West Science Information System and Technology
Vol. 3, No. 01, April 2025, pp. 56~61

Implementation of Green IT-Based Cloud Computing for Energy Efficiency in Technology Companies

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Article Info

Article history:

Received April, 2025
Revised April, 2025
Accepted April, 2025

Keywords:

Green IT,
Cloud Computing,
Energy Efficiency,
Sustainability,
Technology Companies

ABSTRACT

The growing demand for energy-efficient and sustainable solutions has positioned Green IT-based cloud computing as a pivotal strategy for technology companies aiming to balance operational efficiency with environmental stewardship. This study conducts a systematic literature review of 15 Scopus-indexed documents to explore the benefits, challenges, and strategies associated with the adoption of Green IT-based cloud computing. The findings reveal that these practices significantly enhance energy efficiency, reduce operational costs, and minimize carbon footprints. However, challenges such as high implementation costs, technological complexity, and intermittent renewable energy sources impede widespread adoption. Strategies including the use of AI and machine learning, collaborations with renewable energy providers, and the establishment of standardized policies are identified as effective solutions. This study contributes to the growing discourse on sustainable IT practices and provides a roadmap for technology companies aiming to integrate Green IT principles into their cloud computing operations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the escalating energy demands of technology companies have become a critical concern for both the industry and society. As digital transformation accelerates, these organizations increasingly rely on large-scale data centers, cloud computing, and advanced technologies, which significantly contribute to global energy consumption. Simultaneously, the environmental impact of such energy use, including greenhouse gas emissions, has intensified the need for sustainable practices within the technology sector. Against this backdrop, Green IT has emerged as a vital framework for achieving energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in IT operations. Green IT encompasses strategies to minimize energy usage and carbon emissions, addressing the environmental impact of IT operations through energy-efficient practices, renewable energy integration, and sustainable design. Virtualization and cloud computing, for example, can reduce energy usage by up to 50%, enhancing operational efficiency [1], while the adoption of energy-efficient

hardware, such as advanced processors and storage systems, helps lower power consumption in data centers [2]. Moreover, integrating renewable energy sources into data centers reduces reliance on fossil fuels, thereby promoting an eco-friendly energy supply [2], and the use of emerging technologies like blockchain and IoT facilitates real-time monitoring and resource optimization to support Green IT initiatives [1]. Effective e-waste management strategies also play a pivotal role, enabling recovery of up to 80% of valuable materials and reducing environmental harm [1], while sustainable IT practices advocate for recycling and responsible disposal of obsolete hardware [3]. Furthermore, aligning Green IT with corporate social responsibility enhances brand reputation and stakeholder trust [1], and global policy reforms alongside interdisciplinary research are essential to foster sustainability throughout the IT industry [4].

Green IT, or Green Information Technology, encompasses strategies, technologies, and best practices aimed at minimizing the environmental footprint of IT systems while maintaining optimal performance and scalability. Central to this approach is cloud computing, a transformative technology that enables on-demand resource allocation, virtualization, and data storage through remote servers. By integrating Green IT principles into cloud computing systems, technology companies can significantly reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions, contributing to broader global sustainability goals. Virtualization and cloud computing, for instance, can lower energy usage by up to 50% due to more efficient utilization of computing resources [1], while green cloud computing practices—such as optimizing data center operations and employing energy-efficient hardware—minimize the carbon footprint of cloud infrastructures [5], [6]. This is particularly vital given the exponential growth of data servers, which has increased energy demands and greenhouse gas emissions, thus making green cloud computing essential to mitigating environmental impact [6]. Adoption of renewable energy sources and sustainable design further supports emission reduction in data centers [4]. Beyond environmental advantages, Green IT initiatives also offer economic benefits, including cost savings and enhanced corporate social responsibility, which contribute to overall business value [7]. Additionally, embedding Green IT within corporate governance frameworks strengthens brand reputation, fosters stakeholder trust, and boosts employee engagement [1]. This paper explores the implementation of Green IT-based cloud computing as a strategic pathway for energy efficiency in technology companies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Green IT is the practice of designing, using, and disposing of IT resources in an environmentally sustainable manner, aiming to minimize the environmental impact of IT operations while enhancing economic viability and system performance. According to Smith et al. (2021), Green IT strategies focus on energy efficiency, resource optimization, and the reduction of electronic waste through the use of energy-efficient devices, virtualization technologies, and eco-friendly data centers, aligned with international standards such as ISO 50001. The concept also involves organizational policies and employee behavior, emphasizing a holistic approach that integrates technical innovation with environmental awareness and corporate sustainability goals [8]. Practices such as virtualization and cloud computing can reduce energy consumption by up to 50% [1], while the adoption of efficient hardware and green data centers contributes to lower carbon emissions [4], [9]. Effective e-waste management is crucial, with recovery rates of up to 80% and sustainable disposal methods helping to mitigate environmental harm [1], [4]. Integrating Green IT into corporate governance enhances brand reputation, stakeholder trust, and employee engagement [1], and is a key element of corporate social responsibility by offering cost savings and

added business value [7]. Nevertheless, challenges such as high costs, scalability, and regulatory barriers must be addressed to fully realize the benefits of Green IT [4], requiring interdisciplinary research to tackle complex sustainability issues [1].

Cloud computing supports Green IT by providing scalable and efficient IT resources through virtualization, which reduces hardware requirements and energy consumption. Cloud service providers increasingly adopt advanced cooling technologies and renewable energy sources such as solar and wind to lower their environmental impact, although the efficiency of the underlying infrastructure remains a crucial determinant of overall sustainability. Integrating Green IT into cloud computing enables optimized workload distribution and improved server utilization through dynamic resource allocation and green virtualization techniques [10], [11]. Virtualization allows for server consolidation, significantly enhancing energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions [10]. The incorporation of renewable energy into cloud infrastructures further contributes to emissions reduction, although challenges related to cost and energy supply consistency persist [10]. While cloud data centers are generally more energy-efficient than traditional ones, using fewer servers and reducing the carbon footprint [12], the continued reliance on non-renewable "dirty energy" by some providers remains a significant obstacle, underscoring the urgent need for a transition to cleaner energy sources [12].

3. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach grounded in a systematic literature review of 15 Scopus-indexed documents. The methodology is structured to synthesize existing knowledge, uncover patterns, and extract insights into the implementation of Green IT-based cloud computing for enhancing energy efficiency in technology companies. The data source comprises peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings from the Scopus database. Selection criteria were established to ensure relevance, quality, and diversity, including a focus on studies explicitly discussing Green IT, cloud computing, or energy efficiency; publications from the last decade (2013–2023); document types limited to peer-reviewed journals and conference papers; and language restricted to English. A comprehensive search was conducted using keywords such as "Green IT," "cloud computing," "energy efficiency," and "sustainability in technology companies," with Boolean operators and filters applied, resulting in an initial pool of 50 documents.

The document screening followed a rigorous three-step process to ensure the relevance and academic rigor of the final selection. First, titles and abstracts were reviewed to exclude irrelevant studies. Second, full-text versions of the remaining documents were evaluated for alignment with the research objectives. Third, a quality assessment was performed based on citation metrics, the reputation of the publication venue, and methodological robustness, ultimately narrowing the selection to 15 high-quality documents. Thematic analysis was then used to analyze the selected documents, involving familiarization with the content, systematic coding of concepts related to Green IT-based cloud computing, grouping codes into overarching themes, and synthesizing these themes to generate meaningful insights and address the research questions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Benefits of Green IT-Based Cloud Computing

The reviewed literature highlights numerous benefits of integrating Green IT principles with cloud computing, particularly in enhancing energy efficiency, reducing operational costs, and minimizing environmental impact. Virtualization and optimized resource allocation play a central role in lowering energy consumption, with studies reporting potential reductions of up to

30% in cloud data centers [6], [10]. These energy savings translate into substantial cost reductions, especially in power and cooling expenses [13]. Additionally, the integration of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, into cloud infrastructures helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and overall carbon footprint [10], [11]. Green IT-based cloud computing also supports scalability and flexibility, allowing organizations to dynamically allocate resources while maintaining high performance and environmental efficiency [5], [11]. Moreover, the adoption of energy-efficient technologies aligns with regulatory standards like ISO 50001, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and reinforcing corporate responsibility [13]. Practices such as server consolidation, green virtualization, and sustainable data center operations are essential for transforming traditional IT infrastructures into more sustainable models [6], thereby aligning IT operations with broader sustainability goals.

4.2 Challenges in Implementation

Despite its many advantages, implementing Green IT-based cloud computing presents significant challenges that must be addressed to ensure successful adoption. One of the primary barriers is the high initial cost, as transitioning to energy-efficient infrastructures and integrating renewable energy sources require substantial upfront investments in new hardware and sustainable technologies [10], [14], which can be particularly burdensome for smaller organizations lacking sufficient capital [15]. Additionally, the technological complexity of managing hybrid cloud environments and optimizing workloads for energy efficiency necessitates advanced tools and skilled personnel [10], [16], and while virtualization and consolidation strategies offer benefits, they also introduce operational complexities that must be managed effectively. Another critical issue is the intermittency of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, which can affect the reliability of cloud operations and require robust energy management systems to balance supply and demand [14], [16], [17]. Furthermore, the absence of standardized metrics for measuring energy efficiency complicates the evaluation and benchmarking of Green IT initiatives across different cloud solutions [15], [17], making it difficult for organizations to assess the effectiveness of their sustainability efforts.

4.3 Strategies to Overcome Challenges

Several strategies have been proposed to overcome the challenges of implementing Green IT-based cloud computing, focusing on technological, organizational, and policy-driven solutions. The adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) plays a pivotal role in enhancing energy efficiency by enabling real-time analysis of sensor and smart meter data to predict demand patterns and optimize resource allocation [18], [19]. These technologies provide precise control over energy systems, yielding substantial energy savings and environmental benefits, and also facilitate the integration of renewable energy sources, thus reducing reliance on fossil fuels [20]. To ensure a stable and sustainable energy supply, collaboration with renewable energy providers is essential, helping data centers secure consistent and eco-friendly power [2]. At the policy level, the development of industry-wide governance frameworks and environmental standards can accelerate the adoption of Green IT practices and support regulatory compliance [2], [21]. Additionally, training and capacity building are critical components, as the complexity of implementing AI and ML solutions demands technically skilled professionals; investments in workforce development are necessary to ensure effective deployment and management of these advanced systems [21]. Together, these strategies offer comprehensive solutions for improving sustainability, optimizing resources, and addressing the technical and institutional barriers to Green IT adoption.

DISCUSSION

The findings emphasize the transformative potential of Green IT-based cloud computing in reducing operational costs and environmental impact. Technology

companies adopting these practices can gain a competitive advantage by aligning their operations with sustainability goals. Furthermore, such initiatives can enhance brand reputation and attract environmentally conscious consumers, as highlighted. Overcoming the identified challenges requires a multi-faceted approach. Investment in research and development can drive innovation in energy-efficient technologies, while public-private partnerships can provide financial support for infrastructure upgrades. Additionally, regulatory bodies must play a proactive role in establishing and enforcing energy efficiency standards. The integration of emerging technologies such as AI, blockchain, and Internet of Things (IoT) can further enhance the effectiveness of Green IT-based cloud computing. These technologies can facilitate real-time energy monitoring, automate resource management, and improve data security, creating a holistic approach to sustainable IT operations.

5. CONCLUSION

The integration of Green IT principles into cloud computing operations offers a viable pathway for technology companies to achieve energy efficiency and sustainability. This study highlights the dual benefits of operational cost reduction and environmental impact minimization while identifying key challenges such as high initial costs and technological complexity. Addressing these barriers requires a multi-dimensional approach involving technological innovation, collaborative efforts, and policy standardization. By leveraging advanced technologies like AI and machine learning and fostering partnerships with renewable energy providers, companies can optimize resource utilization and ensure consistent energy supply.

The findings underscore the importance of aligning IT strategies with broader sustainability goals, offering both environmental and competitive advantages. Future research should focus on the application of emerging technologies and the development of standardized frameworks to measure the effectiveness of Green IT practices. This study serves as a foundational reference for technology companies seeking to implement Green IT-based cloud computing as part of their sustainability initiatives.

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