, it is found that the cost effectiveness does not always mean convenience or the most environmentally friendly technology. Additionally, cheap and reliable power supply does not always directly compare with installation costs and payback. Thus, the motivation has been received by the candidate and candidate started searching for the appropriate criteria's, which will assists in selection of solar panels. Accordingly, six criteria's and thirty alternatives are selected for building the decision making model. Literature review is performed in the principal stage to understand critical criteria that need to be importantly incorporated for the selection of solar panels. The model for the present paper is built by the candidate, which are presented in Tables 1-5, where, the related to the alternative solar panels pertaining to Open Circuit Voltage (Volts) and short circuit current (ampere) can be identified in Tables 1 & 2.

TABLE 1: DATA ASSOCIATED WITH AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVES OBTAINED FROM WEBSITES UNDER CRITERIA OPEN CIRCUIT VOLTAGE (V)

Alternative	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
Open Circuit Voltage (V)	42.80	40.93	40.20	40.60	41.20	43.30	41.67	40.56	40.60	40.50
Alternative	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17	A18	A19	A20
Open Circuit Voltage (V)	43.30	45.04	44.00	44.30	44.20	40.66	45.40	41.00	48.00	49.86
Alternative	A21	A22	A23	A24	A25	A26	A27	A28	A29	A30
Open Circuit Voltage (V)	48.30	47.62	49.60	46.80	51.20	48.91	48.91	49.14	49.00	49.33

TABLE 2: DATA ASSOCIATED WITH AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVES OBTAINED FROM WEBSITES UNDER CRITERIA SHORT CIRCUIT CURRENT (A)

Alternative	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
Short Circuit Current (A)	10.82	9.82	9.98	10.40	10.35	10.50	10.08	9.94	10.00	10.20
Alternative	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17	A18	A19	A20
Short Circuit Current (A)	9.51	10.50	10.37	10.26	10.58	10.52	10.20	10.92	10.83	10.39
Alternative	A21	A22	A23	A24	A25	A26	A27	A28	A29	A30
Short Circuit Current (A)	9.60	9.66	10.66	9.59	10.29	10.22	10.79	11.05	10.24	10.83

VI. ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE:

The paper selected six criteria's units for modelling the selection model of solar panels. The paper utilized TOPSIS methodology to determine the most influential alternative for solar panel. TOPSIS methodology is used for evaluation and to determine the most appropriate alternative amongst available in the market. In the primary stage, literature review is conducted to understand critical criteria's that need to be importantly incorporated for the selection of solar panels. After, understanding the literature, six criteria's are selected to define possible alternatives. Afterwards, the available variants of solar panels are identified from the sources of literatures, internet and web support. Here, thirty variants of solar panels are identified, presented, and data are collected in terms of selected criteria's for the identified solar variants named as alternatives. Normalized decision making matrix, PIS (Table 3), NIS (Table 4) and performance score (Table 5) of the alternatives are generated to report significant alternative.

TABLE 3: DISTANCE FROM PIS UNDER TOPSIS TECHNIQUE FOR EACH OF THE ALTERNATIVES

Alternative	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
PIS	0.2923	0.0455	0.0709	0.0344	0.1587	0.2777	0.0475	0.0996	0.0600	0.0850
Alternative	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17	A18	A19	A20
PIS	0.0720	0.0843	0.1568	0.0983	0.1214	0.0677	0.0664	0.0683	0.1790	0.0491
Alternative	A21	A22	A23	A24	A25	A26	A27	A28	A29	A30
PIS	0.1524	0.0786	0.0479	0.0623	0.0615	0.0816	0.0734	0.0713	0.1117	0.0578

TABLE 4: DISTANCE FROM NIS UNDER TOPSIS TECHNIQUE FOR EACH OF THE ALTERNATIVES

Alternative	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
NIS	0.0664	0.2712	0.2365	0.2770	0.1457	0.0585	0.2680	0.2066	0.2511	0.2217
Alternative	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17	A18	A19	A20
NIS	0.2397	0.2179	0.1462	0.2042	0.1826	0.2404	0.2398	0.2409	0.1279	0.2734
Alternative	A21	A22	A23	A24	A25	A26	A27	A28	A29	A30
NIS	0.1523	0.2383	0.2736	0.2927	0.2622	0.2288	0.2367	0.2421	0.1946	0.2633

TABLE 5: COMPUTED PERFORMANCE SCORE UNDER TOPSIS FOR ALTERNATIVE RANKING

Alternative	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
Performance score	0.1851	0.8564	0.7693	0.8895	0.4787	0.1739	0.8494	0.6748	0.8072	0.7228
Alternative	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17	A18	A19	A20
Performance score	0.7690	0.7211	0.4824	0.6750	0.6007	0.7803	0.7831	0.7792	0.4167	0.8479
Alternative	A21	A22	A23	A24	A25	A26	A27	A28	A29	A30
Performance score	0.4998	0.7520	0.8511	0.8244	0.8100	0.7372	0.7634	0.7725	0.6353	0.8201

VII. CONCLUSIONS:

It is presented that the households consume approximately one third of all energy produced, thus studies on the evaluation of solar energy production technologies in households are found important. The need of critical studies, which can provide an overview and in-depth analysis of solar utility and their selection components are found significant. Thus, in present paper solar panel criteria's are evaluated. The study is framed with the intension to increase the efficiency of solar energy to decline the greenhouse gas emissions from the society. The paper presented that the electricity demand is one of the main imperative requirements of every economy and the same is growing constantly. Hence, the developments of solar or other renewable energy sources are required for coping industrial and economic activities as well as to fulfil the aspirations of the population growth. Today, it is required to replace conventional electricity generation methods with renewable energies. Thus, the paper highlighted the need of appropriate selection of solar power sources and their mediums are very important for evident power generation effectively under low cost and other constraints. The results of the study can assist in understanding critical choice of solar panel for implementation

by the societal people. The paper admirably reported six criteria's named as Open Circuit Voltage (Volts), short circuit current (ampere), module efficiency (%), Peak Power per m² (W/m²), Cost per m² (Rs./m²) and Weight per m² (Kg/m²) that are found significant to be considered before purchasing a solar panel from the market from the insights of competency. The procedure for determining the optimal selection of solar panel is presented in present paper by the implication of MCDM technique. In present thesis, the procedural steps of TOPSIS an MCDM technique is presented to help the evaluated in selection an optimum choice.

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