

Research Methodology in Computer Science

Course Code: AI800

Weighting: 20%

Lecturer: Dr. Mohammed Anbar

Hand-out Date: 25 October 2025

Hand-in Date: 8 November 2025

Hand-in Method: Online Submission via E-Learning

Assignment Report: Cognitive Self-Organizing Networks: AI-driven Network Automation for 5G/6G

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❖ Introduction

With the beginning of 5G and the future deployment of 6G, communication networks face increasing complexity, scalability issues, and dynamic environments. Traditional Self-Organizing Networks (SON) provide basic automation but lack flexibility. Cognitive SON (C-SON) introduces Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to create intelligent, predictive, and autonomous management systems. This literature review analyzes six research papers that discover Cognitive SON concepts, methodologies, applications, and real-world deployments.

❖ Literature Review

Paper 1: From 4G to 5G: Self-organized Network Management via Reinforcement Learning

Objectives: Survey how reinforcement learning can support SON functions from 4G to 5G.

Methods: Communications Surveys & Tutorials survey; classifies SON use cases and RL methods.

Findings: RL can improve handover optimization, load balancing, and parameter tuning.

Critical Analysis: Strength – authoritative tutorial that maps RL to SON

Weakness: limited real-world datasets and no live trials.

Paper 2: Adaptive SON and Cognitive Smart LPN for 5G Heterogeneous Networks

Objectives: Add cognitive features to SON for heterogeneous networks with small cells.

Methods: Simulation studies evaluating load and interference control.

Findings: Better load balancing and reduced interference compared to static policies.

Critical Analysis: Strength – practical simulation baseline

Weakness: pre-6G context and limited scalability evidence.

Paper 3: On the Necessity and Design of Coordination Mechanism for Cognitive Autonomous Networks

Objectives: Show why cognitive functions in autonomous networks need coordination.

Methods: Theoretical model + simulations using Nash bargaining solution for conflict resolution.

Findings: Uncoordinated cognitive functions can conflict; coordination improves stability and KPIs.

Critical Analysis: Strength – clear formal argument and mechanism.

Weakness: evaluated on simplified scenarios.

Paper 4: AI-driven Closed-loop Automation in 5G and Beyond

Objectives: Propose closed-loop service orchestration and network management using AI.

Methods: Architectural vision paper extending the MAPE loop with data-driven control.

Findings: Closed-loop AI improves assurance and optimization across RAN and core.

Critical Analysis: Strength – aligns with industry automation roadmaps.

Weakness: prototype details are limited.

Paper 5: A Survey on Open Radio Access Networks: Challenges, Research Directions, and Open-Source Approaches

Objectives: Survey Open RAN with emphasis on AI/ML enablement for automation.

Methods: Systematic survey across RAN split options, xApps/rApps, and management layers.

Findings: AI reduces OPEX and enables interoperability; identifies data and verification gaps.

Critical Analysis: Strength – up-to-date, open-access survey.

Weakness: limited quantitative benchmarks.

Paper 6: Nokia and stc Group optimize network with AI-powered MantaRay Cognitive SON solution in Saudi Arabia

Objectives: Showcase real-world deployment of Cognitive SON.

Methods: Field deployment and performance monitoring in high-load scenarios (Hajj season).

Findings: Improved utilization by 30% and throughput by 10% despite 40% traffic flow.

Critical Analysis: Strength: real-world validation.

Weakness: limited to one operator

❖ Summary Table

Year	Authors	Methodology	Key Findings	Limitations
2017	Moysen & Giupponi	Survey (IEEE CSurT)	RL maps to SON, improves HO/load balance	No live datasets
2015	Sun et al.	Simulation (Springer)	Better load & interference control	Pre-6G, scalability unclear
2020	Banerjee et al.	Theory + Simulation (arXiv)	Coordination improves stability/KPIs	Simplified models
2021	ACM Paper	Architecture/Vision	Closed-loop AI enhances assurance	Limited prototype details
2024	Azariah et al.	Systematic Survey (MDPI)	AI in Open RAN lowers OPEX	Few quantitative benchmarks
2024	Nokia & stc	Field Deployment	Autonomous RAN boosts performance	Single operator

The reviewed papers collectively demonstrate that Cognitive SON is essential for the evolution from SON to intelligent, AI-driven network management. While academic studies provide frameworks and simulations, industry deployments (e.g., Nokia with STC) validate the practical benefits. However, a gap remains in large-scale real-world validations and in addressing challenges of scalability, security, and interoperability.

❖ Synthesis Matrix for Literature Review

The following combination matrix summarizes how each of the six reviewed papers impacts key themes in Cognitive SON research. It provides an organized evaluation across objectives, methods, AI/ML roles, results, limitations, and contributions.

<u>Theme / Paper</u>	From 4G to 5G: Self-organized Network Management via Reinforcement Learning	Adaptive SON and Cognitive Smart LPN for 5G Heterogeneous Networks	On the Necessity and Design of Coordination Mechanism for Cognitive Autonomous Networks	AI-driven Closed-loop Automation in 5G and beyond	A Survey on Open Radio Access Networks: Challenges, Research Directions, and Open-Source Approaches	Nokia and STC Group optimize network with AI-powered MantaRay Cognitive SON solution in Saudi Arabia
<u>Objective</u>	Map RL to SON	Cognition in HetNet's	Need for coordination	Closed-loop orchestration	AI/xApps in Open RAN	Validate C-SON live
<u>Method</u>	Survey	Simulation	Theory + simulation	Architecture vision	Systematic survey	Field deployment
<u>AI/ML Role</u>	Reinforcement learning	Cognitive control	Multi-agent bargaining	MAPE+AI loop	xApps/rApps with AI	Autonomous RAN
<u>Key Findings</u>	RL improves HO/load	Better load/interference	Coordination stabilizes KPIs	Closed-loop improves assurance	AI reduces OPEX	Utilization/throughput gains
<u>Limitations</u>	No live datasets	Pre-6G scope	Simplified scenarios	Few prototypes	Limited benchmarks	Single operator

❖ Conclusion

The literature review shows that Cognitive SON is an important step in the future of network management. All six reviewed papers add value in different ways. Some papers provide strong academic ideas, others focus on simulations, while the Nokia and STC case show real-world benefits. Together, they highlight that Cognitive SON can improve automation, reduce costs, and provide better service quality.

However, challenges remain such as limited data, security issues, and small-scale trials. This gap creates opportunities for more research and future projects. Overall, Cognitive SON is a promising field for 5G, 6G, and beyond, and it can serve as a strong base for extra academic and practical work.

❖ References

- 1) Paper 1 – Moysen & Giupponi (2017): IEEE CSurT record via Semantic Scholar: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/From-4G-to-5G%3A-Self-organized-Network-Management-Moysen-Giupponi/bc874fbc690a73c24a523dbda0ec18a4646c0b8e>
- 2) Paper 2 – Sun et al. (2015): Springer: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11036-014-0563-2>
- 3) Paper 3 – Banerjee et al. (2020): arXiv: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2001.07031>
- 4) Paper 4 – ACM Closed-loop Automation (2021): <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3472735.3474458>
- 5) Paper 5 – Open RAN Survey (MDPI, 2024): <https://www.mdpi.com/1424-8220/24/3/1038>
- 6) Paper 6 – Nokia & stc (2024): <https://www.nokia.com/newsroom/nokia-and-stc-group-optimize-network-with-ai-powered-mantaray-cognitive-son-solution-in-saudi-arabia/>