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COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF DC-DC CONVERTERS: ADVANCEMENTS, APPLICATIONS, AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract: Power electronics stand as the cornerstone of our electrified world, and versatile DC-DC converters are a key component of this technology. In this comprehensive analysis, we investigate deeply the realm of DC-DC converters, examining their pivotal role in modern power systems. From the evolution of converter topologies to their wide-ranging applications, we explore the advancements that propel this field forward. Whether maintaining continuous power in portable devices or facilitating renewable energy integration, DC-DC converters are the fundamental components. Yet, they face formidable challenges, from complex control strategies to voltage stress management. This study reveals the complex configuration of DC-DC converters, detailing a narrative of adaptability, resilience, and innovation in response to the increasing energy demands of our time.

Keywords: DC-DC converters, Power electronics, DC-DC converter topologies, DC-DC converter advantages, DC-DC converter applications and converter challenges

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1. Introduction

In the ever-expanding landscape of modern electronics, the efficient conversion and management of electrical energy have evolved from being merely a necessity to becoming a driving force. At the heart of this electrifying transformation lies DC-DC converters, unassuming yet indispensable devices that modify and regulate power in our digital age. These converters serve as power bridges, seamlessly shifting voltages, managing power flows, and ensuring a reliable supply to the many electronic devices in our world (Raghavendra et al., 2019). They have firmly established themselves as the preferred choice for medium and high-power applications in power electronic conversion and have reached maturity as a proven technology (Hossain and Rahim 2018). DC-DC converters are now integrated into both standard and customized products, serving a wide range of applications. These applications include photovoltaic (PV) power systems, offshore wind turbines (Forouzesh et al., 2017), electric/hybrid/fuel cell vehicles (İnci et al., 2021), medium-voltage DC (MVDC) and high-voltage DC (HVDC) power systems (Alhurayyis, Elkhateb and Morrow 2020, Li et al., 2018), telecommunication power supplies, shipboard power systems, and offshore oil and gas applications, including subsea compressors (Revathi and Prabhakar 2016), among others. Although they are wellestablished technology, they still present several challenges, yet offer a variety of possibilities, which

continue to fuel ongoing research efforts worldwide. These efforts aim to enhance conversion efficiency, power density, reliability, control techniques, simplicity, and cost while exploring new application domains (Saeedifard et al., 2010).

The realm of DC-DC converters has been characterized by a continuous wave of innovation and development. Advancements in topology, control strategies, and efficiency optimization have propelled these devices into the forefront of modern electronics. Among the notable innovations, the versatile workhorse Buck-Boost converter subtly steps up or down voltages, precisely accommodating input power changes (Khaligh and Onar 2017). It has evolved into a fundamental component in portable electronics, adapting to fluctuating battery voltages and facilitating device operation even as the battery discharges. Meanwhile, the Cuk converter, with its unique ability to maintain a continuous output voltage amidst turbulent input fluctuations, has emerged as a linchpin in the renewable energy era, harnessing energy from solar panels with unparalleled efficiency (Erickson and Maksimovic 2007). Its versatility in both step-up and step-down voltage conversion makes it invaluable in scenarios where a stable power supply is essential, such as in photovoltaic systems and LED lighting applications. The Full-Bridge Converter, which serves bi-directional power flow, demonstrates its effectiveness in high-power applications, proving its ability for robust power

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conversion (Lipo 2017). Its capability to efficiently handle large currents and voltages positions it as a key component in industries such as electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, and high-power industrial equipment. The advancements in these converter topologies reflect the dynamic nature of the field, as engineers are constantly developing tools to manage power effectively. These developments are not limited to the theoretical realm; Rather, it is reflected across diverse industries and applications. In the field of portable electronics, the Buck-Boost converter is emerging as an effective voltage continuity tool, ensuring uninterrupted operation as batteries are running low. Its adaptability to varying input voltages and maintaining a constant output voltage is crucial in extending the operational life of battery-powered devices. In the field of renewable energy conversion, Cuk inverters are proving highly effective, extracting energy from solar panels and leading the global transition towards sustainable energy (Erickson and Maksimovic 2007). Their ability to efficiently regulate voltage and manage power harvested from solar panels makes them pivotal in photovoltaic systems and solar inverters. Cuk converters also play a vital role in LED lighting applications, maintaining consistent brightness despite variations in input voltage and load. On the other hand, Flyback converters diligently power low-wattage electronics, such as power adapters and battery chargers, while Push-Pull converters manage the amplification of audio signals in class D audio amplifiers and drive the precision of electric motors in industrial automation and robotics (Ivanovic and Knezic 2022, Krishnan 2017). The Half-Bridge converter, with its simplicity, finds a niche in motor drives and uninterruptible power supplies (Skvarenina 2018). Moreover, the rise of LLC resonant converters, with their zero voltage switching (ZVS) and zero current switching (ZCS) capabilities, is reshaping high-frequency and high-power systems, underpinning the infrastructure of data centers and revolutionizing renewable energy applications (Wei, Luo and Mantooth 2020). The adaptability of these converters to a wide range of applications underscores their significance in the modern technological word.

However, these advancements are not devoid of challenges. The quest for precise voltage regulation while simultaneously mitigating voltage stress across the switches continues to be a complex engineering issue that demands workable solutions (Lipo 2017). In converters like the Forward Converter, where transformer design is pivotal, achieving optimization in efficiency requires an understanding of core materials, winding ratios, and parasitic elements (Krishnan 2017). The challenges of optimizing voltage transformation while maintaining efficiency are particularly prominent in the context of Full-Bridge converters, where intricate control strategies are essential for harnessing their bidirectional power flow capabilities (Bakas et al., 2016). Additionally, the balance between simplicity and functionality, which is a feature of the Half-Bridge converter, presents its own set of challenges, particularly when extending its use to moderate power applications (Skvarenina 2018). Challenges such as control strategies, electromagnetic interference, and heat dissipation loom large in the realm of Push-Pull converters (Ivanovic and Knezic 2022). Achieving efficient zero voltage switching and zero current switching in LLC resonant converters, while promising for high-frequency and high-power systems, demands intricate control mechanisms and transformative approaches to transformer design (Mohan, Undeland and Robbins 2003). These challenges, although formidable, serve as catalysts for innovation in the domain of DC-DC converters, pushing engineers to craft increasingly efficient, reliable, and versatile solutions to meet the ever-evolving demands of modern electronics.

As we initiate this comprehensive analysis of the DC-DC converters, we will reveal the delicate interplay between innovation and practicality. Through this extensive analysis, we will carefully examine the intricacies of these converters, exploring their fundamental principles, practical applications, and the challenges that persistently drive innovation in this field. We will gain a deep understanding of how these converters have shaped our electrified world in order to influence continued development and innovation.

2. Materials and Methods

The field of DC-DC converters encompasses a wide range of topologies (as shown in Figure 1), and each is designed to meet specific requirements in power conversion, voltage regulation, and power management. These diverse topologies serve different application domains, ranging from renewable energy systems to electric vehicles and communications. This section provides an in-depth analysis of prominent DC-DC converter topologies with their distinct characteristics and applications.

2.1. Buck Converter (Step-Down Converter)

The Buck converter, also referred to as the Step-Down converter, is a fundamental DC-DC converter topology widely utilized for reducing the input voltage to a lower, regulated output voltage (Pressman 2009). Its simplicity, efficiency, and reliable operation make it a cornerstone in power electronics, finding applications in a variety of fields such as power supplies, voltage regulators, and battery-powered devices (Luo and Ye 2016, Rashid 2010).

2.1.1. Operating principle

The Buck converter operates based on the principle of energy storage and transfer through an inductor and a switching element (usually a transistor), accompanied by a diode for rectification (Basso 2008). The process involves alternating between two states: the ON state (switch closed) and the OFF state (switch open).

During the ON state, the switch connects the input voltage source to the inductor. This allows current to

flow through the inductor, building up energy in its magnetic field. The output voltage is determined by the duty cycle of the switching signal, which controls the amount of time the switch remains closed.

When the switch transitions to the OFF state, the inductor's stored energy continues to flow, but now through a diode connected to the output. This diode prevents the inductor's current from reversing and directs it towards the output capacitor, maintaining a continuous output current (Kazimierczuk 2015).

2.1.2. Advantages

The Buck converter offers several advantages, contributing to its widespread use:

- 1) Efficiency: Buck converters are known for their high efficiency, especially when the input-output voltage difference is moderate. Since there is no isolation transformer and minimal energy storage components, power losses are relatively low.
- 2) Simplicity: The Buck converter has a straightforward topology with fewer components, making it cost-effective and reliable.
- 3) Fast Transient Response: The inherent energy storage in the inductor allows for a rapid response to load changes, providing good transient performance.
- Compact Size: The reduced number of 4) components and absence of an isolation transformer contribute to a compact design, making it suitable for space-constrained applications.

2.1.3. Applications

The Buck converter demonstrates its versatility across a spectrum of scenarios necessitating voltage reduction while upholding elevated efficiency standards. Its applications encompass:

- Voltage Regulation: Serving as a steadfast 1) source of a stable output voltage, the Buck converter caters to the needs of microcontrollers, digital circuits, and sensors.
- Battery Charging: Exhibiting proficiency in 2) battery charging operations, the Buck converter efficiently recharges batteries within devices like mobile phones, laptops, and portable electronics.
- 3) Voltage Regulator Modules (VRMs): In the realm of computer motherboards, the Buck converter plays a crucial role by regulating the voltage supply to processors, underscoring its significance in enhancing operational stability.
- Power Supplies: The Buck converter assumes a 4) pivotal role in delivering regulated voltage levels to a wide range of electronic devices, thereby facilitating smooth functionality.

2.1.4. Challenges and Considerations

Despite the manifold benefits conferred by the Buck converter, several considerations warrant attention:

- Limited Voltage Conversion: One of the intrinsic 1) limitations of the Buck converter pertains to its ability to solely reduce voltage; it lacks the capacity to elevate the output voltage beyond the input level.
- 2) Inductor Selection: The right selection of the

2.2.2. Advantages

The Boost converter is characterized by a set of advantages that increase its significance:

- Voltage Boosting: The Boost converter steps up 1) the input voltage to a higher, regulated output voltage, making it ideal for applications requiring voltage multiplication.
- Simple Structure: The Boost topology features 2) an arrangement with minimal components, which is attributed to its cost-effectiveness and high reliability.
- Diverse Applicability: Boost converters exhibit 3) their utility across diverse sectors, encompassing industries such as renewable energy systems, batterypowered devices, and electric vehicles.
- Stable Output Regulation: The Boost converter 4) supplies a regulated output voltage despite fluctuations in input voltage.

2.2.3. Applications:

The Boost converter is essential in applications that

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inductor emerges as a pivotal factor in achieving desired performance benchmarks and operational efficiency.

- 3) Switching Losses: The efficiency of the Buck converter can be impacted by switching losses in the switching element (transistor).
- Output Ripple: The energy transfer process can 4) result in output voltage ripple, which may require filtering for noise-sensitive applications.

2.2. Boost Converter (Step-Up Converter)

The Boost converter, commonly denoted as the Step-Up converter, occupies a pivotal position among DC-DC converter topologies, stepping up the input voltage to a regulated and higher output voltage. With applications including battery charging, power supplies, and renewable energy systems, this converter topology plays an important role wherever demand for high voltage levels prevails (Nouri, Nouri and Vosoughi 2019, Wu, Ruan and Ye 2014).

2.2.1. Operating principle

The operation of the Boost converter is rooted in the concept of inductor energy storage and transfer, facilitated by a switching element (typically a transistor) and a diode (Rashid 2017). Analogous to other DC-DC converters, the Boost converter cycles between two operational modes: the ON state (switch closed) and the OFF state (switch open). In the ON state, the switch links the input voltage source to the inductor, enabling the flow of current through the inductor and leading to energy accumulation within its magnetic field. The magnitude of the output voltage is dictated by the duty cycle of the switching signal, which governs the duration the switch remains closed. During the OFF state transition, the stored energy within the inductor is discharged. The diode prevents the inductor's current from reversing, channeling it towards the output capacitor and load. Consequently, this mechanism elevates the output voltage beyond the input voltage level (Tseng and Huang 2013).

require increased output voltages while maintaining operational efficiency. Applications include a range of domains:

- 1) Battery Charging: Boost converters facilitate the elevation of voltage from low-voltage batteries to levels conducive to effective charging.
- 2) Photovoltaic Systems: In solar energy systems, Boost converters increase the output voltage of solar panels, aligning it harmoniously with grid or battery storage requisites.
- 3) LED Drivers: Boost converters prove their effectiveness by driving LEDs and providing high voltages that match their operational requirements.
- 4) Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS): Boost converters raise the voltage from low battery levels to a suitable threshold for meeting standby power requirements.
- 5) Electric Vehicles (EVs): Boost converters demonstrate their versatility by stepping up the voltage of battery packs to levels that exactly match the operating requirements of an electric motor.

2.2.4. Challenges and considerations

While Boost converters offer various advantages, there are considerations to be aware of:

- 1) Voltage Stress: The operation of Boost converters entails higher voltage levels than the input, which can impose stress on components, mandating meticulous selection of voltage ratings to ensure system robustness.
- 2) Inductor Design: Attaining the desired performance and efficiency hinges upon meticulous selection and design of inductors, making it an essential aspect of the system's optimization.
- 3) Switching Losses: The efficiency of Boost converters may encounter a setback due to switching losses that transpire in the switching element, predominantly the transistor, necessitating mitigation strategies for enhanced performance.
- 4) Output Ripple: The energy transfer process might engender output voltage ripple, underscoring the necessity for suitable filtering techniques, particularly in applications sensitive to noise.

2.3. Buck-Boost Converter

The Buck-Boost converter is a versatile DC-DC converter topology that enables both step-down and step-up voltage conversion. This capability makes it a viable solution for applications where the input voltage can vary widely, and the output voltage needs to be adjusted to match specific requirements (Gorji et al., 2019).

2.3.1. Operating principle

The Buck-Boost converter combines the principles of both the Buck (Step-Down) and Boost (Step-Up) converters to achieve its dual functionality. It employs an inductor, a switching element (typically a transistor), a diode, and an output capacitor (Chen, MaksimoviC and Erickson 2001, Gorji et al., 2019).

During the ON state, when the switch is closed, the inductor charges and stores energy. Similar to the Buck

converter, current flows through the inductor and diode, and energy is stored in the inductor's magnetic field.

When the switch transitions to the OFF state, the inductor's stored energy is released. However, the diode prevents the inductor's current from reversing and directs it toward the output capacitor and load, resulting in an output voltage that can be either higher or lower than the input voltage, depending on the duty cycle of the switching signal.

2.3.2. Advantages

The advantages of the Buck-Boost converter can greatly enhance its utility in various applications:

Bidirectional Voltage Conversion:

- 1) The Buck-Boost converter provides bidirectional voltage conversion, allowing for step-up and step-down voltage regulation in a single topology.
- 2) Input Voltage Variability: It's particularly useful in applications with input voltage variations, as it can handle both lower and higher input voltages, ensuring stable output voltage regardless of fluctuations in the power source.
- 3) Simple Control: The control scheme employed by the Buck-Boost converter is relatively uncomplicated. It relies on Pulse Width Modulation (PWM) control to adjust the duty cycle, allowing for precise and efficient voltage regulation. This simplicity contributes to ease of implementation and control.
- 4) Compact Design: The Buck-Boost's singleinductor design is an advantage for applications with limited space. This compact structure enables it to fit into space-constrained environments, making it an attractive choice for miniaturized electronic devices and systems.

Collectively, these advantages position the Buck-Boost converter as a valuable tool in power electronics, capable of meeting voltage regulation challenges across a range of practical applications.

2.3.3. Applications

The Buck-Boost converter serves a wide range of applications, demonstrating its adaptability in various scenarios:

- 1) Battery-Powered Devices: In portable electronics and battery-powered devices, the Buck-Boost converter plays a pivotal role. It helps to uphold a consistent output voltage even as the battery discharges, ensuring uninterrupted and stable device operation.
- 2) Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS): During power fluctuations or outages, maintaining a stable and reliable power supply is critical. The Buck-Boost converter excels in this role, efficiently regulating voltage to provide a continuous power source to connected devices.
- 3) Energy Harvesting: Renewable energy systems, such as those utilizing solar panels or wind turbines, often face variable energy generation. Buck-Boost converters are instrumental in efficiently storing energy from these sources, allowing for effective

utilization and storage of harvested power.

- 4) Battery Charging: Battery charging systems can include batteries with voltages above or below the charging voltage requirements. Here, the Buck-Boost converter comes into play, ensuring that the batteries are charged correctly and safely, regardless of their initial voltage levels.
- 5) LED Drivers: Maintaining consistent brightness in LED lighting systems is crucial for many applications, including automotive, signage, and general illumination. Buck-Boost converters are employed to regulate voltage, ensuring that LEDs emit a steady and uniform light output despite variations in the input voltage.

These applications underscore the versatility and significance of the Buck-Boost converter in the power electronics field, where voltage regulation is a fundamental requirement.

2.3.4. Challenges and considerations

While the Buck-Boost converter offers valuable advantages, it is necessary to acknowledge and address challenges:

- 1) Voltage Stress: In certain operating conditions, the voltage across the switching element can exceed the input voltage. This requires careful component selection, particularly when selecting components with appropriate voltage ratings to ensure system durability and reliability.
- 2) Efficiency Trade-Offs: Achieving high efficiency in both step-up and step-down modes can be challenging due to varying duty cycles.
- 3) Inductor Design: Designing the inductor to handle both modes efficiently requires careful consideration.

Addressing these challenges requires a deep understanding of the Buck-Boost converter's operation, careful component selection, and advanced control strategies. Despite these challenges, the Buck-Boost converter remains a valuable tool in power electronics, providing bidirectional voltage conversion in a wide range of applications.

2.4. Cuk Converter

The Cuk converter, named after its inventor Slobodan Cuk, is a versatile DC-DC converter topology that combines the advantages of both step-up and step-down voltage conversion. It is known for its ability to provide a continuous output voltage, even when the input voltage fluctuates. This makes it particularly useful in applications where a stable output voltage is crucial (Al-Obaidi, Abbas and Khazaal 2022, Mumtaz et al., 2021).

2.4.1. Operating principle

The Cuk converter consists of an inductor, two capacitors, and two switches. Unlike other conventional converters, it employs a coupled inductor, which enables its unique voltage conversion capabilities (Al-Obaidi, Abbas and Khazaal 2022).

During the ON state of the first switch, energy is stored in the inductor and transferred to the output through the

diode and the second switch. The voltage across the coupled inductor can be either higher or lower than the input voltage, depending on the duty cycle of the switching signal.

In the OFF state of the first switch, the energy stored in the inductor is delivered to the output capacitor and the load through the second switch and the diode. By regulating the duty cycle of the switches, the output voltage can be adjusted.

2.4.2. Advantages

- 1) Continuous Output Voltage: The Cuk converter maintains a consistent output voltage, irrespective of fluctuations in the input voltage or variations in the load. This reliability is crucial for applications demanding stable power delivery.
- 2) Inherent Voltage Conversion: Its design inherently allows for voltage conversion, which can be either step-up or step-down. This inherent versatility makes it suitable for a wide range of applications, where flexible voltage regulation is required.
- 3) Isolation Option: The Cuk converter can be easily adapted to include an isolation transformer, enhancing its suitability for applications that necessitate galvanic isolation. This feature extends its usability to fields requiring electrical separation for safety or functional reasons.
- 4) Reduced Voltage Stress: Compared to some other converter topologies, the Cuk converter imposes lower voltage stress across the switching components. This characteristic not only enhances overall system reliability but also contributes to improved efficiency.

These advantages collectively position the Cuk converter as a valuable choice in various power electronics applications, ensuring stable output voltage, adaptability, and enhanced reliability.

2.4.3. Applications

The Cuk converter finds applications in a range of scenarios due to its continuous voltage conversion ability and other advantages:

- 1) Portable Devices: The Cuk converter is extensively utilized in battery-operated devices to ensure a stable output voltage throughout the battery discharge cycle. This capability is crucial for maintaining consistent device performance and maximizing battery life.
- Photovoltaic Systems: In the realm of solar energy systems, the Cuk converter plays a pivotal role. It is employed to regulate voltage and efficiently manage the power generated from solar panels. This aids in optimizing energy utilization and grid integration.
- 3) LED Lighting: The Cuk converter finds application in LED lighting systems, where it serves to uphold a steady brightness level. It effectively compensates for variations in input voltage and load, ensuring uniform and reliable illumination.
- 4) Voltage Regulators: Cuk converters are employed as voltage regulators in scenarios demanding

effective management of input voltage variations. Their ability to provide continuous output voltage makes them valuable for stabilizing power supply across a variety of applications.

These diverse applications underscore the adaptability and significance of the Cuk converter in modern power electronics, addressing the needs of everything from portable devices to renewable energy solutions.

2.4.4. Challenges and considerations

Despite its benefits, the Cuk converter comes with certain challenges:

- 1) Complex Control: The Cuk converter presents challenges in terms of control strategy due to the presence of multiple reactive components and coupled inductors. Achieving precise regulation and efficiency can require intricate control algorithms and circuitry.
- 2) Voltage Ripple: Depending on the specific design and operating conditions, the Cuk converter's output voltage may exhibit ripple. Managing this ripple effectively calls for the implementation of proper filtering techniques and advanced control methods.
- 3) Isolation Challenges: When the Cuk converter is used in conjunction with an isolation transformer, additional considerations come into play. Issues related to leakage inductance and maintaining a robust isolation barrier must be carefully addressed to ensure safe and reliable operation.

These considerations highlight the need for a thorough understanding of the Cuk converter's intricacies and the importance of tailored solutions to overcome its challenges.

2.5. Flyback Converter

The Flyback Converter, also known as the Flyback Transformer, is a widely used isolated DC-DC converter topology known for its simplicity, cost-effectiveness, and versatility. It provides galvanic isolation between the input and output, making it suitable for applications requiring voltage transformation and electrical isolation (Davari et al., 2012, Erickson, Madigan and Singer 1990).

2.5.1. Operating principle

The Flyback Converter operates based on the principles of energy storage and transfer. It typically consists of a transformer, an input capacitor, an output diode, and a control circuit that regulates the switching of the semiconductor switches (Davari et al., 2012, Erickson, Madigan and Singer 1990).

Switch-On State: When the semiconductor switch (usually a MOSFET) is turned on, current flows through the primary winding of the transformer, storing energy in the magnetic field created around the winding.

Energy Transfer: When the switch turns off, the energy stored in the magnetic field induces a voltage in the secondary winding of the transformer. This voltage is rectified by the output diode and transferred to the output capacitor, resulting in voltage transformation.

Output Regulation: By controlling the duty cycle (ratio of switch-on time to total cycle time), the output voltage can be regulated. Feedback control loops are often employed

to adjust the duty cycle based on the desired output voltage.

2.5.2. Advantages

- 1) Galvanic Isolation: The Flyback Converter offers galvanic isolation between the input and output, providing electrical separation and safety between different circuits.
- 2) Simplicity: Its simple structure with fewer components reduces cost and complexity, making it suitable for various applications.
- 3) Multiple Outputs: The Flyback Converter can provide multiple outputs by adding secondary windings to the transformer.
- 4) Energy Storage: Its energy storage capability allows for buffering energy and accommodating transient loads.

These advantages collectively underscore the Flyback Converter's significance in power electronics, offering a combination of isolation, simplicity, versatility, and energy management capabilities to meet the demands of diverse and complex applications.

2.5.3. Applications

The Flyback Converter finds applications in diverse fields due to its isolation and simplicity:

- 1) Low-Power Electronics: The Flyback Converter is a good choice for low-power electronic devices, including power adapters, battery chargers, and auxiliary power supplies. Its ability to efficiently provide isolated power makes it well-suited for these applications.
- 2) LED Drivers: In LED lighting systems, Flyback converters play a crucial role by delivering constant current or voltage to LEDs. This ensures consistent brightness and stable performance, making it an ideal choice for automotive, signage, and general illumination applications.
- 3) Isolated Power Supplies: It's suitable for applications requiring isolated power sources, such as industrial control systems and medical devices.
- 4) Automotive: Within the automotive industry, Flyback converters power various components, including sensors, lighting systems, and infotainment units. Their ability to efficiently manage power distribution in the challenging automotive environment underscores their importance in modern vehicles.

These applications highlight the adaptability of the Flyback Converter, making it a valuable solution in domains where isolation, simplicity, and precise power regulation are paramount.

2.5.4. Challenges and Considerations

While the Flyback Converter offers significant advantages, it also presents certain challenges that require careful consideration:

1) Voltage Regulation: Achieving precise voltage regulation can be challenging, especially under varying load conditions. Designing control strategies that can effectively handle load fluctuations is essential to ensure stable output voltage.

- 2) Transformer Design: The design of the transformer in a Flyback Converter is a critical aspect that influences overall performance. The transformer design must consider factors like core material, winding ratios, and leakage inductance to optimize efficiency and performance.
- 3) Voltage Stress: The voltage stress experienced by the semiconductor switch can be substantial in Flyback Converters, particularly during switching transitions. Proper selection of switches and the implementation of voltage clamping techniques are vital to mitigate voltage stress and enhance the converter's reliability.

Addressing these challenges requires a profound comprehension of the converter's operation, implementation of advanced control strategies, and meticulous transformer design. By managing these considerations effectively, the full potential of the Flyback converter can be utilized while ensuring reliable and efficient power conversion.

2.6. Forward Converter

The Forward Converter stands as a prominent and widely employed DC-DC converter topology, esteemed for its efficiency, simplicity, and adaptability in applications necessitating voltage transformation and isolation. Operating on the fundamental principle of energy transfer facilitated by a transformer, this converter topology finds a foothold across a wide range of industries, catering to a wide range of low to mediumpower applications (Zhang, Jovanovic and Lee 1998).

2.6.1. Operating principle

The Forward Converter consists of a transformer, semiconductor switches (usually MOSFETs), an input capacitor, an output diode, and a control circuit. The operation of the Forward Converter can be divided into several key stages (Tan 2002, Zhang, Jovanovic and Lee 1998):

Switch-On State: During this stage, one of the MOSFET switches is turned on, allowing current to flow through the primary winding of the transformer. Energy is stored in the transformer's magnetic field.

Energy Transfer: When the primary switch turns off, the stored energy in the magnetic field is transferred to the secondary winding of the transformer. This induces a voltage in secondary winding, which is rectified by the output diode and transferred to the output capacitor.

Voltage Regulation: The output voltage can be regulated by controlling the duty cycle of the switches. Feedback control loops are often used to adjust the duty cycle and maintain the desired output voltage.

Isolation: The transformer provides galvanic isolation between the input and output, enhancing safety and allowing voltage transformation.

2.6.2. Advantages

1) Efficiency: The Forward Converter takes center stage with its remarkable efficiency, captivating the users with reduced switching losses and an optimized transformer design that ensures a high performance in energy conversion.

- 2) Isolation: Galvanic isolation between input and output enhances safety and allows voltage transformation.
- 3) Compact Design: Its simple structure and fewer components contribute to a compact and cost-effective design.
- 4) Versatility: The Forward Converter can be configured for various output voltages and power levels, making it suitable for a wide range of applications.

2.6.3. Applications

The Forward Converter finds applications in different industries due to its efficiency and voltage transformation capabilities:

- 1) Power Supplies: It takes the leading role in power supplies, catering to the energy needs of computers, televisions, and industrial equipment, delivering a stellar performance in providing stable and efficient power.
- 2) Telecommunications: Forward converters provide isolated voltage conversion in telecom power supplies and equipment.
- 3) Automotive: They are used in automotive applications for powering infotainment systems, sensors, and control units.
- 4) Renewable Energy: Forward converters can be part of renewable energy systems, such as wind turbine converters.

2.6.4. Challenges and considerations

Amidst its many advantages, the Forward Converter isn't without its set of challenges:

- 1) Transformer Design: Crafting an efficient transformer demands meticulous attention to winding ratios, core material selection, and the management of parasitic elements. This intricate process is critical to optimizing both efficiency and performance.
- 2) Magnetic Core Saturation: The risk of transformer core saturation lurks, potentially causing distortion and efficiency dips. Combatting this issue necessitates astute design choices and adept control techniques.
- 3) Voltage Stress: Excessive voltage stress on the switches can lead to undesirable consequences like breakdown and ringing. To navigate this challenge, the employment of voltage clamping mechanisms and snubber circuits may become a necessity.

2.7. Full-Bridge Converter

The Full-Bridge Converter is a versatile and widely used topology in the field of DC-DC power conversion. It offers voltage transformation, isolation, and bidirectional power flow, making it suitable for various applications across industries. The Full-Bridge Converter operates by utilizing a bridge configuration of semiconductor switches and is known for its ability to efficiently handle high-power levels (Bakas et al., 2016, Chen et al., 1995).

2.7.1. Operating principle

The Full-Bridge Converter consists of four semiconductor switches arranged in a bridge configuration. These switches can be either diodes or transistors, such as MOSFETs or IGBTs. The converter can operate in two modes: buck (step-down) mode and boost (step-up) mode (Wang, Lee and Lai 2000).

Buck Mode: In this mode, the upper switches are alternately turned on and off while the lower switches remain off. When the upper-left switch is on, current flows through the load and the upper-right diode, effectively stepping down the voltage. The energy stored in the inductor is transferred to the output.

Boost Mode: In this mode, the lower switches are alternately turned on and off while the upper switches remain off. When the lower-left switch is on, current flows through the inductor, storing energy. When the lower-right switch is turned on, the stored energy is transferred to the load and the output voltage is boosted. By carefully controlling the switching sequence and timing of the switches, the Full-Bridge Converter can achieve bidirectional power flow, allowing energy to be transferred in both buck and boost modes.

2.7.2. Advantages

- 1) Bidirectional Operation: The Full-Bridge Converter's capacity to function in both buck and boost modes renders it highly versatile, making it an excellent choice for applications necessitating voltage step-up and step-down capabilities.
- 2) Isolation: When paired with a high-frequency transformer, the Full-Bridge Converter can deliver galvanic isolation between the input and output, significantly enhancing safety and permitting voltage transformation.
- 3) High Power Handling: This converter topology exhibits exceptional suitability for high-power applications. It can efficiently manage substantial currents and voltages, which is pivotal in applications demanding robust power handling.
- 4) Voltage Regulation: Precise control over the output voltage is achieved by fine-tuning the duty cycle of the switches, ensuring reliable and accurate voltage regulation for various applications.

2.7.3. Applications

The Full-Bridge Converter has a wide range of applications in various industries:

- 1) Power Supplies: The Full-Bridge Converter plays a pivotal role in high-power supplies across diverse sectors, including industrial equipment, data centers, and telecommunications. Its robust power handling capabilities make it a dependable choice for ensuring stable and efficient power delivery.
- 2) Renewable Energy: Full-Bridge Converters are instrumental in the realm of renewable energy systems, finding application in solar inverters and wind turbine converters. They serve as vital components for interfacing with the grid, managing power flow, and optimizing the utilization of energy harvested from

renewable sources.

- 3) Electric Vehicles: Within the domain of electric vehicles (EVs), Full-Bridge Converters are integrated into power electronics systems. They facilitate critical functions such as battery charging and power distribution, contributing to the efficient and reliable operation of EVs.
- 4) Motor Drives: Full-Bridge Converters are extensively employed in motor drive applications, where precise control of electric motors is imperative. Their utilization in industrial automation and robotics enables accurate and efficient motor control, enhancing productivity and performance in various industries.

2.7.4. Challenges and Considerations:

- 1) Switching Losses: Operating at high power levels can result in substantial switching losses within the Full-Bridge Converter. These losses can have a detrimental impact on overall efficiency. To mitigate this challenge, it's crucial to carefully select appropriate switching devices and implement advanced control techniques.
- 2) Heat Dissipation: Efficient heat dissipation mechanisms are vital when dealing with high-power applications. The substantial power levels involved can lead to significant heat generation, potentially affecting the reliability and longevity of the converter. Adequate cooling systems and thermal management strategies must be in place to ensure safe and reliable operation.
- 3) Complex Control: The bidirectional operation and multi-mode control capabilities of the Full-Bridge Converter necessitate sophisticated control strategies and circuitry. Achieving precise control over voltage regulation and power flow in high-power systems can be complex and requires in-depth knowledge of power electronics and control theory. Careful design and robust control algorithms are essential to meet the demands of such applications.

2.8. Half-Bridge Converter

The Half-Bridge Converter stands as a foundational topology extensively utilized across diverse power electronic applications, offering a balance between simplicity and functionality. It is particularly used for moderate power levels and is often implemented in motor drives, power supplies, and other applications where voltage transformation and control are essential (Steigerwald 1988).

2.8.1. Operating principle

The Half-Bridge Converter consists of two semiconductor switches (usually transistors or MOSFETs) and a centertapped DC input voltage source. These switches are arranged in a configuration that allows voltage inversion across the load.

When one of the switches is turned on, current flows from the center tap of the input voltage source through the load and the switch. This results in a positive output voltage across the load. Conversely, when the other switch is turned on, the current direction is reversed, leading to a negative output voltage (Chen, Xu and Lee

2001, Steigerwald 1988).

2.8.1. Advantages

The Half-Bridge Converter offers several notable advantages:

- 1) Simplicity: The Half-Bridge Converter has a straightforward structure with only two switches, making it relatively easy to control and implement.
- 2) Voltage Transformation: The topology enables voltage inversion, allowing both positive and negative output voltages to be generated from the input voltage source.
- 3) Space Efficiency: With only two switches, the Half-Bridge Converter occupies less physical space compared to other topologies with multiple switches.

2.8.2. Applications

The Half-Bridge Converter finds application in various areas due to its simplicity and effectiveness:

- 1) Motor Drives: In the realm of motor control, the Half-Bridge Converter plays a pivotal role. It is widely used to control the speed and direction of electric motors, making it an integral component in applications ranging from industrial automation to robotics.
- 2) Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS): Half-Bridge Converters find essential use in UPS systems. Here, they excel in converting DC power sourced from batteries into AC power, ensuring a continuous and reliable power supply to critical loads during mains power interruptions.
- 3) Induction Heating: The Half-Bridge Converter's precise and controlled voltage inversion capabilities make it well-suited for induction heating systems. These systems are employed in various industries for the efficient and controlled heating of metals and other materials, playing a crucial role in processes like metal hardening and cooking appliances.
- 4) Power Supplies: In power electronics, the Half-Bridge Converter is a trusted workhorse for power supplies where voltage inversion and control are prerequisites. Its effectiveness in generating both positive and negative output voltages from a DC source makes it a versatile choice in diverse applications requiring flexible voltage regulation.

These applications underscore the adaptability and effectiveness of the Half-Bridge Converter in addressing the voltage transformation and control needs of various industries and technologies.

2.8.3. Challenges and considerations

- 1) Limited Voltage Transformation Ratio: One of the inherent limitations of the Half-Bridge Converter is its ability to generate only positive and negative output voltages concerning the center-tapped DC source. This restricted voltage transformation capability can be a constraint in applications requiring a wider range of output voltage options.
- 2) Limited Output Power: The Half-Bridge Converter is well-suited for moderate power applications. However, for scenarios demanding higher

power levels, it might be necessary to parallel multiple Half-Bridge Converters to meet the power requirements effectively. This consideration adds complexity to the system, necessitating synchronization and control mechanisms for parallel operation.

Addressing these challenges entails a comprehensive understanding of the Half-Bridge Converter's operational boundaries and careful system design to ensure it aligns with the specific demands of the intended application. Despite these limitations, its simplicity and efficiency continue to make it a valuable choice in numerous power electronic scenarios.

2.9. Push-Pull Converter

The Push-Pull Converter is a prominent topology in the field of power electronics, highly regarded for its proficiency in voltage transformation, high efficiency, and provision of electrical isolation. Its versatility finds extensive utilization in diverse applications such as power supplies, motor drives, and various scenarios where precise voltage conversion holds paramount importance (Ivanovic and Knezic 2022, Kim and Kwon 2009).

2.9.1. Operating principle

The Push-Pull Converter consists of two sets of switches (typically transistors or MOSFETs) arranged in a symmetric configuration. These switches are operated alternately to create a transformer action. The primary winding of the transformer is connected to a DC input source, while the secondary winding is connected to the load (Ivanovic and Knezic 2022).

The operation of the Push-Pull Converter involves two phases:

Positive Half-Cycle: During this phase, one set of switches is turned on while the other set is turned off. This allows current to flow through the primary winding, storing energy in the transformer's core. The secondary winding delivers energy to the load, resulting in an output voltage across the load.

Negative Half-Cycle: In this phase, the state of the switches is reversed, turning off the previously active set and turning on the other set. This reverses the current flow through the primary winding, causing energy to be transferred to the secondary winding and the load. This phase generates an output voltage with reversed polarity (Kim et al., 2013).

2.9.2. Advantages

- 1) Efficiency: Push-pull converters excel in efficiency, thanks to the symmetrical operation of their switches, which minimizes power losses during operation.
- 2) Voltage Transformation: This converter's transformer-based design facilitates voltage transformation, enabling the generation of output voltages that can be either higher or lower than the input voltage, catering to a wide range of applications.
- 3) Isolation: The presence of a transformer in Push-Pull Converters ensures galvanic isolation

between the input and output, enhancing safety by preventing direct electrical connection between the two, and improving noise immunity in sensitive applications.

2.9.3. Applications

Push-pull converters are utilized in a diverse array of applications where voltage transformation and isolation are paramount:

- 1) Power Supplies: They find widespread use in both AC-DC and DC-DC power supplies, effectively and efficiently generating regulated output voltages.
- 2) Audio Amplifiers: Push-pull converters are a key component in class D audio amplifiers, enabling the conversion of low-voltage audio signals into high-power amplified signals, vital for high-quality audio
- 3) Motor Drives: They play a pivotal role in motor drives, providing precise control over voltage and frequency for AC motors, a fundamental requirement in industrial automation and electric vehicle propulsion.
- 4) High-Frequency Transformers: Push-pull converters are indispensable in the design of high-frequency transformers, serving a multitude of applications, including telecommunications and efficient power distribution systems.

2.9.4. Challenges and considerations

- 1) Complexity: The Push-Pull Converter demands intricate control and precise synchronization of the switching operation to guarantee proper functionality and minimize switching losses.
- 2) Transformer Design: Achieving optimal voltage transformation and efficiency hinges on the effective design of the transformer, emphasizing factors such as core material, winding ratios, and parasitic elements.

2.10. Resonant Converters: LLC, ZVS, and ZCS

Resonant converters are a class of power electronic converters that utilize resonant components such as inductors, capacitors, and switches to achieve efficient energy conversion. These converters leverage the properties of resonance to achieve soft switching, reduced switching losses, and improved efficiency (Yang et al., 2002). Among the resonant converters, the LLC resonant converter, along with Zero Voltage Switching (ZVS) and Zero Current Switching (ZCS) techniques, have gained significant attention for their advantages in high-frequency and high-power applications (Kundu, Yenduri and Sensarma 2016, Park, Kim and Choi 2014).

2.10.1. LLC Resonant converter

The LLC resonant converter is a popular topology known for its ability to provide high efficiency over a wide load range. The name "LLC" stands for the three resonant components used in the topology: the resonant inductor (L), the resonant capacitor (C), and the leakage inductance of the transformer (L). The LLC resonant converter operates by creating resonant tank circuits that enable zero voltage switching for the switches, reducing switching losses (Yang et al., 2002, Zeng et al., 2020).

2.10.1. Advantages:

- 1) High Efficiency: The LLC resonant converter offers high efficiency due to its ability to achieve zero voltage switching and minimize switching losses.
- 2) Wide Load Range: LLC converters maintain high efficiency across a wide range of load conditions, making them suitable for variable load applications.
- 3) Reduced Electromagnetic Interference (EMI): The soft-switching characteristics of the LLC converter lead to lower EMI emissions, making it suitable for applications with stringent EMI requirements.

2.10.2. Zero Voltage Switching (ZVS)

Zero Voltage Switching (ZVS) is a technique applied to switching converters where the switching devices (usually transistors) are turned on or off when the voltage across them is zero (Kundu, Yenduri and Sensarma 2016). This technique eliminates the switching losses associated with hard switching and enhances converter efficiency.

2.10.2.1. Advantages

- 1) Reduced Switching Losses: ZVS eliminates the energy dissipated during hard switching, resulting in lower overall losses and increased efficiency.
- 2) Improved Reliability: Since ZVS reduces stress on the switching devices, it can contribute to improved reliability and longer device lifetimes.

2.10.3. Zero Current Switching (ZCS)

Zero Current Switching (ZCS) is a technique similar to ZVS, but it focuses on turning on or off the switching devices when the current through them is zero (Park, Kim and Choi 2014). ZCS minimizes the current-related losses associated with hard switching.

2.10.3.1. Advantages

- 1) Lower Current Stress: ZCS reduces the stress on the switching devices, leading to lower conduction losses and potentially extending the operational life of the components.
- 2) Higher Efficiency: By eliminating currentrelated losses, ZCS contributes to higher converter efficiency.

2.10.4. Applications

Resonant converters, often integrated with Zero Voltage Switching (ZVS) and Zero Current Switching (ZCS) techniques, find extensive applications in high-frequency and high-power systems:

- 1) High-Frequency Power Supplies: Resonant converters, when combined with ZVS and ZCS, are employed in high-frequency power supplies catering to critical sectors like telecommunications and data centers. The efficient and controlled power conversion they offer is essential for the reliable operation of these applications.
- 2) Renewable Energy Systems: Resonant converters, often utilizing ZVS and ZCS techniques, play a pivotal role in renewable energy systems such as solar inverters and wind energy converters. They are instrumental in efficiently converting and managing the power generated from renewable sources, contributing

to the sustainability of these systems.

3) Inductive Heating: Resonant converters, especially when implementing ZVS and ZCS, find significant use in inductive heating applications. Their ability to deliver efficient and controlled heating is invaluable in various industrial processes that rely on precise temperature control and rapid heating capabilities.

2.10.5. Challenges and Considerations:

- 1) Control Complexity: Designing control systems for resonant converters requires careful consideration of resonant frequencies, load variations, and switching characteristics.
- 2) Component Selection: Proper selection of resonant components, such as inductors and capacitors, is essential for achieving desired resonant frequencies and minimizing losses.

Indeed, the diversity of DC-DC converter topologies helps meet power conversion challenges. Whether the goal is precise voltage regulation, accommodating bidirectional power flow, optimizing efficiency, or ensuring galvanic isolation, these converter topologies offer customized solutions. This adaptability underscores the significance of power electronics in a wide array of applications, from portable devices to renewable energy systems, and highlights the role of innovation in continuously improving and expanding the capabilities of these converters to meet evolving technological demands. Table 1 provides an overview of the advantages, applications, and challenges associated with each DC-DC converter topology.

3. Results and Discussion

In the field of electrical engineering and power electronics, DC-DC converters stand as versatile and indispensable components, serving as the cornerstone for many applications. This comprehensive discussion includes an examination of DC-DC converters, exploring operating their diverse topologies, principles, advantages, and challenges. From the commonly used Buck converter, which is adept at efficiently stepping down voltage, to the Buck-Boost converter, which provides the flexibility of step-up and step-down voltage conversion, these structures meet a wide range of voltage regulation needs. The Cuk converter, with its continuous output voltage and voltage conversion abilities, finds its niche in applications demanding stability despite fluctuating input conditions. Meanwhile, the Flyback converter's isolation and simplicity make it a mainstay in low-power electronics. The Forward converter, renowned for its efficiency, and the Full-Bridge converter, lauded for its high-power handling capabilities, find places in various industries. The Half-Bridge converter, a model of simplicity and efficiency, is widely used in motor drives and power supplies. For its ability to convert voltage with precise isolation, the pushpull converter is used in power supply applications, amplifiers and motor drives. In the high-frequency domain, LLC resonant converters reduce switching losses

EMI. enhancing efficiency and mitigating and interference. These converters do not just stand as standalone components; they form the bedrock of many applications, from battery-powered devices to renewable energy systems. However, DC-DC converters still suffer from their complexities, as voltage stress, efficiency trade-offs, and complex control strategies often challenge engineers. Still, researchers continue to work and strive for innovation in the ever-evolving world of power electronics. In conclusion, DC-DC converters are the cornerstone, the power mediators, and the precision instruments, seamlessly adapting voltage to the needs of our electrified world.

4. Conclusion

In this comprehensive analysis of DC-DC converters, the advancements, applications, and challenges shaping this critical technology are explored and examined. These converters, with their diverse structures and operating principles, have redefined how electrical energy is managed and processed. From the humble Buck converter, offering efficient voltage reduction, to the complex Full-Bridge converter, capable of handling substantial power levels, each topology serves a specific purpose. Advancements in DC-DC converter topologies have pushed the field forward, providing engineers with a versatile toolkit to meet the demands of ever-evolving power applications. The Buck-Boost converter is a prime example, bridging the gap between step-up and stepdown voltage conversion smoothly and precisely. Meanwhile, the Cuk converter's ability to maintain continuous output voltage amidst input fluctuations showcases the innovation required to address the needs of modern electronics.

Advantages such as high efficiency, bidirectional operation, galvanic isolation, and reduced voltage stress make these converters invaluable across a wide spectrum of applications. The power our portable devices, light up our LED systems, regulate voltage in photovoltaic installations, and drive motors in industrial automation. They are the unsung heroes, ensuring our electronics run smoothly and reliably and keeping the technological ecosystem running.

However, the operation of these converters is not without challenges. Complex control strategies, stress management and efficiency optimization present formidable obstacles that researchers must continually seek innovative solutions to overcome. Achieving greater efficiency and reliability requires meticulous design and innovative solutions.

In a world where energy efficiency, reliability, and precise voltage control are critical, DC-DC converters have emerged as the cornerstone of modern power electronics. As developments continue and applications expand, DC-DC converters remain at the forefront. They are the innovation meeting necessity, of technology shaping our world, and of challenges met with ingenuity.



Figure 1. DC-DC converter topologies.

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Converter Topology	Advantages	Applications	Challenges and Considerations
Buck Converter	 Efficient step-down voltage conversion Simplicity and high efficiency Low voltage stress on switches 	- Battery-powered devices - LED drivers - Voltage regulators	 Limited to step-down voltage conversion Output voltage fixed below input voltage
Boost Converter	 Efficient step-up voltage conversion Simplicity and high efficiency Low voltage stress on switches 	- Power supplies - Battery chargers - LED drivers	- Limited to step-up voltage conversion - Output voltage fixed above input voltage
Buck-Boost Converter	 Can perform both step- up and step-down voltage conversion Continuous output voltage 	- Portable electronics - Battery-powered devices - LED drivers	- Complex control due to dual operation - Voltage ripple in some operating conditions
Cuk Converter	 Continuous output voltage Inherent voltage conversion Isolation option with a transformer Reduced voltage stress on switches 	- Portable devices - Photovoltaic systems - LED lighting - Voltage regulators	 Complex control due to coupled inductors Voltage ripple in some operating conditions Isolation challenges when using a transformer
Flyback Converter	 Galvanic isolation Simplicity and cost- effective Multiple outputs with secondary windings Energy storage capability 	 Low-power electronics LED drivers Isolated power supplies Automotive 	 Voltage regulation challenges under varying loads Transformer design complexities Voltage stress on switches
Forward Converter	 High efficiency Galvanic isolation Compact design Versatility in output voltages 	- Power supplies - Telecommunications - Automotive - Renewable energy systems	 Transformer design complexities Transformer core saturation Voltage stress on switches
Full-Bridge Converter	 Bidirectional operation Galvanic isolation High power handling Voltage regulation 	 Power supplies for industrial equipment, data centers, telecommunications, etc. Renewable energy systems 	 High-power operation may lead to switching losses Efficient cooling systems are essential for heat dissipation Complex control strategies
Half-Bridge Converter	- Simplicity - Voltage transformation - Space efficiency	- Motor drives - Uninterruptible power supplies - Induction heating - Power supplies with voltage inversion and control required	- Limited voltage transformation ratio - Limited output power for high- power applications
Push-Pull Converter	- High efficiency - Voltage transformation - Galvanic isolation	 Power supplies Audio amplifiers Motor drives High-frequency transformers 	- Control and synchronization complexities - Transformer design complexities
LLC Resonant Converter	- High efficiency - Wide load range - Reduced EMI emissions	- High-frequency power supplies - Renewable energy systems - Inductive heating	 Complex control and synchronization Transformer design complexities High-power operation may require efficient cooling systems

Author Contributions

The percentage of the author contributions is presented below. The author reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

	F.A.O.	
С	100	
D	100	
S	100	
DCP	100	
DAI	100	
L	100	
W	100	
CR	100	
SR	100	
РМ	100	
FA	100	

C=Concept, D= design, S= supervision, DCP= data collection and/or processing, DAI= data analysis and/or interpretation, L= literature search, W= writing, CR= critical review, SR= submission and revision, PM= project management, FA= funding acquisition.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Consideration

Ethics committee approval was not required for this study because of there was no study on animals or humans.

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