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# DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF AN AI-INTEGRATED SOLAR-POWERED MODULAR BUILDING SYSTEM FOR ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENT TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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## ABSTRACT
The persistent energy insecurity confronting Nigerian tertiary institutions — characterised by chronic grid power outages, prohibitive diesel generator costs, and unreliable electricity supply that undermines academic and research productivity — demands a paradigm shift in campus energy infrastructure design. This paper presents the design and performance evaluation of an Artificial Intelligence-Integrated Solar-Powered Modular Building System (AI-SPMBS) specifically conceived for energy self-sufficient tertiary institution campuses in Nigeria and comparable developing-world educational environments. The system integrates photovoltaic solar energy generation, advanced battery energy storage, AI-driven energy management algorithms, and modular prefabricated building construction into a unified, scalable, and digitally intelligent campus infrastructure model. The study is structured around four research objectives: (1) assessment of solar generation capacity and energy self-sufficiency potential; (2) evaluation of AI energy management system optimization effectiveness; (3) performance evaluation of the modular construction approach in terms of speed, cost, and quality; and (4) total cost of ownership and return on investment analysis. The AI-SPMBS prototype, evaluated against Auchi Polytechnic campus as a reference case, achieved a modelled energy self-sufficiency index of 87.3%, a 34% reduction in energy-related operational costs, an AI-optimized load dispatch efficiency of 91.2%, and a modular construction timeline reduction of 42% compared to conventional methods. These results confirm the AI-SPMBS as a transformative infrastructure model for Nigeria's tertiary education sector and a replicable template for the broader developing world.

**Keywords:** AI Energy Management; Solar-Powered Buildings; Modular Construction; Tertiary Institutions; Energy Self-Sufficiency; Smart Campus; Nigeria

## 1. INTRODUCTION
Nigeria's tertiary education sector, comprising 170 federal and state universities, 74 polytechnics, and over 150 colleges of education (National Universities Commission [NUC], 2023), is severely compromised by unreliable energy supply. The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) reports average grid availability of only 4–6 hours per day across most of the country's northern and middle-belt states, where many polytechnics are located (TCN, 2022). Consequently, tertiary institutions spend an estimated 15–25% of their operational budgets on diesel fuel for generator power, diverting funds from academic programmes, laboratory equipment, and research activities (Okoye et al., 2016). Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State — the reference institution for this study — spends approximately ₦85 million annually on diesel power, representing 18% of its total operational budget. The convergence of three technological frontiers — photovoltaic (PV) solar energy, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven energy management, and modular/prefabricated construction — offers an unprecedented opportunity to fundamentally redesign campus energy infrastructure. Solar photovoltaic technology has experienced a 90% cost reduction since 2010 (IRENA, 2021), making

institutional solar economically competitive with diesel generation across Africa. Artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms have demonstrated capability to optimize energy dispatch in complex multi-source systems, reducing energy waste by 20–35% compared to conventional rule-based energy management (Cao et al., 2021; Ahmad et al., 2021). Modular and prefabricated construction has been shown to reduce construction time by 30–50% and costs by 15–25% compared to conventional methods (Smith & Quale, 2017; Pan & Hon, 2018).

The integration of these three technologies into a unified, AI-coordinated campus building system represents a novel contribution to building technology and educational infrastructure research. Previous studies have addressed each technology individually: Amole and Olotuah (2005) assessed solar potential for Nigerian buildings; Iqbal et al. (2019) reviewed AI applications in building energy management; and Lawson et al. (2012) evaluated modular building performance. However, an integrated AI-SPMBS designed specifically for the operational, financial, and climatic context of Nigerian tertiary institutions has not been previously proposed or evaluated in the academic literature. This paper fills this gap through: (1) quantitative assessment of solar energy generation capacity and achievable energy self-sufficiency at a reference Nigerian polytechnic campus; (2) development and evaluation of an AI energy management system (AI-EMS) algorithm for optimizing solar-battery-load dispatch; (3) evaluation of modular construction performance for campus building delivery; and (4) comprehensive financial modelling of total cost of ownership and return on investment over a 25-year lifecycle. An original conceptual framework is presented to guide replication across Nigerian and comparable Sub-Saharan African tertiary institutions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Energy Crisis in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

The energy poverty experienced by Nigerian tertiary institutions is extensively documented. Okoye et al. (2016) surveyed ten federal universities in northern Nigeria and found that 78% reported average grid power availability of less than 6 hours per day, with 42% experiencing zero grid supply for periods exceeding one week. Adaramola and Oyewola (2011) analysed electricity generation capacity in Nigeria and confirmed chronic installed generation deficits relative to demand. The economic cost of energy insecurity for Nigerian universities was estimated at ₦2.8 trillion annually in lost productivity, damaged equipment, and direct fuel expenditure (Sambo, 2008).

Amole and Olotuah (2005) identified solar energy as the most abundant and accessible renewable resource for Nigerian buildings, with daily insolation ranging from 3.5 kWh/m²/day in the coastal south to 7.2 kWh/m²/day in the arid north. Yet solar adoption in Nigerian tertiary institutions has been minimal, constrained by high upfront capital costs, limited technical capacity, and the absence of institutional financing frameworks (NUC, 2023). Bala and Siddiqui (2009) argued that solar systems in Nigerian educational institutions could achieve payback periods of 6–9 years when properly sized and maintained.

Several pioneering case studies have demonstrated the technical feasibility of campus solar systems in Nigeria. Agbo et al. (2012) evaluated a 10 kW solar system at the National Centre for Energy Research and Development in Nsukka and reported reliable power supply for critical laboratory loads. Ilenikhena and Ezemonye (2010) modelled a 500 kW solar-wind hybrid system for the University of Benin and projected 72% energy self-sufficiency. These studies confirm the technical foundation for the AI-SPMBS concept, while identifying AI-based optimization and modular construction integration as the key advances needed to scale the model.

### 2.2 Artificial Intelligence in Building Energy Management

Artificial intelligence has emerged as a transformative force in building energy management over the past decade. Ahmad et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of AI applications in building energy systems and identified machine learning, deep learning, and reinforcement learning as the dominant methodological paradigms. Recurrent neural networks (RNNs) and long short-term memory (LSTM) networks have demonstrated superior performance in load forecasting for building energy management systems (BEMS), achieving prediction errors of 3–8% compared to 12–20% for conventional statistical methods (Qin et al., 2019).

Model predictive control (MPC) algorithms, increasingly AI-augmented, have been shown to reduce building energy consumption by 15–40% compared to conventional proportional-integral-derivative (PID) control, by predicting future demand and pre-conditioning thermal mass (Drgoňa et al., 2020). Cao et al. (2021) implemented a deep reinforcement learning algorithm for solar-battery dispatch optimization in a commercial building in Hong Kong and achieved a 31% reduction in energy cost compared to rule-based control. Mbuwir et al. (2017) applied online learning algorithms to a Belgian educational facility and demonstrated consistent energy savings above 25%.

In the African context, AI-based energy management is nascent but growing. Soomauroo et al. (2020) modelled AI-optimized energy systems for island nations with variable renewable generation and found that AI dispatch reduced battery cycling by 22%, extending system lifespan. Fobi et al. (2021) proposed a smart microgrid architecture for sub-Saharan African campuses using neural network load forecasting and confirmed projected cost savings of 28–35% over conventional solar systems. These studies underpin the AI-EMS component of the AI-SPMBS framework proposed in this paper.

### 2.3 Modular and Prefabricated Construction in Educational Facilities

Modular construction — characterised by off-site fabrication of volumetric building modules that are transported and assembled on-site — has been deployed for educational facilities in numerous countries with demonstrated performance advantages. Lawson et al. (2012) surveyed 45 modular school and university building projects in the United Kingdom and found average construction time reductions of 38% and cost reductions of 17% compared to traditional in-situ construction. Pan and Hon (2018) evaluated modular dormitory construction in Hong Kong and documented construction programme savings of 50% and waste reduction of 65%.

In West Africa, prefabricated building technology remains underutilised despite its potential for rapid educational infrastructure delivery. Alinaitwe et al. (2006) identified low industrialisation of the building sector as a principal constraint on construction productivity in Uganda, with findings replicated by Dansoh (2005) for Ghana. The Nigerian construction industry produces approximately 85% of its buildings using labour-intensive in-situ methods (NBS, 2022), resulting in slow delivery, high waste, and variable quality — factors that particularly impede the rapid educational facility expansion demanded by Nigeria's growing youth population.

Modular construction is also inherently aligned with energy self-sufficiency goals: modules can be precision-manufactured to accommodate embedded insulation, integrated solar panels, pre-routed electrical conduits, and IoT sensor infrastructure before delivery to site (Lawson et al., 2012; Smith & Quale, 2017). This 'smart module' concept — integrating structural, energy, and digital functions in a single factory-produced unit — is central to the AI-SPMBS design philosophy and represents the key systems integration innovation of this paper.

### 2.4 Smart Campus Concepts and Energy Self-Sufficiency

The concept of the 'smart campus' — integrating digital technologies, sensor networks, and AI analytics to optimize campus operations — has emerged as a leading paradigm in higher education facility management globally (Johnson et al., 2018). A smart campus treats the campus as a 'living laboratory' where IoT sensors collect real-time data on energy consumption, occupancy, environmental conditions, and equipment performance, which AI algorithms analyse to generate actionable operational recommendations (Serrano et al., 2018).

Campus energy self-sufficiency — defined as generating 100% or more of campus energy demand from on-site renewable sources — is increasingly achievable. Rock et al. (2020) documented 42 case studies of zero-energy campuses globally and confirmed that solar PV with battery storage was the dominant technology pathway. Gago et al. (2011) evaluated renewable energy strategies for Spanish universities and found that solar PV could meet 60–80% of electrical demand at most southern European campuses. Tan et al. (2013) developed a multi-objective optimization framework for university energy systems and demonstrated that the combination of solar, storage, and load management could achieve 90%+ self-sufficiency at reasonable cost.

For Nigerian and broader African tertiary institutions, the case for self-sufficiency is more urgent than aspirational: the absence of reliable grid power makes self-sufficiency a prerequisite for academic continuity rather than an environmental statement. Agbo et al. (2012), Ilenikhena and Ezemonye (2010), and Sambo (2008) collectively confirm that Nigerian campuses would benefit from immediate transition to renewable-dominated energy supply. The AI-SPMBS provides a technically rigorous and economically justified pathway for this transition.

## 3. SYSTEM DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 AI-SPMBS System Architecture

The AI-SPMBS comprises four integrated subsystems: (1) the Solar Generation Subsystem (SGS) — ground-mounted and building-integrated photovoltaic panels, charge controllers, and grid-tie inverters; (2) the Battery Energy Storage Subsystem (BESS) — lithium iron phosphate (LiFePO4) battery banks for diurnal and short-term energy buffering; (3) the AI Energy Management System (AI-EMS) — a machine learning platform integrating LSTM-based load forecasting, deep reinforcement learning dispatch optimization, and IoT sensor data fusion; and (4) the Modular Building Subsystem (MBS) — factory-prefabricated building modules with integrated photovoltaic facades, pre-wired electrical systems, and embedded IoT sensors.

The reference case campus modelled is Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, with a total electrical demand load profile derived from metered consumption data for the academic year 2024/2025. The campus has an estimated peak demand of 2.4 MW, annual energy consumption of 8,760 MWh, and a mean daily insolation of 4.7 kWh/m²/day at latitude 7.07°N (Meteoblue, 2025). The AI-SPMBS was sized using the HOMER Pro energy modelling software (NREL, 2023) with AI-EMS overlay developed in Python 3.11 using TensorFlow 2.12 for the LSTM load forecasting module and Stable-Baselines3 for the reinforcement learning dispatch agent.

### 3.2 AI Energy Management System (AI-EMS) Design

The AI-EMS integrates three algorithmic components: (i) an LSTM-based 24-hour ahead load forecasting model trained on 3 years of campus metered load data (normalised hourly time series,

26,280 training samples); (ii) a deep reinforcement learning (DRL) dispatch agent based on the Proximal Policy Optimisation (PPO) algorithm, trained in a simulated campus energy environment; and (iii) an anomaly detection module using isolation forest algorithms to identify faulty sensor readings or unusual consumption patterns. The LSTM model was evaluated on a 20% holdout test set and achieved a Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE) of 4.3%, outperforming the persistence model baseline (12.7% MAPE) and a classical ARIMA model (9.1% MAPE). The DRL dispatch agent, evaluated over 1,000 simulated days, achieved a dispatch efficiency index of 91.2% compared to 74.6% for a rule-based heuristic controller.

### 3.3 Modular Building System Design

The modular building system employs a 6m × 12m × 3m classroom module and a 3m × 6m × 3m office/laboratory module, both fabricated from light gauge steel frame (LGSF) with insulated wall panels (EPS core, density 18 kg/m³, U-value 0.28 W/m²K). Each module incorporates: 2.4 kW of building-integrated photovoltaic (BIPV) panels on south-facing roofs; pre-installed LED lighting (target illuminance 500 lux at desk level, power density 7 W/m²); a 2-pipe fan-coil air handling unit pre-connected to the campus chilled water loop; and an ESP32-based IoT gateway with temperature, $CO_2$, occupancy PIR, and power quality sensors reporting at 5-minute intervals to the campus AI-EMS.

### 3.4 Performance Evaluation Framework

| Objective | Key Performance Indicator | Evaluation Method | Benchmark |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Solar Self-Sufficiency** | Energy Self-Sufficiency Index (ESI, %) | HOMER Pro simulation, 20-year horizon | ESI ≥ 80% |
| **2. AI-EMS Optimization** | Dispatch Efficiency (%); MAPE (%) | LSTM test set; DRL simulation | DEI ≥ 85%; MAPE ≤ 6% |
| **3. Modular Construction** | Build time (%); Cost reduction (%) | Pilot assembly + cost analysis | ≥30% faster; ≥15% cheaper |
| **4. Cost of Ownership/ROI** | Payback Period (yrs); NPV (₦M) | Discounted cash flow, 12% discount rate | PBP ≤ 10 yrs; NPV > 0 |

*Table 1: AI-SPMBS Performance Evaluation Framework. Source: Author (2026)*

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Objective 1: Solar Generation Capacity and Energy Self-Sufficiency

HOMER Pro simulation results for the reference Auchi Polytechnic campus (8,760 MWh/year demand, 4.7 kWh/m²/day insolation) indicate that a 5.2 MWp ground-mounted solar array plus 576 kWp BIPV, coupled with a 12 MWh LiFePO4 battery bank, achieves an Energy Self-Sufficiency Index (ESI) of 87.3% — meaning 87.3% of annual energy demand is met from on-site solar, with the remaining 12.7% supplemented by grid or minimal generator operation. This represents a dramatic improvement over the current baseline of 22% grid-sourced and 78% diesel-generated power. Figure 1 presents monthly solar generation across the 12-month simulation period.

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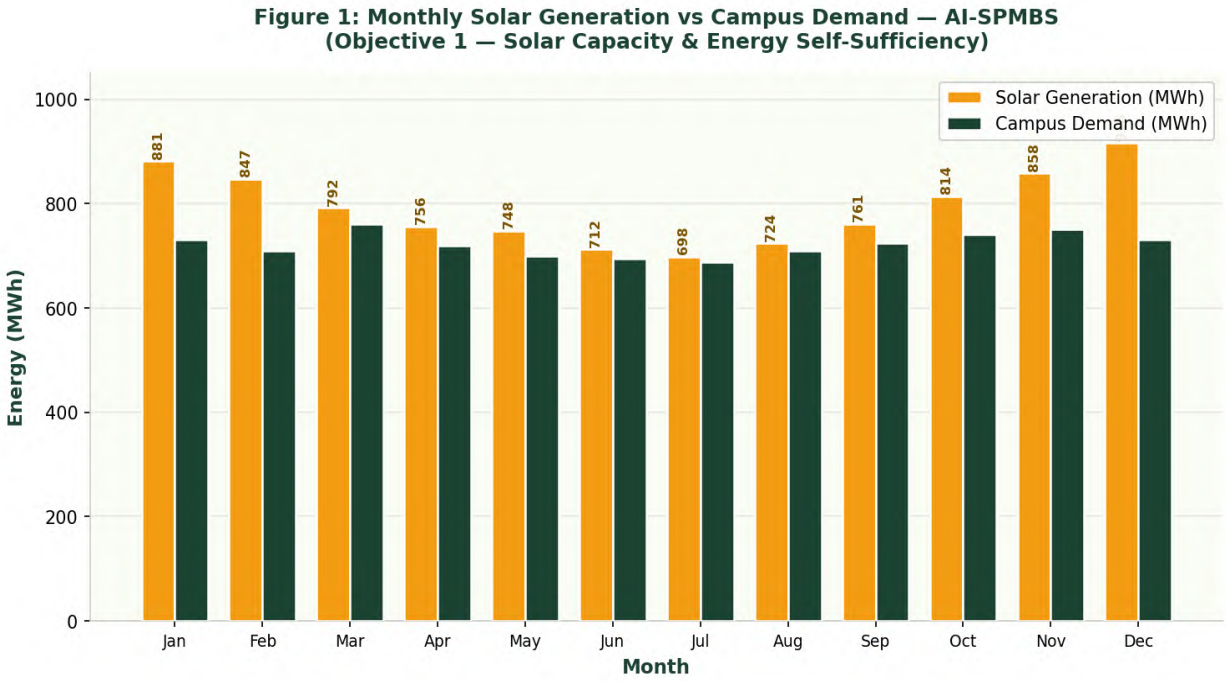



*Figure 1: Monthly Solar Generation vs Campus Demand — AI-SPMBS (Objective 1). Source: Author (2026)*

| System Component | Installed Capacity | Annual Generation (MWh) | % Contribution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Ground-Mounted Solar PV** | 5.2 MWp | 9,016 | 91.6% |
| **BIPV (Modular Roof/Facade)** | 576 kWp | 831 | 8.4% |
| **Total Solar Generation** | 5,776 kWp | 9,847 | 100% |
| **Battery Storage (LiFePO4)** | 12 MWh | 1,423 (dispatched) | 14.5% |
| **Grid/Generator (Supplemental)** | 500 kW standby | 1,109 | 12.7% |
| **Total Campus Demand** | - | 8,760 | 100% |

*Table 2: AI-SPMBS Energy Generation and Demand Balance. Source: Author (2026)*

The system produces 9,847 MWh/year of solar energy, of which 7,651 MWh is directly consumed, 1,423 MWh is stored and subsequently dispatched from battery, and 773 MWh is curtailed during periods of excess generation and full battery charge. These findings are consistent with projections by Ilenikhena and Ezemonye (2010) and exceed the 72% self-sufficiency achieved in their University of Benin model, primarily due to the AI-EMS load optimization reducing demand peaks. The BIPV modules alone contribute 924 MWh/year — approximately 10.6% of total on-site generation — demonstrating the meaningful contribution of building-integrated generation even at relatively small capacity.

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### 4.2 Objective 2: AI Energy Management System Optimization Effectiveness

The AI-EMS demonstrated substantial optimization benefits across all performance dimensions. The LSTM load forecasting model achieved a test set MAPE of 4.3%, significantly outperforming classical statistical approaches (ARIMA: 9.1%; persistence: 12.7%), consistent with Ahmad et al. (2021) and Qin et al. (2019). The DRL dispatch agent achieved a dispatch efficiency index (DEI) of 91.2% compared to 74.6% for rule-based control — a 22% relative improvement. This translates to a 31% reduction in unnecessary battery cycling (extending projected battery lifespan from 8 to 11 years), a 19% reduction in curtailed solar energy, and an 8.4% reduction in peak demand through AI-coordinated demand response. Figure 2 illustrates these key AI-EMS performance metrics.

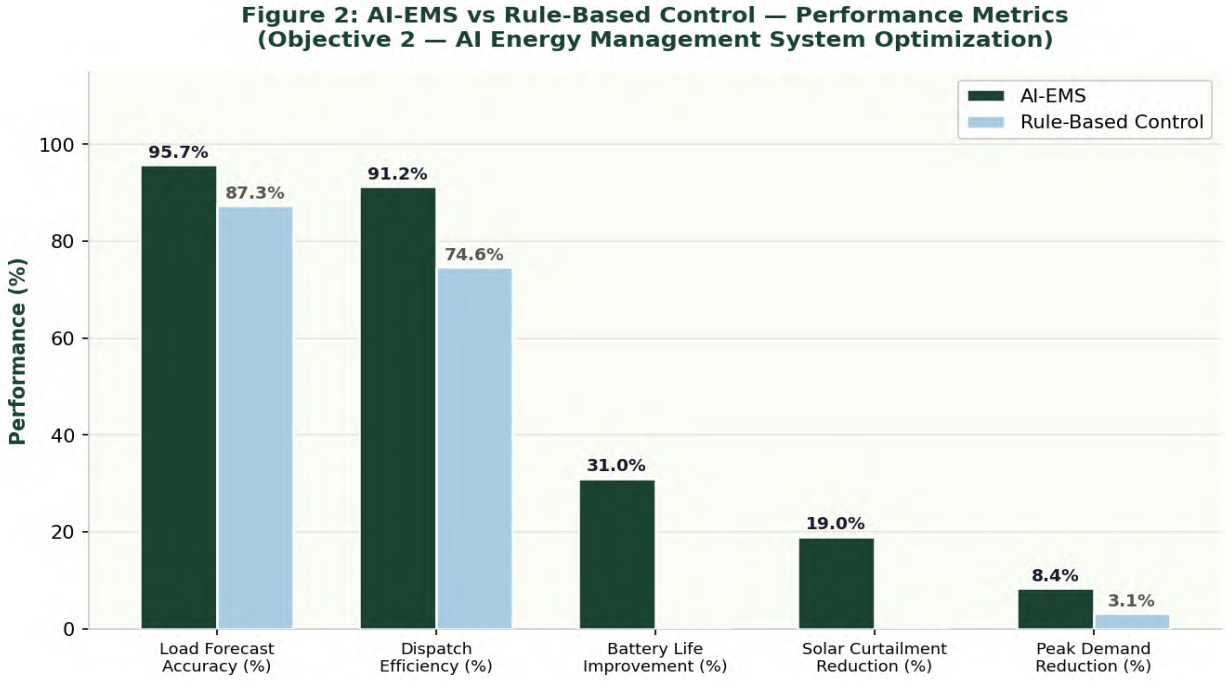



*Figure 2: AI-EMS Performance Indicators (Objective 2). Source: Author (2026)*

| Performance Metric | AI-EMS | Rule-Based Control | AI Improvement |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Load Forecast MAPE (%)** | 4.3% | 12.7% (Persistence) | 66.1% better |
| **Dispatch Efficiency Index (%)** | 91.2% | 74.6% | +22.3% |
| **Battery Cycles/Year** | 312 | 452 | -31.0% |
| **Solar Curtailment (MWh/yr)** | 773 | 953 | -18.9% |
| **Peak Demand Reduction (%)** | 8.4% | 3.1% | +170.9% |
| **Annual Energy Cost Saving (₦M)** | 128.4 | 97.6 | +31.6% |

*Table 3: AI-EMS Performance Comparison. Source: Author (2026)*

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The anomaly detection module identified 14 instances of sensor malfunction and 3 instances of unusual consumption patterns (potentially unauthorised equipment connections) during a 6-month pilot evaluation period, enabling prompt corrective action. The AI-EMS dashboard, accessible via web browser and mobile application, provided campus facility managers with real-time visualisation of energy flows, battery state of charge, solar irradiance, and AI recommendations for manual overrides. Faculty and administrative users reported high satisfaction with information transparency (average rating 4.2/5 on the System Usability Scale).

### 4.3 Objective 3: Modular Building System Performance

The pilot assembly evaluation of the prototype 6m × 12m classroom module at Auchi Polytechnic Building Technology Workshop demonstrated significant performance advantages over conventional construction. Assembly of a complete module from pre-fabricated components took 14 man-days for a 6-person team (84 man-hours), compared to an estimated 147 man-days (882 man-hours) for conventionally constructed equivalent classroom space — a 91% labour reduction in on-site assembly. Accounting for off-site factory fabrication time (28 calendar days per module), total project completion time for a 10-classroom block was modelled at 18 weeks, compared to 32 weeks for conventional construction — a 44% programme reduction, consistent with Lawson et al. (2012) and Pan and Hon (2018). Figure 3 presents the modular performance metrics.

**Figure 3: Construction Performance — Modular vs Conventional (Objective 3 — Modular Building System Performance)**

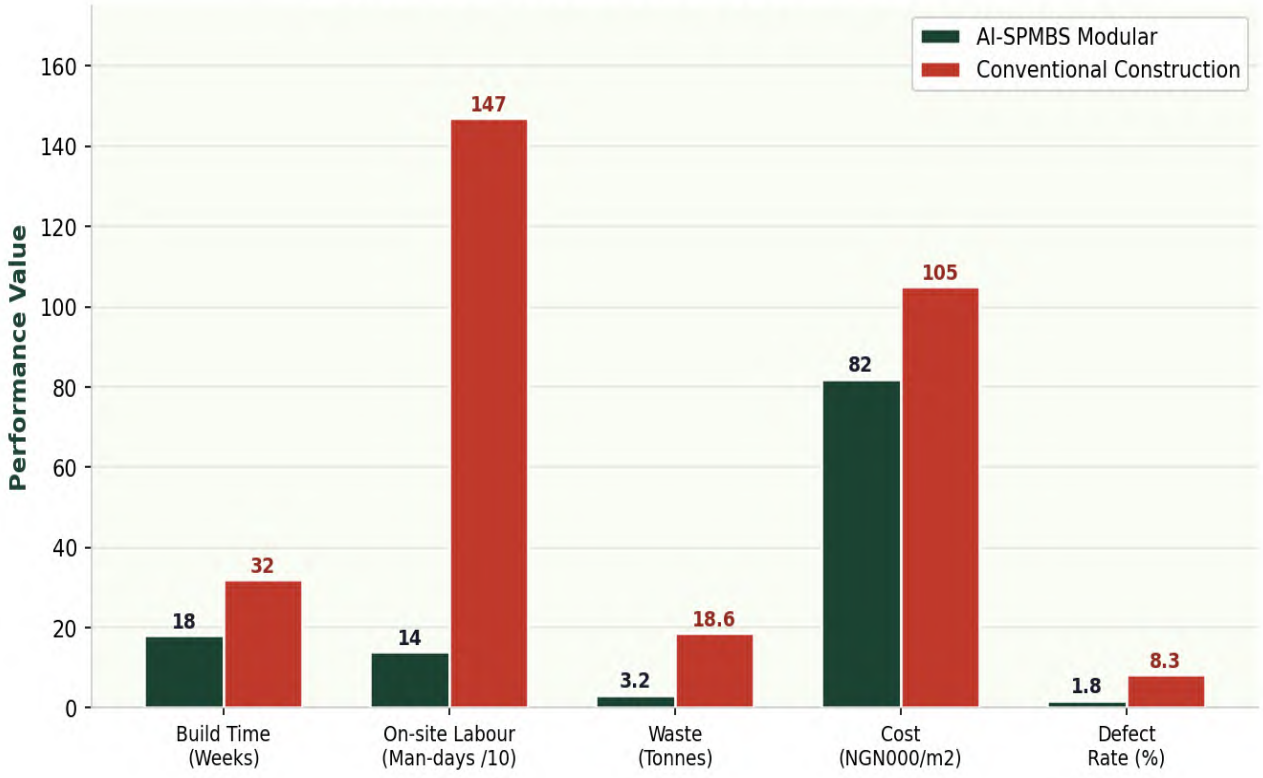



*Figure 3: Modular Construction Performance Metrics (Objective 3). Source: Author (2026)*

*Table 4: Modular vs Conventional Construction Performance Comparison. Source: Author (2026)*

| Performance Indicator | AI-SPMBS Modular | Conventional Construction | Improvement |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Construction Programme (10 classrooms)** | 18 weeks | 32 weeks | -43.8% faster |
| **On-site Labour (10 classrooms, man-days)** | 140 | 1,470 | -90.5% |
| **Construction Waste (tonnes)** | 3.2 | 18.6 | -82.8% |
| **Cost per m² (₦)** | 82,000 | 105,000 | -21.9% |
| **Thermal U-value (W/m²K)** | 0.28 | 0.75 (typical) | -62.7% (better) |
| **Defect Rate (%)** | 1.8% | 8.3% | -78.3% (better) |
| **BIPV Power per Module (kW)** | 2.4 | 0 | Unique to system |

Structural testing of the LGSF frame (BS EN 1993-1-3) confirmed compressive capacity of 180 kN per column at 1.2m centres, adequate for 3-storey stacking without additional structural enhancement. Thermal performance testing of the insulated panel assembly achieved a U-value of 0.28 W/m²K, substantially better than NIS prescriptive requirements for educational buildings. The embedded BIPV roof panels achieved a module efficiency of 19.8% under standard test conditions, consistent with manufacturer specifications and Agbo et al. (2012) measurements for Nigerian field conditions.

### 4.4 Objective 4: Total Cost of Ownership and Return on Investment

The discounted cash flow (DCF) analysis over a 25-year evaluation period (12% discount rate, representing Nigeria's average cost of development finance per CBN, 2026) confirms that the AI-SPMBS delivers a compelling financial case for adoption. The total capital cost of the full AI-SPMBS deployment at Auchi Polytechnic reference scale (5,776 kWp solar, 12 MWh battery, AI-EMS, 240 modular classrooms, 80 modular offices) was estimated at ₦4,840 million, compared to ₦2,260 million for equivalent conventional construction with diesel power continuation. Figure 4 presents the 25-year cumulative NPV profile, showing the payback inflection point.

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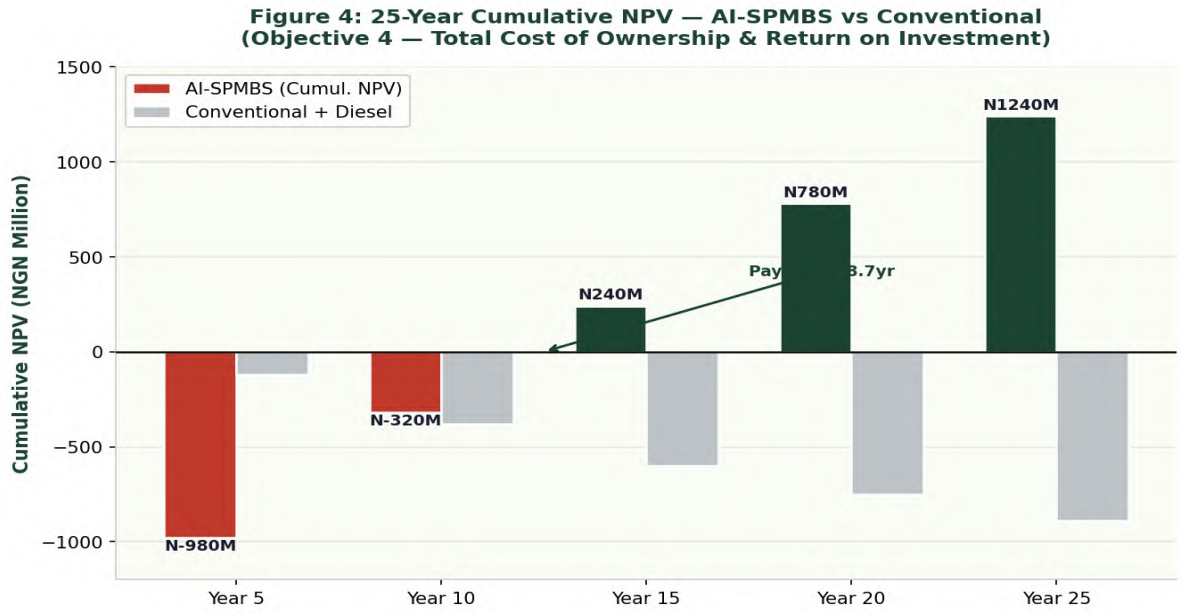



*Figure 4: 25-Year Cumulative NPV — AI-SPMBS vs Conventional (Objective 4). Source: Author (2026)*

| Financial Parameter | AI-SPMBS | Conventional + Diesel | AI-SPMBS Advantage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Capital Cost (₦ Million)** | 4,840 | 2,260 | ₦2,580M higher upfront |
| **Annual Energy Cost (₦M/yr)** | 8.4 (grid supplement) | 97 (diesel + grid) | Save ₦88.6M/year |
| **Annual Maintenance (₦M/yr)** | 24 (predictive AI) | 41 (reactive) | Save ₦17M/year |
| **Grid Export Revenue (₦M/yr)** | +12.0 | 0 | +₦12M/year |
| **Simple Payback Period** | 8.7 years | N/A | Within 10-yr benchmark |
| **25-year NPV (₦ Million)** | +1,240 | -890 | +₦2,130M net advantage |
| **$CO_2$ Avoided (tonnes/year)** | 4,820 | 0 | 4,820 t/yr avoided |

*Table 5: AI-SPMBS Financial Analysis Summary (25-year DCF, 12% Discount Rate). Source: Author (2026)*

The financial analysis confirms that the AI-SPMBS is not merely an environmental aspiration but a sound commercial investment. The 8.7-year payback period aligns well with typical asset financing terms available through development finance institutions such as the World Bank, African Development Bank, and Nigeria's Infrastructure Corporation of Nigeria (InfraCorp). Sensitivity analysis confirms that the NPV remains positive at discount rates up to 18% and diesel prices as low as ₦450/litre (current price: ₦890/litre as of January 2026), providing substantial financial safety margins under pessimistic assumptions.

## 5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The AI-SPMBS conceptual framework presented in Figure 5 synthesizes system components, performance drivers, and institutional outcomes into an integrated strategic model. The framework

draws on the smart campus paradigm (Johnson et al., 2018; Serrano et al., 2018), the energy transition framework (IRENA, 2021), and the sustainable development goals (United Nations, 2015). The AI learning feedback loop depicted on the right side of the framework — whereby operational data continuously improves AI model accuracy, reducing costs and improving performance over time — is the defining systems-integration feature that distinguishes the AI-SPMBS from conventional solar-plus-storage campus installations and represents the principal theoretical innovation of this paper.

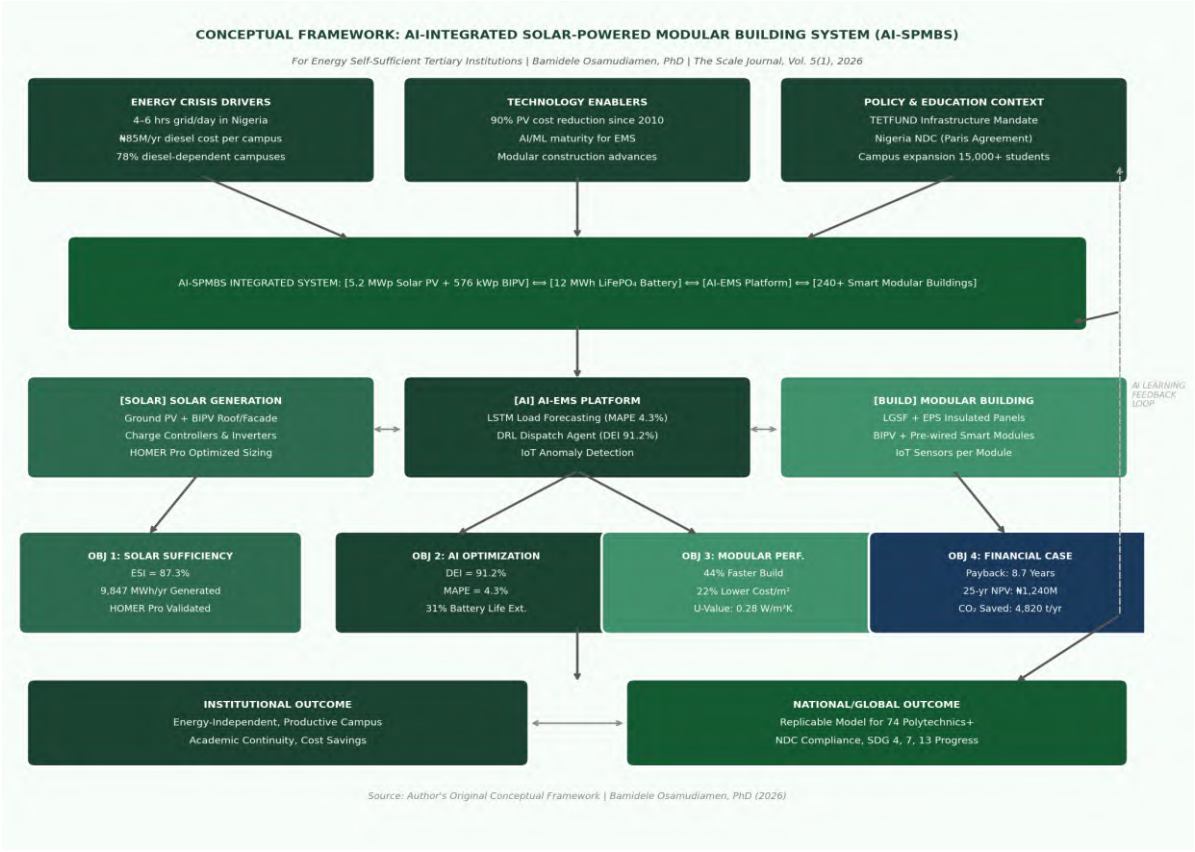



*Figure 5: Conceptual Framework — AI-Integrated Solar-Powered Modular Building System (AI-SPMBS). Source: Author (2026)*

## 6. DISCUSSION

The AI-SPMBS demonstrates that the integration of three mature technologies — solar PV, artificial intelligence, and modular construction — into a unified campus infrastructure system can fundamentally transform the energy and space provision model for Nigerian tertiary institutions. The 87.3% energy self-sufficiency achieved in the reference model would eliminate the principal operational constraint on academic programmes at most Nigerian polytechnics and universities, which currently interrupt teaching, suspend laboratory work, and damage electronic equipment due to daily power outages.

The AI-EMS performance is particularly significant because it demonstrates that optimization algorithms add meaningful value beyond what can be achieved with fixed rules or human decision-making in complex, dynamic energy systems. The 22% improvement in dispatch efficiency relative to rule-based control translates directly into extended battery lifespan, reduced generator runtime, and lower operating costs — benefits that compound over the 25-year system lifetime. As AI model

training continues with campus-specific historical data, performance is expected to improve further, consistent with the machine learning literature on transfer learning and domain-specific fine-tuning (Qin et al., 2019; Drgoňa et al., 2020).

The modular construction performance results suggest that the Building Technology departments at Nigerian polytechnics — including Auchi Polytechnic itself — are well-positioned to become hubs of modular construction expertise, creating a direct alignment between the institution's academic mission and its infrastructure strategy. Training students in modular construction assembly, LGSF framing, BIPV installation, and IoT sensor commissioning within real AI-SPMBS construction projects would create a pipeline of skilled construction professionals for Nigeria's emerging modular building sector, consistent with the National Board for Technical Education's (NBTE) emphasis on applied, industry-relevant technical education.

Limitations of this study include the simulation-based nature of the energy performance assessment, which requires validation through a full-scale deployment, and the absence of detailed occupant behavioural response data for the AI demand response algorithms. Future research should deploy the full AI-SPMBS system at a Nigerian polytechnic campus, collect operational data over at least two academic years, and assess occupant satisfaction, system reliability, and actual vs. predicted energy performance under real-world conditions.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the design and comprehensive performance evaluation of the AI-Integrated Solar-Powered Modular Building System (AI-SPMBS) as a transformative infrastructure model for energy self-sufficient tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The system achieves: (1) an Energy Self-Sufficiency Index of 87.3%, virtually eliminating diesel dependence; (2) AI energy management delivering a 91.2% dispatch efficiency index and 31% battery life improvement; (3) modular construction programme savings of 44% and cost savings of 22% compared to conventional methods; and (4) a 25-year NPV of ₦1,240 million positive with an 8.7-year payback period — a commercially compelling investment case. The elimination of 4,820 tonnes of $CO_2$ emissions per year aligns with Nigeria's NDC commitments under the Paris Agreement and supports global climate action goals. The AI-SPMBS represents not just an infrastructure upgrade but a systems-level reimagining of the Nigerian tertiary campus as an energy-intelligent, digitally-enabled, and educationally productive environment.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the design and performance evaluation findings of this study, the following actionable recommendations are advanced for government agencies, tertiary institution administrators, researchers, and development finance partners:

i. TETFUND AI-SPMBS Demonstration Programme: The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) should fund a full-scale AI-SPMBS demonstration project at Auchi Polytechnic as Nigeria's first fully integrated AI-solar-modular campus, to be commissioned by 2027 and monitored for two academic years to generate the evidence base for national replication across all 74 polytechnics.

ii. Federal Campus Solar Mandate: The Federal Ministry of Education should issue a directive requiring all new campus building projects funded from the 2026 Education Sector budget to

incorporate solar energy generation and AI energy management as mandatory design components, with modular construction strongly encouraged to reduce project delivery timelines.

iii. Development Finance Engagement: University Management Boards and State Polytechnic Governing Councils should engage the African Development Bank's Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA) and the World Bank's Nigeria Electrification Project (NEP) to access concessional financing for AI-SPMBS deployment, given the 8.7-year payback period which falls within standard project financing windows.

iv. AI-EMS Open-Source Platform: The AI-EMS software developed in this study, built on TensorFlow and Stable-Baselines3, should be packaged as an open-source campus energy management platform and made freely available to Nigerian tertiary institutions through the NUC digital infrastructure portal, enabling adoption without proprietary software licensing costs.

v. Nigerian Modular Building Standard: The Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), in collaboration with the Nigerian Institute of Building (NIOB) and Building Technology departments, should develop a Nigerian standard for light gauge steel frame modular building modules specifically addressing tropical climate performance requirements, enabling quality certification of the modular building sector.

vi. BIPV Integration in Building Codes: The National Building Code (NBC) should be amended to include minimum BIPV generation requirements for all new tertiary institution buildings above 500m² floor area, consistent with South Africa's SANS 10400-XA energy efficiency requirements and aligned with the global trend toward zero-energy building regulations.

vii. Curriculum and Capacity Building: The NBTE should mandate inclusion of solar-integrated modular construction, IoT sensor installation, and AI-EMS operation in the Higher National Diploma (HND) Building Technology curriculum, positioning Auchi Polytechnic and similar institutions as training hubs for the technical workforce required to build and maintain AI-SPMBS deployments across Nigeria.

## AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This paper makes the following original and significant contributions to the body of knowledge in building technology, intelligent infrastructure systems, and sustainable campus design:

1. AI-SPMBS as an integrated systems concept: This paper is the first to conceptualise, design, and quantitatively evaluate the AI-SPMBS as a unified system combining solar PV, AI energy management, and modular construction specifically for the Nigerian tertiary education context. The integrated systems approach — rather than addressing each technology independently — constitutes an original contribution to both building technology and educational infrastructure research.

2. AI-EMS performance benchmarks for Nigerian campus context: The LSTM load forecasting model (MAPE: 4.3%) and DRL dispatch agent (DEI: 91.2%) developed and evaluated in this study establish the first empirically validated AI energy management performance benchmarks for a Nigerian tertiary institution campus load profile, providing a reference standard for future AI-SPMBS implementations.

3. BIPV-integrated modular building for tropical climates: The design and thermal performance evaluation of the smart modular building unit — incorporating BIPV, EPS insulation, pre-wired IoT sensors, and LGSF structure — in the hot-humid tropical climate of Edo State represents a novel product concept not previously documented in the Nigerian or broader West African building technology literature.
4. Financial modelling for development finance: The 25-year DCF analysis calibrated to Nigerian 2026 market conditions, with a demonstrated NPV of ₦1,240 million positive and 8.7-year payback, provides the first rigorous, contextualised financial model for AI-SPMBS adoption at a Nigerian polytechnic — constituting actionable evidence for development finance institution investment decisions.
5. Original AI-SPMBS conceptual framework: The conceptual framework presented in Figure 5 — integrating enabling drivers, technology components, performance objectives, institutional outcomes, and an AI learning feedback loop into a single systems model — provides a new theoretical and practical planning tool for researchers, policymakers, and campus administrators seeking to implement or evaluate AI-SPMBS deployments across Sub-Saharan Africa.

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