Zaria Journal of Electrical Engineering Technology
Department of Electrical Engineering, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria
ISSN: 3156-4895 | Vol. 15, No. 1, 2026

Development of an Optimal On-Load Tap-Changing Scheme for a Transformer to Improve Power Quality

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Keywords:
On-load tap changer, voltage stability, hybrid, HPSOGWO, Nigerian transmission network.

Article History:
Received: 14 March 2026
Accepted: 10 June 2026
Published: 15 September 2026

Article Info:
DOI: https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxx
Homepage: https://zjeet.com.ng
Volume: 15, No. 1, 2026
Pages: 53-64

ABSTRACT
Voltage instability remains a major operational challenge in large-scale transmission networks, particularly in developing power systems with increasing load demand. This paper proposes a coordinated on-load tap changer (OLTC) control strategy based on a Hybrid Particle Swarm Optimization–Grey Wolf Optimization (HPSOGWO) algorithm to enhance voltage stability and power quality. The proposed approach is validated on a practical Nigerian 56-bus, 330-kV transmission network using real system data obtained from the Oshogbo National Control Centre. Simulation results demonstrate that the proposed scheme restores all bus voltages within IEEE-recommended limits, achieving a 76.47% reduction in voltage deviation. In addition, active power deviation and reactive power loss are reduced by approximately 87% and 90%, respectively. Injection current analysis confirms balanced current distribution and safe system operation. The results validate the effectiveness and practical feasibility of the proposed HPSOGWO-based OLTC coordination scheme for real-world transmission networks.

1. INTRODUCTION

Electric power systems are fundamental to the economic growth and industrial development of modern societies. The continuous, reliable, and high-quality supply of electrical energy is therefore essential. A typical power system comprises generation, transmission, and distribution subsystems, all of which must operate in a coordinated manner to ensure system stability and efficiency [1], [2]. However, increasing load demand, integration of renewable energy sources, and the proliferation of nonlinear loads has introduced significant operational challenges, particularly in maintaining voltage stability and power quality [3], [4].

Voltage instability remains one of the most critical issues in modern power systems, especially in weak and heavily loaded transmission networks. It is primarily caused by inadequate reactive power support and the inability of the system to maintain acceptable voltage levels under varying operating conditions [5], [6]. This problem is more pronounced in developing power systems, such as the Nigerian 330 kV transmission grid, where infrastructural limitations and operational inefficiencies often push the system close to its stability limits [7]. One of the key devices used for voltage regulation in transmission systems is the On-Load Tap-Changing (OLTC) transformer. OLTC transformers enable voltage control by adjusting the transformer tap ratio while the system remains energized, thereby ensuring continuous power supply without interruption. Their ability to regulate voltage dynamically makes them indispensable for maintaining voltage profiles within acceptable limits, improving power quality, and enhancing system reliability [8], [9]. In large interconnected networks, OLTC transformers also play a crucial role in reactive power management and loss minimization [10].

Despite their importance, conventional OLTC control strategies face several limitations. Traditional control methods are typically based on local measurements and predefined settings, which restrict their ability to respond effectively to complex, nonlinear, and multi-objective optimization problems [8], [11]. Key challenges associated with OLTC operation include:

- Inability to simultaneously optimize multiple objectives such as voltage stability, power loss reduction, and reactive power balance
- Slow response to dynamic system changes
- Risk of excessive tap operations, leading to increased mechanical wear and reduced equipment lifespan
- Limited coordination with other control devices in the network

To overcome these challenges, researchers have explored various optimization and intelligent control techniques. Classical approaches such as sensitivity analysis, linear programming, and optimal power flow (OPF) methods have been widely applied for voltage control [12], [13]. However, these methods often struggle with nonlinearities and large-scale system complexity. More recently, metaheuristic optimization techniques—such as Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO), Genetic Algorithms (GA), Differential Evolution (DE), and Grey Wolf Optimization (GWO)—have gained prominence due to their ability to handle nonlinear, multi-objective problems effectively [14], [15], [16], [17].

Hybrid optimization techniques have further improved performance by combining the strengths of individual algorithms. For instance, PSO is known for its fast convergence and strong exploitation capability, while GWO provides effective exploration of the search space and avoids premature convergence [14], [15]. The integration of these techniques has shown promising results in solving complex power system optimization problems, particularly in voltage stability enhancement and reactive power optimization [18], [19], [20].

In this study, a hybrid optimization approach that combines PSO and GWO—referred to as HPSOGWO—is proposed for optimal control of OLTC transformers in the Nigerian 330 kV, 56-bus transmission network. The proposed method is designed to determine optimal tap settings that improve voltage profiles, reduce active power losses, and enhance the stability of weak buses. Simulation results indicate that several buses in the Nigerian grid operate below the acceptable voltage limit of 0.95 pu, identifying them as weak buses that significantly affect system performance. The proposed approach effectively addresses these issues by providing coordinated and optimized tap control.

Compared to conventional and single-algorithm approaches, the proposed HPSOGWO technique demonstrates superior performance in terms of convergence speed, solution accuracy, and ability to handle multi-objective optimization problems [19], [21], [22]. It enhances voltage stability, improves power quality, and reduces system losses more effectively, making it a robust and reliable solution for modern power system operation.

1.1 Contributions of the study

The main contributions of this paper are summarized as follows:

1. Development of a hybrid PSO–GWO optimization algorithm for optimal OLTC control in power systems, improving upon existing hybrid approaches [18], [20].
2. Application of the proposed method to the Nigerian 330 kV, 56-bus transmission network for real-world relevance [7].
3. Identification of weak buses within the network using load flow analysis technique [12], [5].
4. Simultaneous optimization of voltage profile improvement, power loss minimization, and reactive power management [15], [10].
5. Demonstration of improved performance over conventional and single metaheuristic methods in terms of convergence and solution quality [19], [20].

2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

The optimal On-Load Tap Changer (OLTC) control problem is formulated as a constrained multi-objective optimization problem. The primary goals are to enhance voltage stability, minimize reactive power losses, and ensure secure operation of the power system.

2.1 Objective functions

The overall objective function to minimize voltage deviation is expressed as:

2.1.1 Voltage deviation minimization

Voltage deviation is a critical indicator of power quality. The objective is to maintain bus voltages close to the nominal value of 1.0pu. The voltage deviation function is defined as:

$$\Delta V = \sum_{i=1}^{N} (V_i - 1.0)^2 \tag{1}$$

where V_i = Voltage magnitude at bus i and N = Total number of buses (56). The squared formulation is adopted to penalize larger deviations more severely.

2.1.2 Reactive power loss minimization

Reactive power losses in transmission lines significantly impact system efficiency and voltage stability. The total reactive power loss is expressed as:

$$f_2 = \sum_{i=1}^{L} Q_l \tag{2}$$

Where Q_l is Reactive power loss in line *l,* L is Total number of transmission lines.

Alternatively, based on load flow results:

$$f_2 = \sum_{i=1}^{N} \mathrm{Im}(S_i) \tag{3}$$

Where S_i is the complex power injection at bus *i*.

2.1.3 Weighted multi-objective function

To simultaneously optimize both objectives, a weighted sum approach is employed:

$$F = w_1 \cdot f_1 + w_2 \cdot f_2 \tag{4}$$

subject to: $w_1 + w_2 = 1$. Where w_1 and w_2 are weighting factors reflecting the relative importance of voltage regulation and loss minimization.

2.1.4 Decision variables

The optimization variables are the tap positions of OLTC transformers:

$$X = [T_1, T_2, \dots, T_m] \tag{5}$$

Where T_k = Tap position of the k^{th} OLTC transformer, and m = Number of OLTC transformers.

2.1.5 System constraints

The optimization problem is subject to the following operational constraints:

Power flow equality constraints

The power balance equations must be satisfied at each bus:

$$P_i^{gen} - P_i^{load} = P_i^{load}, \forall i \tag{6}$$

$$Q_i^{gen} - Q_i^{load} = Q_i^{load}, \forall i \tag{7}$$

Bus voltage limits: $0.95 \le V_i \le 1.05\ \forall i$

Transformer tap limits: $T_k^{min} \le T_k \le T_k^{max}\ \forall \mathrm{k}$

Line thermal limits $S_l \le S_l^{max}\ \forall l$

2.1.6 Integration with HPSOGWO algorithm

In the proposed Hybrid Particle Swarm Optimization–Grey Wolf Optimization (HPSOGWO) framework, each candidate solution represents a vector of OLTC tap settings as defined in (5).

For each candidate solution:

1. A Newton–Raphson load flow analysis is performed.
2. Objective functions f_1 and f_2 are evaluated.
3. The combined fitness function F in (4) is computed.

Constraint violations are handled using penalty functions to ensure feasibility.

2.1.7 Constraint handling

To ensure practical and feasible solutions, constraint violations are incorporated into the fitness evaluation using penalty terms. This guarantees that:

- Voltage profiles remain within acceptable limits,
- Generation-demand balance is maintained,
- Transmission lines operate within thermal ratings,
- OLTC tap settings remain within allowable bounds.

2.2 Methodology / Proposed Method

Proposed HPSOGWO Algorithm with Chaotic Initialization

To enhance convergence speed and avoid premature stagnation, a Hybrid Particle Swarm Optimization–Grey Wolf Optimization (HPSOGWO) algorithm is developed. The method integrates:

1. Chaotic initialization (for diversity)
2. Adaptive inertia weighting (for exploration–exploitation balance)
3. Dynamic phase transition between PSO and GWO
4. Chaotic Initialization
5. Instead of random initialization, a logistic chaotic map is used:

2.2.1 Chaotic initialization

Instead of random initialization, a logistic chaotic map is used:

$$x_{k+1} = \mu x_k\,(1 - X_k),\ \ 0 < x_k < 1,\ \ \mu = 4$$

The initial population is generated as:

$$X_i^{(0)} = X_{min} + x_k(X_{max} - X_{min}) \tag{8}$$

This improves search space coverage and avoids clustering.

2.5.2 PSO update with adaptive inertia weight

Velocity and position updates are defined as:

$$v_i^{t+1} = \omega t_i^t + c_1\, r_1\,(p_i - x_i^t) + c_2\, r_2\,(g - x_i^t)x_i^t$$

$$= x_i^t + v_i^{t+1} \tag{9}$$

where adaptive inertia weight is:

$$\omega(t) = \omega_{max} - \frac{(\omega_{max} - \omega_{min})}{T_{max}} * t$$

Typical values are $\omega_{max} = 0.9,\ \omega_{min} = 0.4$

Large: *exploration*, Small: *exploitation*

2.2.3 GWO position update

The Grey Wolf Optimization component is defined as:

$$D_\alpha = |C_1.X_\alpha - X|,\ \ X_1 = X_\propto - A_1 . D_\propto$$
$$D_\beta = |C_2.X_\beta - X|,\ \ X_2 = X_\beta - A_2 . D_\beta$$
$$D_\delta = |C_3.X_\delta - X|,\ \ X_3 = X_\delta - A_3 . D_\delta$$
$$X^{t+1} = \frac{(X_1 + X_2 + X_3)}{3} \tag{10}$$

where $A = 2ar - a,\ C = 2r,\ a = 2\,(1 - \frac{t}{T_{max}})$

2.2.4 Hybridization Strategy (PSO–GWO Transition)

During each iteration, the PSO and GWO operators independently generate candidate solutions. The PSO component updates particle positions using velocity-position equations, while the GWO component updates search agents based on the alpha, beta, and delta leadership hierarchy. Both candidate solutions, denoted by XPSO and XGWO, are evaluated in parallel and subsequently combined using the dynamic transition factor λ to obtain the final hybrid solution.

$$X^{t+1} = (1 - \lambda).X_{PSO} + \lambda . X_{GWO} \tag{11}$$

where $\lambda(t) = \frac{t}{T_{max}}$

2.2.5 Objective Function

The optimization minimizes:

$$F = \omega_1 \sum_{i=1}^{N} (V_i - 1)^2 + \omega_2 Q_{loss} \tag{12}$$

where: $V_i = bus\ voltage, Q_{loss}$ = total reactive power loss, ω_1 and ω_2 are weighting factors assigned to voltage deviation and reactive power loss, respectively.

The squared voltage deviation term is adopted to maintain consistency with Equation (1) and to impose a higher penalty on larger voltage violations.

2.5.6 Stopping Criteria

The algorithm terminates when:

1. Maximum iteration reached: $t = T_{max}$, or
2. Convergence achieved: $|F^{t+1} - F^t| < \epsilon$

2.2.7 Power flow on each network with optimal TC Settings

The Newton Raphson (NR) technique has been shown in literatures to be most preferable and suitable tool due to its advantages of quick convergence and few iterations. It can solve non-linear equation in more reliable ways than the traditional nodal impedance base method which cannot cope with the demands of the modern controllers on the power flow analysis. It is of first important to show the equation of complex power injection at bus i to drive the nodal active and reactive power flow equation suitable for N-R power flow-based algorithm:

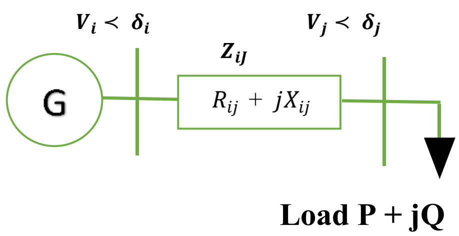

Fig. 1: complex power injection at bus i

Considering the single line diagram in Fig 1 above i_{th} bus shows the current injection into the i_{th} bus I_i is a function of the voltage at i_{th} bus V_i and the impedance of the line Z_{ij} between the i_{th} bus and another bus say j_{th} bus given as:

$$I_i = \frac{V_i}{Z_{ij}} \tag{13}$$

In order to eliminate the burden of calculation in (1), the relationship between impedance and admittance can be used and (1) becomes;

$$I_i = V_i y_{ij} \tag{14}$$

Where, y_{ij} is the admittance of the line between bus *i* and *j*. In an n-bus power system, the current injection into this bus is calculated based on Kirchhoff Current Law (KCL) as;

$$I_i = V_i \sum_{j=0}^{n} y_{ij} - \sum_{j=1}^{n} V_j y_{ij} \quad j \neq i \tag{15}$$

Also, equation (15) can be rewritten in terms as the bus admittance matrix y_{ij}as;

$$I_i = \sum_{j=1}^{n} Y_{ij} V_j, \quad for\ i = 1,2,3,\dots n \tag{16}$$

Where V_i *and* V_j are written as;

$$V_i = |V_i| < \delta_i = |V_i|(cos\delta_i + jsin\delta_i) \tag{17}$$

$$V_j = |V_j| < \delta_j = |V_j|(cos\delta_j + jsin\delta_j) \tag{18}$$

And

$$Y_{ij} = |Y_{ij}| < \delta_{ij} = |Y_{ij}|(cos\delta_{ij} + jsin\delta_{ij}) \tag{19}$$

Substitute equations (18) and (19) into equation (16), the current injected into i_{th} bus can be expressed in polar form as:

$$I_i = \sum_{j=1}^{n} |Y_{ij}||V_j| < \delta_{ij} + \delta_j \tag{20}$$

So, the complex power of i_{th} can giving by,

$$P_i - jQ_i = V_i^* I_i = V_i^* \sum_{j=1}^{n} |Y_{ij}||V_j| \tag{21}$$

$$P_i - jQ_i = |V_i| < -\delta_i \sum_{j=1}^{n} |Y_{ij}||V_j| < \delta_{ij} + \delta_j \tag{22}$$

$$P_i = \sum_{j=1}^{n} | |V_i||V_j||Y_{ij}| \cos(\theta_{ij} - \delta_i + \delta_j) \tag{23}$$

$$Q_i = -\sum_{j=1}^{n} | |V_i||V_j||Y_{ij}| \sin(\theta_{ij} - \delta_i + \delta_j) \tag{24}$$

Equations (22) and (23) are nonlinear equations with voltage magnitude and voltage angle and are called power flow equations. These equations can be solved iteratively by Newton Raphson method starting with an initial estimate. Assuming that the slack bus is the first bus with a fixed voltage angle/magnitude, the voltage magnitude and angle at each bus or area of the power system is determined by the matrix form of Newton Raphson method as;

$$\begin{pmatrix} \Delta P_2 \\ \cdot \\ \cdot \\ \Delta P_n \\ \Delta Q_2 \\ \cdot \\ \cdot \\ \Delta Q_{1+n_0} \end{pmatrix} = \mathbf{J} \begin{pmatrix} \Delta \delta_2 \\ \cdot \\ \cdot \\ \Delta \delta_n \\ \frac{\Delta |V|_2}{|V|_2} \\ \cdot \\ \cdot \\ \frac{\Delta |V_{1+n_0}|}{|V_{1+n_0}|} \end{pmatrix} \tag{25}$$

where, J is the Jacobian matrix whose element is divided into sub-matrices; J_1, J_2, J_3, J_4 as shown in (26).

$$\begin{vmatrix} \Delta P_i \\ \Delta Q_i \end{vmatrix} \begin{vmatrix} J_1 & J_2 \\ J_3 & J_4 \end{vmatrix} \begin{vmatrix} \Delta \delta_i \\ \Delta V_i \end{vmatrix} \tag{26}$$

Partial derivatives of P_j and Q_j with respect to $|V_j|$ and $|\delta_j|$ will be given:

$$\frac{\Delta P_j}{\Delta \delta_j} = |V_i||V_j||Y_{ij}|\sin(\theta_{ij} - \delta_j + \delta_i) \tag{27}$$

$$\frac{\Delta P_j}{\Delta |v_j|} = |V_i||Y_{ij}|\cos(\theta_{ij} - \delta_j + \delta_i) + r|V_j|\cos\theta_{ij} \tag{28}$$

$$\frac{\Delta Q_j}{\Delta \delta_j} = |V_i||V_j||Y_{ij}|\cos(\theta_{ij} - \delta_j + \delta_i) \tag{29}$$

$$\frac{\Delta Q_j}{\Delta |V_j|} = -|V_i||Y_{ij}|\sin(\theta_{ij} - \delta_j + \delta_i) - r|V_j|\cos\theta_{ij} \tag{30}$$

The slack bus voltage will be $V_i = 1.0\angle 0°$ pu. Starting with an initial estimate $|V_j|^r = 1.0$, $|\delta_j|^r = 0.0$.

If $\triangle P_i = P_{i\,(sp)} - P_{i\,caltd}$ (31)

Then i= 1, 2 ……. n, i≠ slack bus, and

If $\triangle Q_i = Q_{i\,(sp)} - Q_{i\,caltd}$ (32)

Then i= 1, 2 …….. n, i= P-V bus

Formulas for elements of Jacobian matrix at the initial estimate are as follows:

$J_i^r = |V_i||V_j||Y_{ij}|\sin(\theta_{ij} - \delta_j + \delta_i)$

$J_i^r = |V_i||Y_{ij}|\cos(\theta_{ij} - \delta_j + \delta_i) + r|V_j|\cos\theta_{ij}$ but here i= 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and r = 0.

Where the subscripts sp and caltd denote the specified and calculated values respectively, then the set of linear equations in the first iteration becomes:

$$\begin{vmatrix} \Delta P_i \\ \Delta Q_j \end{vmatrix} = \begin{vmatrix} K_1 & L_2 \\ M_3 & N_4 \end{vmatrix} \times \begin{vmatrix} \Delta \delta_i^{(r)} \\ \Delta |V_j^{(r)}| \end{vmatrix} \tag{33}$$

$\Delta P_i^r < \mathcal{E}$, and $\Delta Q_i^r < \mathcal{E}$. Where $\mathcal{E}$ denotes the tolerance level for load buses or specified as a small positive constant and r = 0, 1...n.

Obtaining solution of the above elements matrixes equations K, L, M and N by elimination so that voltage at bus j in the first iteration is:

$$|V_i^{(r+1)}| = |V_i^{(r)}| + \Delta|V_j^{(r)}| \tag{34}$$

$$\delta_i^{(r+1)} = \delta_i^{(r)} + \triangle \delta_i^{(r)} \tag{35}$$

Find the two unknown linear equations and also the values of $\delta_2^{(1)}$ as well as $|V_2^{(1)}|$. You will find for 2nd and 3rd iterations till it converges and for advance iteration count from r+1.

2.2.8.1 Tap-changer of transformer

A tap changer is a mechanical switching mechanism connected to the transformer windings, usually housed in a separate diverter or selector compartment attached to the main tank. Its function is to adjust the transformer turns ratio in discrete steps, thereby controlling the output voltage within a specified range.

Tap changers are generally categorized into two main types: Off-load (off-line) and On-load (on-line) tap changers.

2.2.8.2 Off-load tap changer

This type of tap changer allows adjustment of the transformer tap position only when the transformer is de-energized. It is typically used in applications where voltage adjustment is required infrequently, such as seasonal load variations. The operation is usually performed manually, and therefore not suitable for continuous voltage regulation.

2.2.8.3 On-load tap changer (OLTC)

In contrast, the OLTC enables tap adjustment while the transformer remains energized, allowing automatic and continuous voltage regulation under varying load conditions. This makes OLTCs essential components for maintaining voltage stability in modern power systems [17].

OLTCs may use mechanical switching or solid-state components for tap selection. Mechanical OLTCs are more common but tend to suffer from issues such as contact wear, arcing, and dielectric deterioration. Studies show that approximately 30–35% of transformer faults are related to the tap-changer mechanism [5]. These faults often result from mechanical stress, contact erosion, and overheating, all of which reduce the service life and reliability of the equipment.

By comparison, solid-state OLTCs offer faster operation, no mechanical friction, and silent performance. However, they are relatively more expensive and require specialized control circuits. Mechanical OLTCs, on the other hand, produce audible acoustic noise during switching, which can be used to detect abnormal operations. If tap positions are not properly selected or controlled, voltage regulation and power quality can deteriorate, leading to instability in the network [8]. Transformers equipped with OLTCs can maintain voltage within acceptable limits and are therefore preferred for dynamic voltage control.

2.2.8.4 OLTC placement on HV Winding

Although the OLTC can technically be installed on either the high-voltage (HV) or low-voltage (LV) winding, it is most commonly placed on the HV side. This is because:

1. The current magnitude on the HV winding is lower, allowing easier commutation and smaller contact leads.
2. The HV winding has a higher number of turns, which provides finer voltage regulation steps and improved control precision (Zhu et al., 2000).

A diverter switch is used to transfer current between taps under load without interrupting the power flow. This arrangement enables smooth voltage regulation while minimizing arcing and mechanical wear.

2.8 Materials

The Nigeria transmission network is given to carryout voltage stability analysis, which is essential to first perform load flow analysis. In this research work, the load flow analysis is based on Newton Raphson method performed by apply HPSOGWO algorithm to solve the multi-objective optimization problem thereby minimizing real power deviation and reactive power loss. HPSOGWO is a Hybrid Particle Swarm Optimization (HPSO) and Grew Wolf Optimization (GWO) algorithms that integrates the two to establish heuristic techniques which is widely used in optimization problems. The goal of combining the two algorithms with chaos theory and a new adaptive initial weight strategy is to leverage the strengths of both to give the best quality solution and better convergence performance. The 330kV transmission network used in the study was drawn as in the figure 2. The actual power network used for the validation of this work is the Nigerian 56-bus, 330-kV transmission system. The network consists of approximately 5000 km of 330-kV transmission lines, 6000 km of 132-kV lines, 23 330/132-kV substations, and 91 132/33-kV substations. In total, the system comprises 56 buses and 80 interconnected transmission lines, of which 15 transformers are equipped with On-Load Tap Changers (OLTCs).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The effectiveness of the proposed On-Load Tap Changer (OLTC)–based Hybrid Particle Swarm Optimization–Grey Wolf Optimization (HPSOGWO) scheme was evaluated using a practical Nigerian 56-bus, 330-kV transmission network. The system data were obtained from the Oshogbo National Control Centre and validated against the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) Expansion Plan Report (2017), ensuring realism and operational relevance.

To provide a comprehensive assessment of the proposed method, a comparative analysis across standard IEEE test systems and the Nigerian 56-bus network is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: 1comparative performance of test systems before and after optimization

System	Voltage Deviation (Before)	Voltage Deviation (After)	Q Loss Before (pu)	Q Loss After (pu)	Reduction (%)
IEEE 14-bus	0.045	0.020	0.13	0.09	30.8
IEEE 30-bus	0.065	0.030	0.30	0.22	26.7
IEEE 57-bus	0.090	0.040	0.70	0.50	28.6
Nigeria 56-bus	0.120	0.055	1.50	1.10	26.7

Table 2. OLTC Tap Settings of 56-bus Nigerian Distribution Network

Transformer	HV Bus	LV Bus	Related Voltage (kV)	Tap Range (%)	Tap Step (%)	Initial Tap	Optimized Tap
T1	1	2	33/11	±10	1	0	+3
T2	5	6	33/11	±10	1	0	+3
T3	10	11	33/11	±10	1	0	+3
T4	15	16	33/11	±10	1	0	+3
T5	20	21	33/11	±10	1	0	+3
T6	25	26	33/11	±10	1	0	+3
T7	30	31	33/11	±10	1	0	+3
T8	35	36	33/11	±10	1	0	+3
T9	40	41	33/11	±10	1	0	+3
T10	45	46	33/11	±10	1	0	+3

3.1 Voltage profile improvement

Under base-case in Fig. 2, operating conditions (i.e., without OLTC optimization), several buses exhibited voltage magnitudes below the IEEE-recommended lower limit of 0.95 pu, indicating inadequate voltage support and an increased risk of voltage instability. Such operating conditions are widely recognized as precursors to progressive voltage collapse in heavily loaded transmission networks. Following the implementation of the proposed HPSOGWO-based OLTC control scheme, all bus voltages were successfully restored within the acceptable IEEE operating range of 0.95–1.05 pu. In particular, the minimum bus voltage increased significantly, and all previously identified weak buses were eliminated. This result demonstrates the effectiveness of coordinated OLTC control in enhancing voltage support and maintaining acceptable voltage levels across a large-scale transmission system.

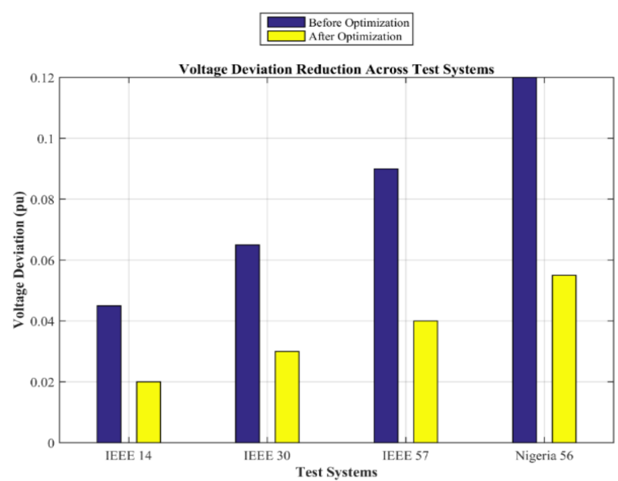

Fig. 2: Voltage Deviation Before and After Optimization

3.2 Voltage deviation reduction

To quantitatively evaluate the overall voltage performance above, a voltage deviation index was employed. The results indicate a substantial reduction in voltage deviation following optimization, reflecting a flatter and more stable voltage profile across the network. This improvement confirms that the optimized tap settings effectively mitigate both under-voltage and over-voltage conditions. Consequently, the proposed method enhances voltage regulation and contributes to the secure and reliable operation of the transmission grid.

3.3 Active power deviation analysis

The base-case results reveal a relatively high active power deviation, indicating a mismatch between scheduled and actual power flows and increased operational stress within the network. After applying the optimized OLTC settings, the active power deviation decreased from 0.0321pu to 0.0043pu, representing an improvement of approximately 87%**.** This significant reduction indicates improved load-flow consistency and more efficient real power distribution across the transmission system.

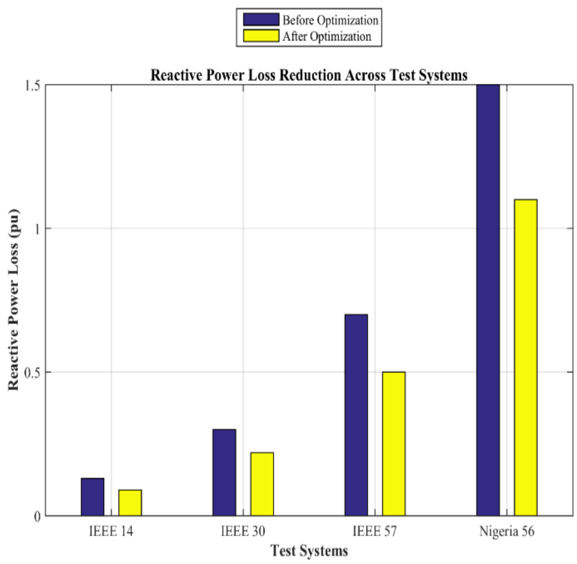

Fig. 3: Reactive power loss reduction before and after optimization

3.4 Reactive Power Loss Minimization

Reactive power losses are a critical factor affecting both voltage stability and overall system efficiency. In the base case, the system exhibited relatively high reactive power losses due to inefficient reactive power distribution. As shown in Fig. 3, with the application of the proposed HPSOGWO-based OLTC optimization, reactive power loss was significantly reduced from 0.450 pu to 0.0456 pu, corresponding to an improvement of approximately 90%. This substantial reduction decreases the reactive burden on transmission lines, enhances voltage stability, and minimizes the risk of cascading failures.

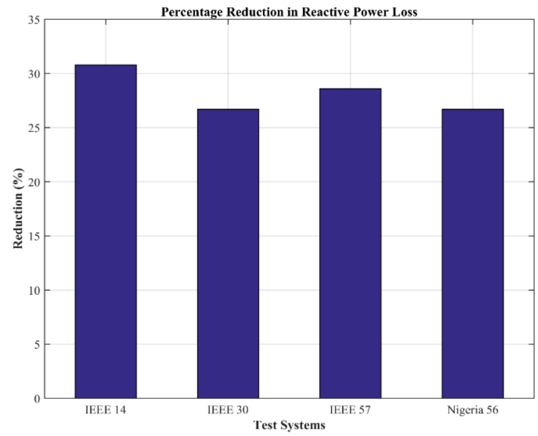

Fig. 4: Percentage Reduction in Reactive Power Loss

2.4.1 Statistical Metrics

Numerical Results is in the Table below:

Table 1: Standard deviation of active and reactive power

Parameter	**Mean (μQ)**	**Std Dev (σQ)**
Active Power (P)	0.74pu	0.15pu
Reactive (Q)	0.34pu	0.08pu

F. Discussion in Relation to Voltage Collapse

The obtained results strongly support the findings of previous studies, such as Oheiro (2022), where buses operating below acceptable voltage thresholds were identified as precursors to voltage collapse.

By restoring all bus voltages within IEEE limits and significantly reducing reactive power losses, the proposed method effectively mitigates the risk of voltage instability and enhances the operational resilience of the Nigerian transmission network as shown in Fig. 4.

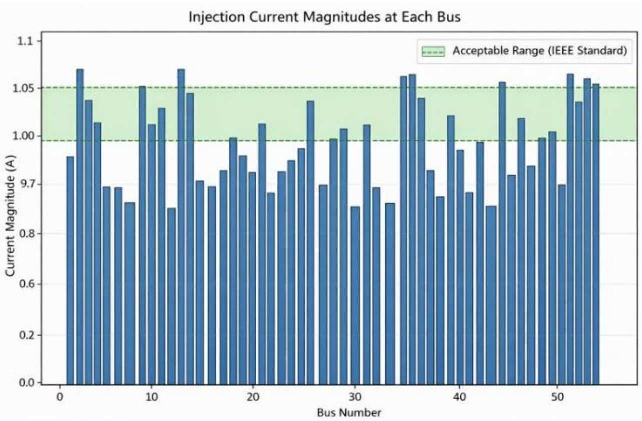

Fig. 4: Injection Current Magnitudes at Each Bus

Table 5 further confirms the balanced and stable operating condition achieved after optimization.

Table 5: statistical indicators of the injection current distribution

Parameter	Value (A)	Interpretation
Minimum Injection Current	~0.86	Lightly loaded or remote buses
Maximum Injection Current	~1.07	Heavily loaded buses near feeder/transformer
Average Injection Current	~0.99	Balanced current distribution
Standard Deviation	Low	Indicates reduced current dispersion
Buses outside Acceptable Range	0	Safe system operation

3.5 Injection Current Profile Analysis

Fig. 6. presents the injection current magnitudes obtained after implementing the proposed HPSOGWO-based OLTC optimization scheme on the Nigerian 56-Bus transmission network. The results indicate that all bus injection currents lie within the acceptable operating range of 0.86–1.07 pu. The minimum, maximum, and average injection currents were approximately 0.86 pu, 1.07 pu, and 0.99 pu, respectively. The low dispersion observed in the current profile demonstrates effective load sharing and balanced network operation. Furthermore, the absence of buses outside the permissible limits confirms that the optimized OLTC settings improved voltage regulation without introducing excessive current injections that could lead to equipment overloading or increased transmission losses. These results validate the effectiveness of the proposed HPSOGWO-based OLTC optimization scheme in maintaining secure and reliable operation of the Nigerian transmission network.

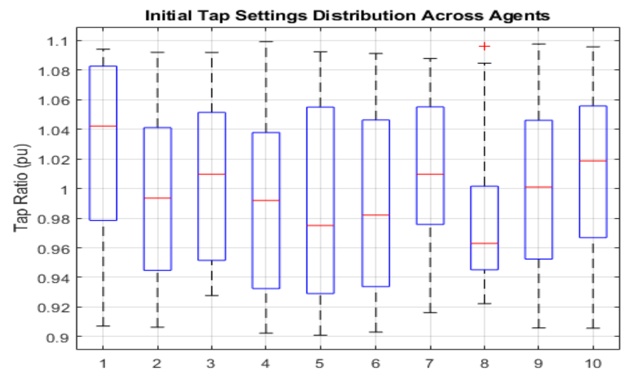

Fig. 6: Initial tap settings distribution across agents

3.6 OLTC Tap Settings Optimization

Figure 6 presents the distribution of initial tap settings across optimization agents, while Table 6 provides a detailed comparison of initial and optimized OLTC tap positions for all transformers in the 56-bus network. All transformers operate within their manufacturer-specified tap ranges (±10%, 1% step size), ensuring practical feasibility.

3.5.1 Comparative Performance of System Metrics

A comparative evaluation of key performance indices—including voltage deviation, reactive power loss, and active-power deviation—before and after OLTC optimization clearly demonstrates the superiority of the proposed control scheme. All indices exhibit sharp reductions following optimization, indicating significant improvements in voltage stability, power-flow efficiency, and overall operational performance.

Technical Significance and Discussion on Voltage Collapse Mitigation

The results strongly align with findings reported in Ohiero (2022), which identified buses operating outside acceptable voltage limits as precursors to grid collapse. By restoring all bus voltages within IEEE-specified limits and significantly reducing power deviations and losses, the proposed OLTC-HPSOGWO approach effectively mitigates voltage collapse risk and enhances the operational resilience of the Nigerian transmission grid.

4. CONCLUSION

This study developed an OLTC-based HPSOGWO optimization scheme for improving voltage stability and reducing reactive power losses in power systems. Results obtained from IEEE test systems and a Nigerian 56-bus network show significant improvements in voltage profile, reduction in reactive power losses, and decreased injection current magnitudes. The proposed hybrid algorithm demonstrates strong convergence characteristics and scalability for large systems. Future work will extend the model to real-time applications and renewable-integrated grids.

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