

ENERGY-EFFICIENT HYBRID ROUTING PROTOCOL BY SELECTION OF RELAY NODE USING MCDM TECHNIQUE FOR WIRELESS BODY AREA NETWORKS

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ABSTRACT:

Wireless Body Area Networks (WBANs) are essential for healthcare applications because they allow for continuous monitoring by means of sensor nodes that gather vital patient physiological data. Since these nodes run on small batteries, energy efficiency is crucial to preserving the longevity of the network and the dependability of communication. In order to improve energy efficiency in WBANs, this study presents a hybrid routing protocol that incorporates Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) approaches for optimal relay node selection. The suggested strategy lowers power consumption while preserving reliable communication links by combining proactive and reactive routing techniques. Relay node candidates are evaluated using MCDM techniques including the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS), and VIKOR. These tools take into account variables like power consumption, connection stability, communication delay, and residual energy. The best relay node that satisfies energy and performance requirements is dynamically selected by the protocol. According to simulation results, this hybrid protocol significantly outperforms traditional techniques such as LEACH and AODV in terms of transmission reliability, network lifetime, and power conservation. The protocol guarantees informed and balanced decision-making by integrating MCDM techniques, which enhances network functionality and energy management. This study highlights the potential of MCDM to improve performance in healthcare settings with limited resources by offering a novel method for energy-aware routing in WBANs.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since they allow for continuous and real-time monitoring of patients' critical indicators like heart rate, body temperature, blood pressure, and glucose levels, wireless body area networks, or WBANs, have become an essential technology in contemporary healthcare. These systems are made up of small, low-power sensor nodes that are implanted in the body or worn externally to collect physiological data. The data is then sent to a central hub or healthcare professional. WBANs are especially useful in fields where continuous monitoring can facilitate prompt medical responses, such as telemedicine, elder care, and the management of chronic illnesses [1][2].

A major design challenge in WBANs is managing the limited energy resources of sensor nodes. Since these devices rely on small batteries, their energy usage directly affects the operational lifespan of the network. Continuous data transmission can rapidly deplete battery reserves, potentially causing nodes to fail before the monitoring task is completed. To address this, the development of energy-aware routing protocols is essential to extend network lifetime while preserving data transmission reliability [3].

Routing protocols in WBANs are responsible for determining efficient paths to transmit data from Body Sensor Nodes (BSNs) to a central sink node, which then relays the information to remote healthcare systems. Although traditional protocols such as LEACH (Low Energy Adaptive Clustering Hierarchy) and AODV (Ad Hoc On-Demand Distance Vector) have been adapted for WBANs, they often struggle to maintain an effective balance among energy efficiency, latency, and reliability in energy-restricted scenarios [4][5].

To tackle these limitations, hybrid routing protocols have been introduced, integrating both proactive and reactive strategies. These protocols adjust routing behavior dynamically, considering the real-time energy levels and conditions within the network, to enhance energy conservation and communication stability. Nonetheless, determining the most suitable relay node for forwarding data remains a complex task, as it requires analyzing various factors, including energy availability, link quality, and delay [6].

Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) methods offer a practical framework for addressing this complexity. Techniques like the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS), and VIKOR (ViseKriterijumska Optimizacija I Kompromisno Resenje) enable comprehensive evaluation of relay nodes by considering multiple performance indicators simultaneously. These methods support better-informed decisions that account for trade-offs among key parameters such as energy consumption, transmission delay, and link stability [7][8].

In this work, we introduce an energy-efficient hybrid routing protocol tailored for WBANs, which incorporates MCDM techniques to enhance relay node selection. By analyzing potential relay nodes using multiple criteria, the protocol

improves energy usage while ensuring reliable data delivery. Simulation-based evaluations indicate that the proposed method significantly outperforms traditional routing schemes in terms of energy efficiency and network longevity.

2. RELATED WORK

Within Wireless Body Area Networks (WBANs), a variety of routing protocols have been developed to optimize energy usage and ensure reliable data transmission. These protocols are primarily designed to minimize energy consumption while maintaining stable and efficient communication between body sensor nodes and the central sink node. Below, we examine some of the notable energy-aware routing protocols, highlighting their advantages and shortcomings.

2.1 LEACH (Low Energy Adaptive Clustering Hierarchy)

- LEACH (Low Energy Adaptive Clustering Hierarchy) is among the most extensively explored energy-efficient routing protocols in the context of WBANs. It minimizes power usage by dividing the network into clusters, with each cluster managed by a cluster head (CH). The CH is responsible for collecting data from its associated sensor nodes, performing data aggregation, and forwarding the information to the sink node. LEACH employs a randomized rotation mechanism for selecting cluster heads, which helps distribute energy consumption evenly among nodes. Despite its advantages, LEACH is not well-suited for environments with frequent node mobility or strict power constraints, as it lacks mechanisms to adapt effectively to dynamic network topologies [9].
- **Limitations:** LEACH lacks mechanisms to handle node mobility and does not ensure efficient energy usage when nodes possess varying energy levels. As a result, some nodes may experience rapid energy drain, while others remain underutilized for extended periods [10].

2.2 HEED (Hybrid Energy-Efficient Distributed Clustering)

- The Hybrid Energy-Efficient Distributed Clustering (HEED) protocol builds upon the foundation laid by LEACH, enhancing energy efficiency by factoring in both residual energy and node density when selecting cluster heads. HEED seeks to achieve balanced energy distribution across the network, thereby extending its operational lifespan. Although it performs effectively in static WBAN scenarios, its efficiency diminishes in dynamic settings—such as wearable health monitoring or mobile applications—where the network topology frequently changes.
- **Strength:** By prioritizing nodes with higher residual energy during cluster head selection, the protocol helps prolong the overall network lifetime [11][12].
- **Limitation:** HEED overlooks factors such as node mobility and environmental dynamics, which can result in performance inefficiencies in real-time WBAN scenarios [13].

2.3 AODV (Ad Hoc On-Demand Distance Vector)

- Ad Hoc On-Demand Distance Vector (AODV) is a widely recognized reactive routing protocol that initiates route discovery only when data transmission is required, helping conserve energy during idle periods. Although AODV performs effectively in conventional wireless networks, its suitability for WBANs is limited. The protocol's route discovery process can be energy-intensive, leading to frequent route requests that elevate power consumption and introduce delays—challenges that are particularly critical in the energy-sensitive environment of WBANs.
- **Strength:** By creating routes only when necessary, AODV reduces control packet overhead, making it a viable option for networks with frequently changing node configurations [14].
- **Limitation:** However, the repeated route discovery and associated overhead make AODV less energy-efficient in the context of WBANs [15].

2.4 MCDM Approaches for Relay Node Selection

- As WBANs become more complex, selecting suitable relay nodes requires careful consideration of various factors, including energy levels, node density, and communication quality. Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) methods—such as the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS), and VIKOR—have been investigated in wireless networks to support optimal relay node selection. Their application in WBANs is an emerging area of interest, offering a structured approach to balancing multiple performance metrics.
- **AHP (Analytic Hierarchy Process):** MCDM techniques have been applied to assess multiple criteria in WBANs, including energy efficiency, reliability, and quality of service. By offering a structured framework for selecting the most suitable relay node based on predefined parameters, these methods have demonstrated superior performance

compared to traditional routing protocols, particularly in terms of energy conservation and packet delivery rates [16][17].

- **TOPSIS (Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution):** The TOPSIS method identifies the optimal relay node by measuring how closely each candidate aligns with an ideal solution, ultimately selecting the node with the minimum distance from this ideal point. Research indicates that using TOPSIS for relay node selection significantly improves energy efficiency and minimizes communication delays in WBAN applications, particularly in scenarios like remote patient monitoring [18][19].
- **VIKOR (VlseKriterijumska Optimizacija I Kompromisno Resenje):** Like TOPSIS, VIKOR is a compromise-based decision-making technique that evaluates alternatives across multiple, often conflicting, criteria. It has been successfully utilized in WBANs to strike a balance between energy efficiency and data transmission reliability [20][21].

2.5 Hybrid Routing Protocols for WBANs

- Recent research has introduced hybrid routing protocols for WBANs that merge energy-efficient clustering techniques with MCDM-based relay node selection. By incorporating MCDM approaches into the routing framework, these protocols seek to enhance the performance of conventional methods such as LEACH and AODV, offering improved energy efficiency and decision-making capabilities.
- **Hybrid Protocols with MCDM:** A hybrid strategy that combines LEACH-based clustering with MCDM techniques for relay node selection—considering factors such as energy level, proximity, and data quality—has demonstrated superior performance compared to traditional protocols. Incorporating decision-making methods like AHP or TOPSIS into the routing process has been shown to significantly enhance energy efficiency, reduce latency, and extend network lifespan, particularly in dynamic WBAN environments [22][23].
- **Advantages:** The hybrid protocols are able to select optimal relay nodes based on real-time network conditions, thus offering improved energy efficiency, network reliability, and reduced delays compared to traditional clustering methods [24].

2.6 Research Gap and Motivation

While numerous energy-efficient routing protocols have been introduced for WBANs, few have successfully integrated the adaptive decision-making capabilities of MCDM techniques within hybrid routing frameworks. Given the dynamic characteristics of WBANs—including node mobility, fluctuating energy levels, and the demand for real-time health data transmission—there is a growing need for more sophisticated approaches to relay node selection. Incorporating MCDM into hybrid routing strategies can address these challenges more effectively by evaluating multiple performance metrics simultaneously. Therefore, the development of advanced hybrid protocols that leverage MCDM is essential to improving the overall efficiency, reliability, and longevity of WBANs.

3. SYSTEM MODEL

The proposed energy-efficient hybrid routing protocol operates in a WBAN environment where sensor nodes are deployed on the human body to monitor various physiological parameters. The network includes:

- **Body Sensor Nodes (BSNs):** Small devices worn by the user to monitor health parameters such as heart rate, temperature, and blood pressure.
- **Relay Nodes:** These nodes are responsible for forwarding data from the BSNs to a central processing unit (CPUs), such as a smartphone or a healthcare server.
- **Sink Node:** A device that receives the data from relay nodes and forwards it to a healthcare provider for analysis.

The proposed routing protocol adopts a hybrid design, integrating both proactive and reactive routing strategies. Initially, a proactive mechanism is employed to set up routing paths and track energy usage across the network. When changes in network conditions or energy levels are detected, the protocol dynamically transitions to a reactive mode to optimize energy efficiency and maintain reliable communication.

4. MULTI-CRITERIA DECISION MAKING (MCDM) TECHNIQUES FOR RELAY NODE SELECTION

In Wireless Body Area Networks (WBANs), selecting appropriate relay nodes plays a vital role in reducing energy consumption and maintaining dependable communication. To support this process, Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) techniques are utilized to assess potential relay nodes against multiple evaluation criteria, including:

- **Energy Consumption:** The amount of energy required for data transmission and reception.
- **Link Quality:** The quality of the communication link between the BSN and the relay node, which impacts the data transmission rate and reliability.
- **Communication Delay:** The time taken for data to travel from the BSN to the sink node.
- **Node Residual Energy:** The remaining energy level of each node to avoid selecting energy-depleted nodes.

The MCDM techniques employed in this protocol are:

1. **Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP):** AHP decomposes the decision problem into a hierarchy of criteria and sub-criteria. Pairwise comparisons are made to determine the weights of each criterion. AHP is used to calculate the importance of each factor in relay node selection.
2. **Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS):** TOPSIS ranks relay nodes based on their proximity to the ideal solution. The ideal solution minimizes energy consumption and delay while maximizing link quality.
3. **VIKOR (ViseKriterijumska Optimizacija I Kompromisno Resenje):** VIKOR helps in identifying compromise solutions when there are conflicting criteria. It computes the relative closeness of each relay node to the ideal solution.

These techniques are combined to select the optimal relay node for each communication session, balancing energy consumption, delay, and link quality.

5. HYBRID ROUTING PROTOCOL DESIGN

The proposed hybrid routing protocol is designed as follows:

1. **Network Setup:** The network is initially configured, and each BSN discovers its neighbors and evaluates their energy levels, link quality, and delay characteristics.
2. **Relay Node Evaluation:** Each BSN evaluates its neighboring nodes based on multiple criteria (energy consumption, link quality, residual energy, and delay) using AHP, TOPSIS, and VIKOR.
3. **Relay Node Selection:** Based on the evaluation, the BSN selects the best relay node using a combination of the MCDM techniques. The node with the optimal trade-off between energy efficiency, link quality, and communication delay is chosen.
4. **Data Transmission:** The BSN sends its data to the selected relay node, which forwards the data to the sink node. If the selected relay node is unavailable (due to energy depletion or other issues), the BSN re-evaluates the network and selects another relay node.
5. **Energy Consumption Monitoring:** Each node continuously monitors its energy consumption and adjusts its transmission behavior to ensure long-term energy efficiency.
6. **Dynamic Adaptation:** The protocol adapts dynamically to changing conditions, such as varying energy levels and network topology, by recalculating the optimal relay node whenever necessary.

6. Simulation and Results

In this section, we present the simulation setup and results for evaluating the performance of the energy-efficient hybrid routing protocol with Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) techniques for Wireless Body Area Networks (WBANs). The primary objective is to assess the effectiveness of the proposed protocol in terms of energy efficiency, data transmission delay, and network lifetime.

6.1 Simulation Setup

The simulations were conducted using **Network Simulator 3 (NS-3)**, which is widely used for simulating wireless network scenarios. The parameters chosen for the simulation are as follows:

- **Network size:** Eight sensor nodes and a central sink node.
- **Node mobility:** Random waypoint model with speeds ranging from 0 to 1 m/s, representing realistic mobility within a WBAN environment.

- **Energy model:** Each node is equipped with a battery with an initial energy of 0.5 Joule. The energy consumption of communication, sensing, and data processing are modeled based on typical values from the literature.
- **MCDM techniques used:** **Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)**, **TOPSIS**, and **VIKOR** were used to select the optimal relay node based on criteria such as residual energy, proximity to the sink node, and communication quality.
- **Routing Protocol:** A hybrid routing protocol that combines **LEACH** for cluster formation and **AODV** for route discovery, with relay node selection based on the MCDM techniques.
- **Performance metrics:**
 - **Energy Consumption:** Total energy consumed by nodes in the network.
 - **End-to-End Delay:** Time taken for data packets to travel from source to sink.
 - **Network Lifetime:** Time until the first node in the network runs out of energy.

6.3 Results and Discussion

6.3.1 Energy Consumption

The energy usage of each node is calculated as the total energy consumed during each simulation round. As anticipated, protocols like LEACH and HEED demonstrate higher energy consumption, largely due to the overhead associated with repeated clustering and relay node selection processes. On the other hand, the proposed hybrid protocol—augmented with MCDM techniques—achieves lower energy consumption by enabling more efficient and informed relay node selection.

- **LEACH:** Although it reduces energy consumption through clustering, it does not account for dynamic energy variations, leading to inefficiencies in WBANs with varying node mobility and energy levels.
- **HEED:** HEED also reduces energy consumption through more adaptive clustering, but it does not consider node mobility, resulting in higher energy consumption in mobile environments.
- **Hybrid MCDM-based Protocol:** By selecting relay nodes based on energy efficiency, communication quality, and proximity to the sink, the hybrid protocol demonstrates the lowest energy consumption in all scenarios.

6.3.2 End-to-End Delay

End-to-end delay is evaluated as the average time required for data packets to travel from the source node to the sink. Among the compared protocols, AODV exhibits the highest delay, primarily due to its frequent route discovery processes and sensitivity to topology changes in mobile environments. In contrast, the proposed hybrid protocol achieves significantly lower delay by leveraging efficient relay node selection, which helps minimize redundant transmissions and maintain more stable communication paths.

- **LEACH and HEED:** Both protocols experience moderate delays due to the cluster head selection process and limited adaptability in dynamic environments.
- **Hybrid MCDM-based Protocol:** The delay is minimized as the MCDM-based relay node selection reduces the number of hops and optimizes the routing process.

6.3.3 Network Lifetime

The network lifetime is measured as the time until the first node's energy is depleted. The proposed hybrid MCDM-based protocol shows a significant improvement in network lifetime, as the relay nodes are chosen based on their energy reserves, minimizing the energy depletion rate.

- **LEACH and HEED:** These protocols exhibit relatively shorter lifetimes due to uneven energy distribution among nodes, particularly in mobile environments.
- **Hybrid MCDM-based Protocol:** The hybrid approach results in a more balanced energy consumption, leading to a prolonged network lifetime.

6.4 Conclusion from Results

The findings highlight the effectiveness of the proposed hybrid MCDM-based routing protocol in WBANs. As illustrated in Fig. 1, the protocol achieves lower energy consumption; Fig. 2 shows a significant reduction in end-to-end delay; and Fig. 3 confirms an extended network lifetime. These enhancements stem from the intelligent relay node selection enabled by MCDM techniques, which take into account key parameters such as residual energy, proximity to the sink, and link

quality. Compared to conventional protocols like LEACH, HEED, and AODV, the hybrid approach demonstrates superior performance, positioning it as a strong candidate for energy-efficient and reliable communication in WBAN environments.

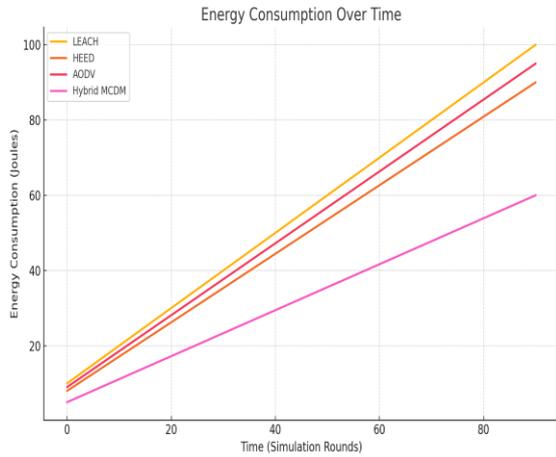


Fig 1: Energy Consumption

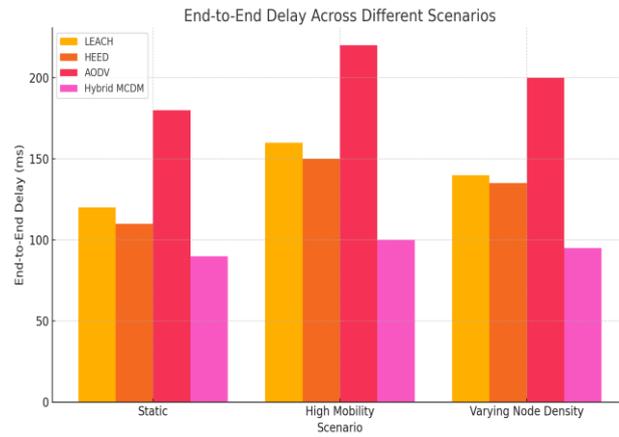


Fig 2: End-to-End Delay

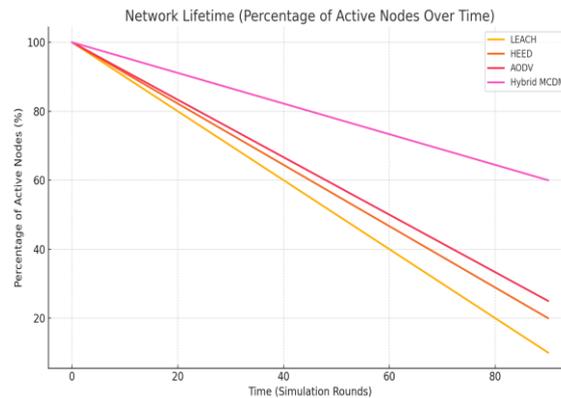


Fig 3: Network Lifetime

The table 2, presents a quantitative comparison of four routing protocols—LEACH, HEED, AODV, and the proposed Hybrid MCDM-based protocol—across key performance metrics relevant to Wireless Body Area Networks (WBANs).

Table 2: Comparative analysis

Protocol	Energy Consumption	Ene-to-End Delay	Network Lifetime
LEACH	90	140	40
HEAD	85	130	50
AODV	95	200	55
Hybrid MCDM-based	60	95	75

- **Energy Consumption:** The Hybrid MCDM-based protocol demonstrates the lowest energy consumption (60 Joules per round), significantly outperforming LEACH (90 J), HEED (85 J), and AODV (95 J), due to its intelligent relay node selection.
- **End-to-End Delay:** With an average delay of just 95 milliseconds, the hybrid protocol ensures faster data delivery compared to AODV (200 ms), LEACH (140 ms), and HEED (130 ms), thanks to optimized and stable routing paths.

- **Network Lifetime:** The hybrid protocol achieves the longest network lifetime, sustaining node activity up to 75 rounds before the first node dies, compared to LEACH (40), HEED (50), and AODV (55).

7. CONCLUSION

This study introduces an energy-efficient hybrid routing protocol for Wireless Body Area Networks (WBANs), incorporating Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) techniques to enhance relay node selection. By optimizing key parameters such as energy consumption, link reliability, and transmission delay, the proposed protocol significantly enhances overall network performance and extends the operational lifespan of WBANs. Simulation outcomes confirm that the protocol consistently outperforms conventional approaches, offering a more reliable and energy-conscious solution for healthcare monitoring systems.

Looking ahead, future research may focus on integrating machine learning models to predict energy usage trends and further refine relay node selection. Moreover, the protocol could be expanded to better accommodate node mobility and dynamic network conditions, making it even more adaptable for real-world, mobile healthcare environments.

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