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Research Paper

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Abstract

In this paper, a low profile 4×4 multiple input and multiple output (MIMO) antenna is proposed and designed for wireless local area network (WLAN) application using a square split-ring resonator. Initially, a single square-patch antenna is designed with square-shaped split-ring slot. Subsequently, the two-element MIMO antenna is designed and it is extended to four-element MIMO antenna. Finally, the defected ground structure (DGS) is implemented in order to enhance antenna performance. The antenna elements are placed opposite to each other. The mutual coupling between the antennas elements is reduced by DGS. The proposed single, two and four-element antennas operate at 5.8 GHz for WLAN. The overall performance is measured in terms of S parameter, radiation pattern, and envelope correlation coefficient. The simulated results are verified through measurements. The simulated and measured results demonstrate that the proposed 4×4 MIMO antenna is the most suitable for WLAN applications.

Introduction

Wireless local area network (WLAN) is an important technology to provide an inherent property such as high-speed transmission rate, high security, low cost, low power consumption, and high signal to noise ratio. The performance of the antenna is achieved by multiple input and multiple output (MIMO) antenna [1]. In a MIMO system, more than one antenna is used as transmitter and receiver. It is used to improve the communication quality and increase the channel capacity.

Typically, the MIMO antenna faces two major problems namely the size of the antenna and mutual coupling between the antenna elements. One is to minimize the size of MIMO antenna. In order to reduce the size of the antenna, they are placed close to each other. Owing to this arrangement, it produces mutual coupling. The mutual coupling is reduced by various types of isolation techniques, namely, antenna placement and orientation [2], decouple network [3], inclusion of parasitic element [4], defected ground structure (DGS) [5], neutralization line [6], metamaterial structure [7, 8] etc.

Abdulla *et al.* proposed two-element metamaterial MIMO antennas. It consists of two zeroth-order resonator to reduce the size of an antenna and DGS filter is introduced for avoiding mutual coupling [9]. Thummalaru *et al.* have projected a two-monopole antenna with negative metamaterial as a decoupling network [10]. A metamaterial array is used as a substrate coated with polymer industrial adhesive [11]. Jusoh *et al.* designed two-elements MIMO antennas where each element consists of seven circles surrounded by a center circle. A partial ground plane is employed to improve the isolation [12]. Merihpalankonden *et al.* developed two dipole MIMO antennas. Each dipole antenna is connected with a six-unit cell. A truncated slot is introduced on a truncated ground plane to improve the isolation [13]. Nordin *et al.* designed a three left-handed metamaterial unit cell. Each unit cell consists of split-ring slot with capacitive loaded. A trident feed and slotted ground are employed to match the antenna and input port [14]. The two monopole antenna is designed and a quarter wavelength slot and open-ended slot are used to improve the isolation [15].

Chou *et al.* devised a three-loop antenna with different antenna arrangement. The middle antenna was placed at a horizontal position. It is orthogonal to other antenna elements for better isolation. A T-shaped slot and ground strip are used to enhance antenna performance [6]. Mallahzadesh *et al.* reported E shape two and four-element MIMO antenna where the isolation is enhanced by invasive weed optimization algorithm [16]. Yu *et al.* proposed matching network derived using power allocation rule. The genetic algorithm was utilized to optimize the performance [17]. The T shaped parasitic element is implemented for the isolation [18]. Kim *et al.* introduced the radiating elements and one-dimensional electromagnetic band-gap reflectors to reduce the mutual coupling [19]. Krairiksh *et al.* designed a two-probe circular ring. The isolation between the two probes is enhanced by the insertion of an inductor coil between the probes [20]. In addition, there are several four-element MIMO antennae designed and developed for WLAN, worldwide interoperability for microwave access (WiMax)

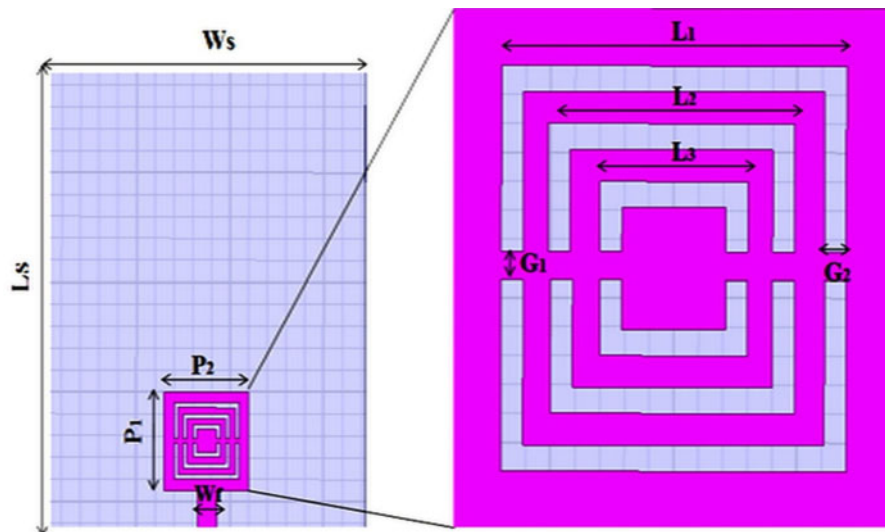


Fig. 1. Schematic structure of unit element square patch with split-ring slot antenna.

Table 1. Structural parameters of a single element (mm) antenna.

Parameter	Value (mm)
Patch length (P_1)	9
Patch width (P_2)	9
Substrate length (L_s)	42.837
Substrate width (W_s)	34.485
Feed width (W_f)	2.05
Gap between two slots (G_1)	0.48
Width of slots (G_2)	0.45

applications, ultra wide band (UWB) applications, industrial scientific and medical (ISM) band, universal mobile telecommunications system (UMTS), long-term evolution (LTE) and 4G/5 G smartphone applications. It is designed using Slot, dielectric resonator antenna (DRA), complementary split ring resonator (CSRR), DGS, and inverted F/L antenna [21–36].

In the literature, several MIMO antennas, with various decoupling structures are reported for WLAN applications where the metamaterial and DGS are mostly used for MIMO applications to minimize the mutual coupling. Further, it is also investigated that isolation is needed to be enhanced and the size of the patch is large. In order to mitigate the above-mentioned issues, the square patch with a square-shaped split-ring slot is introduced to develop 4×4 MIMO antenna.

In this paper, a MIMO antenna (single MIMO antenna, 2×2 MIMO antenna without DGS and 4×4 MIMO antenna without and with DGS) is proposed and designed and its functional parameters namely, return loss, VSWR, resonant frequency, isolation, radiation pattern, and envelope correlation coefficient (ECC) are investigated. DGS is introduced in 4×4 MIMO antenna in order to enhance the performance of the antenna. Finally, the simulated return loss is compared with that of a fabricated antenna.

This paper is arranged in the following way: Antenna geometry and design illustrates the design of single MIMO antenna, 2×2 MIMO antenna without DGS and 4×4 MIMO antenna without and with DGS and its return loss performance of simulated and measured. MIMO antenna results and discussions illustrates the

simulation results of 4×4 MIMO antenna namely, isolation, radiation pattern and ECC. Conclusion concludes the paper.

Antenna geometry and design

The proposed antenna is designed as a low-cost FR4 substrate with relative permittivity of 4.4. The resonant frequency is calculated as per Ref. [11]. The width and length of the patch are 5.4 mm and 5.4 mm, respectively. The thickness of the substrate is 0.8 mm and loss tangent is 0.02. The patch height is 1.1 mm from the ground plane. According to the calculation, the single, double element, and four-element MIMO antenna are designed. The substrate has a dimension of 34.485 mm width and 42.837 mm length. The patch size is 9 mm \times 9 mm.

Single element antenna

The unit element of the proposed antenna is shown in Fig. 1. The unit element is used to design a proposed MIMO antenna. It is operated at 5.8 GHz. The antenna is fed by 50 Ω microstrip line. The structural parameters and the values of the proposed antenna are listed in Table 1.

The return loss $|S_{11}|$ of the proposed antenna is shown in Fig. 2. The square-shaped split-ring slot is introduced on the patch to reduce the electrical length of the antenna. The slot width is 0.45 mm. The size of the antenna is less than the operating wavelength, using the square-shaped split-ring resonator. The split-ring resonator is designed according to the radiation on the patch. The return loss of the proposed antenna is -27.2366 dB at 5.8 GHz.

The return loss comparison of simulated and measured single patch antenna is shown in Fig. 2. The return loss is -25 dB at 5.9 GHz. The change in return loss and the resonant frequency is due to the incorporation of SubMiniature version A (SMA) connector in the fabricated antenna.

Double element MIMO antenna

The design of a double element MIMO antenna is shown in Fig. 3. The antenna is designed as two-unit element antennas which are placed opposite to each other. However, the other structural parameters are similar to a single element antenna.

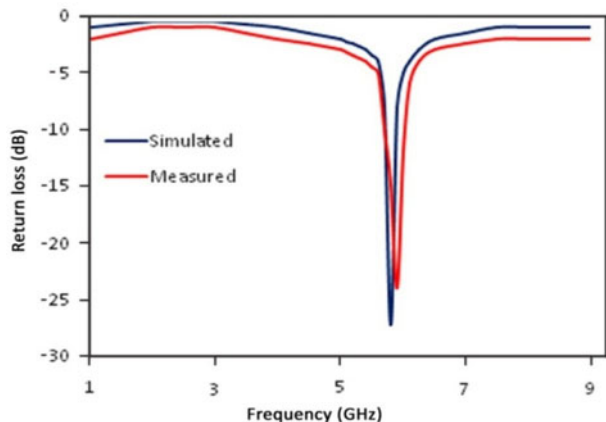


Fig. 2. Return loss response of the unit element of square patch with split-ring slot antenna.

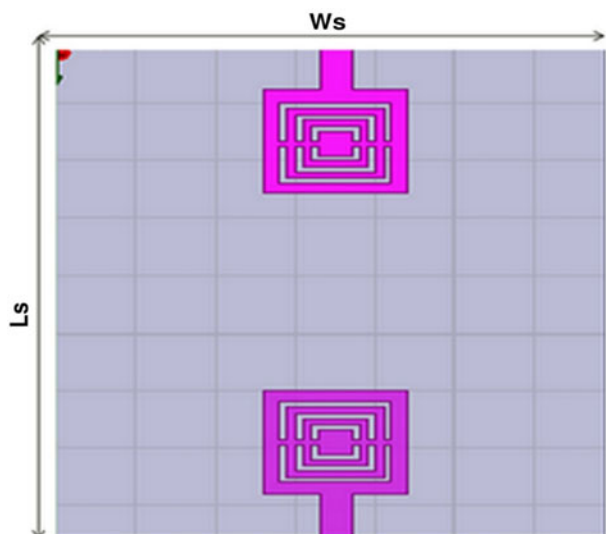


Fig. 3. Schematic structure of double elements MIMO antenna.

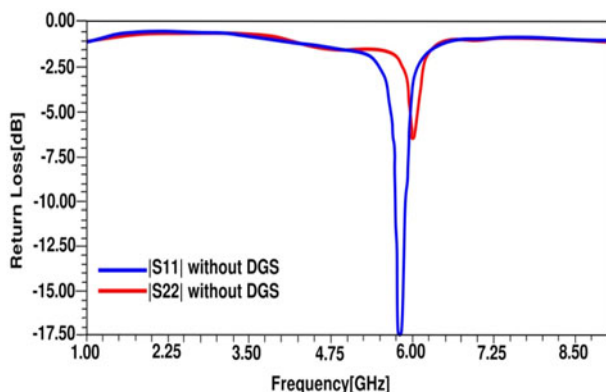


Fig. 4. Simulated return loss response of a double element MIMO antenna.

The return loss of two elements MIMO is shown in Fig. 4. When port 1 is excited, port 2 is matched with the strong electromagnetic energy coupling between the two elements. As a result,

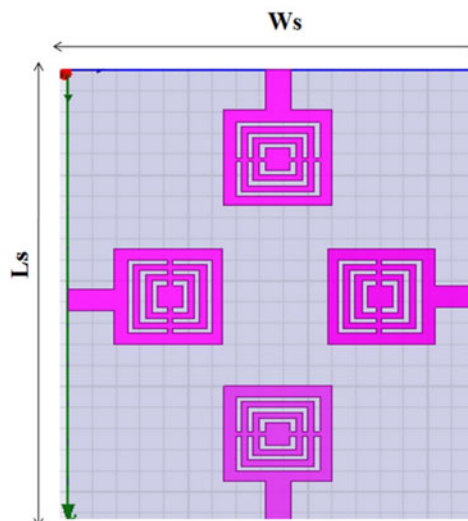


Fig. 5. Schematic structure of four-element MIMO antenna without DGS.

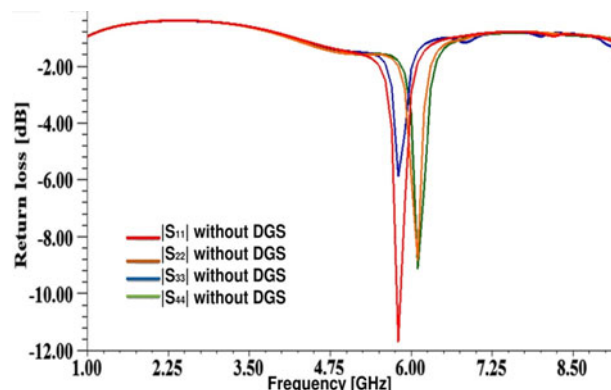


Fig. 6. Simulated return loss response of four-element MIMO antenna without DGS.

the return loss of port 1 is degraded. As there is no isolation technique used between the antenna elements, it introduces mutual coupling. Owing to the mutual coupling between the ports, the return loss is reduced at port 1 which is -17.50 dB at 5.8 GHz and port 2 resonates -6 dB at 6 GHz. However, the return loss of the single element antenna is -27.2366 dB at 5.8 GHz.

Four-element MIMO antenna

The proposed four-element MIMO antenna is shown in Fig. 5. The antenna is designed as a four-unit element antenna which is placed at the center of each side. The length and width of the patch remain the same as a single element MIMO antenna.

The simulated return loss response of four-element MIMO antenna is shown in Fig. 6. There is no isolation technique used between the antenna elements to minimize the mutual coupling. Hence, the return loss of port 1 resonates -11.69 dB at 5.8 GHz, port 2 resonates -8.8 dB at 6.1 GHz, port 3 resonates -5.8 dB at 5.8 GHz and port 4 resonates -9.12 dB at 6.1 GHz. There are several types of isolation techniques reported for antenna placement and orientation [1], algorithms [5], parasitic elements [2], DGSs, neutralization lines [6], and metamaterial structures [7]. Here, the DGS is introduced to enhance antenna performance.

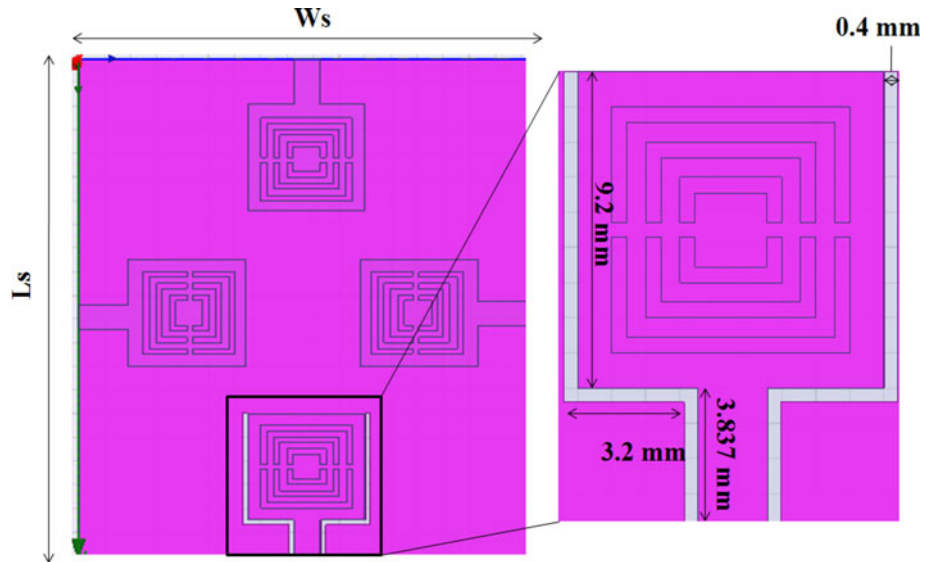


Fig. 7. Schematic structure of four-element MIMO antenna with DGS.

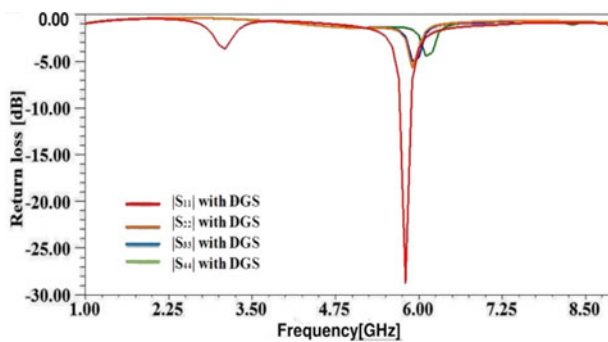


Fig. 8. Simulated return loss response of four-element MIMO antenna with DGS.

In between the antenna elements, mutual coupling is introduced which reduces the performance of the antenna. For avoiding the mutual coupling, the two meandered line-shaped slots like DGS is introduced on the ground plane. The two meandered line-shaped slot is placed on the ground plane in between the first antenna element because the radiation of this antenna element affects the nearby antenna element. The thickness of the slot is 0.4 mm. The return loss is improved at port 1 by this structure. The four-element MIMO antenna with the size of the DGS is shown in Fig. 7.

The return loss of four-element MIMO with DGS is shown in Fig. 8. Two meandered line slots introduced on the ground plane are used to enhance the return loss performance. The return loss of port 1 resonates -28.75 dB at 5.8 GHz, port 2 resonates -5.77 dB at 5.9 GHz, port 3 resonates -7 dB at 6.1 GHz, port 4 resonates -4 dB at 5.9 GHz. The return loss is improved by incorporating the DGS in between the antenna elements. DGS suppresses the unwanted wave in the ground plane. As a result, the return loss is enhanced from -11.69 dB to -28.75 dB.

The impedance bandwidth is just the normal bandwidth of the antenna. Eventually, it is defined as the range of frequencies over which the return loss is acceptable. The 6 dB impedance bandwidth of the proposed antenna without and with DGS is about 0.10 GHz and 0.35 GHz, respectively. The impedance bandwidth of the proposed antenna without DGS is 0.10 GHz which spans from 5.8 GHz to 5.9 GHz. The 0.35 GHz impedance bandwidth arrives with DGS over the ranging from 5.6 GHz to 5.95 GHz. The impedance bandwidth of the proposed antenna meets the requirements for 802.11a/n/ac.

The antenna efficiency is calculated. The antenna efficiency of the proposed 4×4 MIMO antenna with/without DGS is reported in the revised paper. The antenna efficiency of an antenna with/without DGS is 87.5% and 83%, respectively. The fabricated four-element patch antenna's front and back view are shown in Fig. 9. The overall size of an antenna is very small (about 42.837 mm \times 34.485 mm \times 0.8 mm.).

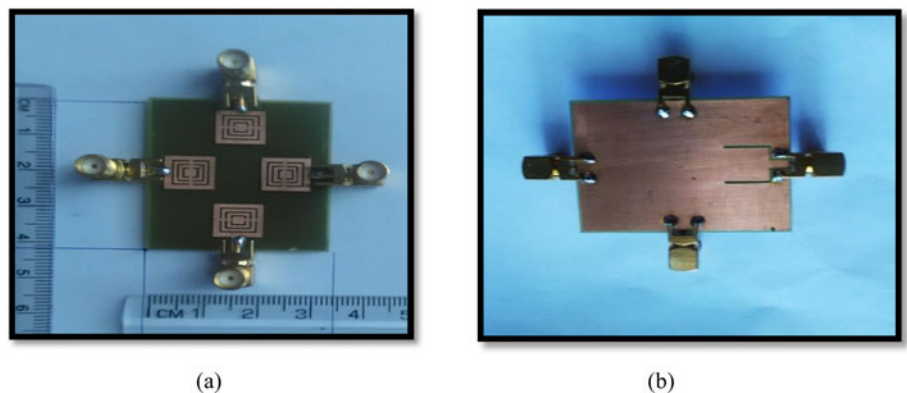


Fig. 9. Fabricated four-element MIMO antenna with DGS (a) front view and (b) back view.

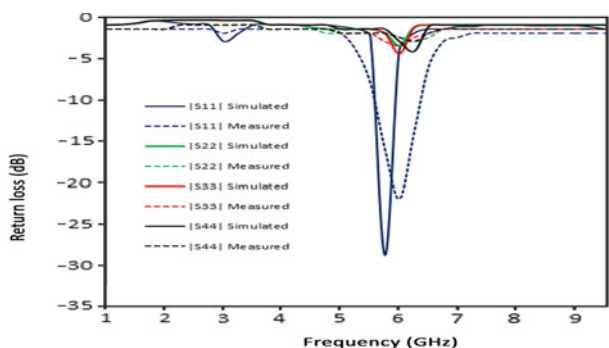


Fig. 10. Return loss response of dual-element MIMO antenna with DGS.

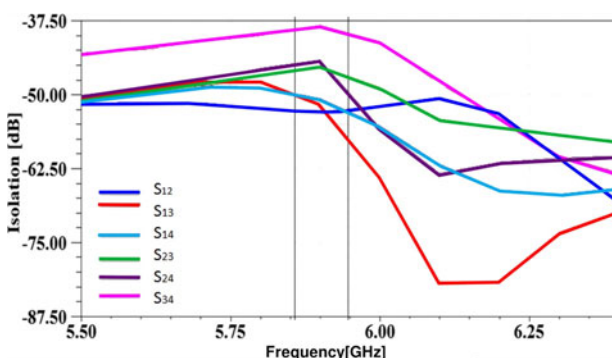


Fig. 11. Simulated isolation response of four-element MIMO antenna with DGS.

The return loss comparison of simulated and measured four-element MIMO antenna is shown in Fig. 10. The measured results are slightly varied from the simulated result. During the simulation, the SMA connector is not included. Owing to the insertion loss the resonant frequency is shifted to 6.1 GHz with the return loss of -22 dB.

MIMO antenna results and discussions

The 4 × 4 MIMO antennas is designed and the isolation, radiation pattern, and ECC are simulated and presented here.

Isolation

Isolation is used to find out how much power is coupled between the adjacent antenna elements by using the structure of antenna elements. Figure 11 shows the isolation curve of proposed four-element MIMO antenna. The isolation is calculated in between port 1 and 2, port 1 and 3, port 1 and 4, port 2 and 3, port 2 and 4, port 3 and 4.

Radiation characteristics

The simulated radiation patterns in *H*- and *E*-planes are presented in Fig. 12. The simulated radiation pattern of the proposed antenna is at the frequency of 5.8 GHz. The representation of the 2D radiation pattern of the simulated result is unidirectional in *E* plane and bidirectional in *H* plane.

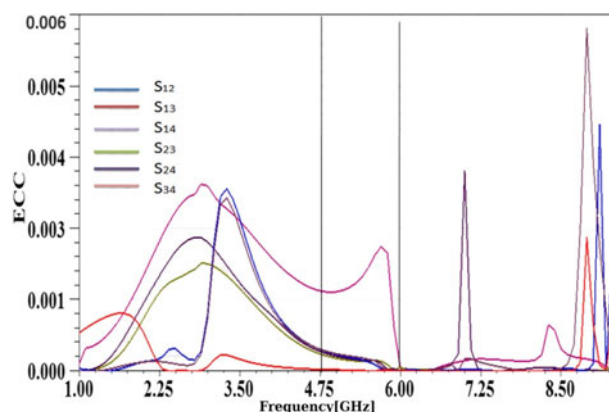


Fig. 12. Radiation patterns of four-element MIMO antenna with DGS antenna.

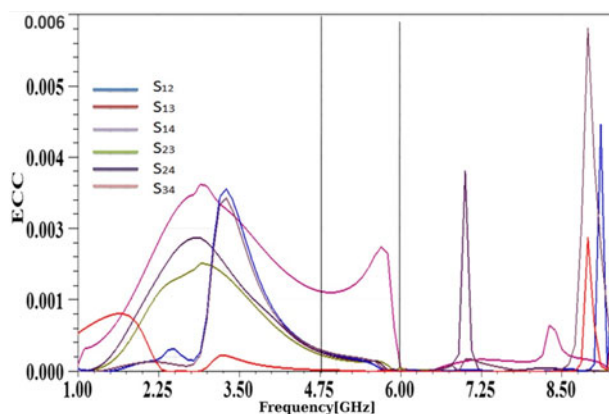


Fig. 13. Simulated ECC response of four-element MIMO antenna with DGS.

Envelope correlation coefficient

The capacity of the proposed MIMO antenna is analyzed by ECC. The MIMO antenna is necessary to obtain a low ECC. ECC computes the correlation between the branch signals received by the different elements, and lower ECC signifies higher pattern diversity [10]. By assuming the proposed antenna as a lossless antenna in an isotropic scattering environment, the ECC between *i* and *j*, is calculated using the following equation. The ECC of two elements with DGS is shown in Fig. 13:

$$\rho_{eij} = \frac{|s_{ii}^*s_{ij} + s_{ji}^*s_{jj}|}{(1 - |s_{ii}|^2 - |s_{jj}|^2)(1 - |s_{jj}|^2 - |s_{ji}|^2)}$$

The ECC is calculated in between port 1 and 2, port 1 and 3, port 1 and 4, port 2 and 3, port 2 and 4, port 3 and 4. The ECC of four elements with DGS structure is <0.0001. The ECC is improved by the DGS. The values are well below the acceptable limit of 0.5 [6]. From the above analysis, it can be seen that the designed antenna has the smallest size and has low mutual coupling between the antennas. Hence, the proposed antenna is highly desirable for WLAN applications.

Conclusion

In this paper, four-element MIMO antennas, with DGS are proposed and designed. The functional characteristics of the

proposed antenna, namely return loss, isolation, radiation pattern, and ECC are investigated. The return loss of the four-element MIMO antenna is -28.75 dB at 5.8 GHz. However, the return loss is reduced to -22 dB after the fabrication due to SMA connector. The overall size of the antenna is 42.837 mm \times 34.485 mm \times 0.8 mm. The radiating patch-size is 9 mm \times 9 mm. The mutual couplings between the antennas elements are minimized through DGS. The ECC is <0.0001 . Hence, the proposed antenna meets the requirements for WLAN-applications.

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