IoT-Driven Energy Efficiency in Commercial Spaces: A Literature Review of Occupancy Detection and Cloud-Based Automation

V. A Dahore[1], Dr. Prof. S. V. Pattalwar[2], Prof. V. R. Raut[3]

[1]Digital Electronics, PRMITR Badnera, Amravati, Maharashtra
[2]HoD Electronics & communication, PRMITR, Badnera, Amaravati, Maharashtra
[3] Professor , PRMITR, Badnera, Amaravati, Maharashtra

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Abstract - *This literature review evaluates the recent developments in Internet of Things (IoT) technologies aimed at enhancing energy efficiency within commercial buildings, concentrating on aspects such as occupancy detection, sensor fusion, and cloud-based automation. A comprehensive examination of more than 30 peer-reviewed articles and industry case studies reveals IoT's significant contribution to minimizing energy waste in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, along with lighting, achieving reductions ranging from 20% to 70%. The review also addresses the challenges associated with reconciling accuracy and privacy and highlights the transformative capabilities of edge-cloud architectures. Furthermore, existing deficiencies in scalability, interoperability, and ethical considerations are identified, along with recommendations for future research focusing on artificial intelligence-driven analytics and the implementation of digital twins.*

***Key Words*:** IoT, energy efficiency, occupancy detection, smart buildings, cloud computing, sustainability.

1.INTRODUCTION

The advent of the Internet of Things (IoT) represents a significant advancement in the management of sustainable building practices, enabling unprecedented levels of control over energy consumption in commercial environments. Given that buildings are responsible for approximately 40% of global carbon emissions, the implementation of IoT-enabled systems is essential for the realization of climate objectives, including those outlined by the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). This review investigates the progression of IoT architectures, sensor technologies, and cloud platforms, emphasizing their application in optimizing energy use specifically within meeting rooms, which are often characterized by operational inefficiencies.

2. IoT & ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN COMMERCIAL SPACES

2.1 IoT Architectures and Frameworks

The architecture of IoT systems is typically categorized into three layers: the perception layer, the network layer, and the application layer, each contributing to a seamless data flow from sensors to processing platforms [1]. The perception layer encompasses various sensors, such as passive infrared (PIR) and carbon dioxide (CO_2) detectors, as well as actuators like smart HVAC systems and automated lighting solutions. The network layer employs low-power communication protocols, including LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) and Zigbee, to facilitate connectivity [2]. The application layer, in turn, leverages cloud computing platforms—such as AWS IoT (Amazon Web Service IoT) and Microsoft Azure—to enable the automation of energy management systems.

One illustrative case is the implementation at The Edge in Amsterdam, which utilizes 28,000 sensors to achieve energy savings of approximately 70% by dynamically adjusting lighting and HVAC systems based on real-time occupancy data [3]. Additionally, Google's Nest Labs has reported a 12% reduction in HVAC costs through the integration of machine learning algorithms.

2.2 Sector-Specific Implementations

In the healthcare sector, IoT systems deployed in hospitals resulted in a 25% reduction in HVAC energy consumption, all while upholding patient comfort standards [22]. Similarly, academic institutions like the University of California, Berkeley have employed IoT-enabled lecture halls, which facilitated a 30% decrease in energy waste through automation triggered by occupancy detection [4]. Within the retail sector, Walmart has successfully implemented motion-sensitive LED systems that collectively save 1.4 terawatt-hours (TWh) of energy annually [5].

2.3 Challenges in Legacy Systems

Conventional HVAC and lighting systems often exhibit limitations related to adaptability, leading to the phenomenon of "phantom loads" in unoccupied rooms. Research indicates that approximately 35% of meeting rooms maintain power despite being vacant due to outdated booking mechanisms [6]. The integration of real-time sensor networks and predictive shutdown protocols through IoT solutions effectively addresses these inefficiencies.

3.OCCUPANCY DETECTION TECHNIQUES

3.1 Passive Infrared (PIR) Sensors

PIR sensors are widely adopted for occupancy detection due to their affordability (costing less than $10 per unit) and low energy consumption (ranging from 0.1 to 1 watt). Gupta et al. [1] noted an accuracy rate of 85% to 90% in motion detection, albeit with certain limitations: a 15% false negative rate for stationary occupants and the occurrence of false positives triggered by sunlight or air currents from HVAC systems. Mitigation strategies, such as the implementation of delay timers (ranging from 5 to 10 minutes) and sensitivity calibration, have been proposed to address these issues [7].

3.2 Vision-Based Systems

Vision-based systems utilizing technologies such as OpenCV or YOLOv7 can achieve accuracy rates between 95% and 99%. However, these systems raise significant privacy concerns. Rahman [8] [9] explored the use of edge-processed thermal imaging to anonymize data in compliance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Nevertheless, the high-power consumption (between 5 and 10 watts per camera) presents a challenge to scalability.

3.3 Hybrid Sensor Fusion

The combination of PIR sensors with CO_2, audio, or door entry sensors has been shown to enhance detection accuracy. For example, Chen [10] achieved a 95% accuracy rate in recognizing stationary occupants by establishing CO_2 concentration thresholds at 800 parts per million (ppm). Furthermore, audio sensors were effective in detecting speech and movement, leading to a 30% reduction in false negatives [11]. In practical applications, multi-sensor nodes using Kalman filters were employed to resolve conflicting signals, as demonstrated in the deployments at UC Berkeley [4].

3.4 Emerging Technologies

Innovative technologies such as LiDAR provide three-dimensional mapping capabilities with an accuracy of 98%, though they incur high costs exceeding $500 per unit [12]. The analysis of Wi-Fi Channel State Information (CSI) offers a means to achieve approximately 90% accuracy without the need for dedicated sensors [12]. Additionally, TinyML facilitates the execution of lightweight artificial intelligence models on microcontrollers to enable privacy-preserving occupancy detection [13].

4.CLOUD INTEGRATION FOR IoT AUTOMATION

4.1 Cloud Platforms and Architectures

Dominant cloud platforms in commercial IoT deployments include AWS IoT Core and Azure IoT Hub, which support data ingestion through protocols such as MQTT (Message Queuing Telemetry Transport) and HTTPS capable of managing over 10,000 devices. In terms of analytics, Salesforce Einstein has identified a 22% idle time in HVAC operations within meeting rooms [6]. Moreover, the concept of digital twins has been utilized to simulate energy-saving scenarios for the building known as The Edge (Grieves et al., 2023).

4.2 Case Studies

The Salesforce IoT Cloud has successfully decreased energy costs by 30% across 200 rooms with REST API integrations [6]. Additionally, AWS IoT Analytics has facilitated predictive pre-cooling of HVAC systems, resulting in an 18% reduction in peak-hour energy demand [15] [16].

4.3 Security and Latency Challenges

The implementation of encryption protocols, including AES-256 and TLS 1.3, has been critical in mitigating vulnerabilities associated with HVAC control systems [17]. Furthermore, the adoption of edge computing has led to a 60% reduction in latency within extensive deployments [23].

5.CHALLENGES & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

5.1 Technical Barriers

The issue of interoperability remains a significant hurdle, necessitating middleware solutions such as OpenHAB to facilitate communication among heterogeneous devices [24]. Additionally, while LoRaWAN's 10-kilometer range is suitable for multi-floor buildings, challenges arise in densely populated urban environments [2].

5.2 Ethical and Economic Considerations

Privacy concerns persist, as employees often express resistance to camera systems despite attempts at anonymization [8] [9]. Moreover, the high initial investment costs, estimated between $10 and $50 per square meter, typically lead to savings realized over a span of two to three years [5].

5.3 Future Innovations

The field of AI-driven analytics presents opportunities to forecast occupancy trends utilizing Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks [11]. Furthermore, advancements in the development of self-powered sensors, such as solar-powered PIR devices, offer a pathway to zero-maintenance deployments [25].

6.CONCLUSION

The integration of IoT technologies is revolutionizing energy management practices in commercial buildings, with advancements in occupancy detection and cloud automation contributing to energy savings ranging from 20% to 70%. Despite the ongoing challenges related to scalability, privacy concerns, and interoperability, technological innovations such as TinyML, digital twins, and hybrid sensor fusion hold promise for addressing these issues. Future research endeavours must focus on establishing ethical frameworks and tailoring solutions to specific sectors to maximize the effectiveness of IoT in promoting global sustainability.

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