

# Evaluation of Different Signal Propagation Models for a Mixed Indoor-Outdoor Scenario Using Empirical Data

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**Abstract.** In this paper, we are choosing a suitable indoor-outdoor propagation model out of the existing models by considering path loss and distance as parameters. Path loss is calculated empirically by placing emitter nodes inside a building. A receiver placed outdoors is represented by a Quadcopter (QC) that receives beacon messages from indoor nodes. As per our analysis, Stanford University Interim (SUI) model, COST-231 Hata model, Green-Obaidat model, Free Space model, Log-Distance Path Loss model and Electronic Communication Committee 33 (ECC-33) models are chosen and evaluated using empirical data collected in a real environment. The aim is to determine if the analytically chosen models fit our scenario by estimating the minimal standard deviation from the empirical data.

**Keywords:** Path loss, Signal propagation models, Signal strength, Experiment.

## 1 Introduction

Network planning is quite important in outdoor and indoor scenarios and the tools that are developed are to help operators to optimize their networks. The tools help in determining the best parameters like the position of the emitter nodes, the signal strength, and the suitable transmission channels. For these parameters to work efficiently in the chosen environment, it is also important to choose the best suited signal propagation model [1]. The propagation mechanisms are examined to help the development of propagation prediction models and to enhance the understanding of electromagnetic wave propagation phenomena involved when dealing with radio transmission in mobile and personal communication environments.

Evidently, the radio propagation phenomena are by themselves not new and do not depend on the environment considered. However, considering all the existing radio propagation phenomena, the most important one must be identified and investigated to improve the modeling of the mobile radio communication

channel or of the prediction of radio coverage and signal quality in radio communication systems. The most important radio propagation phenomena depend on the environment and differ whether we consider a flat terrain, or houses in a suburban area, or buildings in the city center. Propagation models are efficient only when the most dominant phenomena are taken into account and in how much detail do they need to be considered will also differ whether we are interested in modeling the average signal strength, or the path loss, or the power density, or any other signal characteristics.

The propagation environment causes difficulties in the investigation of the wireless signal propagation. Here, the most important aspects are as follows: (i) the distance between the base station and receiver range from several meters to several kilometers, (ii) walls inside the building have sizes ranging from very small to very large in comparison to the signal wavelength and affect the propagation of radio waves, (iii) the knowledge of the signal propagation environment is usually not known [1].

Since a suitable propagation model is important to work in a mixed indoor-outdoor environment we select few of the existing signal propagation models by considering the parameters for our scenario. The literature study suggests models which work either in the indoor or outdoor environment. By comparing other existing models, we propose to provide a model which is nearer in approximation in terms of minimum root mean squared error (RMSE) in comparison to the log-distance path loss model, in the frequency range of 2400 MHz and applicable in a mixed indoor-outdoor scenario. The latter considers that the emitter and the receiver are separated by one or multiple walls.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. In Section II, we briefly describe the criteria to select the signal propagation models for our scenario and provide detailed explanation of our analytically chosen models. In Section III, we present the evaluation scenario. Section IV gives the analysis of results. In Section V, the conclusion are drawn.

## 2 State of the Art

Path loss or path attenuation is reduction in the power density of an electromagnetic wave as it propagates through space [14]. The signal propagation models are designed keeping in mind the path attenuation factor, base station antenna height, mobile station antenna height, distance and operating frequency. Several other factors also contribute to the design of the signal propagation model. For example, such models can help to find the best position of the emitters, the optimal radiated power and the best propagation channel. A overview of the existing and the most well-known signal propagation models is provided in Table 1. Next, we highlight the models selected for further evaluation.

The following models are chosen as they fall in the frequency range of approximately 2400 MHz and the characteristics of these models are in accordance with our indoor-outdoor scenario.

**Table 1.** Existing Signal Propagation Models.

Title	Signal Model	Frequency Range [MHz]	Environment
Free Space Propagation [8]	$L = 32.44 + 20\log_{10}d + 20\log_{10}f$	NA	Free Space
SUI [4]	$L = A + 10\gamma\log_{10}\left(\frac{d}{d_0}\right) + X_f + X_h + S$	2500-2700	Indoor/ Outdoor
ECC 33 [3]	$L = A_{fs} + A_{bm} - G_t - G_r$ $A_{fs} = 92.4 + 20\log_{10}d + 20\log_{10}f$ $A_{bm} = 20.41 + 9.83\log_{10}d + 7.894\log_{10}f + 9.56(\log_{10}f)^2$ $G_t = \log_{10}\frac{h_b}{200} [13.958 + 5.98\log_{10}d]^2$ $G_r = [42.57 + 13.7\log_{10}f][\log_{10}h_m - 0.585]$	3500	Indoor/ Outdoor
Log-distance Path Loss Model [8]	$P_r(d) = P_r(d) + X_\sigma$ $P_r(d) = P_{r0} - 10\gamma\log_{10}d + X_\sigma$	NA	Indoor/ Outdoor
COST-231 Hata Model [6]	$L50 = 46.3 + 33.9\log_{10}f - 13.82\log_{10}h_b - ah_m + (44.9 - 6.55\log_{10}h_b)\log_{10}d + c_m$	500-2000	Indoor/ Outdoor
Ericsson-9999 Model [10]	$PL_{\text{U}} = a_0 + a_1\log_{10}d + a_2\log_{10}h_b + a_3\log_{10}h_b\log_{10}d - 3.2(\log_{10}(11.75h_r))^2 + g(f)$ $g(f) = 44.49\log_{10}f - 4.78(\log_{10}f)^2$	3500	Indoor/ Outdoor
Hata Model [14]	$L50(\text{urban}) = 69.55 + 26.16\log_{10}f_c - 13.82\log_{10}h_t - a(h_r) + (44.9 - 6.55\log_{10}h_t)\log_{10}d$	150-1800	Indoor/ Outdoor
Okumura Model [7]	$L50 = L_f + Amu(f, d) - G(H_t) - G(H_r) - G_{area}$	150-1920	Indoor/ Outdoor
Walfisch and Bertoni Model [15]	$S = L0Q^2L_{rts}$	800-2000	Indoor/ Outdoor
Walfisch and Ikegami Model [16]	$L_b = L0 + L_{rts} + L_{msd}$	800-2000	Indoor/ Outdoor
Clutter Factor Model [16]	$L = 40\log D - 20\log H_m - 20\log H_b$	30-88	Indoor/ Outdoor
Okumura Hata Model [17]	$L = A + B\log D - E, L = A + B\log D - C$	150-1500	Indoor/ Outdoor
Obaidat-Green model [18]	$L_{fs} = 40\log_{10}d + 20\log_{10}f - 20\log_{10}h_t h_r$	2400	Outdoor

**Table 2.** Weather and experiment setup.

Parameter	Value/Name
Air temperature	7° C
Humidity	75, %
Speed of wind	5, m/s
Air pressure	1008, mb
Building size	30 × 20 m <sup>2</sup>
Number of nodes	11
Measured data sequences	>20000
Measured parameter	RSS

**Wall Attenuation Model.** In order to predict received signal strength between emitters and receivers, we employ the wall attenuation model [19]. In this model, received power  $P_r(d)$  (in dBm) at a distance  $d$  (in meters) from the transmitter is given by:

$$P_r(d) = \bar{P}_r(d) + X_\sigma = P_{r0} - 10\gamma\log_{10}d + X_\sigma,$$

where  $P_{r0}$  is the signal strength 1 meter from the transmitter,  $\gamma$  is the path loss exponent and  $X_\sigma$  represents a Gaussian random variable with zero mean

and standard deviation of  $\sigma$  dBm [8]. In the equation above,  $\bar{P}_r(d)$  represents the mean (expected) signal strength  $d$  meters from the transmitter, while  $P_r(d)$  denotes a random outcome. This model takes into account the different obstacles present in multiple transmitter-receiver paths with the same separation. This phenomenon referred to as log-normal shadowing. For example, Seidel et al. report the results of modeling two office buildings at 914 MHz, with best fits  $(\gamma, \sigma)$  corresponding to (3.27, 11.2) and (3.25, 5.2) for single-floor measurements [13]. Other installations that have also been shown to follow this model can be found in [8,11,12]. This equation can also be extended with a wall attenuation factor  $W$ :

$$P_r(d) = P_{r0} - 10\gamma \log_{10}d - W.$$

The parameter  $\gamma$  defines the statistical model and is viewed as heavily dependent on the environment. Measurements in the literature have reported empirical values for  $\gamma$  in the range between 1.8 (lightly obstructed environments with corridors) and 5 (multi-floored buildings), while values for  $\gamma$  usually fall into the interval (4, 12) dBm [8]. According to [19], the following parameters are representing the best fit for this model applied in a mixed indoor-outdoor scenario:

$$P_{r0} = -40\text{dBm}, W = 4.8\text{dBm}, \gamma = 3.32.$$

**Free Space Model.** Free Space Model is also considered to be the benchmark model for our scenario. In this model, the received power is a function of transmitted power, antenna gain and distance between the transmitter and the receiver. The basic idea is that the received power decreases as the square of the distance between the transmitter and the receiver subjected to the assumption that there is one single path between the transmitter and the receiver. The received signal power in a free space at a distance  $d$  from the transmitter is [8]

$$P_r(d) = P_t G_t G_r \left(\frac{\lambda}{4\pi d}\right)^2,$$

where,  $P_t$  is the transmitted signal power,  $P_r$  is the received signal power,  $G_t$  is the transmitter antenna gain,  $G_r$  is the receiver antenna gain,  $\lambda$  is the wavelength. It is common to select  $G_t = G_r = 1$ . It can be expressed in dBm as:

$$L = 32.44 + 20\log_{10}d + 20\log_{10}f[\text{dBm}].$$

**Stanford University Interim (SUI).** IEEE 802.16 Broadband Wireless Access working group proposed the standards for the frequency band below 11 GHz containing the channel model developed by Stanford University, namely the SUI model. The correction parameters are allowed to extend this model up to 3.5 GHz band. In the USA, this model is defined for the Multipoint Microwave Distribution System (MMDS) for the frequency band from 2.5 GHz to 2.7 GHz [3].

The base station antenna height of SUI model can be used from 10 m to 80 m. Receiver antenna height is from 2 m to 10 m. The cell radius is from 0.1 km to

**Table 3.** Parameters for different terrains (SUI model).

Constants	Terrain A	Terrain B	Terrain C
a	4.6	4	3.6
b	0.0075	0.0065	0.005
c	12.6	17.1	20

8 km. The SUI model describes three types of terrain: A, B and C. There is no declaration about any particular environment. Terrain A can be used for hilly areas with moderate or very dense vegetation. This terrain presents the highest path loss. Terrain B is characterized with either mostly flat terrains with moderate to heavy tree densities or hilly terrains with light tree densities. This is the intermediate path loss scheme. Terrain C is associated with minimum path loss and applies to flat terrains with light tree densities. The basic path loss expression of the SUI model with correction factors is presented as [4,5]:

$$L = A + 10\gamma \log_{10} \frac{d}{d_0} + X_f + X_h + S \text{ for } d > d_0,$$

where  $d$  is the distance between emitter and receiver [m],  $d_0 = 100$  m;  $\lambda$  is the wavelength [m];  $X_f$  is the correction for frequency above 2 GHz;  $X_h$  is the correction for receiving antenna height,  $S$  is the correction for shadowing in the range between 8.2 and 10.6 [4] [dBm],  $\gamma$  is the path loss exponent. The parameter  $A$  and  $\gamma$  are defined as:

$$A = 20 \log_{10} \frac{4\pi d_0}{\lambda},$$

$$\gamma = a - bh_b + \frac{c}{h_b},$$

where, the parameter  $h_b$  is the base station antenna height in the range between 10 m and 80 m. The constants  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  depend upon the type of terrain and are given in Table 3. As a result, the value of parameter  $\gamma = 2$  corresponds to the free space propagation in an urban area,  $3 < \gamma < 5$  to an urban non-line-of-sight environment, and  $\gamma > 5$  to an indoor propagation.

The frequency correction factor  $X_f$  and the correction for the receiver antenna height  $X_h$  are defined as follows:

$$X_f = 6.0 \log_{10} \frac{f}{2000}$$

$$X_h = 10.8 \log_{10} \frac{h_r}{2000}, \text{ for terrain types A and B}$$

$$X_h = -20.0 \log_{10} \frac{h_r}{2000}, \text{ for terrain type C,}$$

where,  $f$  is the operating frequency in MHz, and  $h_r$  is the receiver antenna height in meters. For the above correction factors this model is extensively used

for the path loss prediction of all three terrain types in rural, urban and suburban environments.

**Electronic Communication Committee 33 (ECC-33) Model.** The ECC 33 path loss model, which is developed by Electronic Communication Committee (ECC), is extrapolated from original measurements by Okumura [7]. The model is defined as [3]:

$$PL(dBm) = A_{fs} + A_{bm} - G_t - G_r,$$

where  $A_{fs}$  is the free space attenuation,  $A_{bm}$  is the basic median path loss,  $G_t$  is the base station antenna height gain factor and  $G_r$  is the receiving antenna height gain factor. These parameters are individually defined as:

$$A_{fs} = 92.4 + 20\log_{10}d + 20\log_{10}f$$

$$A_{bm} = 20.41 + 9.83\log_{10}d + 7.894\log_{10}f + 9.56[\log_{10}f]^2$$

$$G_t = \log_{10}\frac{h_b}{200}[13.98 + 5.8(\log_{10}d)^2]$$

$$G_r = [42.57 + 13.7\log_{10}f][\log_{10}h_m - 0.585],$$

where  $d$  is the distance between the base station and the mobile [km],  $h_b$  is the base station antenna height [m] and  $h_m$  is the mobile antenna height [m].

**COST-231 Hata Model.** A model that is widely used for predicting path loss in mobile wireless systems is the COST-231 Hata model [6]. It was devised as an extension to the Hata-Okumura model [7]. The COST-231 Hata model is designed to be used in the frequency band from 500 MHz to 2000 MHz. It also contains corrections for urban, suburban and rural (flat) environments. Although its frequency range is outside of the one used in our measurements, its simplicity and the flexibility have motivated many researchers to widely use it for the path loss prediction in frequencies above 2000 MHz. The basic equation for path loss in dBm is [8]:

$$L = 46.3 + 33.9\log_{10}f - 13.82\log_{10}h_b - ah_m + (44.9 - 6.55\log_{10}(h_b))\log_{10}d + c_m,$$

where,  $f$  is the frequency in MHz,  $d$  is the distance between antennas in km, and  $h_b$  is the transmitter antenna height above ground level in meters. The parameter  $c_m$  is defined as 0 dBm for suburban or open environments and 3 dBm for urban environments. The parameter  $ah_m$  is defined for urban environments as [9]:

$$ah_m = 3.20(\log_{10}(11.75h_r))^2 - 4.97, \text{ for } f > 400\text{MHz},$$

and for suburban or rural (flat) environments as:

$$ah_m = (1.1\log_{10}f - 0.7)h_r - (1.56\log_{10}f - 0.8),$$

where,  $h_r$  is the antenna height above ground level. Observation reveals that the path loss exponent of the predictions made by COST-231 Hata model is given by:

$$n_{COST} = \frac{(44.9 - 6.55\log_{10}(h_b))}{10}.$$

**Green-Obaidat Model.** This model was first described by Green and Obaidat [18] in 2002. It considers the path loss accounting due to Fresnel zone with near earth antenna height (i.e. typically between 1 and 2 meters) [18]. The proposed path loss for near ground antennas is as follows:

$$P_{LOSS} = 40\log_{10}d + 20\log_{10}f - 20\log_{10}h_t h_r,$$

where  $f$  is the frequency in GHz,  $h_t h_r$  represent the antenna heights for the transmitter and the receiver correspondingly, and  $d$  is the overall distance. This equation can further be simplified for use in 2.4 GHz IEEE 802.11 frequency as:

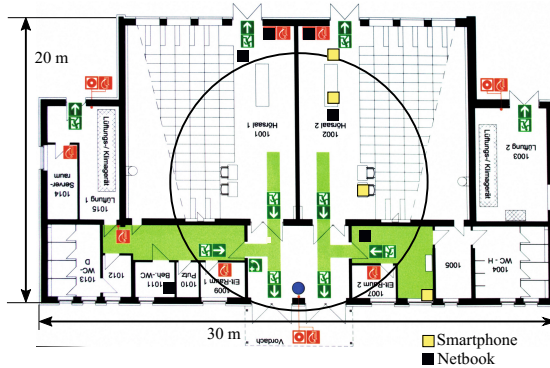
$$P_{LOSS} = 7.6 + 40\log_{10}d - 20\log_{10}h_t h_r.$$

Next, the above models will be evaluated according to our empirical data.

### 3 Evaluation

For the evaluation of our scenario, we consider the following environment. Our experiment took place at Leonardo Da Vinci building in the TU Ilmenau campus. The building plan and the placement of nodes is shown in Fig. 1. A total of 11 nodes were used in the experiment from which ten nodes were represented by netbooks as well as smartphones and were placed inside the building; and one node represented by a quadcopter (QC) that was placed inside to perform indoor measurements and outside to perform measurement of a mixed indoor-outdoor signal propagation. In Fig. 1, the nodes in black represent the netbooks and the nodes in yellow represent the smartphones. Outdoor measurements were taken both in front and rear (South and North correspondingly) of the building by placing the quadcopter at distances of 5, 10, 12, 15, 20 meters in the front, and 5, 10, 16, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 50, 55 meters in the rear. Since some models require reference measurements at distance  $d = 1$  m, these measurements have been carried out indoors (the average value is  $P_{r0} = 37$  dBm). For further indoor measurements, the nodes were placed equidistant at intervals of 0.9 meters. The technical specifications of the QC are given in Table 4.

Table 5 gives a description of the propagation parameters used for the evaluation of results. These parameters have been used to find the best fit for every



**Fig. 1.** The floor-plan of the chosen building. Positions of the smartphones and netbooks are marked accordingly.

**Table 4.** Technical parameters of quadrocopter.

Technical Characteristic	Model or Parameter
Processor	600MHz Cortex A8
RAM	256MB
Gyroscope/Acceleration Sensor	MPU6050
Magnetic Field Sensor	HMC5883L
GPS Receiver	UBLOX6
Barometric Pressure Sensor	MS5611
Ultrasonic Sensor	MaxSonar I2CXL
Operating System	Gentoo Linux
Flight and Measurement Software	PengPilot ( <a href="https://github.com/PenguPilot">github.com/PenguPilot</a> )

signal propagation model described above. We used the brute force method to go through all possible constellations of the values for the path loss exponent  $\gamma$  and the intercept (intercept has been applied for the log-distance and wall attenuation models only). For every combination of  $\gamma$  and intercept, an RMSE value has been calculated as an indication of correspondence to our empirical data. The smaller an RMSE value is, the more precisely a model fits to our scenario.

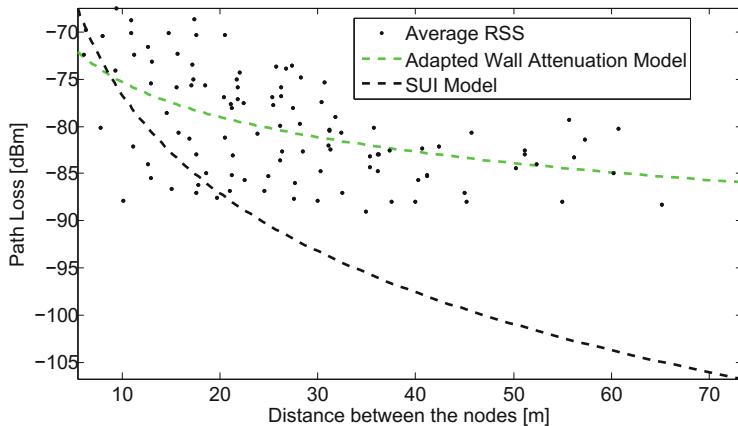
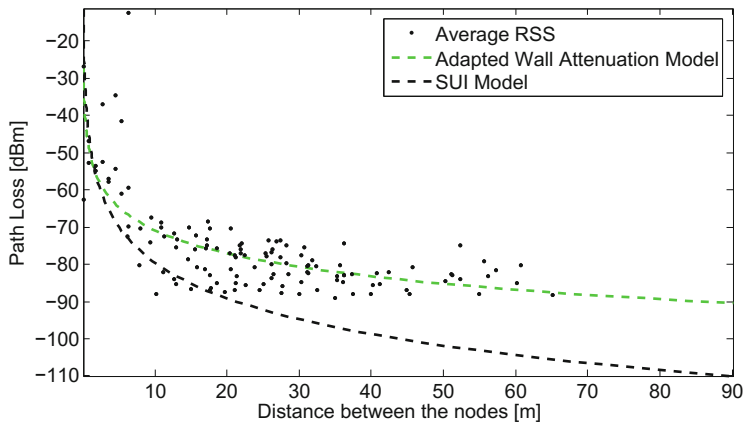
## 4 Evaluation Results

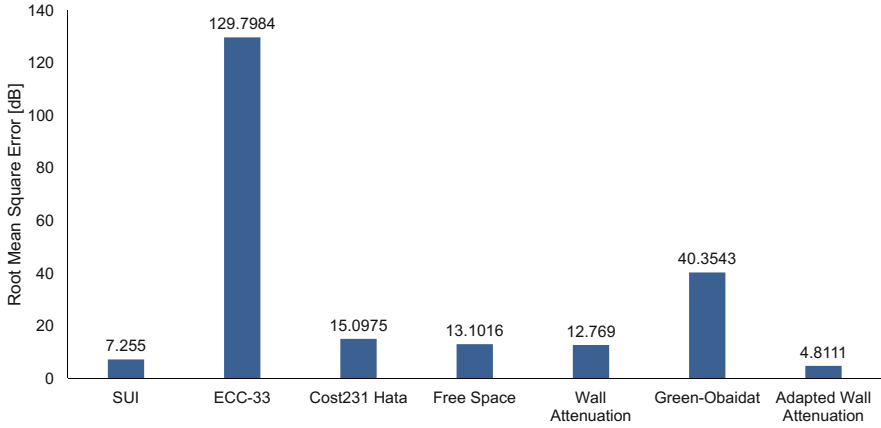
Using the data obtained our setup, we evaluated the path loss in dBm with respect to the distance between the emitter nodes and the QC. In Fig. 2, we plot the average signal strength measurements for different distance values using outdoor measurements only. Whereas, Fig. 3 incorporates both indoor and outdoor measurements.



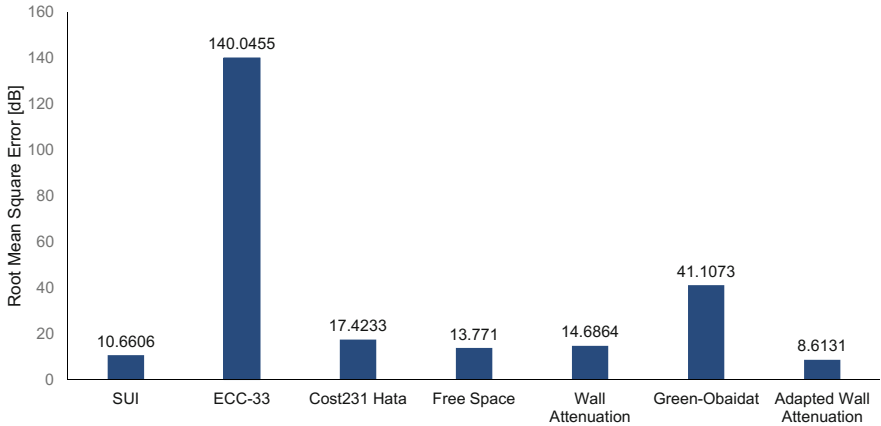
**Table 5.** Propagation parameters for the evaluation.

Parameters	Values
Frequency	2.4 GHz
distance $d_0$	1 m
Receiving antenna height	0.15 m
Wavelength $\lambda$	0.12 m
Transmitting antenna height	1.2 m
Path loss exponent $\gamma$	[1, 5]
Intercept	[0, 100] dBm

**Fig. 2.** Received signal strength vs. distance considering outdoor measurements only.**Fig. 3.** Received signal strength vs. distance considering both indoor and outdoor measurements.



**Fig. 4.** Comparison of chosen models considering outdoor measurements only.



**Fig. 5.** Comparison of chosen models considering both indoor and outdoor measurements.

The upper line in Fig. 2 and 3 represents the adapted wall attenuation model. The line below represents the SUI model for the path loss exponent that produces the minimum error. It is obvious in both figures that the SUI model, presenting the second best result in this work, deviates significantly from the cloud of measurements. The wall attenuation model provides the smallest RMSE using the path loss exponent  $\gamma = 2.05121$  and the sum of transmitted power and wall attenuation factor at 50.3292 dBm. The RMSE for the various models chosen is shown in Fig. 4 which represents the RMSE for the measurements taken with QC being outside of the building and Fig. 5 represents the RMSE for all measurements. In both figures, the adapted wall attenuation model outperforms its opponents presenting RMSE values 4.8 and 8.6 considering outdoor measurements and all measurements correspondingly. Considering high heterogeneity of

data applied for the calculation of the RMSE using measurements from both indoor and outdoor environments, we can explain the enormous degradation and almost doubled value of the RMSE compared to the results achieved with outdoor measurements only.

## 5 Conclusion

As per the analysis of the chosen models, we obtained the minimum root mean squared error using the adapted wall attenuation model. The SUI model, the Free Space Model and the COST-231 Hata model provide the next best possible choice with respect to the minimum error. Hence for the chosen set of parameters and for the chosen mixed indoor-outdoor environment, the adapted wall attenuation model provides a closer approximation of the RMSE in comparison to other models.

Comparing the obtained set of values for the adapted wall attenuation model ( $P_{r0} = 37$  dBm,  $W = 13.3$  dBm,  $\gamma = 2.05$ ) with the one of the original model from [19] ( $P_{r0} = 40$  dBm,  $W = 4.8$  dBm,  $\gamma = 3.32$ ), we can conclude the following:

- The obtained RMSE for the model with the adjusted parameters is significantly better than the original one (the corresponding ratio is 2.6).
- Similar environmental conditions do not guarantee similar behavior of the signal propagation.
- A calibration of parameters can improve the accuracy of the model significantly. However, such a calibration represents an overhead and needs to be periodically repeated for the same area. This is partially due to the fact that the environmental conditions like temperature, light, open and closed doors and windows of the building can have a considerable impact on the resulting signal propagation.

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