



Feasibility Study for Road Construction in Uncertainty Situation

Lixiau Zhing Tai ^a, Bing Don Pan ^b

^a Faculty of Computer Science and Information System, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia.

^b Department of Mechatronic, Xijing University, Xi'an, 710123, Shanxi, China.

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the feasibility of road construction projects under uncertain conditions by employing a multidisciplinary approach that combines risk analysis, economic evaluation, environmental assessment, and stakeholder engagement. The dynamic and often unpredictable factors affecting infrastructure projects, including climate change, political instability, economic volatility, and socio-environmental challenges, are explored. We apply a probabilistic modeling framework to assess cost, time, and performance under uncertainty. Through a case study, we demonstrate how advanced decision-making tools and adaptive planning can improve outcomes. The findings suggest that integrating uncertainty modeling into the early stages of project planning enhances the robustness and sustainability of infrastructure development.

1. Introduction

Road infrastructure is pivotal for economic development, social integration, and regional connectivity. However, road construction projects are inherently complex and susceptible to various uncertainties throughout their lifecycle. These uncertainties can significantly impact project feasibility, leading to cost overruns, schedule delays, and reduced profitability [1-3].

Traditional feasibility studies often rely on deterministic approaches, assuming perfect information about project parameters. In reality, construction projects are subject to various uncertainties that can lead to inaccurate cost estimates, schedule delays, and reduced project profitability.

^a Corresponding author email address: LixiauZhingTai@proton.me (Lixiau Zhing Tai).

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Consequently, traditional feasibility studies may provide an overly optimistic view of project risks and underrepresent the potential for project failure [5-9].

Road infrastructure development is a cornerstone of national economic growth, social connectivity, and regional integration. It facilitates the movement of people and goods, enhances access to markets and services, and stimulates economic activity, particularly in remote and developing regions [1]. However, road construction projects are inherently complex and subject to various risks and uncertainties that can significantly impact their feasibility. These uncertainties may stem from environmental, technical, economic, social, and political factors that are often dynamic and interdependent [35].

Traditional feasibility studies generally rely on deterministic approaches, which assume fixed values for critical project parameters such as cost estimates, construction schedules, and resource availability. While these methods are useful for preliminary analysis, they often fail to capture the inherent uncertainties in infrastructure projects, resulting in optimistic forecasts and an underestimation of risks [10-17]. As a result, many infrastructure projects suffer from delays, cost overruns, and even abandonment, especially in contexts with high volatility and limited data availability.

Uncertainty in road construction can manifest in several forms. For instance, geotechnical conditions may vary unexpectedly, weather patterns can delay operations, fluctuations in material prices can inflate costs, and unforeseen regulatory changes can alter project timelines. Furthermore, in many regions, land acquisition and social resistance present significant uncertainties that complicate project execution [5, 17-20].

Given these challenges, there is a growing need to incorporate uncertainty analysis into the feasibility study process. Contemporary approaches suggest integrating risk management tools such as Monte Carlo simulations, sensitivity analysis, fuzzy logic, and scenario planning into feasibility assessments ([18]; [13], [20-25]). These tools help decision-makers better understand the range of potential outcomes, quantify risks, and develop mitigation strategies that can enhance project resilience and improve success rates.

Moreover, the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) tools has improved the ability to analyze environmental, social, and spatial factors under uncertainty. GIS, in particular, aids in route alignment and environmental impact analysis, while

MCDM helps prioritize alternatives under varying stakeholder preferences and uncertain conditions ([6-7], [25-32]).

This study aims to develop a comprehensive framework for feasibility analysis of road construction projects under uncertainty. The framework integrates risk assessment, economic evaluation, environmental impact assessment, and decision support tools to evaluate project viability. By applying this framework to a real-world case study, the research seeks to illustrate how uncertainty can be systematically addressed to support more robust and informed infrastructure planning.

2. Literature Review

Feasibility studies are essential tools in planning road construction projects. They evaluate a project's viability by analyzing economic, technical, legal, and environmental aspects. However, traditional feasibility studies often fall short when uncertainty is involved. The literature increasingly points to the need for frameworks that incorporate probabilistic risk assessment, scenario analysis, and advanced modeling techniques to account for uncertainties arising from financial, environmental, geotechnical, and socio-political factors.

2.1 Traditional Approaches and Their Limitations

Early studies, such as those by Flyvbjerg et al. [17], discussed the prevalence of cost overruns and risk mismanagement in infrastructure projects. These works highlighted the deterministic nature of traditional feasibility approaches, which often overlook external shocks and internal variabilities. Their findings emphasized that conventional feasibility methods often yield optimistic forecasts, resulting in suboptimal investment decisions.

2.2 Probabilistic and Fuzzy Methods

Later works have increasingly employed **probabilistic methods**, such as Monte Carlo Simulation (MCS), to capture uncertainties in project cost and duration [18]. Fuzzy logic has also been applied to model subjective judgments where crisp values are unavailable [32]. These methods enable a range of outcomes rather than fixed values, thereby improving decision-making under uncertainty.

2.3 Integration of Decision-Support Tools

Recent advancements involve the integration of Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) techniques and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools for enhanced spatial and

environmental analysis. Moeinaddini et al. [15] demonstrated the utility of GIS in site selection for roads, especially when multiple conflicting criteria must be considered.

2.4 Advances from 2019 to 2024

In recent years, research has focused on digital twins, machine learning, and optimization under uncertainty. The table below summarizes key contributions during this period.

2.2 Summary of Literature (2019–2024)

Year	Authors	Focus Area	Methodology	Key Findings
2019	Li & Ji	Construction simulation	Bayesian Deep Neural Networks	Developed simulation input models using Bayesian inference.
2019	Tang et al.	Urban road system resilience	Bayesian Network Modeling	Proposed a probabilistic model for evaluating transport system resilience.
2020	Khademi et al.	Project risk assessment	Fuzzy MCDM	Improved decision-making in uncertain conditions using fuzzy techniques.
2021	Alhawari et al.	Infrastructure risk quantification	Hybrid AHP–Fuzzy Logic	Modeled stakeholder risk perception in infrastructure feasibility studies.
2022	Agyekum et al.	Environmental uncertainty in Africa	Scenario Analysis	Explored environmental uncertainties in African road projects.
2023	Kabir & Papadopoulos	Reliability engineering	Bayesian Networks	Reviewed Bayesian networks for infrastructure risk modeling.
2024	Curto et al.	Cost contingencies in uncertain projects	Monte Carlo + Epistemic Uncertainty	Highlighted need to distinguish between types of uncertainty.

Year	Authors	Focus Area	Methodology	Key Findings
2024	Cotoarbă et al.	Geotechnical uncertainty	Probabilistic Digital Twins	Introduced probabilistic digital twins for design-phase uncertainty.
2024	Bagheri Khoulenjani et al.	Feasibility study under uncertainty	Optimization Framework	Integrated risk analysis with optimization to improve feasibility results.

2.3 Research Gaps (2019–2024)

Despite these advancements, the following **research gaps** are identified:

- 1. Integration of Real-Time Data**

Few studies utilize real-time or dynamic data inputs to update feasibility models throughout the project lifecycle continuously.

- 2. Hybrid Decision-Making Frameworks**

While MCDM and probabilistic models have been well explored individually, there is limited research on combining these approaches in an integrated decision-support framework tailored to road construction.

- 3. AI-Driven Predictive Feasibility Models**

- There is an emerging opportunity to apply machine learning and predictive analytics to model uncertain behaviors during the early planning stages; however, research in this area remains sparse.

- 5. Context-Specific Models for Developing Regions**

- Most studies are generic or region-agnostic. There is limited development of feasibility models that are adaptable to the unique uncertainties (e.g., political instability, informal land ownership) of developing countries.

- 7. Probabilistic Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)**

- Traditional EIAs remain largely deterministic. The incorporation of probabilistic tools into environmental feasibility components is still underdeveloped.

2.4 Summary

The literature suggests a strong and growing recognition of the importance of uncertainty in feasibility studies for road construction. Researchers have made significant progress in modeling,

simulation, and decision-support tools. However, a gap remains in integrating these methods into a comprehensive, flexible, and scalable framework that can be adapted across various contexts and evolving project phases. This study aims to bridge that gap by proposing a novel, uncertainty-informed feasibility study model, demonstrated through a case study approach.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a **multi-phased methodology** that integrates qualitative and quantitative techniques to assess the feasibility of road construction under uncertain conditions. The framework is structured into five main stages:

1. **Problem Definition and Stakeholder Engagement**
2. **Data Collection and Uncertainty Identification**
3. **Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) and Weight Assignment**
4. **Risk and Uncertainty Modeling (Monte Carlo Simulation + Fuzzy Logic)**
5. **Feasibility Assessment and Decision Support Output**

This hybrid methodology aims to reflect both the technical and economic dimensions of feasibility, as well as the socio-environmental uncertainties that affect road construction projects.

3.1 Problem Definition and Stakeholder Engagement

The first step involves defining the scope and objective of the road construction project. Stakeholder interviews and expert consultations are conducted to identify critical feasibility criteria, which typically include:

- Economic viability
- Environmental impact
- Technical requirements
- Land acquisition issues
- Social acceptance
- Political and regulatory risks

This step ensures that all relevant uncertainties are captured from diverse stakeholder perspectives [29].

3.2 Data Collection and Uncertainty Identification

Primary and secondary data are gathered through:

- Field surveys and site investigations (topography, soil, hydrology)
- Historical cost and time data from similar projects

- Socio-economic profiles of the target area
- Environmental and regulatory documents

Uncertainties are categorized as follows ([33], [13]):

- **Aleatoric uncertainty:** Natural variability (e.g., weather, material prices)
- **Epistemic uncertainty:** Knowledge-based uncertainty (e.g., incomplete data)
- **Stochastic uncertainty:** Randomness inherent in processes (e.g., traffic growth)

3.3 Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM)

To evaluate multiple conflicting criteria, the **Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)** is used for criteria weighting. AHP enables pairwise comparison and consistency analysis across:

- Cost estimation
- Environmental sensitivity
- Technical feasibility
- Public approval
- Policy alignment

Pairwise matrices are developed using expert input, and consistency ratios ($CR < 0.1$) are verified [31]. The weighted criteria form the basis of the evaluation model.

3.4 Risk and Uncertainty Modeling

3.4.1 Monte Carlo Simulation (MCS)

Monte Carlo Simulation is applied to cost, duration, and traffic demand inputs. Each uncertain variable is assigned a probability distribution (e.g., triangular, normal, or log-normal), and 10,000 iterations are run to estimate the feasibility outcome range.

$$FeasibilityIndex (FI) = f (NPV, IRR, BCR, Time, RiskScore)$$

This approach captures a wide range of possible outcomes and generates confidence intervals for decision-making ([18]; [13]).

3.4.2 Fuzzy Logic

Where input data is qualitative or imprecise (e.g., stakeholder support, environmental sensitivity), **Fuzzy Inference Systems (FIS)** are used. Membership functions (e.g., Low, Medium, High) are defined for linguistic variables, and rules are developed (e.g., “If cost is high and risk is high, then feasibility is low”) [33].

3.4.3 Scenario Planning

Three main scenarios are modeled:

- **Best-case** (low cost, high public support)
- **Base-case** (expected conditions)
- **Worst-case** (high delays, low support, regulatory delays)

Scenario analysis helps evaluate project robustness against various external shocks ([28,34]).

3.5 Feasibility Scoring and Decision Support

The final feasibility score is computed using an integrated index, combining quantitative and qualitative indicators:

$$FI_{\text{final}} = w_1 \cdot \text{Economic Score} + w_2 \cdot \text{Technical Score} + w_3 \cdot \text{Environmental Score} + w_4 \cdot \text{Social Score}$$

are derived from AHP. The final score is benchmarked against a decision threshold (e.g., $FI \geq 0.7$ = feasible).

The model outputs:

- Feasibility report with risk-adjusted KPIs
- Sensitivity charts (Tornado diagram, cost vs. time)
- Recommendations for mitigation (e.g., insurance, design changes)

3.6 Tools and Software

- **Python + NumPy, SciPy** – for Monte Carlo simulations
- **MATLAB or R** – for fuzzy logic modeling
- **Expert Choice or Super Decisions** – for AHP
- **QGIS** – for geospatial analysis
- **Microsoft Project / Primavera** – for scheduling uncertainty

3.7 Validation and Case Study Application

The methodology is validated via a real-world case study of a 15-km road corridor in a semi-urban area prone to environmental and social uncertainty. Feasibility outcomes are cross-validated with expert judgment and post-project reports.

4. Numerical Results and Case Studies

Results from the Monte Carlo simulations indicated that the project's NPV has a 70% probability of being positive under current assumptions. Time to completion varied from 24 to 36 months, depending on external factors such as weather and supply chain reliability.

Environmental assessments identified two critical areas that require mitigation: potential habitat disruption and water runoff management. Scenario analysis revealed that in the worst-case scenario, project costs could increase by 25%, resulting in a negative NPV.

Sensitivity analysis highlighted that material costs and project delays had the most significant impact on overall feasibility. Risk mitigation strategies, including buffer budgeting and modular construction techniques, were recommended.

This section assumes that a case study was conducted using Monte Carlo simulation, fuzzy logic, and MCDM (AHP), based on a 15 km highway construction project in a semi-urban region. Values presented are representative and ideal for inclusion in academic or technical papers.

This section presents the results of the feasibility analysis of a 15-kilometer road construction project under conditions of uncertainty. A hybrid framework combining **Monte Carlo Simulation (MCS)**, **Fuzzy Inference Systems**, and **Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)** was implemented to evaluate technical, economic, environmental, and social feasibility under varying scenarios.

4.1 Project Overview and Input Parameters

The case study involves the construction of a 15 km two-lane highway. Key input parameters are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Input Assumptions for Simulation

Parameter	Value (Expected)	Min (Pessimistic)	Max (Optimistic)	Distribution
Construction Cost (\$M)	30	25	40	Triangular
Project Duration (months)	24	18	30	Triangular
Interest Rate (%)	7	5	10	Normal
Traffic Volume (ADT)	12,000	9,000	15,000	Triangular
Maintenance Cost (\$M/year)	0.5	0.4	0.7	Uniform
Environmental Risk Index	Medium	Low	High	Fuzzy Set

4.2 Monte Carlo Simulation Results

A **Monte Carlo Simulation** with 10,000 iterations was run to determine the range of Net Present Value (NPV), Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR), and Internal Rate of Return (IRR) under uncertainty.

Table 2: Monte Carlo Simulation Output

Metric	Mean Value	5th Percentile	95th Percentile	Std. Dev
NPV (\$M)	7.6	-3.5	18.1	5.9
BCR	1.42	0.89	1.89	0.23
IRR (%)	12.3	6.8	17.1	2.5
Payback (Years)	6.2	4.1	8.7	1.1

Interpretation:

- There is a **90% probability** that the project will yield a **positive net present value (NPV)**, indicating economic feasibility.
- $BCR > 1$ in most iterations, signifying benefits exceed costs.
- The payback period remains under 9 years across all simulations.

4.3 AHP Weighting Results

The AHP was used to assign relative importance to feasibility criteria based on expert judgment (from 12 stakeholders including engineers, environmental experts, and economists).

Table 3: Criteria Weights (AHP Output)

Criteria	Weight
Economic Feasibility	0.35
Environmental Impact	0.25
Technical Viability	0.20
Social Acceptability	0.15
Legal/Regulatory Fit	0.05

The consistency ratio ($CR = 0.07$) was within the acceptable threshold ($CR < 0.1$), indicating reliable judgment.

4.4 Fuzzy Logic Results

A Fuzzy Inference System (FIS) was applied to assess qualitative attributes (e.g., political stability, environmental risk, and public opposition).

Linguistic Variables and Membership Functions:

- *Environmental Risk*: {Low, Medium, High}
- *Social Support*: {Weak, Moderate, Strong}

- *Political Stability*: {Unstable, Average, Stable}

Sample

Rule:

IF Environmental Risk = High AND Social Support = Weak, **THEN** Feasibility = Low

Table 4: Fuzzy Evaluation Output

Scenario	Feasibility Score (0–1)	Linguistic Outcome
Base Case	0.68	Moderate
Optimistic Scenario	0.81	High
Pessimistic Scenario	0.44	Low

4.5 Integrated Feasibility Index (IFI)

A composite feasibility score was calculated:

$$IFI = \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \cdot S_i$$

Where:

- W_i is the weight from AHP
- S_i is the score from MCS and Fuzzy outputs

Final IFI Scores:

- **Optimistic:** 0.81 (Feasible)
- **Base Case:** 0.72 (Marginally Feasible)
- **Pessimistic:** 0.56 (Uncertain)

Threshold: Feasibility is accepted if $IFI \geq 0.70$

4.6 Sensitivity Analysis

Sensitivity analysis revealed that:

- **Construction Cost** and **Environmental Risk** are the most sensitive variables.
- A 10% increase in construction cost reduces NPV by 18%.
- A 10% increase in environmental penalties results in a 12% decrease in BCR.

The Tornado Diagram (not shown here) highlighted key risk drivers that most significantly affect feasibility.

4.7 Summary of Numerical Results

- The project shows **strong feasibility** under base and optimistic conditions.

- Monte Carlo results support economic viability with robust IRR and BCR values.
- Fuzzy logic reveals vulnerability to social and environmental uncertainties.
- Integrated modeling provides a more comprehensive and realistic picture than traditional deterministic feasibility studies.

The hybrid feasibility assessment confirms that road construction is likely feasible under current economic and technical assumptions but highlights the importance of **scenario-based planning** and **risk mitigation strategies**. The use of probabilistic and fuzzy tools enhances the reliability of decision-making in uncertain environments.

5. Conclusion

Uncertainty is inherent in large-scale infrastructure projects, particularly road construction. Traditional feasibility studies often fall short in accounting for this uncertainty. This paper presents a robust framework that incorporates probabilistic modeling, scenario analysis, and GIS-based environmental assessment.

By applying this integrated approach, planners and engineers can better anticipate potential pitfalls and adapt accordingly. The case study highlights the importance of modeling early-stage uncertainty in enhancing decision-making and ensuring project sustainability. Future work should focus on refining these models with real-time data and expanding their applicability across diverse geographical and socio-political contexts.

The feasibility of road construction projects in uncertain environments has become an increasingly critical concern for infrastructure planners and policymakers, particularly in regions subject to economic volatility, environmental risks, and social dynamics. This study aimed to address these complexities by proposing and applying a hybrid decision-making framework that integrates **Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)**, **Monte Carlo Simulation (MCS)**, and **Fuzzy Inference Systems (FIS)** to evaluate road project viability under uncertainty.

The results derived from a real-world case study involving a 15-kilometer highway project reveal that, under base-case and optimistic scenarios, the project exhibits robust financial and operational feasibility. Specifically, the Monte Carlo Simulation demonstrated a high probability of achieving a positive Net Present Value (NPV), a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) consistently above 1.0, and an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) averaging 12.3%, indicating sound economic viability. Furthermore, the project's payback period remained under acceptable thresholds across most simulation runs.

The **AHP analysis** highlighted that economic feasibility and environmental impact are the most influential criteria, together contributing to over 60% of the decision weight. Meanwhile, the **Fuzzy Inference System** effectively captured and modeled qualitative uncertainties such as environmental sensitivity, public support, and political stability. Fuzzy scores ranged from 0.44 (low feasibility under pessimistic assumptions) to 0.81 (high feasibility under optimistic assumptions), aligning well with Monte Carlo outcomes and providing a nuanced understanding of non-quantifiable risk elements.

The **Integrated Feasibility Index (IFI)**, which consolidated results from AHP, MCS, and FIS, yielded a final score of **0.72** in the base-case scenario, above the acceptable feasibility threshold of 0.70. This result confirms that the project is **marginally feasible**, provided that risk mitigation strategies are implemented to address potential cost overruns and environmental constraints.

Importantly, **sensitivity analysis** underscored that construction cost and environmental penalties are the most sensitive parameters affecting overall project feasibility. A modest 10% increase in construction cost could reduce NPV by up to 18%, illustrating the critical need for robust budgeting and environmental risk controls during planning and execution.

Policy and Managerial Implications

The findings suggest that conventional deterministic feasibility assessments are inadequate in uncertain settings. Decision-makers are encouraged to:

- Incorporate **probabilistic risk modeling** during the early planning phases.
- Apply **fuzzy logic** techniques to reflect stakeholder sentiment and environmental ambiguity better.
- Prioritize **multi-criteria frameworks**, such as the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), to ensure a transparent and balanced evaluation.

The hybrid framework used in this study can serve as a **decision-support tool** for governments, contractors, and international donors in prioritizing road investments, especially in emerging markets and climate-sensitive regions.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides a comprehensive model, it is not without limitations. The accuracy of results is influenced by the quality of input data and expert judgments used in AHP and FIS models.

Future research should aim to:

- Integrate **real-time data feeds** for dynamic risk updates.

- Explore the role of **machine learning** for predictive modeling of uncertainty.
- Conduct **cross-country comparative studies** to generalize the applicability of the framework.

In conclusion, the feasibility of road construction under uncertainty is best evaluated through integrated, scenario-based models that combine both **quantitative rigor** and **qualitative insight**. The hybrid approach demonstrated in this research offers a replicable and scalable solution for infrastructure decision-making in complex, high-risk environments.

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