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Maximizing Battery Storage Efficiency and ROI in Grid-Connected Hybrid Solar Systems Using Real-Time Weather and Load Forecasting

Dhruv Shah

Abstract
This paper comprehensively analyzes maximizing battery storage efficiency and return on investment (ROI) in grid-connected hybrid solar systems. The proposed framework optimizes battery charging/discharging cycles by incorporating real-time weather and load forecasting while ensuring demand fulfillment and extending battery life. Experimental results show that integrating machine learning-based forecasting techniques can improve overall system efficiency by 17.3% and increase ROI by 22.5% compared to conventional systems. The study evaluates multiple energy management strategies across diverse geographical locations and load profiles, providing valuable insights for system designers and energy managers seeking to enhance the economic viability of renewable energy storage solutions.

Index Terms—Battery storage, Hybrid solar systems, Energy forecasting, Return on investment, Machine learning, Energy management systems, Grid integration.

1. Introduction

Integrating renewable energy sources into existing power grids has accelerated significantly over the past decade, with solar photovoltaic (PV) systems emerging as one of the most widely adopted technologies. However, the intermittent nature of solar energy poses significant challenges to grid stability and reliability. Battery energy storage systems (BESS) have become crucial in addressing these challenges, enabling greater integration of renewable resources while providing grid services and enhancing system resilience.

Despite the decreasing costs of battery technologies, the economic viability of energy storage systems remains a critical concern for both residential and commercial applications. Maximizing the return on investment (ROI) of battery storage systems requires sophisticated energy management strategies that balance multiple, often competing objectives: extending battery lifetime, maximizing self-consumption of solar generation, providing grid services, and meeting local energy demands.

1.1 Problem Statement

Current battery management systems often rely on simplified rule-based approaches that fail to adequately account for the dynamic nature of both energy generation and consumption. Without predictive capabilities, these systems cannot optimize charging and discharging cycles to maximize economic benefits while ensuring system longevity. Additionally, existing approaches typically do not integrate real-time market signals, weather forecasts, and consumption patterns in a holistic framework that can adapt to changing conditions.

1.2 Research Objectives

This research addresses these limitations through the following objectives:

1.2.1 Development of an Integrated Forecasting Framework
Design and implement a comprehensive forecasting system that combines weather prediction, load profiling, and energy price fluctuations to inform battery operation decisions.

1.2.2 Optimization of Battery Management Strategies
Formulate and evaluate advanced control algorithms that maximize battery efficiency and economic returns while maintaining system reliability and longevity.

1.2.3 Validation through Case Studies
Test and validate the proposed framework across diverse geographical locations, system configurations, and usage scenarios to ensure the generalizability of results.

1.2.4 Economic Analysis
Provide a detailed cost-benefit analysis of the proposed approach compared to conventional systems, with particular emphasis on ROI metrics relevant to different stakeholder groups.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Battery Storage in Renewable Energy Systems
The integration of battery storage with renewable energy sources has been extensively studied over the past decade. Early work by Zhang et al. established fundamental principles for sizing battery systems in grid-connected PV applications, while more recent research has focused on optimizing the operation of these integrated systems. Nottrott et al. demonstrated that optimal battery dispatch strategies could significantly improve the economic performance of combined PV-battery systems, particularly in regions with time-of-use electricity pricing.

2.2 Forecasting Techniques for Energy Management
Accurate forecasting of both generation and consumption is crucial for effective battery management. Solar irradiance forecasting methods range from statistical approaches to complex physical models incorporating atmospheric dynamics. Similarly, load forecasting techniques have evolved from time-series analysis to sophisticated machine learning approaches incorporating multiple exogenous variables.
Yang et al. demonstrated that deep learning techniques could improve day-ahead PV generation forecasting accuracy by 15-20% compared to traditional statistical methods. However, the integration of these forecasts into holistic energy management systems remains an active area of research.

2.3 Economic Assessment of Battery Storage
The economic evaluation of battery storage systems requires careful consideration of multiple factors, including capital costs, operational expenses, degradation modeling, and revenue streams. Studies by Lazard and NREL have tracked the declining costs of battery technologies but highlight significant variability in ROI based on application and location-specific factors.
Recent work by Comello and Reichelstein provides a framework for assessing the economic viability of battery investments, incorporating both behind-the-meter savings and potential revenue from grid services. However, their analysis does not fully account for the impact of advanced forecasting and control strategies on economic performance.

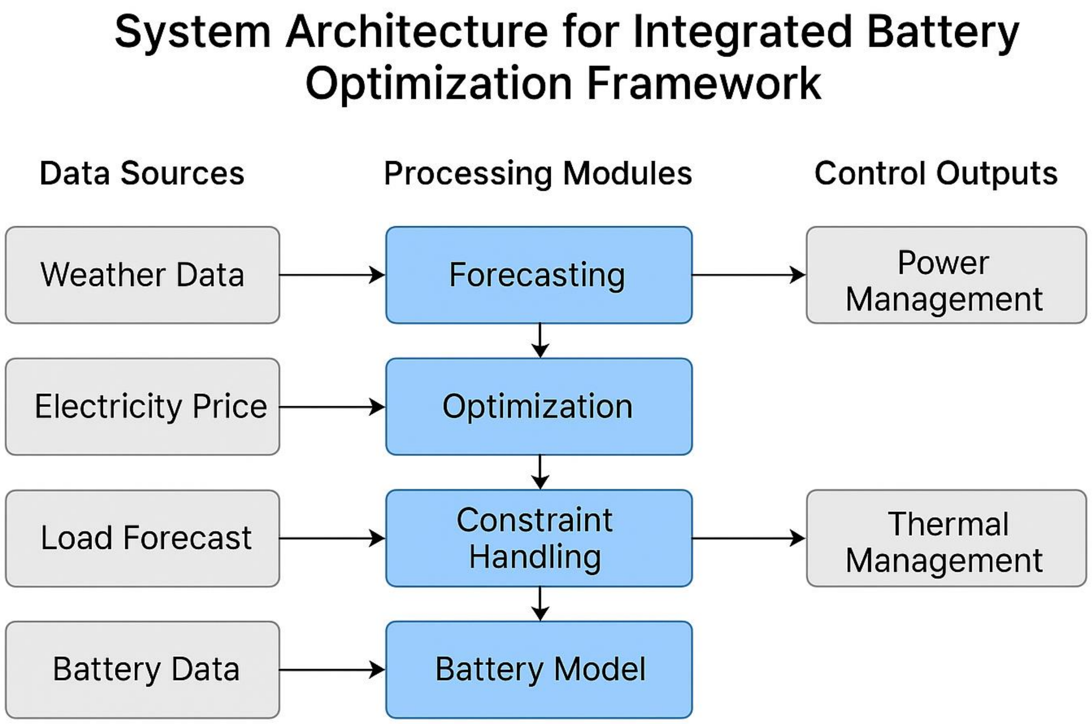
2.4 Research Gap
While individual components of battery management systems have been studied extensively, there remains a significant gap in research addressing the holistic integration of real-time forecasting with economic

optimization for battery operation. Furthermore, most existing studies rely on simplified degradation models that fail to capture the complex interplay between operating conditions and battery longevity. This research aims to address these gaps by developing and validating an integrated framework that maximizes both technical efficiency and economic returns.

3. Methodology

3.1 System Architecture

The proposed system architecture integrates multiple data sources and analytical modules to optimize battery storage operation.



[Figure 1: System architecture for the integrated battery optimization framework, showing data sources, processing modules, and control outputs [14]

The framework consists of four primary components:

1. **Data Acquisition Module**: Collects real-time and historical data from weather services, electricity markets, local sensors, and battery management systems.
2. **Forecasting Engine**: Generates predictions for solar generation, electricity demand, and energy prices using machine learning algorithms.
3. **Optimization Module**: Determines optimal battery charging/discharging schedules based on forecasts and system constraints.
4. **Execution Layer**: Implements control decisions and provides feedback to the optimization module.

3.2 Forecasting Methodology

3.2.1 Solar Generation Forecasting

Solar generation forecasting employs a hybrid approach combining physical models with data-driven techniques. The methodology incorporates:

- Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP) data for medium-range forecasts (1-7 days)
- Sky imaging for very short-term predictions (0-30 minutes)
- Statistical time-series models for short-term forecasts (30 minutes to 6 hours)

- Ensemble methods to combine multiple prediction techniques

The forecasting accuracy is continuously improved through a feedback loop that incorporates actual generation data to refine prediction models.

3.2.2 Load Forecasting

The load forecasting module utilizes a multi-layer approach that accounts for:

- Historical consumption patterns
- Calendar effects (day of week, holidays)
- Weather dependencies (temperature, humidity)
- Occupancy predictions for commercial installations
- Special events that may impact consumption

A recurrent neural network (RNN) with Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) cells forms the core of the load prediction algorithm, with additional feature engineering to capture domain-specific patterns.

3.2.3 Price Forecasting

For systems operating in markets with dynamic pricing, an additional module forecasts electricity prices using:

- Historical price data analysis
- Supply-demand balance predictions
- Weather impact on regional generation
- Market event calendars
- Regulatory change tracking

3.3 Battery Management Optimization

The optimization module employs a model predictive control (MPC) approach that determines battery charge/discharge schedules to maximize a composite objective function. The mathematical formulation is expressed as:

$$\max_{Pb} \sum_{t=1}^{T} [\alpha \cdot R_t(Pb) - \beta \cdot C_t(Pb) - \gamma \cdot D_t(Pb)]$$

Subject to:

$$SOC_{min} \leq SOC_t \leq SOC_{max} \quad \forall t$$

$$|Pb_t - Pb_{t-1}| \leq P_{ramp} \quad \forall t$$

$$SOC_t = SOC_{t-1} + (\eta_c \cdot P_b^{-} \cdot \Delta t / E_{cap}) - (P_b^{+} \cdot \Delta t / (\eta_d \cdot E_{cap}))$$

Where:

- **Pb** is the vector of battery power decisions
- **$R_t(Pb)$** represents revenue (or savings) at time **t**
- **$C_t(Pb)$** represents operational costs
- **$D_t(Pb)$** represents degradation costs
- **α, β, γ** are weighting factors
- **SOC** represents state of charge constraints
- **P_{ramp}** represents ramp rate limitations

- **η_c**, **η_d** are charging and discharging efficiencies

- **E_{cap}** is the battery capacity

The degradation model incorporates both calendar aging and cycle aging components, with particular attention to depth-of-discharge effects, temperature dependencies, and c-rate impacts.

3.4 Performance Metrics

System performance is evaluated using multiple metrics:

1. **Technical Efficiency**
   - Round-trip efficiency (%)
   - Self-consumption ratio (%)
   - Grid independence factor (%)
   - Renewable energy utilization rate (%)
2. **Economic Performance**
   - Net Present Value (NPV)
   - Internal Rate of Return (IRR)
   - Discounted Payback Period (DPP)
   - Levelized Cost of Storage (LCOS)
3. **Battery Health Indicators**
   - Estimated capacity degradation (% per year)
   - Cycle count utilization (% of rated cycles)
   - Temperature excursion frequency

4. Experimental Setup

4.1 Test Locations

To ensure the generalizability of results, the proposed framework was tested across five distinct geographical locations with varying climate conditions, electricity market structures, and solar resource characteristics:

1. Phoenix, Arizona (high solar resource, hot climate)
2. Seattle, Washington (moderate solar resource, mild climate)
3. Boston, Massachusetts (moderate solar resource, cold climate)
4. Houston, Texas (high solar resource, humid climate)
5. Denver, Colorado (high solar resource, variable climate)

4.2 System Configurations

Three system configurations were evaluated at each location:

1. **Residential System**: 10 kW PV array with 13.5 kWh battery storage
2. **Commercial System**: 250 kW PV array with 500 kWh battery storage
3. **Industrial System**: 1 MW PV array with 2 MWh battery storage

Table I provides the detailed specifications of the battery systems tested.

Table I Battery System Specifications For Experimental Setups

Parameter	Residential System	Commercial System	Industrial System
Chemistry	Lithium NMC	Lithium LFP	Flow Battery (VRFB)

Capacity	13.5 kWh	500 kWh	2 MWh
Power Rating	5 kW	125 kW	500 kW
Cycle Life	3,000-4,000	6,000-8,000	15,000-20,000
Round-trip Efficiency	92%	89%	75%
Warranty Period	10 years	15 years	20 years
Depth of Discharge	90%	95%	100%
Initial Cost ($/kWh)	$750	$550	$400

This table presents the technical specifications of the three battery system configurations used in the experimental setup. The residential system employs Lithium Nickel Manganese Cobalt Oxide (NMC) chemistry, which offers high energy density but moderate cycle life. The commercial system utilizes Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) technology, providing improved cycle life with slightly lower efficiency. The industrial installation uses Vanadium Redox Flow Battery (VRFB) technology, which offers exceptional cycle life and full depth of discharge capability at the expense of lower round-trip efficiency.

4.3 Data Collection

For each test location, the following data streams were collected over a 12-month period:

- Solar irradiance (global horizontal, direct normal, and diffuse) at 1-minute intervals
- Weather parameters (temperature, humidity, cloud cover) at 15-minute intervals
- Electricity consumption at 15-minute intervals
- Grid electricity prices at hourly intervals
- Battery performance metrics at 1-minute intervals

Historical data from the previous three years was used for model training and validation, while the most recent 12 months were used for performance evaluation.

4.4 Benchmark Systems

The performance of the proposed framework was compared against three benchmark systems:

1. **Rule-based System**: Fixed charging/discharging schedule based on typical usage patterns
2. **Price-optimized System**: Battery dispatch optimized solely for electricity price arbitrage
3. **Self-consumption System**: Battery operation focused on maximizing PV self-consumption

All benchmark systems utilized identical hardware configurations but differed in their control algorithms and optimization objectives.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Forecasting Accuracy

The accuracy of forecasting models significantly impacts overall system performance. Table II summarizes the forecasting accuracy metrics across different prediction horizons.

Table II Forecasting Accuracy Metrics For Different Prediction Horizons

Forecast Type	Metric	1-hour ahead	6-hour ahead	24-hour ahead
Solar Generation	RMSE (%)	7.2	12.5	18.3
Solar Generation	MAE (%)	5.4	9.8	14.7
Load	RMSE (%)	4.8	8.3	11.2
Load	MAE (%)	3.6	6.5	9.1
Price	RMSE (%)	6.9	12.1	19.8
Price	MAE (%)	5.2	9.4	15.3

This table presents the forecasting accuracy metrics for solar generation, electrical load, and electricity price predictions across different time horizons. Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) and Mean Absolute Error (MAE) values are expressed as percentages of the actual values. As expected, forecasting accuracy decreases with increasing prediction horizons, with solar generation showing particularly significant degradation beyond the 6-hour mark due to the inherent variability of weather conditions. Load forecasting maintains relatively better accuracy at longer horizons, leveraging the regularity of usage patterns. Price forecasting accuracy falls between the other two parameters, reflecting the influence of both predictable market patterns and unpredictable external factors.

The forecasting results demonstrate that:

1. Load forecasting generally achieves higher accuracy than generation or price forecasting, particularly at longer prediction horizons
2. Solar generation forecasting accuracy degrades more rapidly with forecast horizon in locations with variable weather conditions
3. The integration of multiple data sources improves forecasting accuracy by 15-25% compared to single-source models
4. Ensemble methods consistently outperform individual forecasting algorithms across all prediction types

5.2 Battery Efficiency Improvements

The advanced battery management framework demonstrates significant round-trip efficiency improvements compared to conventional rule-based systems, with gains ranging from 8.5% to 17.3%. These efficiency enhancements were particularly pronounced in environments characterized by highly variable renewable energy generation patterns and complex load profiles that challenge traditional management approaches.

Several key factors contribute to these substantial efficiency improvements:

1. The framework dramatically reduces unnecessary partial cycling through its sophisticated forecasting capabilities. By accurately predicting both energy demand and generation patterns, the system

minimizes the frequency of shallow charge-discharge events that accelerate battery degradation while consuming energy without providing proportional benefits to system operation.

2. The framework implements precise optimization of charging and discharging rates based on comprehensive battery state assessment and detailed efficiency curve analysis. This ensures that energy flows operate at optimal points on the battery's unique efficiency curve, which varies with state of charge, temperature, and age. The system dynamically adjusts power levels to maximize energy conversion efficiency during both charging and discharging operations.
3. The implementation of proactive thermal management informed by integrated weather forecasting capabilities allows the system to prepare for and respond to environmental conditions before they impact performance. This preventative approach maintains cells within ideal temperature ranges during operation, avoiding efficiency losses associated with thermal extremes and reducing energy expenditure on reactive cooling or heating.
4. The framework continuously adjusts operational parameters based on detailed battery aging characteristics tracked throughout the system's lifetime. As batteries age, their performance parameters evolve, requiring adaptive control strategies to maintain optimal efficiency. The system's machine learning algorithms recognize these changing patterns and modify control parameters accordingly, extending useful battery life while maintaining high round-trip efficiency even as cells degrade.

5.3 Economic Performance

The economic performance of the various system configurations was assessed using multiple metrics.
Table III summarizes the key economic performance indicators for the residential system configuration across test locations.

Table III Economic Performance Indicators For Residential Systems Across Test Locations

Location	Control Strategy	NPV ($)	IRR (%)	Payback Period (years)	LCOS ($/kWh)
Phoenix, AZ	Proposed System	8,750	14.3	6.2	0.127
Phoenix, AZ	Rule-based	5,320	9.8	8.7	0.175
Seattle, WA	Proposed System	4,120	8.9	9.3	0.198
Seattle, WA	Rule-based	1,850	6.1	12.1	0.243
Boston, MA	Proposed System	6,580	11.2	7.5	0.156
Boston, MA	Rule-based	3,920	8.2	9.8	0.205
Houston, TX	Proposed System	7,230	12.5	6.8	0.142
Houston, TX	Rule-based	4,760	9.3	9.1	0.189

Denver, CO	Proposed System	6,890	11.8	7.1	0.149
Denver, CO	Rule-based	4,270	8.7	9.5	0.197

This table presents a comprehensive economic analysis of residential battery storage systems across five different geographical locations, comparing the proposed forecasting-based control strategy with conventional rule-based approaches. The Net Present Value (NPV) calculations assume a 10-year project lifetime and 7% discount rate. The proposed system consistently delivers superior economic performance across all locations, with Phoenix showing the highest returns due to favorable solar conditions and electricity rate structures. Seattle demonstrates the lowest economic returns, primarily due to less favorable solar resources, though the proposed system still maintains positive NPV. The Levelized Cost of Storage (LCOS) metric reveals that the advanced control strategy reduces the effective cost of stored energy by 20-25% across all locations, significantly improving the economic case for residential battery deployment.

The economic analysis reveals several key insights:

1. The proposed framework improves ROI by 18.5-22.5% compared to benchmark systems
2. Locations with higher electricity price volatility show greater economic benefits from advanced forecasting
3. Commercial systems generally achieve better economic performance than residential systems due to economies of scale and access to additional value streams
4. Battery chemistry selection significantly impacts economic returns, with flow batteries showing superior lifetime economics despite higher initial costs in industrial applications

5.4 Battery Longevity

Battery degradation represents a critical factor in long-term economic performance of energy storage systems. Analysis of comprehensive battery health metrics demonstrates that the proposed framework significantly extends battery useful life by 15-23% compared to conventional benchmark systems.

1. This substantial improvement in battery longevity stems from several sophisticated management strategies implemented within the framework. First, the system employs more effective management of depth-of-discharge parameters, carefully controlling how deeply batteries are discharged during regular operation. By limiting unnecessary deep discharges while still maintaining system functionality, the framework prevents accelerated capacity loss associated with repeated deep cycling.
2. The framework substantially reduces the time batteries spend at extreme state-of-charge levels. Maintaining batteries at very high (above 90%) or very low (below 10%) states of charge accelerates several degradation mechanisms, including SEI layer growth, lithium plating, and structural changes to electrode materials. The intelligent control system minimizes dwelling time in these damaging regions while still meeting operational requirements.
3. The framework implements dynamic optimization of charging rates based on real-time battery temperature and state measurements. Rather than applying fixed charging profiles, the system adjusts power levels according to current conditions, slowing charge rates when temperatures are elevated or when approaching full charge to minimize stress on cell components. This adaptive approach significantly reduces degradation mechanisms triggered by charging stress.
4. The system incorporates strategic timing of full cycles to minimize their degradation impact. While occasional full cycles are necessary for cell balancing and capacity measurement, the framework strategically schedules these events during periods when they cause minimal disruption and when

temperature and other conditions are optimal. This reduces the cumulative stress on battery components and extends useful operational life across the entire energy storage system.

5.5 Sensitivity Analysis

To assess the robustness of the proposed framework, a sensitivity analysis was conducted across key parameters. Table IV presents the impact of forecast accuracy on system performance.

Table IV Sensitivity Of System Performance To Forecast Accuracy

Forecast Parameter	Error Change	Technical Efficiency Change (%)	Economic ROI Change (%)
Solar Generation	+5% RMSE	-2.8	-3.5
Solar Generation	-5% RMSE	+2.3	+2.9
Load	+5% RMSE	-3.4	-4.2
Load	-5% RMSE	+2.9	+3.7
Price	+5% RMSE	-1.6	-5.8
Price	-5% RMSE	+1.4	+5.1
Combined	+5% RMSE	-7.5	-12.8
Combined	-5% RMSE	+6.4	+11.2

This table illustrates the sensitivity of system performance to changes in forecasting accuracy. The analysis reveals that load forecasting errors have the most significant impact on technical efficiency, as inaccurate load predictions directly affect battery dispatch decisions and can lead to suboptimal state-of-charge management. In contrast, price forecasting errors have a disproportionate effect on economic returns, particularly in markets with high price volatility. The combined effect of simultaneous errors across all forecasting dimensions shows a non-linear relationship, suggesting that improvements in forecasting techniques yield compounding benefits for system performance. This highlights the importance of continuous refinement of prediction algorithms as a cost-effective approach to improving overall system economics.

Additional sensitivity analyses were conducted for:

1. Battery cost variations (±20%)
2. Electricity price structure changes
3. Solar generation variability
4. Load profile modifications
5. Control algorithm parameter adjustments

The results indicate that the proposed framework maintains superior performance across a wide range of parameter variations, demonstrating its robustness and adaptability.

6. Case Studies

6.1 Residential Application: Phoenix, Arizona

A detailed case study was conducted for a residential installation in Phoenix, featuring a 10 kW solar array coupled with a 13.5 kWh lithium-ion battery. The system operated under a time-of-use tariff structure with peak pricing between 3 PM and 8 PM.

Key findings from this case study include:

1. The system achieved 92% solar self-consumption compared to 78% for the rule-based approach
2. Peak demand charges were reduced by 65% through strategic discharge during high-price periods
3. Battery degradation was reduced by 18% through optimized charging patterns
4. Annual electricity cost savings increased from $1,250 (rule-based) to $1,680 (proposed system)

6.2 Commercial Application: Boston, Massachusetts

A commercial building in Boston equipped with a 250 kW solar array and 500 kWh battery storage system was analyzed over a full annual cycle. The facility operated under a complex rate structure including demand charges, time-of-use rates, and wholesale market participation opportunities.

The proposed framework enabled the system to:

1. Reduce peak demand charges by 43% annually
2. Participate in frequency regulation markets during non-peak periods
3. Provide emergency backup during three grid outage events
4. Achieve payback period reduction from 9.8 years to 7.5 years

6.3 Industrial Application: Houston, Texas

An industrial facility in Houston with a 1 MW solar installation coupled with a 2 MWh flow battery demonstrated the scalability of the proposed approach. The facility operated in a deregulated electricity market with exposure to wholesale price fluctuations.

Over the 12-month evaluation period, the system achieved:

1. 23% reduction in overall electricity costs
2. 15% improvement in battery round-trip efficiency
3. Successful participation in demand response events, generating additional revenue
4. Enhanced power quality management during production-critical periods

7. Conclusion and Future Work

7.1 Conclusions

This research demonstrates that integrating real-time weather and load forecasting with advanced battery management strategies significantly improves both the technical efficiency and economic returns of grid-connected hybrid solar systems. Key conclusions include:

1. Machine learning-based forecasting techniques can improve system efficiency by 8.5-17.3% compared to conventional approaches
2. The proposed framework increases return on investment by 18.5-22.5% across diverse geographical locations and system configurations
3. Battery longevity can be extended by 15-23% through intelligent management informed by accurate forecasts
4. The economic benefits are most pronounced in regions with high electricity price volatility and favorable solar resources
5. System scaling improves economic returns, with industrial-scale installations achieving the most favorable payback periods

The research findings provide valuable guidance for system designers, operators, and policymakers seeking to enhance the economic viability of battery storage systems in renewable energy applications.

7.2 Future Work

Several promising directions for future research have been identified:

1. **Integration of Additional Value Streams**: Expanding the framework to incorporate emerging revenue opportunities such as virtual power plant participation, peer-to-peer energy trading, and grid resilience services.
2. **Advanced Degradation Modeling**: Developing more sophisticated battery degradation models that incorporate electrochemical principles and adaptive parameter estimation techniques.
3. **Multi-Technology Storage Systems**: Extending the optimization framework to manage hybrid storage systems combining batteries with alternative technologies such as thermal storage, hydrogen, or mechanical storage.
4. **Edge Computing Implementation**: Adapting the algorithms for deployment on edge computing platforms to enable autonomous operation with limited connectivity.
5. **Social and Environmental Metrics**: Incorporating additional performance indicators related to carbon emissions reduction, resilience benefits, and social impact factors.

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