IARJSET ISSN (O) 2393-8021, ISSN (P) 2394-1588

International Advanced Research Journal in Science, Engineering and Technology

Impact Factor 8.311 ∺ Peer-reviewed & Refereed journal ∺ Vol. 13, Issue 3, March 2026

DOI: 10.17148/IARJSET.2026.13341

Energy Consumption and Carbon Emissions in Large-Scale Artificial Intelligence Systems

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Abstract: Artificial intelligence has rapidly evolved into a critical technological driver across numerous domains including healthcare, finance, transportation, and large-scale data analytics. Recent developments in deep learning have significantly improved the capabilities of artificial intelligence systems , particularly through the adoption of large neural network architectures that require extensive computational resources for training and deployment While these advancements have enabled improved predictive performance and broader application potential they have also resulted in substantial increases in computational power requirements and associated with the energy consumption. The growing dependence on high performance computing infrastructures has raised concerns regarding the environmental sustainability of artificial intelligence technologies. Training modern deep learning models often involves the use of multiple graphics processing units (GPUs) operating for extended durations, which leads to the considerable electricity consumption and indirectly contributes to carbon emissions depending on the energy source used by computing facilities. This study analytically investigates the relationship between computational power requirements of artificial intelligence systems and their environmental impact. The analysis focuses on key computational parameters including model complexity, hardware utilization, and training duration to estimate the energy consumption associated with AI model training processes. These energy values are subsequently translated into carbon emission estimates using carbon intensity metrics to evaluate the environmental implications of AI computation. The findings reveal that increases in model scale significantly amplify both energy consumption and carbon emissions, highlighting the need for energy-efficient artificial intelligence frameworks. The study proposes the adoption of energy-aware AI development strategies and computational optimization approaches to promote sustainable artificial intelligence systems.

Keywords Artificial Intelligence, Green AI, Energy Consumption, Carbon Emissions, Sustainable Computing, Deep Learning Efficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence has become one of the most important development technologies in the digital age. Through techniques such as machine learning and deep learning, computers are now able to perform tasks that once depended completely on human intelligence. These tasks include image recognition, natural language processing, speech generation, and prediction of patterns from data. As a result, AI has influenced many industries by allowing automated decision making and helping in the analysis of large amounts of data.

The rapid growth of AI research has mainly been supported by improvements in computing systems and the availability of large datasets. Modern AI models often rely on deep neural network structures made up of several connected layers that learn patterns from data. In order to achieve better accuracy and performance, researchers continue to increase the size and complexity of these neural networks.

Training these large models requires heavy computational work such as matrix calculations, gradient calculations, and repeated adjustment of model parameters. These processes require strong computing power and are usually carried out using special hardware such as Graphics Processing Units (GPUs). GPUs are suitable for deep learning tasks because they can handle many calculations at the same time.

However the increasing use of large computing systems has created concerns about energy use and environmental impact. Data centers which supports the AI applications requires a large amount of electricity to operate computing equipment and cooling systems that keep the machines running properly. When this electricity is produced using fossil fuels, the energy used for training AI models indirectly adds to greenhouse gas emissions.

As AI systems continue to grow in size and the complexity, it becomes important to study the environmental effects of these computing requirements. To examine the energy usage and carbon emissions related to AI model training can

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provide useful understanding for developing more sustainable computing methods. Therefore, this study examines how the growth of computational requirements in AI systems affects energy use and carbon emissions, and also discusses possible ways to improve energy efficiency in AI development.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The environmental implications of artificial intelligence computation have attracted increasing attention in recent years as machine learning models have grown significantly in size and complexity. Early research in artificial intelligence primarily focused on improving algorithmic performance and accuracy without considering the computational cost associated with model training. However, as deep learning models became larger and more computationally demanding, researchers began examining the sustainability challenges associated with AI development.

Strubell et al. (2019) conducted one of the earliest studies highlighting the environmental impact of training large natural language processing models [5]. Their research demonstrated that training deep learning models could produce substantial carbon emissions depending on the computational resources and electricity sources involved in the training process.

Schwartz et al. (2020) introduced the concept of Green AI, which encourages the evaluation of artificial intelligence systems not only based on performance metrics but also in terms of computational efficiency and environmental cost [4]. Their work emphasized the importance of reporting energy consumption and computational requirements in AI research. Patterson et al. (2021) further explored the relationship between machine learning workloads and carbon emissions [3]. Their analysis examined strategies for reducing the environmental impact of AI systems through improved hardware efficiency, optimized data center operations, and the use of renewable energy sources.

More recent studies have focused on developing energy-efficient AI architectures and sustainable computing frameworks [1][2]. Researchers have proposed techniques such as model compression, hardware optimization, and algorithmic efficiency improvements to reduce the energy requirements of AI systems.

Despite these advancements, the environmental cost of artificial intelligence remains an important challenge as models continue to increase in computational scale. Analytical investigations that quantify the relationship between computational resources, energy consumption, and carbon emissions are therefore essential for understanding the sustainability implications of AI technologies.

III. COMPUTATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AI SYSTEMS

Artificial intelligence systems rely on complex computational processes to train machine learning models and optimize their predictive performance. These processes involve executing large numbers of mathematical operations across extensive datasets. The computational characteristics of AI systems are primarily influenced by three key factors they are model architecture complexity, training dataset size, and hardware infrastructure used for computation.

Deep learning models typically consists of multiple layers of the artificial neurons that transform input data through a sequence of mathematical operations. During these training the networks repeatedly adjust their internal parameters in order to minimize the prediction errors. This process requires performing forward propagation to generate predictions and backward propagation to compute gradients used for parameter updates.

As neural network architecture grows larger, the number of parameters within the model increases significantly. Large scale models may contain hundreds of millions or even billions of parameters, each of which must be updated during the training process. The computational workload therefore increases substantially with the model size.

To manage this workload efficiently the AI training environments often rely on the parallel computing systems which utilizes multiple GPUs simultaneously. GPUs are designed to perform thousands of arithmetic operations concurrently, making them highly effective for deep learning computations. However, operating multiple GPUs for extended training periods results in considerable power consumption.

The computational configuration of AI models can therefore be characterized based on the number of GPUs utilized and the duration of the training process as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1: Computational Configuration of AI Models

Model Scale	Approximate Parameters	GPUs Used	Training Time
Small Model	~5 Million	2	10 Hours
Medium Model	~50 Million	8	36 Hours
Large Model	~500 Million+	32	72 Hours

IV. ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Energy consumption associated with artificial intelligence computation is primarily determined by the power requirements of hardware accelerators used during model training. GPUs operate at high power levels when executing deep learning workloads due to the extensive parallel computations involved in neural network optimization.

The total energy consumption of an AI training process can be estimated by considering the power usage of each GPU, the number of GPUs utilized, and the duration of the training process.

Energy Consumption (kWh) = Power (kW) × Number of GPUs × Training Duration (hours)

Assuming an average GPU power consumption of 0.3 kW, the energy requirements for different AI model configurations can be estimated as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Estimated Energy Consumption of AI Model Training

Model Scale	GPU Power	GPUs Used	Training Time	Energy Consumption
Small Model	0.3 kW	2	10 hrs	6 kWh
Medium Model	0.3 kW	8	36 hrs	86.4 kWh
Large Model	0.3 kW	32	72 hrs	691.2 kWh

V. CARBON EMISSIONS FROM AI COMPUTATION

Energy consumption during AI training indirectly contributes to carbon emissions depending on the carbon intensity of electricity generation. Carbon intensity represents the amount of carbon dioxide emitted per unit of electricity produced.

Carbon emissions can be estimated using the following equation:

Carbon Emissions = Energy Consumption × Carbon Intensity
Assuming a global average carbon intensity value of 0.475 kg CO_2 per kWh, the estimated emissions associated with AI model training can be calculated as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Estimated Carbon Emissions

Model Scale	Energy Consumption	Carbon Emissions
Small Model	6 kWh	2.85 kg CO_2
Medium Model	86.4 kWh	41.04 kg CO_2
Large Model	691.2 kWh	328.32 kg CO_2

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

The rapid growth of artificial intelligence technologies has introduced significant environmental challenges associated with energy consumption and carbon emissions. As AI models become larger and more computationally intensive, the energy demand required to train these models continues to increase substantially.

Large-scale deep learning systems often require distributed computing environments consisting of multiple high-performance GPUs operating simultaneously. These infrastructures consume large amounts of electricity and require advanced cooling systems to maintain stable operating temperatures. The electricity required to support these systems often originates from energy sources that produce greenhouse gas emissions.

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The increasing computational demand of AI systems therefore raises important sustainability concerns. Without improvements in energy efficiency, the environmental footprint of artificial intelligence technologies may continue to expand as models grow in scale and complexity.

VII. RESULTS

The evaluation conducted in this study highlights the relationship between computational scale and environmental impact in artificial intelligence systems. Using the computational configurations presented in **Table 1**, the corresponding energy consumption values were estimated as shown in **Table 2**, and the resulting carbon emissions were derived in **Table 3**.

The results indicate that as the number of GPUs and training duration increase, both energy consumption and carbon emissions also increase significantly. Small-scale AI models require relatively limited computational resources, while large-scale models demand extensive GPU infrastructure and longer training periods.

For instance, the large-scale model configuration consumes approximately **691.2 kWh of energy** during training, which results in an estimated **328 kg of carbon emissions** under average global carbon intensity conditions. These findings demonstrate that computational scaling in artificial intelligence systems directly increases their environmental footprint. To address this issue, energy-efficient AI development strategies such as optimized neural network architectures, improved hardware utilization, and the use of renewable energy sources in data centers can be considered to reduce the environmental impact of AI training processes.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between computational power requirements, energy consumption, and carbon emissions associated with artificial intelligence model training. The analysis demonstrated that increasing model complexity significantly increases the computational resources required for training, which in turn leads to higher electricity consumption and greater environmental impact.

The findings highlight the importance of integrating sustainability considerations into artificial intelligence development. As AI technologies continue to evolve, researchers and developers must prioritize energy-efficient algorithms and environmentally responsible computing infrastructures.

Overall, this paper emphasizes that while artificial intelligence offers significant technological benefits, its long-term sustainability depends on the adoption of energy-aware computing strategies that minimize environmental impact while maintaining high levels of performance.

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