

**Midocean University**

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## **Uninterruptible Power Supply in Data Center Risk Management**

**إدارة مخاطر الطاقة الغير منقطعة في مركز البيانات**

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# Uninterruptible Power Supply in Data Center Risk Management

## Introduction

An uninterrupted power supply is an advanced mode of electrical device that offers an emergency power supply to different types of critical loads in any event of a power outage or even voltage fluctuation. In most situations, it normally acts as a backup power source hence making sure that there is a continuous power supply that is capable of protecting sensitive equipment, data and even various systems from any potential damage or data loss. UPS has been implemented across different types of data centers and this has ended up bringing onboard quite a number of added advantages to a lot of organizations and individuals operating the data centers (Masanet et al., 2020). Furthermore, Data centers are regarded to be among the most critical infrastructure facilities that majorly constitute of large number of computer servers and working equipment along with different types of associated components like storage systems, cooling systems and even power supplies (Araz, Choi, Olson & Salman, 2020). In most cases, these centers are always designed for the purposes of storing, processing, managing and even distributing huge amounts of digital information that are majorly meant for different purposes like data storage, web hosting, and cloud computing together with several other advanced modes of network services. Furthermore, the use and implementation of data centers can be perfectly traced back to the early days of computing when different types of organizations began to recognize the need for implementing centralized facilities for the purposes of handling the growing data volume that was generated as a result of their respective operations. As various forms of technologies advanced to higher levels and nearly all businesses emerged to be increasingly reliant on various aspects of digital systems, this further enhanced the demand for implementing data centers which ended up growing exponentially. As a result, the importance of data centers in this modern-day digital age is something that cannot be underrated. They have been able to serve as the major pillars of the modern information-driven economy, thus offering one of the best opportunities for different businesses and individuals to gain

access to and even process various forms of data on an unprecedented scale. They are always important when it comes to data storage management. The data centers are able to offer one of the most secure and reliable storage for huge amounts of information (Huang et al., 2020). They are known for housing huge amounts of servers alongside storage systems that are able to store and manage huge amounts of data. This is, therefore, fundamental for various businesses, most so the ones that require to retain and access huge volumes of data that are meant for operational, analytical or even regulatory purposes. Again, they have been able to gain much popularity due to their potential to host some of the most powerful servers that are in a position to handle some of the most complex computational tasks. Due to this, the data centers facilitate higher-performance computing, data analytics, and machine learning together with several other forms of resource-intensive applications (Shehabi, Smith, Masanet & Koomey, 2018). As a result of centralizing processing power, the implementation of data centers offers an opportunity for various businesses together with researchers to adequately tackle quite a number of complex problems and even go as far as extracting some of the most valuable insights from data.

Data Center risk management is a critical practice that is being used by organizations with specific governance, process, and procedures alongside the compliance for acquiring being able to store, process, adequately transform and even use various forms of data for the purposes of adequately managing and eliminating different types of risks that might be associated with the data (Munodawafa & Awad, 2018). Furthermore, the act of risk analysis normally entails being able to look at various assets within an organizational environment, possible threats together with a wide variety of different vulnerabilities for the purposes of determining any risks and then going further to come on board with various forms of countermeasures that are capable of being relative to issues associated with risk management (Anthony Jr, Abdul Majid & Romli, 2018). Data is always the core pillar of every organization, and due to this, any incorrect or even poor implementation of any data type can end up severely impacting various operations together with expected outcomes within an organizational

environment. Furthermore, different types of risks always have to be identified, clearly understood, quantified and even parsed into different types of categories that might entail things like transferring, mitigation and many more (Shammugam et al., 2021). Moreover, issues associated with data risk management majorly entail the implementation of different practices for identifying a variety of risks, accessing them and even scaling them down to minimum acceptable levels (Yang, Li, Yang & Tang, 2018). This has always been very fundamental, but currently, stakes are higher, most so with the emergence of quite a number of remote work and various cyber security breaches alongside different risks that are known to be associated with cloud security.

When talking about risk management is one of the most fundamental processes that entails the identification, assessment together with the prioritization of different types of risks for the purposes of minimizing or even mitigating quite a number of potential negative impacts that are likely to be channelled towards an organization or even an individual. Again, it entails a systematic analysis of different forms of uncertainties accompanied by the development of different strategies aimed towards dealing with them in an effective manner. There are always different types of risks that are known to be linked to data centers in this modern world. As a result, the data centers encounter various risks that can always end up impacting their overall operational levels, security, alongside reliability. One of the major risks is the risk of power and cooling failures. The use of a reliable and uninterrupted power supply is very critical when implemented within the boundaries of data centers. Due to this, various power outages or even fluctuations can always contribute to system failures alongside higher levels of data corruption. Again, the failure of the cooling system can also contribute towards issues related to overheating, which ends up posing one of the most significant risks to the server equipment; hence this can end up causing operational failures or even fire outbreaks. Another risk is the risk that is linked to connectivity issues. All data centers majorly rely on advanced modes of network connectivity for the purposes of transmitting data to and from different locations. Different types of connectivity issues like

network outages, bandwidth limitations, and many more can negatively impact the accessibility together with the availability of data that is always stored in the data centers. The third risk is all about the cyber security risks. Since they are capable of storing some of the most sensitive and valuable information, this ends up making them attractive for cyber-attacks. The risks that might be encountered under such situations majorly include data breaches and malware infection that can end up resulting in data theft, manipulation of data or even service disruptions.

## **Literature Review**

### **Data Centers in the modern world**

Different types of data centers in this modern developed world are at the epicenter of the most crucial and essential part of a wide range of companies. Due to this, quite a number of data center management organizations have been able to learn some of the most critical lessons the hard way. This is a result of different problems like the crushing of the systems and even the loss of various forms of critical data. According to research conducted by Barroso, Hölzle & Ranganathan (2019), CISA, together with the Energy Department aware of quite a number of threat actors gaining access to different types of internet-connected uninterruptable power supply devices, most so through various forms of unchanged default usernames together with passwords. Furthermore, Engemann (2019) asserts that different types of organizations in this modern developed world can always mitigate any form of attacks against their respective UPS devices, which majorly offer power in a variety of applications, most so when the normal source of power is lost, by eradicating management interfaces away from the internet. Again, (Araz, Choi, Olson & Salman (2020) believes that just like any other form of financial instrument or even other forms of corporate assets, various types of data drive organizations always have to come in order to realize that data is something that is more than just data. It is a critical asset that, when leveraged in an appropriate manner, can always be utilized for the purposes of competitive advantage in order to help in the growth of a given business or even ensure that there is sustained growth within the boundaries of that business.

## **Implementation of UPS technology in the data centers of modern organizations**

The implementation of uninterrupted Power Supply systems across different data centers is very critical when it comes to ensuring continuous availability of power and the protection of quite a number of critical IT infrastructures from any negative impacts of power shortage. According to research conducted by Hoosain, Paul, Kass & Ramakrishna (2023), Google, which is one of the most recognized organizations globally, has been able to operate quite a number of data centers at the international level by adequately utilizing advanced modes of UPS systems that has greatly ensured uninterrupted power supply. Again, their respective data centers are fully equipped with high-capacity UPS units capable of offering backup power, most so during grid outages, thereby eradicating any forms of disruptions that are linked to their respective services. Again, Liu et al. (2020) conducted research on Facebook's Prineville Data Center, which is situated in Oregon, USA. The research further postulates that the data center majorly relies on advanced modes of UPS systems that are perfectly designed for safeguarding the organization's servers together with all the other forms of networking equipment. Furthermore, the organization has implemented a combination of both modular and centralized forms of UPS units for the purposes of delivering more reliable and adequate backup power to the extent of even maintaining uptime in any event of power failure. On the other hand, the Data Centers that are known to be linked to Microsoft Azure which is among the most recognized cloud computing services, majorly depend on advanced modes of UPS systems across different parts of the world. These systems offer support to all the critical servers, storage systems and even networking equipment, thereby ensuring that there is continuous availability of all their cloud services to the extent of minimizing any potential impact that might be associated with a power interruption.

## **Types of UPS technologies used in the Data Centers of modern organizations to manage risks**

Quite a number of modern data centers have been in a position of implementing a wide range of Uninterrupted Power supply technologies for the purposes of ensuring that there is a continuous power

supply and full protection of a wide range of critical equipment. As a result, Zhang, Wu, Liu & Hu (2023) postulate that a lot of organizations have been able to make good use of standby UPS which is a special and advanced mode of UPS that creates an opportunity for the connected equipment to directly run on utility power and during power outages, it will automatically switch to battery power. Additionally, there are also Line-interactive UPS systems that are known to be having voltage regulation capabilities that are in-built; hence this makes it appear to be unique to the other existing types of UPS technologies. As a result, they are majorly known to be in a position of actively regulating the incoming voltage in order to fully compensate for all the encountered fluctuations. During times when the input voltage falls outside a specific predetermined range, this type of UPS will automatically switch to battery power in order to offer a more stable output voltage.

### **Characteristics and technologies existing in modern data centers**

Quite a number of modern data centers are among the highly advanced facilities capable of housing a large number of computer systems, various storage devices, and different types of network equipment together with advanced modes of infrastructure components geared towards offering support to processing, and storage alongside the distribution of various forms of digital data. Moreover, most of these data centers are very critical, most so for different industries and even organizations. One of the major characteristics and technology that is commonly linked to data centers is scalability. All modern data centers are perfectly designed to be highly scalable, thus creating room for expansion and contraction of a wide range of computing resources that are strictly based on demand. Additionally, this level of scalability is majorly attained through an advanced mode of virtualization and containerization together with a wide range of software-defined infrastructure technologies. At the same time, there is also virtualization. Li et al. (2020) postulate that different types of data centers are capable of extensively using virtualization, that majorly entails the creation of virtual instances of different servers, and storage devices alongside various networks. This further allows more efficient and reliable resource utilization,

better workload management together, with an improved level of flexibility. According to research conducted by Long, Li, Huang, Li & Li (2022), a lot of data centers in this modern world are majorly built for the purposes of supporting a wide range of cloud computing services. Such types of data centers offer infrastructure as a service, platform as a service alongside software as a service offering to customers, thereby offering them one of the best opportunities to leverage a variety of computing resources that are likely to be on demand. There is also the existence of what is known as high-density computing. A lot of data centers are currently on the verge of employing a wide range of high-density computing techniques that entails things like blade servers together with a hyper converged infrastructure that always aims towards maximizing computing power within a limited physical space. They also allow for more efficient forms of energy usage alongside a higher level of processing capacity. Energy efficiency is also a common experience that is being encountered in quite a number of data centers in this modern developed world. With the increased power demand that is being encountered across different parts of the world, a lot of data centers have been able to put much concentration on energy efficiency in order to scale down the overall operating costs alongside environmental impacts. This, therefore, entails the utilization of various technologies like efficient power distribution and advanced modes of cooling systems alongside the virtualization of the servers. Emara & Huang (2020) postulate that a lot of data centers have been subjected to redundancy and fault tolerance. A lot of modern data centers are perfectly designed with higher levels of redundancy and fault tolerance in mind for the purposes of making sure that higher levels of availability are encountered. They therefore employ a wide range of different techniques, with the major ones being the use of redundant power supplies, the use of backup generators, and the use of UPS together, with redundant forms of networking infrastructure. Another feature and technique are majorly focused on data security. Shoukourian & Kranzlmüller (2020), asserts that different data centers are in a position to adequately priorities a robust combination of different security measures in order to offer protection to different types of data. This entails the implementation of a wide range of physical security

controls like access controls and surveillance systems alongside logical security measures like firewalls and encryptions. As technology continues to advance to higher levels, different types of data centers are likely to scale up their further advancements in order to address the ever-increasing demands that are linked to the digital world.

## Methodology

### Research design

In order to ensure that credible information is collected within the research boundaries for a much better outcome to be attained, this research embraced an advanced and well-organized form of qualitative research. This research had to put much concentration on the qualitative research design in order to ensure that all the research goals and objectives were perfectly addressed. Furthermore, the research aimed to gain a deep and detailed level of understanding of the entire research context.

### Sample and populating

For a perfect outcome of the research, it had to make good use of random sampling of different types of participants within the research boundaries. Moreover, one of the major reasons why random sampling had to be used was to ensure that issues related to research bias were minimized as much as possible.

In relation to the research population, it was able to incorporate a total of 20 participants who were able to offer a lot of valuable information linked to the study topic through the use of different forms of data collection methods.

### Data Collection

In relation to the implemented qualitative research methodology within the boundaries of this research, the following data collection method had to be implemented for a perfect opportunity of exploring different types of information that were all relevant to the research topic.

- **Interviews-** In order to ensure that perfect and reliable information was collected through the use of interviews as a major data collection method, the researcher had to interview various data risk management experts. Every interview with this group of participants lasted for a maximum of 30 minutes with every participant just to ensure that there was more time to analyze and

explore different forms of data. All the participants adequately responded to the interview questions.

- **Online surveys**-The research used advanced forms of online survey where all the participants were offered one link that they had to access in order to respond to the survey questions. Additionally, all the survey questions that were offered to the participants were strictly based on the knowledge related to the study topic.
- **Questionnaire**-The research participants were offered the same questionnaire forms that contained a total of ten different questions. They responded to all the questions and were given a maximum of two days to make submission of their respective questionnaires.

### Data Analysis

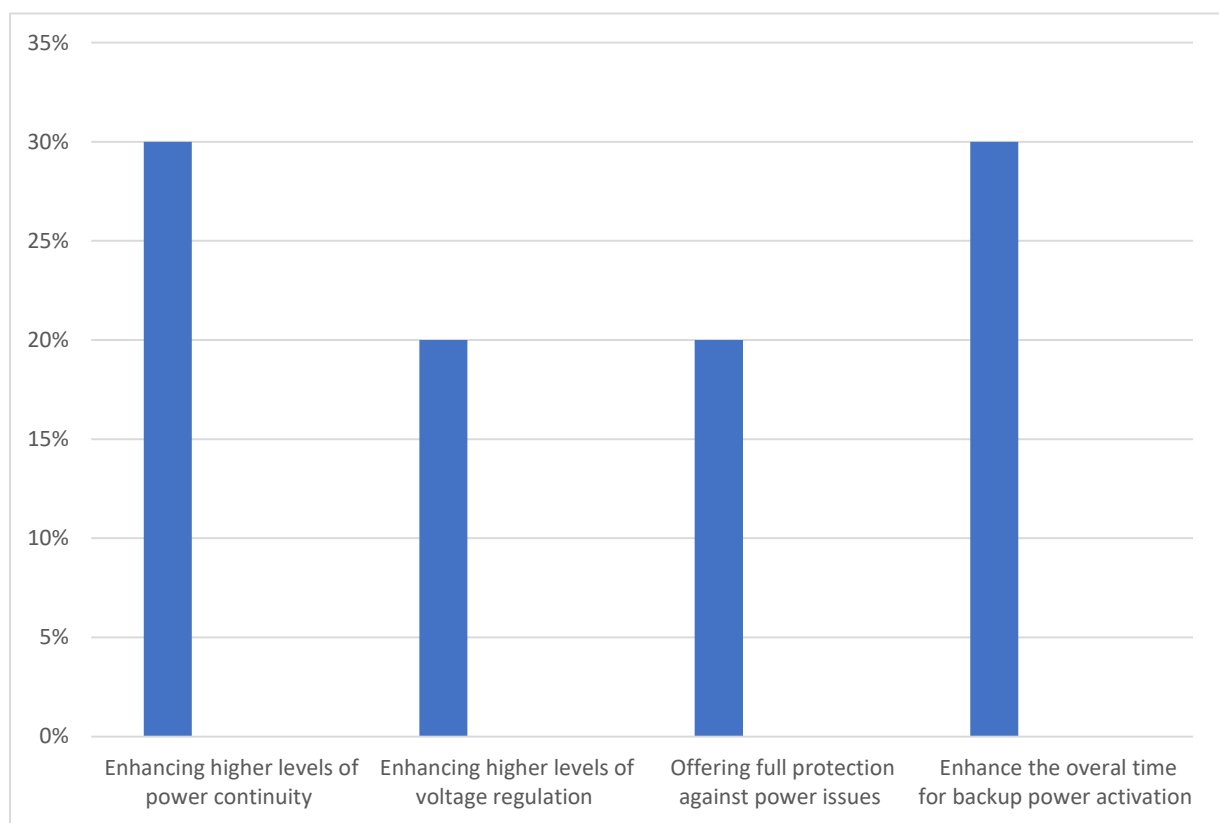
The data that was obtained within the boundaries of this research were majorly analyzed through the use of qualitative analysis. Through this analysis method, the research was able to analyze different forms of non-numerical data that majorly entailed things like interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses. As a result of this data analysis method, it was able to offer the research with a wider level of understanding of a lot of complex phenomena to the extent of generating rich insights that were all associated with the study topic.

## Findings

Based on the information that was obtained from data risk management experts who acted as participants in this research, all of the participants were able to acknowledge the fact that the implementation of UPS, just like any other organization, depends on the use of data centers, aims towards minimizing various risks and even ensure the continuity together with the security of all the operations that are being carried out within the data centers. When asked about some of the major benefits that uninterrupted power supply brings on board when it comes to risk management within the organization, 30% of the participants admitted that the use of UPS has greatly helped in managing different risks by enhancing higher levels of power continuity within their respective organizational environments. According to them, the use of UPS has always acted as a source of power backup in the event of any utility power outage. Due to this, their implementation of an uninterrupted power supply has been able to ensure that their respective data center servers, networking equipment together with the other form of critical equipment continue to be powered even with the existence of interruptions. This further prevents the occurrence of any form of unexpected shutdown, data loss or even different acts of service disruptions that might be encountered during power failures. On the other hand, 20% of the participants also admitted that the use of UPS helps in data center risk management by enhancing higher levels of voltage regulation. They believed that the implementation of advanced modes of UPS systems helps in the regulation of supplied voltage to different types of data center equipment hence helping in the protection against voltage surges together with fluctuations that might end up damaging a variety of sensitive IT hardware. As a result of offering their respective data centers with a more stable and clean power source, the UPS units have played a greater role in extending the lifespan of most equipment to the extent of also scaling down the risk of failures that is majorly triggered as a result of power related issues. Another 20% of the participants also stated that the use of UPS within their respective organizational boundaries has greatly helped in scaling up data center risk management by

offering full protection against power quality issues. They strongly believed that the UPS systems normally incorporate advanced levels of power conditioning features that entail things like surge protection together with voltage stabilization. Where these available features have greatly helped them in the mitigation of the risk that is linked to power quality issues that are likely to be caused by electrical disturbances that might entail things like lightning strikes. As a result of flitting out some of the most harmful electrical noise together with transient spikes, this group of participants believed that the use of UPS within their respective organizational boundaries had played a critical role in safeguarding their data center equipment from any potential damage. Finally, the remaining 30% of the participants linked to this research strongly believed that the use of UPS had played a vital role in data center risk management by helping them to enhance the overall time for backup power activation. Furthermore, they admitted that in any event of any utility power failure, the implementation of advanced modes of UPS systems has greatly offered valuable time for different backup power sources that entail things like generators to start and reach their full capacity. This kind of seamless transition that originates from utility power to backup power has greatly ensured that a lot of critical data center operations remain to be totally uninterrupted hence scaling down any risk that might be associated with downtime and data loss.

*Figure 1: Results obtained from the research participants*



## Discussions

Based on the information generated from the findings, a lot of interpretation can be made in order to offer a further and deeper understanding of the whole research. First, it is much clear that power continuity is a very critical issue. The findings clearly suggest that ensuring a more continuous and reliable power supply is very critical when it comes to data center risk management. As a result of the implementation of various forms of UPS systems, the data centers can always prevent power outages from triggering any unexpected shutdown and service disruptions, thus minimizing any form of associated risks. Additionally, voltage regulation adequately enhances higher levels of equipment protection. The data clearly indicates that the implementation of UPS units greatly helps in the regulation of supplied voltage to different types of data center equipment hence protecting it from any mode of voltage sags and fluctuations. This kind of voltage regulation feature reduces the risks that might be linked to equipment failure that is majorly triggered as a result of power-related issues. Again, based on the findings, the implementation of UPS systems has acted as a game changer across different organizations that are known to be having data centers; hence this has helped them in dealing with quite a number of threats both at the internal and external parts of the organizations. Again, the implementation of this technology has greatly offered an added advantage to most organizations by offering them a fully continuous operation with their respective data or even organizational-based activities; hence those organizations with well-implemented UPS systems within their data centers have been able to get a rare chance of being subjected to a continuous mode of operation.

## Research limitations

The implementation of this research was able to encounter certain limitations that acted as a bit of a challenge in terms of exploring the goals and objectives that are linked to the research. One of the major limitations was time. There was inadequate time to carry out the exploration of more information through the use of the data collection methods that have been captured in the research. Another limitation of this research was its sample size. It was linked to a small sample size of different participants; hence this made it difficult for the obtained findings to be extrapolated.

## Ethical considerations

The research was also in a position of incorporating different types of ethical considerations to ensure that it was on good terms with all the participants. As a result, the following ethical considerations had to be included within the research boundaries;

- **Informed consent-** This research had to obtain informed consent from different participants in order to ensure that they had a clear understanding of the study's purpose, various procedures, and potential risks alongside a vast range of benefits that were all associated with the research.
- **Privacy and confidentiality-** The research was in a position of fully respecting the privacy and confidentiality of all the research participants. Furthermore, it was able to protect personal together with identifiable information to the extent of only using it for the intended purposes and disclose different potential limitations to issues regarding confidentiality.
- **Beneficence-**The research had got an obligation to fully maximize various benefits and, at the same time, minimize any potential harm to all the research participants. Additionally, it also ensured that all the potential benefits of the research were in a position to perfectly justifying any risks that were involved hence going as far as taking the required steps in relation to mitigating those risks. Finally, the researcher was able to take into consideration the overall impact of the entire research on society and further moved to promote the welfare of different personalities.

## Conclusion

The implementation and use of uninterrupted power supply (UPS) are of paramount importance, most so when it comes to handling issues related to data center risk management. The UPS systems majorly serve as the critical components to ensure that there are continuous operations and eliminate a wide range of potential risks that are fully associated with power outages, voltage fluctuations and even surges. Due to the provision of backup power and regulation of voltage levels alongside the ability to offer advanced levels of surge protection, the implementation of UPS systems plays a critical role in minimizing downtime and protection different types of sensitive equipment. They also facilitate quite a number of maintenance activities and transitions that exists between different types of power sources hence ensuring that there is a seamless mode of operation. Additionally, different types of UPS systems adequately contribute to disaster recovery preparedness, where this takes place by fully enabling different types of data centers to remain functional, most so during quite a number of unforeseen events. The integration of these systems across data center infrastructure is very important for the purposes of fully maintaining uninterrupted power operations, mitigating quite a number of existing risks, alongside ensuring that there is overall reliability and availability of quite a number of critical services. Organizations that have made good use of UPS implementation within their respective data centers have ended up offering one of the highest levels of competitive advantages when it comes to embracing their operational levels in order to explore a wide range of goals and objectives.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire

- (1) What type of UPS system is currently implemented in your data center?
- (2) How to you access and determine the appropriate UPS capacity for your entire data center?
- (3) In case you encounter a utility power failure, how quickly does the UPS system shift to battery power?
- (4) What are the best procedures that you have in place for monitoring the health and performance of your UPS?
- (5) How has the use of UPS helped in managing different risks?