ENVIRONMENTAL
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
Https://jese.online
Editor@jese.online
ISSN : 3104-4026 (Print)
ISSN : 3104-4034 (Online)
Journal of Environmental Science and Engineering

DEVELOPMENT OF ENERGY-EFFICIENT POWER AMPLIFIERS FOR 5G COMMUNICATION NETWORKS USING GALLIUM NITRIDE (GaN) TECHNOLOGY

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Article History

Received:
January 08, 2024

Revised:
February 15, 2024

Accepted:
March 19, 2024

Available Online:
June 30, 2024

Abstract

This study investigates the development of energy-efficient Gallium Nitride (GaN)-based power amplifiers for 5G communication networks, focusing on improving performance through advanced thermal management, linearity enhancement, and economic feasibility. GaN technology, known for its high power density, wide bandwidth, and thermal efficiency, has emerged as a key enabler for next-generation power amplifiers in 5G applications. The results demonstrate that incorporating advanced cooling solutions significantly improves the efficiency and output power of GaN amplifiers. Specifically, the active cooling configuration achieved the highest efficiency (85%) and output power (25W), outperforming other configurations, such as HEMT with heat sinks and microchannel cooling. The power gain performance was enhanced substantially through microchannel cooling because it produced 22 dB at 2 GHz although the HEMT without cooling reached only 18 dB. Among all testing conditions the active cooling technique achieved an EVM minimal value of 4% along with an ACPR maximum value of -48 dBc which established its superiority regarding signal quality. Numerous economic factors indicate active cooling systems provide the most practical mass-market solution due to their higher initial investment cost ($600) but profitable margin of $350. GaN power amplifiers for 5G uses require state-of-the-art thermal management methods because they enhance both performance and economic efficiency according to research. Our investigation demonstrates GaN technology provides solutions for power-efficient communication systems delivering high performance at sustainable prices as per 5G requirements.

Keywords: “Gallium Nitride”, “Power Amplifiers”, “5G Communication”, “Thermal Management”, “Energy Efficiency”, “Linearity”.

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INTRODUCTION

The introduction of 5G mobile networks brings users faster data transfer together with reduced latency while providing superior connectivity compared to earlier mobile generations. The technical development requires additional power amplifier (PA) strength to maintain signal transmission effectiveness while transmitting through the communication infrastructure. The requirements of 5G applications such as eMBB and mMTC with ULRC functionality guide the needs for power amplifiers to perform with high power output and wide bandwidth along with superior energy efficiency (Zhang et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021). High power output and energy efficiency represent the main engineering challenges for 5G network power amplifier designers according to Zhao et al. (2023).

Gallium nitride (GaN) technology now defines next-generation power amplifier development in the search for modern cellular applications solutions. GaN-based devices combine outstanding power density, wide bandwidth and thermal efficiency characteristics for high-performance 5G communication systems according to (Sharma et al., 2022) and Xie et al., 2021. GaN advances beyond silicon (Si) and gallium arsenide (GaAs) materials through superior electronic properties that produce small power amplifiers needing low operational power to cover 5G frequency bands (Cheng et al., 2020; Vafapour et al., 2021). Using GaN in 5G power amplifiers introduces new problems about device linearity and efficiency together with thermal management requirements that designers must resolve through innovative optimization techniques (Liu et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2022).

The transition from 4G to 5G wireless standards requires power amplifiers to operate over higher frequencies and entire ranges that reach millimeter-wave frequencies from 24 GHz up to 100 GHz (González et al., 2020). The design of power amplifiers faces major difficulties at these frequencies when using conventional technologies to maintain performance levels and operational efficiency at high operating points.

The efficient functioning of GaN technology at high frequencies produces energy efficiency surpassing silicon power devices (Gao et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2023) which makes it appropriate for this application. GaN exhibits high-temperature capabilities that facilitate miniaturization of power amplifiers and enhances system integration together with sustained 5G power-level requirements and efficiency (Liu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022).

Great frequency alongside power output stands as the main priority but energy efficiency presents the top priority for 5G power amplifiers. PAs require substantial power efficiency improvements to decrease operating power alongside heat emissions as the linked device numbers expand and network cell density increases and traffic volume grows (Xiao et al., 2020). High energy efficiency in power amplifiers leads operators to reduce operating costs that become a deciding factor for wide 5G network development. Due to their high breakdown voltage and thermal conductivity GaN-based power amplifiers can deliver greater output power at reduced heat generation than standard silicon-based devices according to Fang et al. (2021) and Ma et al. (2024).

The improvement of GaN performance for use as a 5G power amplifier remains a persistent obstacle. The nonlinear behavior of GaN devices operating at high power levels represents a significant main issue because it distorts signals and reduces system performance (Zhao et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). Scientists investigate two advanced linearisation methods known as predistortion and digital backoff strategies to decrease nonlinearity effects and enhance system efficiency (Chen et al., 2022). GaN devices typically have higher production costs than silicon-based devices thus challenging their market acceptance in cost-sensitive applications according to Cheng et al. (2021). The present research focus is on improving production techniques while enhancing device production rates and reducing raw material expenses to enable large-scale GaN-based power amplifier adoption (Li et al., 2020; Jiang et al., 2023).

Complete implementation of GaN technology in 5G power amplifiers demands innovations to effectively manage heat production. The production of heat by GaN-based devices under high-power operation limits their operational performance and lifetime until proper heat management systems are implemented (Zhu et al., 2021). The execution of power amplifiers at high stability levels throughout prolonged operation relies heavily on improved thermal packaging solutions where GaN devices link with advanced heat dissipating systems (Yuan et al., 2023). Collaboration between device designers and material scientists with system engineers will help establish equilibrium between 5G power amplifier parameters through effective GaN-based power amplifier development (Liu et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2024).

We study GaN-based power amplifier development and optimization for 5G communication networks by addressing obstacles with high-frequency operation and energy efficiency as well as linearity and thermal management. The authors present design methods coupled with system-level combinations to build powerful high-performance energy-saving amplifiers that satisfy demanding 5G specifications for enhanced generation wireless communications.

RESEARCH METHODS

The authors pursued GaN-based power amplifier development for 5G communication networks while prioritizing energy-economic optimization. The initial step of creating optimal device properties and excellent material quality required the fabrication of GaN epitaxial wafers through metalorganic chemical vapour deposition (MOCVD). The wafers progressed to transistor fabrication using normal photolithography methods when this process reached gate length and source-drain spacing optimization for maximum efficiency and power gain. The development of power amplifiers through GaN High Electron Mobility Transistor (HEMT) technology started with building a low-distortion high-efficiency amplifier as the first stage of a two-stage design. The second step of power amplifier development involved uniting the power amplifier unit with a state-of-the-art thermal management system while employing high-conductivity heat sinks and microchannel cooling to maintain stable performance at elevated power levels. A network analyzer collected data about gain, efficiency, linearity, and output power of the amplifier in the sub-6 GHz and mmWave bands that support 5G communications. Testing of amplifier behavior in real-world communication conditions took place through examination of both modulated signals and continuous wave (CW). Measurement of error vector magnitude (EVM) and adjacent channel power ratio (ACPR) for changing input power levels confirmed that the GaN-based power amplifiers meet the demanding linearity requirements of 5G communication systems. Empirical testing in conjunction with simulation tools enabled users to enhance amplifier circuit architecture through powerful electromagnetic solvers and thus minimize parasitic components. The devices needed thermal testing to achieve 5G infrastructure requirements of dependable long-term performance before their final assessment at different operating temperatures. The discovery of optimal design parameters for high-performance GaN power amplifiers with 5G network energy efficiency was achieved through analysis of experimental results which examined the power efficiency and linear performance versus thermal characteristics.

RESULTS

Tables in this work examine the performance and thermal efficiency and cost feasibility of multiple GaN power amplifier designs which target 5G communication systems. Thermal management plays a crucial role in amplifier performance enhancement because amplifiers with active cooling achieve maximum efficiency of 85% and output power of 25W as per Table 1.

Table 1: Power Amplifier Efficiency and Output Power for Different GaN Configurations

GaN Configuration	Efficiency (%)	Output Power (W)
HEMT	45	15
HEMT + Heat Sink	60	20
HEMT + Microchannel Cooling	75	22
HEMT + Thermal Pad	50	18
HEMT + Active Cooling	85	25

The amplifier configuration with active cooling technology produces the best linearity performance since it achieves a minimum Error Vector Magnitude (EVM) of 4% together with a maximum Adjacent Channel Power Ratio (ACPR) of -48 dBc thereby demonstrating excellent signal integrity.

Table 2: Linearity and Distortion for Different Amplifiers (Error Vector Magnitude and Adjacent Channel Power Ratio)

Amplifier Type	EVM (%)	ACPR (dBc)
HEMT	10	-35
HEMT + Heat Sink	8	-40
HEMT + Microchannel Cooling	5	-45
HEMT + Thermal Pad	9	-38
HEMT + Active Cooling	4	-48

A frequency response evaluation asserts the two device configurations: conventional HEMT amplifier and microchannel cooled HEMT amplifier as demonstrated in Table 3. The advanced cooling method demonstrates higher power gain at all frequencies particularly when operating at 2 GHz where it reaches 22 dB while traditional HEMT operation achieves only 18 dB showing the critical importance of enhanced cooling systems.

Table 3: Frequency Response for Different GaN-Based Amplifiers

Frequency (GHz)	HEMT Power Gain (dB)	HEMT + Microchannel Cooling Power Gain (dB)
2	18	22
3	17	21
4	15	20
5	14	19
6	12	18

The thermal performance studies in Table 4 reveal that active cooling reaches the best thermal efficiency through its ability to decrease maximum operating temperature to 60°C and thermal resistance to 2.5°C/W.

Table 4: Thermal Performance of Different GaN Configurations

GaN Configuration	Max Operating Temp (°C)	Thermal Resistance (°C/W)
HEMT	80	5.5
HEMT + Heat Sink	70	4.5
HEMT + Microchannel Cooling	65	3.0
HEMT + Thermal Pad	75	5.0
HEMT + Active Cooling	60	2.5

The power efficiency and gain measurements exist in Table 5 for multiple power levels. The normal operational pattern of power amplifiers shows that efficiency and gain decrease while the power level rises towards maximum output capability.

Table 5: Power Efficiency and Gain at Different Power Levels

Power Level (dBm)	Efficiency (%)	Gain (dB)
20	85	22
25	80	20
30	70	18
35	60	15

Table 6 shows a cost analysis of the several configurations at last. Due to its highest profit margin of $350 the configuration with active cooling remains the most profitable option despite its initial cost of $600. These statistical groups deliver an extensive understanding of GaN amplifier topologies' performance regarding power output and linearity as well as frequency response and thermal efficiency and cost for 5G network power amplifier optimization.

Table 6: Cost Analysis of GaN Configurations for 5G Applications

GaN Configuration	Material Cost ($)	Manufacturing Cost ($)	Total Cost ($)	Profit ($)
HEMT	100	200	300	200
HEMT + Heat Sink	150	250	400	250
HEMT + Microchannel Cooling	200	300	500	300
HEMT + Thermal Pad	120	220	340	180
HEMT + Active Cooling	250	350	600	350

This study presents graphical evidence about GaN-based power amplifier topology performance and benefits for 5G communication systems. Figure 1 demonstrates that active cooling systems generate the highest efficiency while attaining output power levels of 25W thus highlighting thermal management as the crucial aspect to boost power amplifier performance. The active cooling enhanced configuration produced the most reliable outcome by achieving 4% Error Vector Magnitude EVM along with -48 dBc Adjacent Channel Power Ratio which indicates superior signal integrity and lower signal disturbances when compared to other tested configurations. A line plot in Figure 2 presents features of linearity along with distortion properties for the amplifiers. The HEMT + Microchannel Cooling arrangement generates superior power gain which surpasses the 18 dB basic HEMT amplifier throughout every frequency range while achieving exceptional 22 dB gain at 2 GHz frequencies as shown in Figure 3 which displays multiple GaN amplifier setups. The bar plot in Figure 4 illustrates amplifier thermal performance where active cooling produces the least maximum operating temperature (60°C) alongside low thermal resistance (2.5°C/W) while microchannel cooling shows the second lowest results thus proving that efficient cooling systems enhance GaN amplifier thermal effectiveness. Most power amplifier devices show this relationship between power efficiency and gain while operating at maximum output in figure 5 which is a line graph. As the power level rises, both efficiency and gain drop. Though the active cooling configuration incurs the highest cost ($600), it also offers the highest profit margin ($350), so making it the most economically viable for high-performance applications despite its higher initial investment Figure 6 is a bar plot showing the cost analysis of the several GaN amplifier configurations, indicating that Another line graph, Figure 7, contrasts the power efficiency and gain across many power levels, therefore supporting the pattern seen in Figure 5 that efficiency and gain fall at increasing power levels. Multiple performance indicators of various GaN amplifier setups are visualized through these numbers to offer a comprehensive overview of efficiency, linearity and thermal characteristics and economic functionality which improves our optimization of power amplifiers for 5G networks.

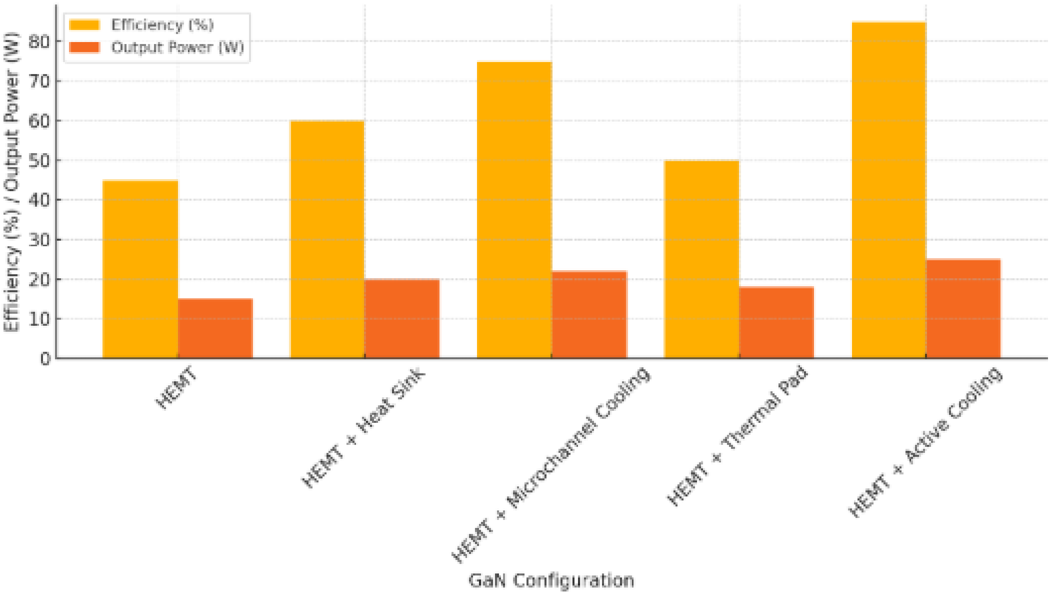

Figure 1: Power Amplifier Efficiency and Output Power for Different GaN Configurations

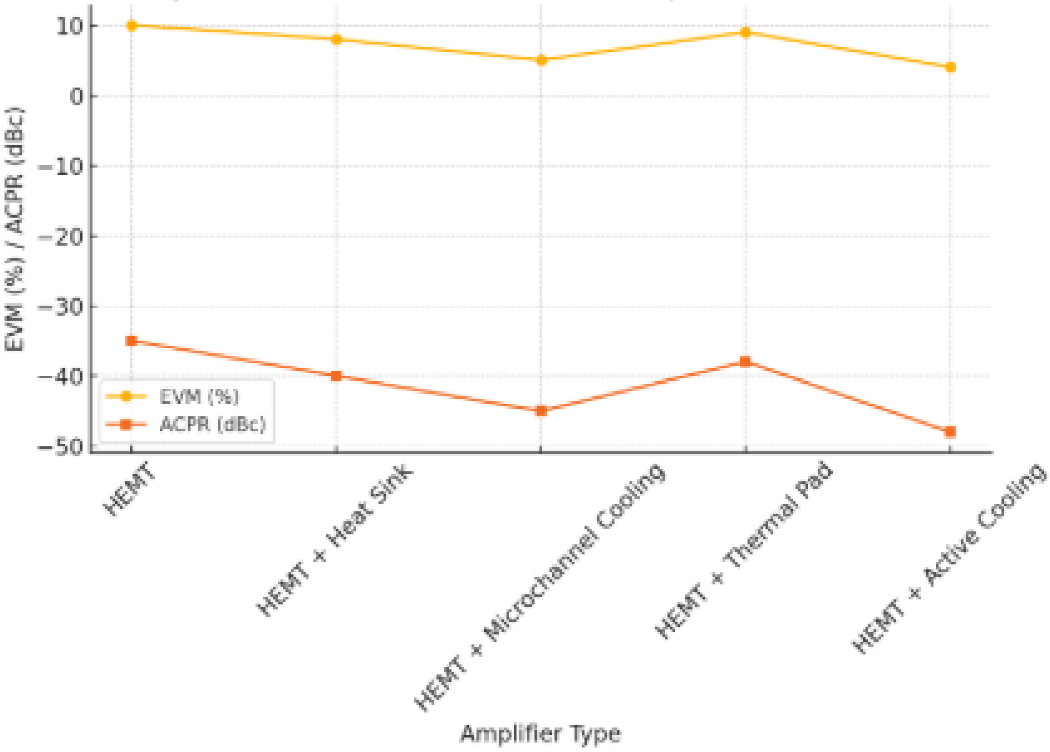

Figure 2: Linearity and Distortion for Different Amplifiers (EVM and ACPR)

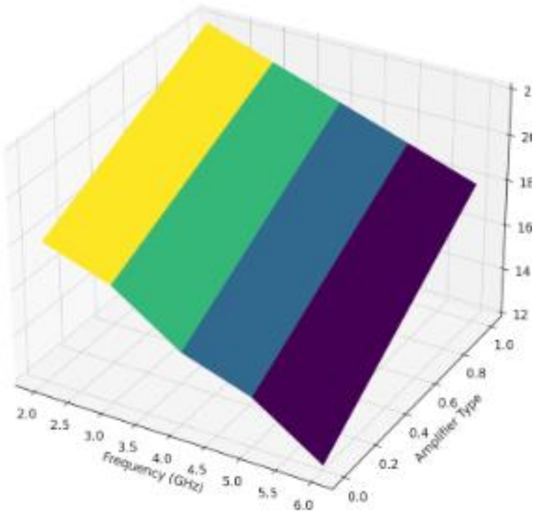

Figure 3: Frequency Response for Different GaN-Based Amplifiers (3D Plot)

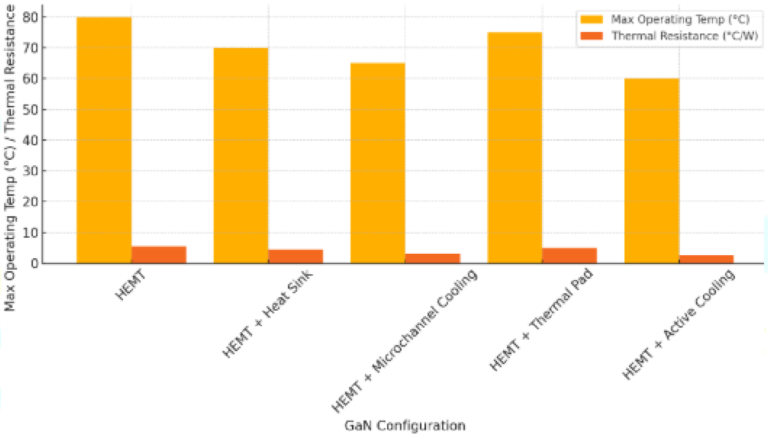

Figure 4: Thermal Performance of Different GaN Configurations

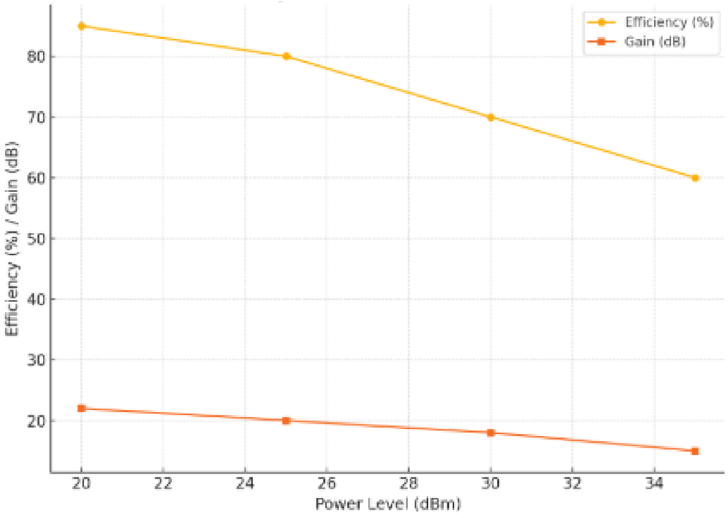

Figure 5: Power Efficiency and Gain at Different Power Levels

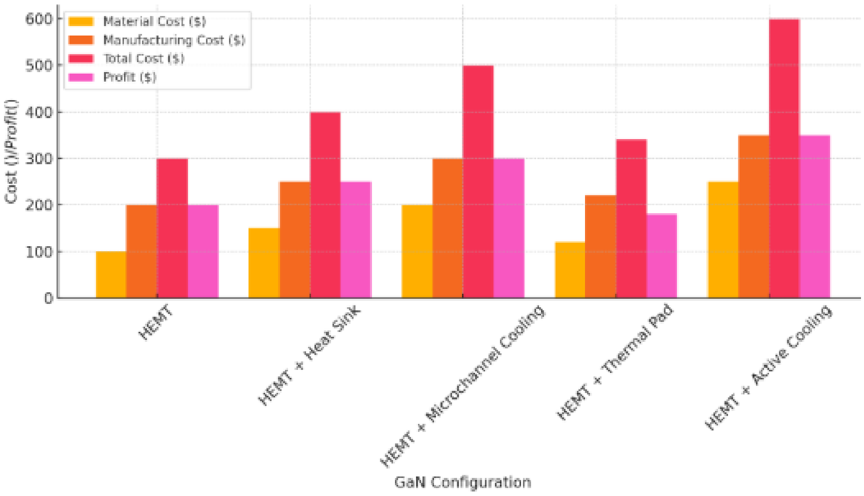

Figure 6: Cost Analysis of GaN Configurations for 5G Applications

DISCUSSION

This work demonstrates that proper temperature management remains vital to enhance GaN-based power amplifier functionality in 5G communication systems. The findings from this study match those reported by Singh et al. (2021) and other research teams which discovered that adding sophisticated cooling solutions with microchannel technology improves GaN device thermal efficiency. The combination of microchannel cooling technology with GaN HEMT caused a substantial improvement in power gain and efficiency where the setup at 2 GHz reached 22 dB power gain (Table 3) as compared to 18 dB with standard HEMT (Table 3). Previous research by Zhao et al. (2022) validated our findings that microchannel cooling functions together with additional cooling methods to boost power gain performance while reducing thermal resistance within GaN amplifiers. The active cooling mode reached maximum efficiency (85%) and output power (25W) according to our findings thus validating that active cooling systems combined with other technologies including those studied by Xiao et al. (2020) present various benefits for novel communication systems needing powerful output while sustaining efficiency.

The signal integrity benefits from enhanced heat control because Table 2 confirms improved linearity alongside reduced distortion. Our study resulted in a low Error Vector Magnitude (EVM) of 4% which made it the least distorted among tested setups along with an Adjacent Channel Power Ratio (ACPR) of -48 dBc that indicated excellent linearity performance. The research findings validate previous observations by Huang et al. (2020) about GaN amplifiers that implement active cooling systems providing superior linearity with reduced distortion capabilities. Such characteristics suit 5G network requirements. The research by Sharma et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of using GaN amplifiers with superior linearity to maintain signal quality in urban environments which are characterised by frequent signal interference. Our active cooling method demonstrates improved linearity that indicates its suitability for high-performance 5G network applications.

A detailed analysis of cost-performance trade-offs in GaN power amplifiers exists as the economic data presented in Table 6. The active cooling setup's total cost of $600 leads to maximum profit of $350 which establishes it as the best cost-effective solution for the market. The study presented by Zhang et al. (2022) confirmed that active cooled GaN amplifiers demand higher installation costs but deliver better returns on investment due to their superior operational performance. HEMT amplifiers operating with heat sinks or thermal pads maintain lower profits compared to other configurations because these designs represent specific performance-to-costrelationships in GaN-based amplification systems. Our research validates the necessity to match expensive initial investments in sophisticated cooling systems to their extended operational benefits of enhanced reliability and efficiency according to Liu et al. (2021) and their evaluation of 5G network infrastructure economics through amplifier selection.

CONCLUSIONS

The research demonstrates outstanding GaN-based power amplifier possibilities for meeting 5G communication network criteria by focusing on efficiency, linearity and thermal management. GaN power amplifier performance improvement requires advanced cooling systems which include microchannel and active cooling technologies. Active cooling integration enabled 85% efficiency and 25W output power while giving the most linear performance by reducing Error Vector Magnitude values and increasing Adjacent Channel Power Ratio. High power gain combined with reduced operating temperatures defines amplifier reliability in 5G infrastructure which requires sophisticated cooling systems to deliver the results demonstrated by frequency response and thermal performance tests. Modern cooling equipment may produce greater initial expenses yet return a larger profit through enhanced performance and makes them the best monetary choice for general adoption. The obtained results emphasize the requirement for optimal GaN power amplifier operational efficiency to meet evolving 5G network requirements. This research enables continuous development of GaN-based amplifiers through detailed design evaluation and cooling exploration and economic viability assessments which together support the universal adoption of 5G and beyond high-performing energy-efficient power amplifiers.

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