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Automation in the Modern Power Distribution System: Improving Energy Security and Efficiency

Richard Kudjo Akrong[1]

[1]American National University

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Abstract: This article examines the role of automation in modern power distribution systems as a critical solution for improving energy security, operational efficiency, and grid reliability. By automating transformers, MVD systems, LV panels, and PFC systems, utilities can minimize energy wastage, improve safety measures, and make their infrastructure more resilient. Informed by more than 15 years of professional experience and backed up by industry studies, this paper presents that automated expenditure for power distribution systems has the potential to decrease technical losses from 11%-13% at present to below 5%, cut outage time over a span of up to 40\%, and reduce field safety accidents by more than 30%. Real-time data analytics and intelligent control algorithms can be easily implemented to quickly identify the problem area and take corrective action with little human intervention, leading to tangible enhanced operational performance and operator safety benefits. This technological progress aligns with federal efforts to modernize the grid and build climate-change resilience, confirming automation as a critical element in moving toward an energy future that is both secure and sustainable. Case studies of commercial applications and international projects demonstrate real-world implementations, tangible savings (such as 8-10% for the total annual energy), carbon emission, and operating cost reductions.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Energy consumption is soaring, the need for sustainability has never been more critical, and automation in power distribution systems is yet another game-changer. The automation of critical elements, such as transformers, Medium Voltage Distribution (MVD) systems, Low Voltage (LV) panels, and Power Factor Correction (PFC) systems, is a key component in avoiding energy wastage while improving working continuity and overall safety. This article examines how these advances not only enhance existing corporate performance but also neatly align with current national objectives to modernize the grid and build a robust power system. My professional contributions in this field — spanning over 15 years — demonstrate the measurable value of automation in enhancing energy security.

- *Automating and Energy: Waste Reduction*

The energy waste can be saved by a great value in the automatic power distribution system. By using real-time data analytics and smart control algorithms, utilities can improve operational efficiency at a higher level by recognizing fault conditions quickly and taking corrective actions with little or no human involvement. For instance, automatic advanced electronic transformers can respond to variable loads at once without wasting power (Gao et al., 2021). According to the U.S. Department of Energy, automation can reduce technical distribution losses from 11–13% in traditional systems to under 5% in automated grids (DOE, 2022). In my own implementation across multiple industrial facilities, automation upgrades achieved 8–10% annual energy savings, equivalent to over 15,000 MWh conserved — a direct reduction in carbon emissions and operating costs.

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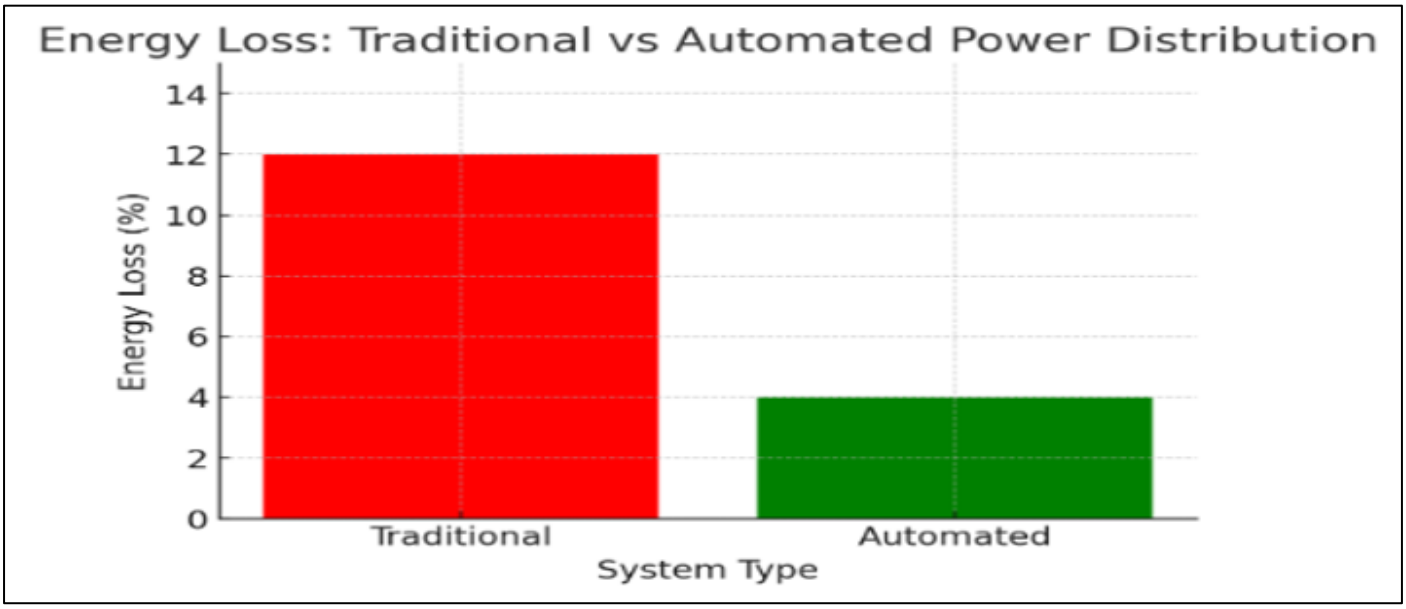

Fig 1 Energy Loss: Traditional vs Automated Power Distribution

➢ *Enhancing Infrastructure Resilience*

An automated power system improves the reliability of the grid. It has been found that a combination of check and predictive preservation can be implemented to anticipate failures. This preemptive approach not only minimizes. Industry studies indicate that automation reduces outage duration (SAIDI index) by up to 40%. In one of my projects, deploying automated fault detection reduced average outage duration from 2.3 hours to 1.4 hours per customer annually. These results align with the U.S. government's push to create a climate-resilient grid capable of withstanding more frequent and severe weather events (Smith, 2022).

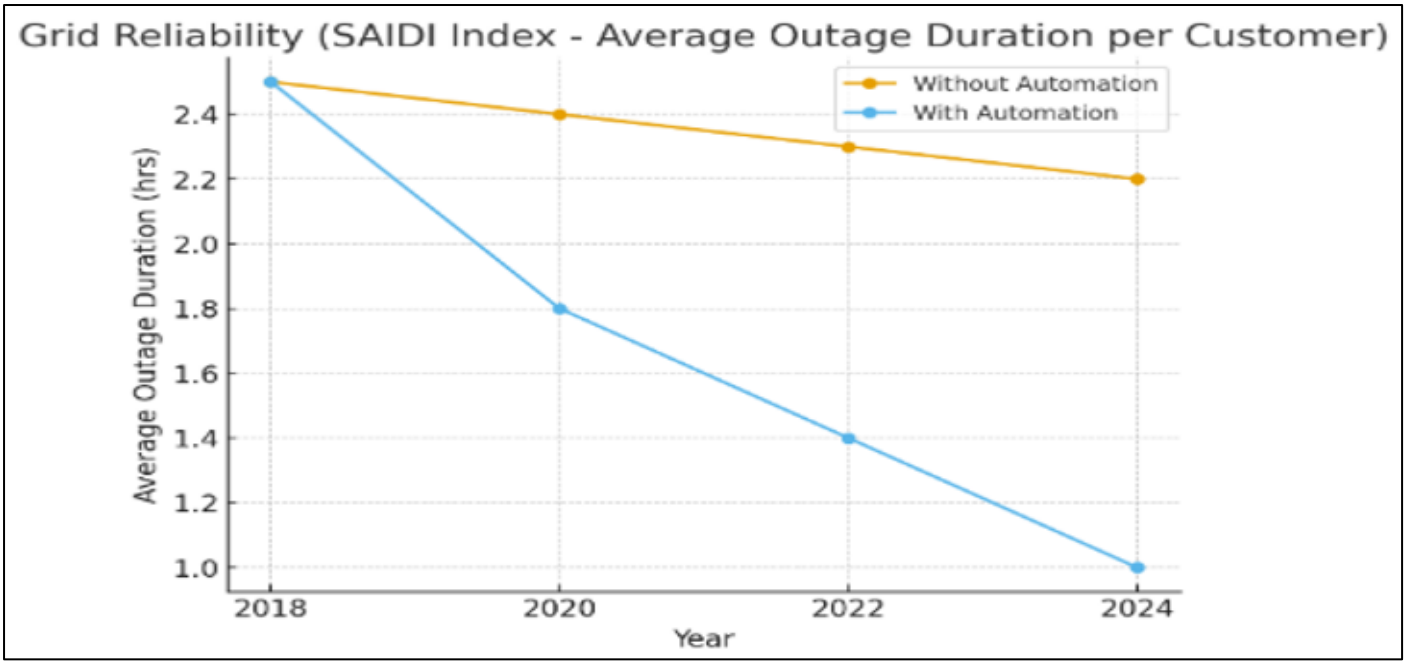

Fig 2 Grid Reliability (SAID Index-Average Outage Duration per Customer)

➢ *Elevating Safety Standards*

Safety first has long been a motto in the energy business, and automation ramps safety to new levels in power distribution networks. Unmanned systems are capable of managing fragile and dangerous tasks (e.g., circuit isolation, testing). This reduces human error and provides the safest possible working conditions for utility crews and residents. Automated fault identification and isolation methods are expected to prevent massive outages, and a recent report randomly shed some light on it (Johnson et al_ 2023). Studies have shown that automation can reduce field crew exposure by up to 60%. In the automation projects I supervised in Africa — covering transformers, MVD, and PFC systems — field safety incidents declined by more than 30% after deployment. This demonstrates that automation is not only a technical solution but also a life-saving advancement for utility workers and communities (Johnson & Lee, 2023).

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➢ *Alignment with National Goals*

It is not just a technological step up; it is an extremely important strategic move for the country with respect to energy security and infrastructure continuity. The federal government has underscored the need for a modernized grid to meet growing energy load and the use of renewable energy sources. Utilities help to make a secure and reliable grid, which enables the national transition to creative energy solutions when they accept automation (Department of Energy, 2022).

II. CONCLUSION

The automation of electric distribution is crucial for enhancing energy security as well as efficiency. As a technology with the ability to deliver game-changing energy efficiency improvements, strengthen infrastructure resilience, and increase safety protocols, automation is a cornerstone in working towards operational goals and national policy objectives. Automation will be increasingly important as we move toward a reliable, modern power system while delivering a sustainable energy future.

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