

IMCSM Proceedings

ISSN 2620-0597

Volume XVIII, Issue (1), (2022)

An international serial publication for theory and
practice of Management Science



Editor-in-Chief: Prof. dr Živan Živković

**Published by University of Belgrade, Technical Faculty in Bor,
Department of Engineering Management**

Bor, 2022



**Conference is financially supported by
the Ministry of Education and Science of
the Republic of Serbia**

**Konferencija je finansijski podržana od
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CIP - Каталогизacija u publikaciji
Nародна библиотека Србије, Београд

005.51(082)(0.034.2)

INTERNATIONAL May Conference on Strategic Management (18 ; 2022 ; Bor)

[XVIII] International May Conference on Strategic Management – IMCSM22, May 28, 2022, Bor
[Elektronski izvor] / [editor-in-chief Živan Živković]. - Bor : University of Belgrade, Technical
Faculty, Management Department, 2022 (Bor : Tercija). - 1 elektronski optički disk (CD-ROM) ; 12
cm : tekst, slika. - (Edition IMCSM Proceedings ; vol. 18, issue (1) (2022), ISSN 2620-0597)

Sistemske zahtevi: Nisu navedeni. - Nasl. sa naslovne strane dokumenta. - Tiraž 150. - Bibliografija
uz svaki rad.

ISBN 978-86-6305-129-4

а) Стратешки менаџмент -- Зборници

COBISS.SR-ID 76538121

**INTERNATIONAL MAY CONFERENCE ON
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**



HYBRID CRITIC-TOPSIS MODEL FOR PRIORITIZING DIGITALLY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN THE LIGHT OF ENERGY INDICATORS

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Abstract: Digital progress of the society is associated with trends in energetic sector. The top ten digitally developed European countries, according to the most recent ICT development index report in 2017, were chosen as testing countries to conduct a deeper investigation on the issue of energy production and consumption in the digital era. Data on (1, 2) coal and oil-fired electricity generation, (3) share of GHG emissions from energy production, (4) final electricity consumption in industry, (5) final electricity consumption in households, and (6) energy intensity were included in the initial database. For determining criteria weights and final ranking of alternatives, a hybrid CRITIC-TOPSIS MCDM model was utilized. The CRITIC approach was used to calculate objective weights of criteria by employing standard deviation to measure the contrast strength of each criterion. The findings highlight the dominance of three criteria in comparison to others: energy intensity ($w_{ei} = 0.200$), share of GHG emissions in total energy production ($w_{eGHG} = 0.198$), and ultimate energy consumption in households ($w_{fch} = 0.194$). The TOPSIS approach was used to complete the final ranking. Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Sweden were ranked first, second, and third, respectively, in terms of advanced digitalization performance and awareness of the need of providing green energy for economic activity.

Keywords: energy, digitalization, multi-criteria decision-making, CRITIC-TOPSIS

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern society is facing serious energy issues that tackle secure energy supply and renewable energy sources (Carrilho-Nunes & Catalão-Lopes, 2022). A number of countries have adopted the agreement to become carbon neutral until 2050 and now they implement different energy strategies and set ambitious energy targets (Jin, 2022). In order to fulfill the Paris Agreement by which global rise of temperature must be kept below 2°C, European Union has long term commitment to reduce GHG emission to become carbon neutral continent by the year 2050 while reducing the quantity of total GHG by 55% until 2030 (European Commission, 2020). Accelerated diffusion of industrial activity is the major contributor to the increased share of greenhouse gasses (Lin & Jia, 2020). In addition, industry intensity is associated with increased electrical energy demand (Li & Yuan, 2021). Active government's role in decreasing pollution caused by industrial sector is found in fostering the sustainability concept (Yue et al., 2021). Achieving sustainability in industrial

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sector is possible under developing the use of artificial intelligence technology in different spheres thus developing industry 4.0 (Liu et al., 2021). Implementing advanced technological solutions in industry force overall technological progress that in turn enhance energy consumption. In this way technology and industry are united in the same mission to mitigate the effects of climate change and prevent further environmental pollution. Technological progress enables the use of energy efficient technology that is a key to establish economic progression followed by rational energy consumption and future environmental degradation (Hui et al., 2021). It facilitates transition to low-carbon technological solutions thus reduces energy intensity (He et al., 2021).

The study's primary objective is to rank the top 10 digitally developed European countries in terms of energy production, consumption, and pollution from energy production. For that purpose multi-criteria decision making (MCDM) methodology has been applied since various energy parameters have been used for prioritization. CRITIC MCDM has been used to calculate the weights of energy attributes, while final prioritization is done using TOPSIS method.

Since digital technology is energy intensive, empirical evidence on its effects on energy balance is required to promote further digital development. As a result, the study's expected scientific contribution is to provide theoretical and practical understanding concerning energy balance in digitally advanced European countries. In addition, proposed methodological concept can be used to rank other countries according to their energy parameters or it can be used as a guide to solve similar prioritization problems. Empirical findings in this study are found to be valuable for decision makers in energy and technology sectors, as well as for future sustainable development of digitalization process. The research outcome can contribute to further comparative analysis with less digitally developed economies.

The following five sections constitute the study. The second section offers a brief overview of the current literature on energy balance and pollution in digitally developed countries. The study's empirical data and analytical methodology are described in Section 3. Section 4 highlights the most important study findings and provides a more in-depth discussion. Finally, section 5 summarizes the findings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Digitalization brings prosperity to the society and economy. However, several studies have discovered increased GHG emissions due to accelerated technological diffusion (Carrilho-Nunes & Catalão-Lopes, 2022; Su & Fan, 2022). Authors Golroudbary et al. (2022) discussed ecological issue of developing green high-tech solutions whose development is constrained by depletion of valuable resources. High-tech development and production phases are not clean process and leave traces on environmental degradation. This triggering effect can be solved by reducing the use of fossil fuels and ensuring enough energy supply from renewables. Authors Dolge & Blumeranga (2021) argue that improvements in energy efficiency can lead to a higher reduction of GHG emissions than fostering renewable energy strategies. It is discovered that higher energy efficiency can contribute to energy transition towards sustainable and clean energy sources (Sun et al., 2022). However, contemporary studies (Yu et al., 2022) discover high energy intensity in economies with developed industrial sector that is major energy consumer. Particularly, the biggest emitter of GHG is acknowledged by manufacturing industry in those economies that have developed this industry sector (Zhang et al., 2020). Even if the share of renewables in developed economies

is increasing at high rate, decrease in energy intensity is at much lower level. This phenomena is putting a lot of pressure on sustainable development of energy sector in the future and force economies to develop energy-saving technology in order to cut down electrical energy consumption (Yu et al., 2022). When faced with global challenges such as resource shortage and climate change, global economies struggle to provide adequate strategic answer in a form of green policies and strategies. Hence, innovation activities in renewable energy technology are desirable as they promote green development and serve to neutralize environmental pollution caused by increased industrial activities (Su & Fan, 2022).

EU strategy for becoming carbon neutral is based on liberating energy structure from fossil fuels, especially coal (Lehotský et al., 2019). EU has active Emission Trading System that is used to trace and control emissions generated by electrical energy production (Böhringer & Rosendahl, 2022). Even in some global countries, coal is still a critical source of fossil fuel that is used to generate electrical energy (Zhao et al., 2019; Schneider et al., 2020). Its role in delivering heating demand in many countries is still substantial making it as an important feature of national energy mix (Lin & Jia, 2020). Countries that own large coal reserves will struggle to eliminate the use of this conventional energy source because it is essential to secure future demand from clean energy sources and in the next stage to phase out fossil fuels (Zhao & Alexandroff, 2019). Another emerging challenge is the question of coal industry survival that slows down green energy transition. For example, powerful economies like China, Germany and Japan are outsourcing domestic coal production outside the national borders and orient their supply on foreign coal import rather than national production (Zhao & Alexandroff, 2019). Their ability to invest in cutting-edge technology in coal industry is higher than those of host countries therefore they transfer advanced technology outside the national borders. Global economies are constantly seeking for sustainable solution and propose the use of clean-coal technology for extracting that can ensure low-emission of GHG with improved efficiency (Zhao et al., 2019). While other economies are putting extra efforts to phase-out coal like in the case of Germany that has committed to eliminate coal use by 2038 in order to enhance its climate change goals (Keles & Yilmaz, 2020; Heinisch et al., 2021).

Consequences of climate change are present in all aspects of economy and society. Global warming is causing extremes in temperatures during summer and winter seasons. Therefore, population is facing rising temperature peaks that change the structure of energy demand in households (Zhang et al., 2022). Electricity demand in households is constrained by multiple factors such as life pattern of residents, however besides of all it includes facing extreme weather conditions (Andersen et al., 2017; Kang & Reiner, 2022). Household with increased number of cold days during winter season are prone to have increased electrical energy demand (Chen et al., 2022). The same situation is in countries where climate is hot during summer and additional electrical energy demand is directed towards cooling households (Tao et al., 2022). The process of digitalization tackles the energy demand of households by introducing IT appliances for home use on a large scale. Scholars reveal significant factor for evaluating electrical energy consumption in households that concerns the question of home IT appliances. Researches discover that as the number of owned IT devices increases and hours of usage, the demand for electrical energy is growing (Wallis et al., 2016). Authors Hao et al. (2022) discussed that current internet development has negative impact on energy intensity and in order to boost energy efficiency governments must invest in rising digital cities, digital cultures and societies.

3. RESEARCH DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH DATA

The main research aim of this study is to rank ten European digitally developed countries by their energy balance that include energy demand, conventional energy consumption and environmental pollution that is a consequence of energy production from non-renewable sources. To rank the performances of these countries data about seven indicators that concern energy and digital indicators were collected. Summarized information about them can be found in the Table 1. Countries that are involved in the study include developed European economies such as Iceland, Switzerland, Denmark, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden, Germany and France that are ranked in the top of the latest ICT report for 2017. The listed countries are shown in descending order by their ICT development index from the most developed to the less digitally developed nations. Reference year for constructing MCDM decision matrix was 2018.

Table 1. Data structure

Criteria name	Label	Unit	Source
Electricity generation from coal	EGC	% of total electricity generation	Our World in data
Electricity generation from oil	EGO	% of total electricity generation	Our World in data
Share of GHG emissions MTCO _{2e} from energy production in total GHG emission	eGHG	% of total GHG emission	Climate watch, 2022
Final electricity consumption - industry sector (TWh)	FCI	TWh	IEA, 2022
Final electricity consumption - other sectors household (TWh)	FCH	TWh	IEA, 2022
Energy intensity	EI	kWh/ GDP PPP	Our world in data, 2022
ICT Development Index (IDI)	IDI	Coefficient	Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D)

The research study is planned to be conducted into four phases illustrated in the Fig. 1. Selected analytic approach consists of a hybrid multi-criteria decision-making model composed of two methods. The first MCDM method is used for computing criteria's importance weight. This method is known as CRITIC method and it is often used method for determining importance weights in the objective mode. The second MCDM method used for final ranking is based on TOPSIS methodology. Proposed CRITIC-TOPSIS model requires constructing initial decision-making matrix that is established using gathered data.

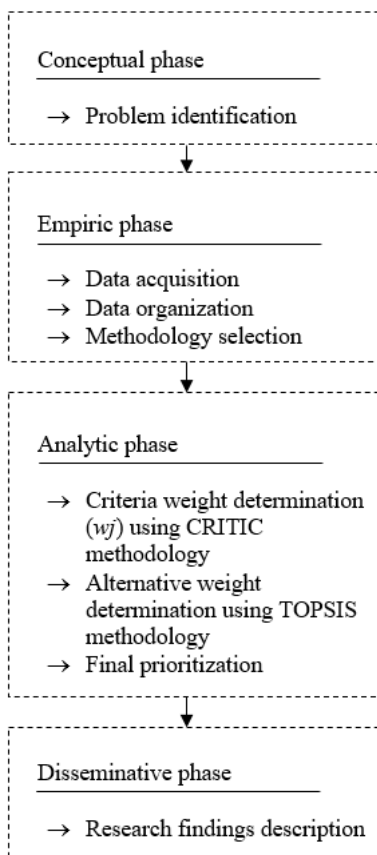


Fig. 1. Adopted research phases

Theoretical background about employed MCDM methodology can be found in the following part of the paper.

3.2. CRITIC METHOD

The Criteria Importance Through Intercriteria Correlation (CRITIC) method is a multi-criteria decision-making method for determining objective weights of criteria based on the comparative intensity of the evaluation criteria and conflict between them (Pan et al., 2021). Criterion with higher comparative intensity computed by formula for standard deviation is given a higher importance weight (Krishnan et al., 2021). By Diakoulaki et al. (1995) CRITIC method is preferable to use in situations to:

- Define objective weights when decision maker is inconsistent;
- Make it easier for decision maker to express opinion about the importance of criteria;
- Reduce subjectivity;
- Discard non-silent attributes.

Computation procedure for CRITIC methodology by Diakoulaki et al. (1995) is follow:

Step 1. Normalize the initial decision making matrix using formula:

For beneficial criteria:

$$x_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij} - x_j^{\min}}{x_j^{\max} - x_j^{\min}}, \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, n; \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, m; \quad (1)$$

For cost criteria:

$$x_{ij} = \frac{x_j^{\max} - x_{ij}}{x_j^{\max} - x_j^{\min}}, \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, n; \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, m; \quad (2)$$

where $x_j^{\max} = \max_j \{x_{1j}, x_{2j}, \dots, x_{mj}\}$ and $x_j^{\min} = \min_j \{x_{1j}, x_{2j}, \dots, x_{mj}\}$.

Step 2. Compute standard deviation σ_j for each criterion.

Step 3. Form symmetric matrix.

Step 4. Determine the quantity of the information in relation to each criterion.

$$w_j = \sigma_j \sum_{k=1}^n (1 - l_{kj}) \quad (3)$$

Step 5. Normalize w_j measure of criteria.

$$w_j = \frac{w_j}{\sum_{k=1}^m w_k} \quad (4)$$

Step 6. Compute objective weights of each criterion.

$$w_j = \frac{\sigma_j}{\sum_{k=1}^m \sigma_k} \quad (5)$$

3.3. TOPSIS METHOD

The Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) is a multi-criteria decision-making methodology that was introduced by Hwang and Yoon in 1981 (Hwang & Yoon, 1981). Through its application, original TOPSIS method has gained some novelty modifications and extensions (Ren et al., 2007). The basic idea behind the TOPSIS method is to prioritize alternatives in such order that the best alternative is the one closest to the positive ideal solution, and the worst alternative is the one closest to the negative ideal solution (Krohling & Pacheco, 2015). Positive ideal solution is maximizing benefit criteria while minimizing cost criteria and negative ideal solution is determining opposite solution (maximize the cost criteria while minimize benefit criteria) (Behzadian et al., 2012). The distance between solutions can be computed using several metrics but the commonly used is Euclidian norm based on the minimization of square root of the sum of squared distances (Olson, 2004). Other possible distance metrics consider least absolute value terms or minimum maximum distance difference. The subjectivity in applying this method is reduced to minimum and it is introduced when inputting the data about criteria weights (Olson, 2004).

TOPSIS computation procedure by Hwang & Yoon (1981) is given as follow:

Step 1. Form normalized decision matrix

$$r_{ij} = x_{ij} / \sqrt{\sum x_{ij}^2} \quad \text{for} \quad i = 1, \dots, m; j = 1, \dots, n; \quad (6)$$

where x_{ij} and r_{ij} are original and normalized values of formed normalized matrix.

Step 2. Form weighted normalized decision matrix

$$v_{ij} = w_j r_{ij} \quad (7)$$

where w_j is the weight for criterion j .

Step 3. Compute positive ideal and negative ideal solutions

For positive ideal solution:

$$A^+ = \{v_1^+, \dots, v_n^+\} \quad (8)$$

$$v_j^+ = \{\max(v_{ij}) \text{ if } j \in J; \min(v_{ij}) \text{ if } j \in J'\}$$

For negative ideal solution:

$$A^- = \{v_1^-, \dots, v_n^-\} \quad (9)$$

$$v_j^- = \{\min(v_{ij}) \text{ if } j \in J; \max(v_{ij}) \text{ if } j \in J'\}$$

Step 4. Compute the distance measure using Euclidian method

For positive ideal solution:

$$S_i^+ = [\sum (v_j^+ - v_{ij})^2]^{1/2} \quad i = 1, \dots, m; \quad (10)$$

For negative ideal solution:

$$S_i^- = [\sum (v_j^- - v_{ij})^2]^{1/2} \quad i = 1, \dots, m; \quad (11)$$

Step 5. Compute proximity to ideal solution and rang alternatives

$$C_i^* = S_i^- / (S_i^+ + S_i^-) \quad (12)$$

where $0 < C_i^* < 1$. The best alternative is closest to the value 1.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

Hierarchical structure of prioritization model for ranking digitally developed countries according to energy criteria is based on following six criteria: electricity generation from coal (EGC), electricity generation from oil (EGO), greenhouse gas emissions from energy production (eGHG), final energy consumption in industry (FCI), final energy consumption in households (FCH) and energy intensity (EI). The model is considering 10 alternatives (A_1 - A_{10}) presented in the form of countries that are the subject of prioritization. Alternatives are given in the descending value of IDI coefficient and include Iceland (A_1), Switzerland (A_2), Denmark (A_3), United Kingdom (A_4), Netherlands (A_5), Norway (A_6), Luxembourg (A_7), Sweden (A_8), Germany (A_9) and France (A_{10}). In order to compare diverse criteria CRITIC method for computing objective criteria weights has been used. All of the considered criteria are susceptible to minimize their effects on the prioritization goal therefore are classified as non-beneficial criteria and their impact is anticipated with decreasing utility function. Initial step in applying CRITIC method is to normalize the initial decision matrix. The results of the normalization procedure are presented in the following matrix r_{ij} with normalized values.

$$r_{ij} = \begin{bmatrix} 1.000 & 1.000 & 1.000 & 0.945 & 1.000 & 0.000 \\ 1.000 & 0.974 & 0.867 & 0.937 & 0.886 & 1.000 \\ 0.398 & 0.958 & 0.534 & 0.976 & 0.944 & 0.963 \\ 0.858 & 0.690 & 0.543 & 0.600 & 0.346 & 0.922 \\ 0.326 & 0.733 & 0.331 & 0.856 & 0.861 & 0.830 \\ 0.999 & 0.968 & 0.000 & 0.807 & 0.753 & 0.836 \\ 1.000 & 0.997 & 0.954 & 1.000 & 0.999 & 0.796 \\ 0.994 & 0.872 & 0.458 & 0.791 & 0.723 & 0.803 \\ 0.000 & 0.000 & 0.244 & 0.000 & 0.201 & 0.897 \\ 0.960 & 0.548 & 0.677 & 0.499 & 0.000 & 0.868 \end{bmatrix}$$

The next step is to apply formula for computing value of standard deviation within each criterion. Standard deviation is calculated in order to measure the discrepancies in the normalized values of criteria. The results are given in the following matrix σ .

$$\sigma = [0.3699 \ 0.3127 \ 0.3222 \ 0.3072 \ 0.3589 \ 0.2861]$$

Next step is to calculate the symmetric matrix in $n \times n$ form that is used to identify linear correlation coefficient between criteria. In the next stage, the result of the symmetric matrix is utilized to calculate the measure of the conflict caused by each criterion in relation to other criteria. The quantity of information in respect to each criteria is determined by multiplying the standard deviation for each criteria with the measure of the conflict. The CRITIC technique uses the value of the quantity of information to compute the final objective weights. The following matrix w_j shows the final weights of the criteria.

$$w_j = \begin{bmatrix} 0.160 \\ 0.094 \\ 0.198 \\ 0.154 \\ 0.194 \\ 0.200 \end{bmatrix}$$

Matrix w_j reports criteria final energy consumption in households ($W_{FCH}= 0.200$), greenhouse gas emissions from energy production ($W_{eGHG}= 0.198$) and energy intensity ($W_{EI}= 0.194$) as most important for the prioritization procedure. Calculated objective weights are derived from CRITIC method and are further employed in the initial TOPSIS decision matrix.

First step in applying TOPSIS method is for final ranking of alternatives/countries in relation to criteria is to normalize initial decision matrix to r_{ij} . After normalizing the values in the decision matrix the next phase is to allocate appropriate criteria objective weights that are computed using CRITIC method. The results of the weighted decision matrix v_{ij} are presented as follow:

$$v_{ij} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.000 & 0.000 & 0.000 & 0.008 & 0.001 & 0.160 \\ 0.000 & 0.002 & 0.016 & 0.009 & 0.015 & 0.023 \\ 0.071 & 0.003 & 0.054 & 0.005 & 0.008 & 0.028 \\ 0.017 & 0.025 & 0.053 & 0.050 & 0.085 & 0.033 \\ 0.080 & 0.021 & 0.078 & 0.019 & 0.019 & 0.046 \\ 0.000 & 0.003 & 0.117 & 0.025 & 0.032 & 0.045 \\ 0.000 & 0.000 & 0.005 & 0.002 & 0.001 & 0.051 \\ 0.001 & 0.010 & 0.063 & 0.027 & 0.036 & 0.050 \\ 0.118 & 0.080 & 0.088 & 0.123 & 0.103 & 0.037 \\ 0.005 & 0.036 & 0.038 & 0.063 & 0.129 & 0.041 \end{bmatrix}$$

The next step is to calculate the measure of distance between each alternative and its ideal positive S_i^+ and ideal negative solution S_i^- using n-dimensional Euclidean distance. The results of matrix S_i^+ and matrix S_i^- generate the relative proximity to the ideal solution in the form of matrix C_i^* that denotes the outcome of the final prioritization of alternatives A_1 - A_{10} :

$$C_i^* = \begin{bmatrix} 0.647 \\ 0.923 \\ 0.728 \\ 0.636 \\ 0.653 \\ 0.645 \\ 0.906 \\ 0.734 \\ 0.358 \\ 0.564 \end{bmatrix}$$

Table 2 reports results of the CRITIC-TOPSIS prioritization model with final ranking scores. The outcome of prioritization illustrates decisive advantage of Switzerland ($C_2^* = 0.923$) and Luxembourg ($C_7^* = 0.906$) compared to other countries. While the rest of the countries report approximately similar ranking scores, except Germany that is at the bottom of the ranking list ($C_9^* = 0.358$).

Table 2. Final prioritization by hybrid CRITIC-TOPSIS model.

Country	Name	C_i^*	Rank
Iceland	A_1	0.647	5
Switzerland	A_2	0.923	1
Denmark	A_3	0.728	4
United Kingdom	A_4	0.636	7
Netherlands	A_5	0.635	8
Norway	A_6	0.645	6
Luxembourg	A_7	0.906	2
Sweden	A_8	0.734	3
Germany	A_9	0.358	10
France	A_{10}	0.564	9

TOPSIS method emphasize the importance of declining electricity generation from conventional energy sources (in this case, coal and oil energy sources) in countries like Germany and Netherlands. Germany is providing a third of total electricity generation from coal and a quarter from oil sources. While share of coal sources for electricity production in Netherlands reaches almost 25%. Germany and Netherlands are recognized as coal-intensive economies with substantial share of electrical energy production from coal resources (Yue et al., 2021). Countries with coal reserves distinguish this energy resource as integral part of energy mix while simultaneously work on improving efficiency of technology for coal processing (Zhao et al., 2019). Germany as the largest coal producer in the EU has adopted strategy to cancel emission allowances in order to eliminate coal use in the national energy mix (Böhringer & Rosendahl, 2022). On the other side, empirical evidence suggest Iceland, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Norway as leaders in using alternative energy sources for supplying electrical energy demand. Iceland is the only digitally developed country that satisfies total electrical energy demand from renewable energy sources therefore produce zero

GHG emission for this activity (United Nations, 2015). Similar results are achieved in Luxembourg that reports extremely low share of GHG emissions from electrical energy generation in total energy production. Obtained result is a consequence of import-oriented energy policy where more than 85% of electrical energy supply is secured from abroad (IEA, 2020). Further results distinguish Germany as digitalized economy with high GHG emissions from electrical energy production. In this case, Germany can be recognized as highly industrialized economy with substantial share of energy sources from fossil fuels therefore the GHG emissions that pollute the environment are higher. Countries that are highly industrialized and dependent on the use of coal should introduce sustainability in the industrial sector and promote energy-efficiency for industrial activities (Yue et al., 2021). Empirical evidence confirm intensified consumption of electrical energy sources for industrial sector in Germany, France and UK. While minimal electricity consumption for industrial needs are recorded in Luxembourg, Denmark, Iceland and Switzerland. The outcome can be supported by deficiency of industrial sector. Leaders in electricity consumption for household's activities are Scandinavian countries Norway and Sweden. Taking in consideration that Norway and Sweden are known by extremely low temperatures in winter the consumption of electrical energy is predominantly used for needs of heating demand. The results are identical to a recent research by Chen et al. (2022) who confirm increased electrical energy demand in households that face extreme climate conditions. Khosravi et al. (2020) discussed that cold Scandinavian winters require large share of energy demand for heating purposes. Securing heat supply from renewable energy sources provides room for reducing energy intensity (Jin, 2022). Finally, by looking at the ratio of electrical energy consumption in comparison to available GDP, Iceland stands out as the most energy intensive economy, followed by Luxembourg, Sweden, Netherlands and Norway. The case of Iceland is specific because it is the result of several interconnected factors such as accessible low-cost electrical energy, industrial activities mostly related to metal industry and extreme weather conditions that include long and dark winters (Nordic Energy Research, 2013). Dolge & Blumberga (2021) found that decrease in energy intensity leads to decline in GHG emissions therefore economies that intend to achieve sustainability have to plan their strategies for improving energy intensity. The least energy intensive economy that is observed in this case is Switzerland. IEA (2022) puts Switzerland on the top of low-energy intensive economy thanks to the decarbonized energy sector that depend on nuclear and hydro electricity generation.

5. CONCLUSION

Over the years, the consumption of electricity for the needs of industry and households is constantly growing. Advanced technologies in the 4.0 industry that surrounds us require an increased intensity of spending this resource. As a result, the growth of digitalization, which is at the heart of Industry 4.0, is accompanied by a rise in energy consumption. Digital technologies are being used increasingly extensively not only in industry, but also in households, which now have an abundance of smart devices. As a result of this circumstance, society is progressing toward a modern way of life and modern communities. However, as technology progresses, so does the use of specific resources, and it's critical to analyze if these resources are being sustainably used.

As a result, the study's major goal is to show how to manage energy resources by using the example of highly digitalized European countries. The study that was carried out with this motive incorporated multi-criteria decision-making methodologies. For country

prioritization, a hybrid CRITIC-TOPSIS framework was designed. The weighting elements of the criteria on which the prioritizing of alternatives was performed were computed using the CRITIC approach. Energy indicators for non-renewable energy production, electricity consumption in the industrial and home sectors, GHG emissions generated by electricity production, and energy consumption intensity are among the criteria. The most influential criteria for ranking, according to the results of the CRITIC technique, were final energy consumption in households, greenhouse gas emissions from energy production, and energy intensity. The TOPSIS approach was then used to prioritize the countries based on established criteria and weighting considerations. The prioritization results placed Switzerland and Luxembourg at the very top of the priority list. France and Germany are at the bottom of the rankings. Because industrial activity in France and Germany is significantly more intense than in the countries at the top of the list, such findings are partly expected. These sectors are drawing high electricity use and, as a result, a higher share of GHG emissions. According to the findings, countries with a higher ICT index score are ranked higher in terms of the considered indicators than those with a lower score. According to the ICT index, Iceland and Switzerland rank first and second, respectively, while Germany and France rank last.

According to the research, digitally developed countries, which are also industrial giants, must place more emphasis into enhancing renewable energy production. They must establish mechanisms for efficient energy generation and usage in order to reach this aim. Strong industrial activity that boosts their economic and social development must be directed towards low-energy intensive activities and low-carbon technology. Future development in such countries must be grounded on Industry 4.0, as well as a broader use of digital technology. In this regard, digitally developed countries should assist continued digital expansion by providing renewable energy solutions. Cutting-edge technology development must be based on zero GHG emissions. Only in this manner can long-term growth be maintained.

A number of shortcomings have been identified in the study. Only a few countries are included in the study. The study's scope is confined to nations with a high level of digital development, leaving theoretical and empirical gaps for countries with lower levels of digital development. Furthermore, because the reference year for the ICT report is 2017, there may be data discrepancies. Future studies should focus on other countries and include the most up-to-date statistics on digital advancement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was supported by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development through Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

**XVIII INTERNATIONAL MAY CONFERENCE ON STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT –
IMCSM22**

Plenary papers

**DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OF THE
ULTRASONIC WELDING PROCESS USING SIX SIGMA APPROACH**
Predrag Đorđević, Predrag Mladenović, Kristina Stamenković.....p1

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SIMPLE WISP METHOD AND ITS EXTENSIONS?
Dragisa Stanujkic.....p15

**STRATEGIC APPROACH TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN SERBIA:
TRENDS, PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES**
Vladimir Mihajlović.....p25

SUCCESS OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS – A CASE OF ONLINE TEACHING
Darko Stefanović, Teodora Lolić, Dušan Krstić.....p35

**A FUZZY HYBRID MCDM MODEL TO SOLVING THE TRANSPORTATION
COMPANY SELECTION PROBLEM**
Alptekin Ulutaş.....p44

Conference papers

JOB STRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY
Vidhya Vinayachandran, Sreedisha A.K.1

**THE CONCEPT OF LEAN PRODUCTION: NEW POINT OF VIEW ON
COMPETITIVENESS OF BUSINESS**
Irina Somina, Victor Kondakov, Maxim Kondakov.....12

BIG DATA IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Olga Anatolievna Chernova, Inna Vasilievna Mitrofanova, Marina Vladimirovna
Pleshakova, Elena Valerievna Kleitman.....18

**COMPETITIVE, SUSTAINABLE, SECURE AND BALANCED DEVELOPMENT
OF A REGION: A NEW BEGINNING IN THE POST-COVID WORLD**

Inna V. Mitrofanova, Natalia N. Kiseleva, Tatiana B. Ivanova, Victoria V. Batmanova.....	27
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: THE SUPPLY CHAIN CASE	
Vesna Spasojević Brkić, Branislav Tomic.....	37
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF BUSINESS MODELS: THEORETICAL PREREQUISITES AND PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION IN THE ROSTOV REGION	
Anastasia Y. Nikitaeva, Tatiana S. Laskova, Ekaterina E. Aydarkina, Liudmila P. Amiri.....	47
THEORETICAL ISSUES IN DEMATEL	
Petra Grošelj, Tjaša, Šmidovnik.....	56
THE PRACTICE OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SERBIA: THE RESULTS FROM CRANET 2021	
Nemanja Berber.....	66
OPTIMIZATION OF PROCESS PARAMETERS IN PRODUCTION OF PVC PRODUCTS TO IMPROVE QUALITY BY THE TECHNOLOGICAL EXTRUSION PROCESS USING TAGUCHI METHOD	
Aleksandar Krstić, Snežana Urošević, Đorđe Nikolić.....	75
CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT: DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATIONS	
Agnes Kemendi, Pal Michelberger, Agata Mesjasz-Lech.....	85
EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON WOMEN WORKFORCE PERCEPTION IN INTERNATIONAL HOTEL INDUSTRY	
Chutinon Putthiwanit, Velga Vēvere, Orhan Akova, Agota Giedrė Raišienė.....	101
CASE STUDY OF HORIZONTAL COOPERATION IN LOGISTICS: THE POTENTIAL OF PRICE REDUCTION THROUGH TRANSPORT BUNDLING IN GENERAL CARGO DELIVERY IN THE GERMAN FOOD INDUSTRY	
Boris Zimmermann, Philipp Knauf, Moritz Klein, Sarah Fakhreddine.....	110
SUSTAINABLE LOGISTICS: ANALYSING THE TRUCK MARKET IN REGARD TO THE POTENTIAL OF BUYING BATTERY-ELECTRIC TRUCKS	
Philipp Knauf, Boris Zimmermann.....	121
POVERTY AND REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SELF-EMPLOYED IN SERBIA	
Kosovka Ognjenović, Dejana Pavlović, Duško Bodroža.....	131

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND INDIVIDUAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION	
Ani Mbrica, Biljana Panin, Ina Keçi, Ermira Qosja.....	141
ANALYZING INTENTIONS TOWARD SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP. DO VALUES MATTER?	
Ina Keçi, Ermira Qosja, Ani Mbrica.....	151
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AS A DETERMINANT OF THE PURCHASE OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL BRANDS	
Jovana Filipović.....	161
E-GOVERNMENT IN THE CONDITIONS OF SELECTED SLOVAK CITY	
Lenka Labudová, Denisa Jánošová.....	171
PANDEMIC CHALLENGES IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR GENERATIONS Y AND Z	
Noémi Piricz.....	183
AUTOMATED ASSISTANCE IN HAZARDOUS MANUFACTURING PROCESSES TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND REDUCE WORKERS BODILY RISKS: A LITERATURE REVIEW	
Md Abdullah Al Mamun, Buics Laszlo.....	193
ON-DEMAND TRANSPORTATION SERVICE: SYSTEM APPLICATION AND ESSENTIAL STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION	
Adhie Prayogo, Buics László.....	210
THE ROLE OF ETHICS IN SME DECISION-MAKING	
Gábor Gyarmati, Bálint Göttli.....	223
SHOPPING EXPERIENCE - IMPUTING EMOTIONS TO DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FOOD	
Azeta Tartaraj, Ariola Harizi, Howard R. Moskowitz.....	235
THE EFFECT OF INDUSTRY 4.0 ON INTERNATIONALIZATION: CASE OF ALBANIAN FASHION INDUSTRY	
Denada Lica.....	247
CULINARY TOURISM INFLUENCE IN DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AREAS	
Drita Kruja, Irina Canco.....	254
HYBRID CRITIC-TOPSIS MODEL FOR PRIORITIZING DIGITALLY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN THE LIGHT OF ENERGY INDICATORS	
Ivana Petkovski, Ivan Mihajlović, Aleksandra Fedajev.....	264

RISK ASSESSMENT OF BACKHOE LOADER DOWNTIMES

Mirjana Misita, Vesna Spasojević Brkić, Aleksandar Brkić, Zorica Veljković, Martina Perišić, Neda Papić, Abdulghder Mohamed Al Sharif.....278

EXIGOUS HORIZONTAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CEP MARKET PLAYERS – LITERATURE REVIEW

Csilla Bartucz, Edit Süle.....287

POSITIONING OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA ACCORDING TO THE INDEX OF DIGITAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

Sanela Arsić, Anđelka Stojanović, Isidora Milošević, Milena Gajić.....300

COAL AS A SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE OF SERBIA AND RISK POTENTIALS OF WORLD ENERGY NEEDS FOR ENERGIES

Slobodan Radosavljević, Nikola Ille, Milan Radosavljević, Ivana Radosavljević.....310

INDUSTRY 5.0 AND RISKS IN THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE

Slobodan Radosavljević, Nikola Ille, Milan Radosavljević, Ivana Radosavljević.....321

THE ROLE OF YOUNG GENERATIONS IN ENSURING OF CHINESE FAMILY SMES COMPETITIVENESS

Marina Sheresheva, Ximeng Ye, Daniel Pavlov.....331

THE EFFICIENCY OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: PRISMA COMPLIANT LITERATURE REVIEW OF DEA APPLICATIONS

Katerina Fotova Čiković.....337

WORKING ACTIVITY COMPOSITION FOR K-12 TEACHERS IN LINK EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE, EXPLORATORY RESEARCH REGARDING OBSERVED TEACHER'S WORKLOAD AND PROJECTED DISTRIBUTION

Valentin Kuleto, Milena P. Ilić, Rocsana Bucea-Manea-Țoniș, Zorana Živanović, Dan Păun.....348

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPPLY CHAIN AGILITY AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG EMPLOYEES OF KNOWLEDGE-BASED COMPANIES

Maftoon Mahmoodi, Velga Vevere.....358

EVOLUTIONARY PATH OF INCREMENTALISM AND ITS MODERN APPLICATION

Artem Darenin.....370

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT WITHIN THE FAMILY AS A FACTOR STIMULATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY BUSINESS

Julia Murzina, Daniel Pavlov.....377

LINKING INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP AND INDUSTRY 4.0 FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY AMONGST THE SMES IN THE UAE	
Hima Parameswaran.....	383
GENDER PECULIARITIES OF THE WILLINGNESS OF THE YOUTH TO HAVE A FAMILY BUSINESS	
Svetlana Shvab, Julia Murzina, Daniel Pavlov.....	395
THE SIGNIFICANCE AND THE ROLE OF BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT IN DIGITAL BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION	
Danijel Horvat.....	401
RESEARCH OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS MEANS OF COMMUNICATION FOR INDUSTRIAL BRANDS	
Gulnaz I. Khaibrakhmanova, Natalya B. Safronova.....	410
A COMPARATIVE STUDY ABOUT WILLINGNESS OF SERBIAN AND BULGARIAN STUDENTS TOWARDS INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILY BUSINESSES	
Milica Veličković, Daniel Pavlov.....	422
THE MAJOR MENTAL PRESSURES FACED BY DIFFERENT GROUPS OF FRONTLINE PROFESSIONALS UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW	
Ligita Gasparėnienė, Rita Remeikiene.....	436
EVALUATION OF THE SHADOW ECONOMY DETERMINANTS IN THE LITHUANIAN LABOUR MARKET	
Rita Remeikiene, Ligita Gasparėnienė, Justina Bankauskienė	445
MULTI-CRITERIA ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERISTICS OF REMOTE EMPLOYEE MONITORING SYSTEMS	
Dušan Bogdanović, Srđan Sladojević, Marko Arsenović, Andraš Anderla.....	455
DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH ONLINE TEACHING - EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN SERBIA	
Viktorija Petrov, Zoran Drašković, Đorđe Ćellić, Zorica Uzelac.....	464
LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISO 14000 SERIES OF STANDARDS	
Ana Stojković, Nenad Krstić, Dragan Đorđević, Nikola Igić, Ivan Krstić.....	473
SOME SPECIAL RESULTS OF ICT REVOLUTION	
András Keszthelyi.....	479

ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY AND PERFORMANCE IN A CRISIS: THE CASE OF BULGARIAN TEXTILE AND APPAREL COMPANIES

Vesselina Maximova.....485

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEES DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ON THE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON INVESTMENT PROJECTS

Nenad Milijić, Ivan Jovanović, Aleksandra Radić.....494

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF TRADE COMPANIES, BY REGIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Adrijana Jevtić, Jelena Radojičić, Mirjana Jemović.....505

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN BUSINESS DIGITALIZATION

Adrijana Jevtić, Dejan Riznić, Goran Milovanović, Aleksandra Radić.....521

ASSESSMENT OF DIFFERENCES IN SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS ACROSS EUROPEAN ECONOMIES

Aleksandra Fedajev, Danijela Voza, Milica Veličković, Marija Panić.....531

INNOVATION INPUTS AND OUTPUTS IN WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES AS A DRIVER OF THEIR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Aleksandra Fedajev, Marija Panić, Živan Živković.....542

ANALYSIS OF THE ATTITUDE OF THE STUDENT POPULATION TOWARDS THE FAMILY BUSINESS

Aleksandra Radić, Anđelka Stojanović, Ivica Nikolić.....557