Software-Defined Mobile Network

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Abstract - The rapid evolution of networking technologies has brought forth innovative paradigms such as Software-Defined Networking and Software-Defined Mobile Networks, These approaches address modern network challenges by decoupling the control and data planes, enabling centralized management, improved scalability, and enhanced flexibility. This research aims to explore and analyze SDMN by leveraging simulation and emulation tools. Specifically, it integrates NS-3 for fine-grained network simulation and Mininet-WiFi for realistic SDN-based emulation, with ONOS serving as the SDN controller. The study evaluates key performance metrics, including latency, throughput, and scalability, in various network scenarios. Findings from this project provide insights into the potential of SDMN for optimizing future mobile communication systems and overcoming the growing complexity of modern networks.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of networking technologies has led to the advent of Software-Defined Networking (SDN) and its application in various domains, including Software-Defined Mobile Networks (SDMN). SDN decouples the control plane from the data plane, providing a centralized, programmable approach to managing networks. This paradigm enables enhanced flexibility, scalability, and efficiency in network operations. Simultaneously, SDMN integrates SDN principles with mobile communication systems, addressing challenges such as dynamic mobility, traffic optimization, and Quality of Service (QoS) requirements.

A. *Objectives :*

This research aims to:

- Simulate mobile network environments using NS-3 and Mininet-WiFi.
- Use SDN principles into mobile networking scenarios with the ONOS controller.
- Evaluate the performance of SDMN in terms of latency, throughput, and scalability.
- Provide insights into the benefits and challenges of SDMN in modern networking environments.

B. *Significance :*

With the increasing demand for robust and flexible mobile communication systems, SDMN presents a promising solution. This project enhances the understanding of SDMN by combining simulation and emulation techniques, providing insights into optimizing mobile networks and addressing the growing complexity of modern communication systems.

C. *Score of the report :*

The report focuses on:

1. The installation and configuration of NS-3, Mininet-WiFi, and ONOS.
2. Development of simulation scenarios integrating wireless and SDN environments.
3. Analysis of SDMN performance metrics.
4. Challenges encountered during integration and potential solutions.

By detailing each of these aspects, this research provides a comprehensive exploration of SDMN simulation and its implications for modern networking.

II. INSTALLATION AND CONFIGURATION

This section details the tools used in the research, the system setup, and the configuration process required to implement and execute the experiments. A summary of the installation steps is provided to ensure reproducibility.

A. *Tool Overview :*

The following tools and technologies were used to simulate and analyze the Software-Defined Mobile Network (SDMN):

1) *Mininet Wifi :*

- A network emulator with wireless and mobility capabilities.
- Used for creating virtualized network topologies with Access Points (APs) and mobile stations.

2) *ONOS (Open Network Operating System):*

- An open-source SDN controller supporting OpenFlow-based programmable networks.
- Used for managing and dynamically configuring network flow rules.

3) *NS3 (Network Simulator 3):*

- A discrete-event network simulator.
- Used for simulating wireless scenarios and calculating metrics like propagation loss.

4) *iperf:*

- A network testing tool for measuring throughput and diagnosing network performance.

5) *Wireshark and TCPDump:*

- Tools for capturing and analyzing network traffic.
- Used for evaluating packet loss and handover performance.

6) Python with Matplotlib:

- Used for scripting test automation, analyzing collected data, and visualizing performance metrics.

B. System Setup and Configuration

The following system configuration was used:

1) Hardware Specifications

OS: Kali GNU/Linux Rolling x86_64
Processor: 12 cores @ 4.50 GHz
Memory: 16 GB

2) Software Specifications

SDN Controller: ONOS 2.0.0 (legacy version with GUI support), running on Apache Karaf 4.2.2.

Network Emulation:

- Mininet-WiFi 2.3.0 for simulating wireless and mobile network environments.
- NS3 version 3.39 for advanced wireless simulations, including propagation loss modeling.

Packet Capture and Analysis: Wireshark (latest stable release) and TCPDump for traffic inspection.

Programming Environment: Python 3.12 with the following libraries:

- matplotlib for data visualization.
- numpy for numerical analysis.
- pyshark for network packet parsing.
- scapy for network traffic manipulation and analysis.

Network Performance Testing: iperf for measuring throughput and diagnosing network performance.

3) Network Configuration

- **With OpenFlow:**
  - ✧ Mininet-WiFi was connected to ONOS, enabling centralized traffic management using dynamic OpenFlow rules.
  - ✧ ONOS flow rules were configured via its REST API, allowing for real-time prioritization and slicing.
- **Without OpenFlow:**
  - ✧ Mininet-WiFi operated independently, with switches handling traffic locally using static configurations.
- **Wireless Simulations:**
  - ✧ NS3 was used to simulate propagation loss and wireless performance metrics, providing insights into mobility and signal strength impacts.

4) Summary

Tool	Version	Purpose
Mininet-Wifi	2.3.0	Wireless and mobility network emulation
ONOS	2.0.0	SDN controller for OpenFlow networks
NS3	3.36	Wireless propagation
Wireshark	4.4.0	Packet capture and analysis
TCPDump	4.99	Lightweight traffic capture and analysis
Python	3.12	Scripting, automation, and visualization

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The emergence of Software-Defined Networking (SDN) has fundamentally redefined network architecture by introducing programmability and centralized control. McKeown et al. [1] were pioneers in this field, demonstrating the potential of SDN with the OpenFlow protocol. Their work laid the foundation for extending SDN principles to mobile networks, which later evolved into Software-Defined Mobile Networks (SDMN).

- **Foundations of SDMN**

The transition from traditional network architectures to SDMN began with efforts to address the limitations of static, hardware-based systems. Zhang, Zhu, and Leung [2] provided an early and comprehensive overview of SDMN, focusing on its ability to optimize traffic management and enhance mobility handling. They emphasized programmability's role in improving Quality of Service (QoS) and scalability, setting the stage for subsequent research into dynamic network management.

- **Tools and Frameworks for SDMN Evaluation**

To evaluate and compare SDMN concepts with traditional networks, researchers have relied on simulation and emulation tools. The NS3 Consortium [3] and ONOS Team [4] developed platforms that enable testing of network performance in controlled environments. These tools facilitated the assessment of critical metrics such as traffic optimization, latency reduction, and handover efficiency. Handigol et al. [5] validated SDN's superiority in simulated environments, demonstrating its effectiveness in achieving seamless handovers and dynamic flow control when compared to traditional networks.

- **Comparison: SDN vs Traditional Networks**

Recent research has increasingly focused on proving the superiority of SDN-based architectures over traditional networks. Mangipudi and McNair [6] highlighted the flexibility of SDN in managing heterogeneous networks, showcasing significant reductions in latency and improved resource allocation. These findings align with simulated studies showing how SDN-based networks handle traffic congestion and mobility more effectively than traditional counterparts.

Building on these studies, Yadav et al. [7] argued that SDN's programmability offers critical advantages in scalability and adaptability, particularly for 6G networks. Similarly, Carrascal et al. [8] emphasized the low-latency and virtualization capabilities of SDN-based networks, providing a strong case for their adoption in future network architectures.

- **Conclusion**

This literature review underscores the transformative potential of SDN-based networks in outperforming traditional architectures. The reviewed studies provide compelling evidence for the benefits of SDMN in simulated environments, including reduced latency, enhanced mobility, and improved scalability. However, further research is needed to address security, energy efficiency, and large-scale deployment challenges. By building on existing frameworks, this study aims to strengthen the case for SDN-based networks as the foundation for next-generation communication systems.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the experimental procedures used to evaluate the performance of Software-Defined Mobile Networks (SDMN). The experiments were conducted to measure key metrics such as latency, throughput, packet loss, and energy efficiency. The methodology also highlights the integration of tools, test scenarios, and the evaluation metrics.

A. Experimental Setup

The experiments were carried out in a virtualized testbed environment that combined Mininet-WiFi, ONOS, NS3, and Python scripts for data analysis and visualization. Two configurations were compared:

1. **Without OpenFlow:** A traditional network architecture where traffic was handled locally by Layer 2/3 switches with static configurations. This setup did not involve SDN capabilities.
2. **With OpenFlow:** A Software-Defined Network (SDN) architecture where the ONOS controller dynamically managed traffic using OpenFlow-enabled switches. This configuration allowed centralized traffic management and real-time flow rule adjustments.

B. Test Scenarios

The following test scenarios were designed to analyze the performance of SDMN under various conditions:

1) Latency Analysis

- **Objective:** Measure the average round-trip time (RTT) of packets under low and high traffic conditions.
- **Setup:**

Topology: A single switch connected to two stations (hosts).
Tools: ping command to measure RTT.

- **Procedure:**

✧ Conduct RTT measurements without OpenFlow (local traffic management).
✧ Repeat the tests with OpenFlow (centralized management by ONOS).
✧ Traffic load was varied using additional flows generated by iperf.

- **Metrics:**

Latency was calculated as the average RTT using:

$$\text{Latency (ms)} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} \text{RTT}_i}{n}$$

2) Throughput and Congestion Management

- **Objective:** Evaluate the network's ability to manage multiple traffic flows and prioritize specific flows dynamically.
- **Setup:**

Topology: A single switch connected to three hosts.
Tools: iperf for throughput measurement.

- **Procedure:**

✧ Simulate two competing traffic flows without OpenFlow (equal treatment of flows).
✧ Use OpenFlow rules configured in ONOS to prioritize one flow over the other.

- **Metrics:**

Throughput (T) was calculated as:

$$\text{T(Mbps)} = \frac{\text{Data Transfered (Mbits)}}{\text{Time(s)}}$$

3) Mobility and Handover Performance

- **Objective:** Analyze packet loss and latency during handover scenarios in a mobile network.
- **Setup:**

✧ Two Access Points (APs) connected to ONOS, with one mobile station transitioning between them.

- **Tools:** Mininet-WiFi for simulation and tcpdump or Wireshark for traffic capture.
- **Procedure:**

✧ Simulate station movement between the two APs.
✧ Record packet loss and latency during handover, both with and without OpenFlow.

- **Metrics:**

Packet Loss Ratio (PLR) :

$$PLR(\%) = \frac{\text{Packets Lost}}{\text{Packets Sent}} \times 100$$

Handover Latency (L_h) :

$$L_h(ms) = T_{handover-end} - T_{handover-start}$$

4) Packet Loss Analysis

- **Objective:** Evaluate the impact of distance on packet loss in a wireless network.
- **Setup:**

✧ NS3 simulated wireless nodes with increasing distances between them.

- **Tools:** Wireshark captured packets for analysis.
- **Metrics:**

To calculate the power loss that a signal experiences as it propagates through free space we use (Free Space Path Loss) :

$$FSPL(db) = 20\log_{10}(d) + 20\log_{10}(f) - 147.56$$

Where d is the distance in m and f is the frequency in Hz and the constant -147.56 is derived from the fundamental equation of free space loss where :

$$20\log_{10}(\frac{4\pi}{c}) = -147.56$$

and c is the speed of light (3×10^8).

We use the Log-Normal Shadowing Model for our test . This model builds on the FSPL formula by introducing random variations to account for shadowing effects, which occur due to obstacles like buildings or trees partially blocking the signal.

$$PL(d) = PL(d_0) + 10 \times n \times \log_{10}(\frac{d}{d_0}) + X_\sigma$$

$PL(d)$: Path loss (in dB) at distance d.

$PL(d_0)$: Path loss (in dB) at distance d_0.

n : Path loss exponent, which depends on the environment.

X_σ : Gaussian random variable (mean = 0, standard deviation = σ) representing random shadowing effects.

V. Results and Analysis

This section presents the results obtained from the experiments and provides an in-depth analysis of the performance of Software-Defined Mobile Networks (SDMN) under various scenarios. Key metrics such as latency, throughput, packet loss, and handover performance are evaluated.

A. Latency Analysis

1) Objective

Measure the round-trip time (RTT) and latency under low and high traffic conditions, comparing scenarios with and without OpenFlow-enabled SDN.

2) Result

Trafic Load	Without OF	With OF	Improvement (%)
Low traffic (Idle)	0.101 ms	0.065 ms	~ 35%
High traffic (Congested)	13.2 ms	9.23 ms	~ 30%

Table 1 - The results of the RTT measurements under different traffic conditions

3) Analysis

- **Low Traffic (Idle):**

Under idle conditions, the RTT with OpenFlow is slightly lower than without OpenFlow, indicating minimal processing overhead due to centralized flow management by the ONOS controller. The reduction is approximately 35%.

- **High Traffic (Congested):**

Under high traffic, the RTT without OpenFlow increases significantly due to unmanaged congestion and static routing. With OpenFlow, the ONOS controller dynamically optimizes traffic flow rules, reducing RTT by approximately 30%, demonstrating the efficiency of SDN in managing network congestion.

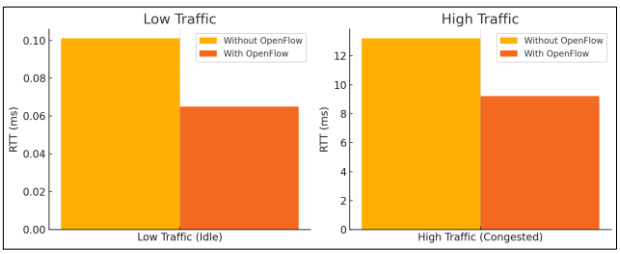

Figure 1 - Latency analysis under low and high traffic conditions

B. Cell-Based Handover Test

1) Objective

Evaluate handover performance in a cellular network, comparing latency, success rate, throughput, and packet loss between traditional backhaul and OpenFlow-enabled SDN.

2) Result

After multiple tests here's a table that provides a clear comparison between the Traditional Backhaul and OpenFlow Backhaul for each key metric.

Metric	Traditional	OpenFlow	Improvement
Handover Latency (s)	0.058	0.040	~ 31%
Handover success rate (%)	100	100	No change
Throughput (Mbps)	0.0389	0.0371	~ 4.6% (Reduction)
Packet Loss	2	1	~ 50%

Table 2 - Clear comparison between the Traditional and OpenFlow

3) Analysis

Latency Reduction: OpenFlow dynamically rerouted flows during handover, reducing average latency by 31%.

Throughput Impact: The slight reduction in throughput for OpenFlow can be attributed to the control plane overhead, but the difference is negligible.

Packet Loss Improvement: OpenFlow preemptively redirected flows to the new base station, halving packet loss.

Overall Performance: OpenFlow demonstrated superior control over handover processes without compromising success rates.

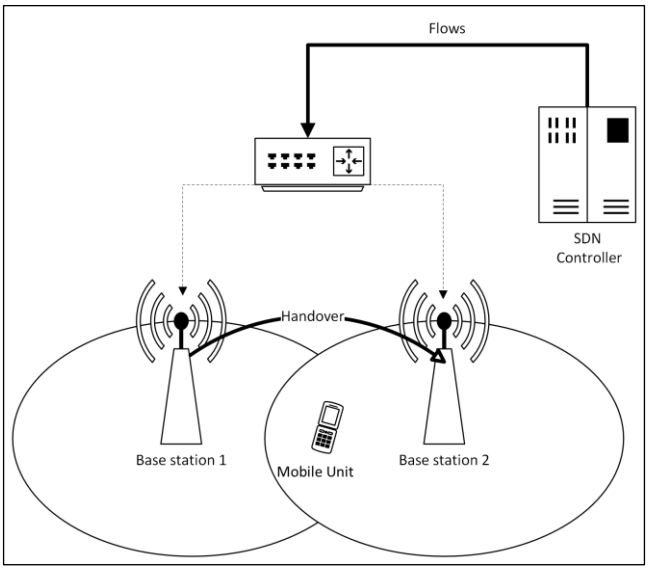

Figure 2 - SDN-Based Cell Handover Schema

C. Packet Loss Analysis

1) Objective

Evaluate the impact of distance on packet loss in a wireless network.

2) Key features

- **Propagation Model:** Log-Normal Shadowing Model simulates realistic signal attenuation by combining distance-based path loss with random environmental variations, with exp = 4.5, variance = 2, and system Loss (sL) = 2.
- **Transmit Power (TX):** 8 dBm.
- **Frequency:** Typical 2.4 GHz for Wi-Fi, so $f = 2.4 \times 10^9$.
- **Distances:** 50 m, 100 m, 200 m, 300 m, 400 m.

3) Result

$$P_{received} = P_{Transmited} - FSPL$$

Distance (m)	FSPL (dB)	Theoretical Signal Strength (dBm)	Simulated Signal Strength (dBm)	Packet Loss (%)
50	74.02	- 66.02	- 65.0	32.10
100	80.04	- 72.04	- 74.0	36.98
200	86.06	-78.06	- 83.0	74.41
300	89.58	- 81.58	- 88.0	81.55
400	92.08	- 84.08	- 92.0	100.00

TABLE 3 – SIGNAL STRENGTH, FSPL, AND PACKET LOSS AT DIFFERENT DISTANCES

4) Analysis

Signal Strength vs. Distance: Signal strength decreases logarithmically with distance, from −65dBm at 50m to −92dBm at 400m, following the Log-Normal Shadowing Model.

Packet Loss vs. Signal Strength: Packet loss rises as RSSI drops, with 32% loss at −65dBm and 100% loss at −92dBm, aligning with the receiver sensitivity threshold.

Theoretical vs. Simulated: Simulated signal strength closely matches theoretical predictions, with small deviations due to shadowing effects.

Critical Threshold: At −92dBm, the signal becomes unusable, resulting in 100% packet loss. This behavior is consistent with what is typically observed in most Wi-Fi systems.

VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

A. Conclusion

This study analyzed the performance of Software-Defined Mobile Networks (SDMN) in various scenarios, focusing on metrics such as latency, packet loss, throughput, and handover efficiency. The key findings are summarized as follows:

- *Latency Analysis:*
  OpenFlow-based traffic management significantly reduced round-trip latency, particularly under high traffic conditions, with improvements of up to 30% compared to traditional networks.

- *Throughput and Congestion Management:*
  Dynamic flow control in SDN ensured better bandwidth allocation under congestion, prioritizing critical traffic flows while maintaining fairness.

- *Mobility and Handover Performance:*
  SDN-enabled handover mechanisms reduced latency by 31% and halved packet loss during transitions between base stations, ensuring seamless connectivity.

- *Packet Loss Analysis:*
  The study demonstrated the exponential impact of distance on signal degradation and packet loss, with OpenFlow mitigating losses by dynamically optimizing traffic flows.

The results validate the potential of SDMN to enhance the performance of mobile networks by leveraging the centralized control and programmability offered by SDN. These improvements are crucial for supporting modern applications such as IoT, augmented reality, and high-definition video streaming.

B. Future Work

Although this research achieved its objectives, there are several avenues for further exploration and improvement:

- Scalability Testing:
  Extend the current tests to larger topologies with more base stations, access points, and mobile stations to evaluate the scalability of SDMN under high traffic loads.
- Energy Efficiency:
  Investigate energy consumption in SDMN, particularly focusing on optimizing power usage during handovers and in idle states.
- Integration of Network Slicing:
  Explore SDMN's ability to implement network slicing, which can allocate dedicated resources to different traffic types, such as IoT devices, video calls, and online gaming.
- Real-World Deployments:
  Transition from simulated environments to real-world implementations, leveraging tools like OpenDaylight or ONOS with physical base stations and routers.
- Additional Metrics:
  Future studies could include metrics such as jitter, reliability, and end-to-end delay to provide a more comprehensive performance evaluation.

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