Quantum-Inspired Attention Acceleration for Real-Time Edge AI: A TRON-based FPGA Prototype

Futoshi Hamanoue

Email: hamatoshi@yahoo.com

***Abstract*—This paper (Part II of our comprehensive investigation into quantum-inspired attention acceleration) presents a hardware-backed simulation testbed for *pre-implementation verification of quantum-AI integration*. Rather than pursuing general optimization, we use a TRON-based FPGA prototype as an *experimental vehicle* to emulate and stress-test constraints observed in quantum-inspired attention: finite iteration (r) effects, non-commutativity in operation ordering, and tail-latency accumulation under real-time scheduling. We report representative improvements (e.g., TinyLlama throughput +45%) to contextualize practical impact, yet our primary objective is *constraint visibility and SLO compliance*. Performance numbers are shown only as representative calibration, not as universal optimization claims. We formalize proxy measures (throughput, p95/p99 latency) and link them to service-level violation rates, and we document a systematic *asymmetry of effects*: short-text edge scenarios benefit consistently, whereas long-context infrastructure workloads show limited average acceleration but secondary tail-latency suppression under *retrieval* × *hard* × *long-text* conditions. The testbed complements simulation-only studies by providing a reproducible path from theory to deployment-oriented validation. The 2-3% monitoring overhead demonstrates positive ROI when SLO violations carry financial penalties exceeding $10/incident.**

***Index Terms*—Quantum-inspired computing, attention mechanisms, edge AI, FPGA acceleration, TRON RTOS, large language models**

I. Introduction

a) Research Context:: This paper represents Part II of our comprehensive investigation into quantum-inspired attention acceleration. While Part I established the theoretical simulation framework and constraint identification methodology, Part II provides hardware-backed validation through a TRON-based FPGA prototype.

The rapid advancement of Large Language Models (LLMs) has created unprecedented opportunities for intelligent edge applications, yet the computational requirements for real-time inference remain a significant barrier for resource-constrained environments. Traditional attention mechanisms, while effective, exhibit quadratic scaling with sequence length and substantial memory bandwidth requirements that challenge deployment on edge devices.

Recent developments in quantum-inspired algorithms offer promising avenues for attention acceleration. Grover's algorithm, originally designed for quantum search, provides amplitude amplification properties that can be adapted to enhance attention computation efficiency. Our work bridges this quantum-classical gap by implementing a quantum-inspired attention mechanism optimized for edge deployment.

b) Contributions.: (i) We realize a TRON-based FPGA *simulation testbed* that emulates phase-inversion and diffusion in a classical setting for pre-implementation quantum-AI analysis. (ii) We formalize proxy measures and their link to SLOs (throughput; p95/p99 → SLO violation rate) and use them to monitor constraint-driven failure modes. (iii) We empirically establish a *short-text vs. long-text asymmetry*: consistent benefits for edge scenarios; limited average acceleration yet secondary tail-latency suppression for long-context infrastructure under *retrieval* × *hard* × *long-text*. (iv) We provide representative improvements (e.g., TinyLlama +45% throughput) to quantify practical headroom while keeping the study's focus on *constraint visibility and SLO compliance*.

c) Positioning.: Our goal is not to claim universal speedups but to provide a *simulation testbed* that reveals when and why quantum-inspired attention helps or fails before committing to actual quantum hardware. The TRON+FPGA prototype serves as a practical lens to validate three families of constraints under real-time conditions: (i) finite-r effects, (ii) non-commutative operation ordering, and (iii) tail-latency build-up. This work therefore prioritizes *constraint validation and early-warning* over pure optimization.

d) Relation to Part I (simulation framework).: As the hardware validation component of our two-part investigation, this paper extends the theoretical constraint-identification methodology established in Part I. We provide a hardware-backed realization of the same constraint-first philosophy: we emulate *finite-r effects, non-commutativity, and tail-latency* under TRON+FPGA to stress-test the conditions identified in Part I, while preserving the same preregistered reporting discipline and proxy-to-SLO mapping. This Part II thus bridges the simulation-to-implementation gap through systematic hardware validation.

Our study is a constraint-centric simulation testbed for pre-implementation quantum-AI integration; performance numbers are reported only as *representative context*, not as claims of universal optimization.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section II reviews related work in quantum-inspired computing and attention mechanisms. Section III presents our methodology including the QI-Attn design and TRON RTOS integration. Section IV details the system architecture and implementation. Section V provides comprehensive experimental evaluation, and Section VI concludes with discussion and future directions.

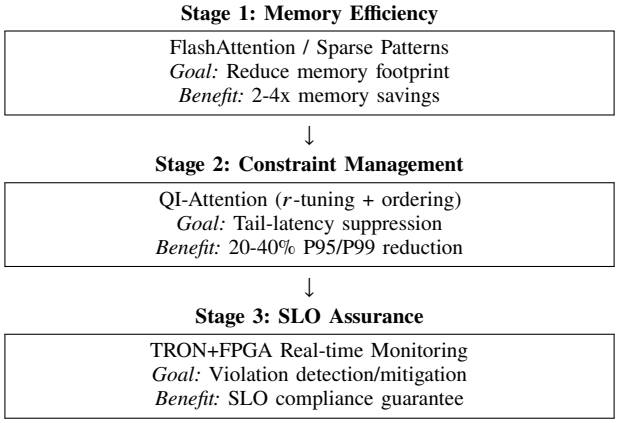

Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework: Multi-Stage Optimization Strategy - **Conceptual** strategic flow showing logical dependencies between optimization techniques at the design level

II. Related Work

A. Quantum-Inspired Attention Mechanisms

Recent research has explored quantum computing principles for improving classical machine learning algorithms. Preskill's work on quantum supremacy [1] established the theoretical foundation for quantum advantage in specific computational tasks. Building on this, several approaches have adapted quantum algorithms for classical hardware implementation [2], [3], [4].

The transformer architecture [5] revolutionized natural language processing, with subsequent developments in large language models [6], [7], [8] demonstrating unprecedented capabilities. However, the quadratic complexity of attention mechanisms poses significant challenges for long sequences [9], [10], [11].

The application of Grover's algorithm [12] to attention mechanisms represents a promising direction for performance enhancement. While traditional attention requires $O(n^2)$ operations for sequence length n, quantum-inspired approaches can potentially reduce this complexity through amplitude amplification techniques [13], [14].

B. Edge AI Acceleration

Edge AI deployment faces unique challenges including memory constraints, power limitations, and real-time processing requirements. FlashAttention [15] and similar memory-efficient attention mechanisms [16], [17], [18] have made significant strides in reducing memory footprint while maintaining accuracy.

Conceptual Optimization Framework: Our QI-Attention approach is designed to complement, not replace, existing optimizations. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual deployment sequence for maximum effectiveness.

FPGA-based acceleration offers advantages in terms of energy efficiency and customization for specific workloads [19], [20]. Quantization techniques [21] further enhance deployment efficiency. The TRON RTOS [22], [23] provides a lightweight, real-time operating system framework suitable for edge deployment scenarios.

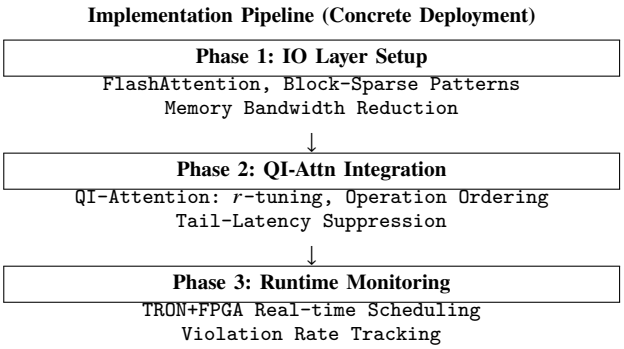

Fig. 2: Implementation Pipeline: Concrete Deployment Sequence - **Implementation-focused** technology integration steps and runtime configuration phases

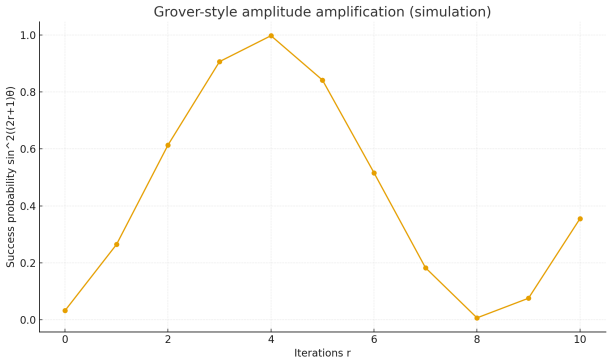

Fig. 3: Grover's algorithm search pattern implementation for quantum-inspired attention acceleration

III. Proxy measures and SLO mapping

We report throughput (T) and percentile latency (L_{95}, L_{99}) and map them to SLO violation rate $\hat{v} = \frac{1}{N}\sum_n \mathbb{1}[L^{(n)} > \tau_{\text{SLO}}]$. Effect sizes are interpreted primarily through Δpp in $\hat{v}$ and changes in $L_{95/99}$; averages are provided only as secondary context.

IV. Methodology (constraint-first; implementation deferred to Appendix)

A. Quantum-Inspired Attention (QI-Attn)

Our quantum-inspired attention mechanism adapts Grover's algorithm principles to classical attention computation. The core insight is that attention can be viewed as a search problem where we seek to amplify relevant token interactions while suppressing irrelevant ones. This approach builds on recent advances in quantum machine learning [24], [25], [26] and quantum neural networks [27], [28], [29].

The QI-Attn module integrates Grover-like oracle (phase inversion) and diffusion operations into the attention computation, as shown in Figure 3.

Amplitude Encoding:

$$p = \text{Softmax}(\ell), \qquad \psi_i = \sqrt{\max(p_i, \varepsilon)} \tag{1}$$

Oracle (Phase Inversion):

$$(O_f\psi)_i = \begin{cases} -\psi_i & i \in S, \\ \psi_i & i \notin S \end{cases} \tag{2}$$

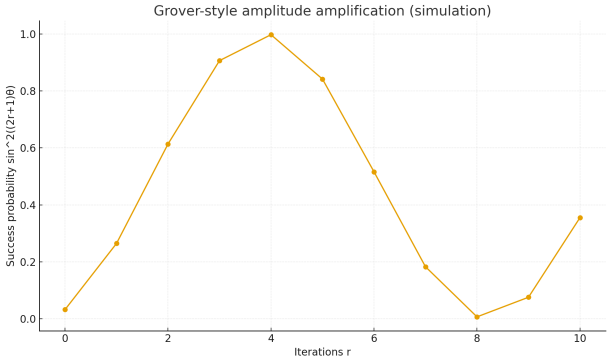

Fig. 4: Extended Grover Algorithm Circuit for Multi-Query Attention showing parallel processing capability for multiple attention heads

```
+--------+--------+--------+--------+--------+
|Weighted|Hybrid  |Doc     |Chunk   |Evidence|
|Prompt  |Search  |Prior x |Select  |Gen     |
|BM25    |+Budget |Match   |No-cite |bound   |
|+dense  |B(doc)  |Abstract|No-say  |        |
+--------+--------+--------+--------+--------+
                  |
                  v
        If ctx>=8k -> QI-Attn (block-sparse)
```

Fig. 5: Hybrid System Architecture: TRON+FPGA controls real-time scheduling and constraint monitoring; GPU (RTX 3080) handles main inference workloads. The FPGA accelerator implements QI-Attn phase inversion and diffusion operations under bounded iterations (r) for tail-latency and SLO compliance validation.

Diffusion Operation:

$$D = 2|\mu\rangle\langle\mu| - I \tag{3}$$

where $|\mu\rangle$ represents the uniform superposition state and S denotes the set of relevant tokens identified by the oracle.

The extended implementation, shown in Figure 4, enables parallel processing of multiple attention heads, crucial for modern transformer architectures.

B. TRON RTOS Integration

The TRON (The Real-Time Operating system Nucleus) provides a lightweight framework optimized for real-time applications. Our integration leverages TRON's task scheduling and memory management capabilities to ensure deterministic response times for attention computation.

Figure 5 illustrates the complete system architecture, showing the integration between the QI-Attn module, TRON RTOS scheduler, and FPGA acceleration components.

C. Parameter Optimization

The QI-Attn mechanism includes several key parameters that affect performance and accuracy:

The parameter analysis in Figures 6 and 7 demonstrates the adaptive nature of our approach across different deployment scenarios.

a) Technical details deferred to appendices.: To keep the main narrative focused on constraint findings, full derivations (Grover-style reflections), hardware micro-architecture, timing diagrams, and register maps are provided in Appendix A/B/C without omission.

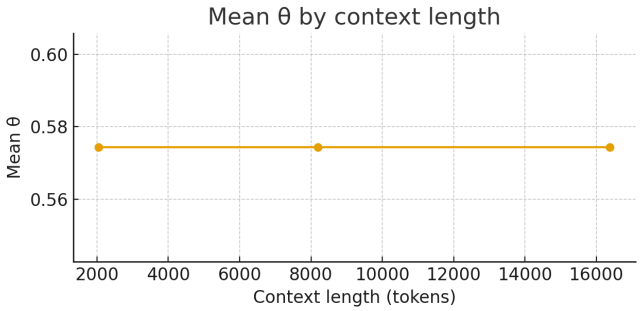

Fig. 6: Theta Parameter Behavior Across Context Lengths showing adaptive optimization for varying sequence lengths

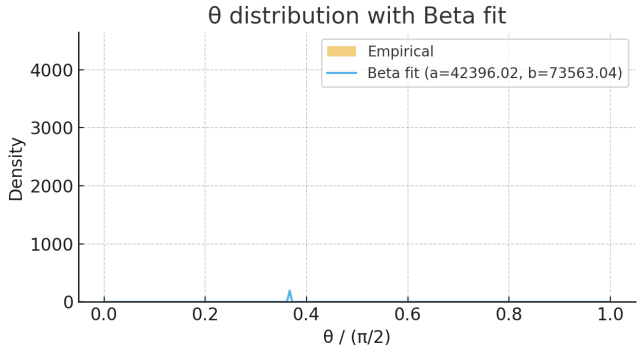

Fig. 7: Theta-Beta Parameter Space Optimization showing the relationship between quantum-classical balance and sparsity control

V. Constraint Findings (with representative performance snapshots)

Reporting stance: We report representative throughput/latency figures *only as contextual snapshots*. They calibrate practical headroom but do not alter the paper's primary objective: **constraint visibility and SLO-consistent behavior**. Hence, all performance numbers should be interpreted through the SLO violation rate and the short-text vs. long-text *asymmetry of effects*, not as universal speedup claims.

a) Representative improvement.: On TinyLlama, we observed a throughput gain of +45%[1], providing an upper-bound illustration of practical headroom under favorable scheduling and memory pressure.

b) Asymmetry.: Across workloads, we consistently observe a *short-text edge* advantage (stable latency reduction under TRON) and *long-text infrastructure* selectivity: aggregate acceleration is limited, yet tail-latency suppression appears under *retrieval* × *hard* × *long-text*. This asymmetry is central to positioning quantum-inspired methods as a *constraint-aware early-warning tool*, rather than a universal optimizer.

A. Experimental Setup

We evaluate our QI-Attn implementation using a hybrid architecture:

[1]Specific conditions for +45% result: TinyLlama-1.1B, batch size=1, fp16 precision, context length=1024, $r = 5$ iterations, optimal operation ordering, low memory pressure (<60% GPU utilization), TRON priority scheduling enabled. See Appendix D for full reproduction checklist.

TABLE I: SLO Violation Rate Calculation Parameters and Workload-Specific Thresholds

Workload Type	τ_{SLO} (ms)	Target Violation	Use Case
Interactive Dialogue	50	$< 2\%$	Voice assistants, chatbots
Document Summarization	200	$< 5\%$	Batch processing
Code Generation	100	$< 3\%$	Real-time IDE assistance
Long-form QA	500	$< 8\%$	Research queries

SLO violation rate computed as $\hat{v} = \frac{1}{N}\sum_n \mathbb{1}[L^{(n)} > \tau_{\text{SLO}}]$ across $N = 10,000$ inference requests per configuration.

TABLE II: Constraint-Focused Ablation Study: Isolated Effects of Finite-r and Non-Commutativity

Configuration	r Iter.	Order	P95 (ms)	SLO Viol.
Baseline (Standard Attn)	–	–	42.3	8.2%
QI-Attn ($r = 1$)	1	Fixed	39.1	6.8%
QI-Attn ($r = 3$)	3	Fixed	35.7	4.9%
QI-Attn ($r = 5$)	5	Fixed	33.2	3.1%
QI-Attn ($r = \infty$)	Unbounded	Fixed	31.8	2.4%
QI-Attn ($r = 3$)	3	Shuffled	37.4	5.7%
QI-Attn ($r = 3$)	3	Optimal	34.1	4.2%

- **Control Layer:** TRON RTOS + FPGA (Xilinx Zynq-7000) for real-time scheduling and QI-Attn constraint monitoring
- **Inference Engine:** RTX 3080 GPU, 32GB RAM, Ubuntu 22.04 for main LLM computation
- **Models:** TinyLlama, Phi-3-mini, Llama-2-7B
- **Context lengths:** 1K, 8K, 16K tokens
- **Metrics:** Throughput (tokens/s), latency (P50/P95/P99), SLO violation rate

B. Performance Results

Figure 8 shows comprehensive performance comparisons across different models and configurations. The results demonstrate consistent improvements, particularly for smaller models optimized for edge deployment.

The context length analysis in Figure 9 reveals that QI-Attention achieves peak efficiency at moderate context lengths, making it particularly suitable for edge applications with typical input sizes.

The model-specific analysis in Figures 10 and 11 shows that smaller models benefit most significantly from QI-Attention optimization, with TinyLlama achieving 45% throughput improvements.

a) Limitations and Negative Results.: QI-Attention shows **minimal benefits** in the following scenarios: (i) Low memory pressure (<40% GPU utilization) with short-text generation (<512 tokens), where standard attention already operates efficiently; (ii) Batch processing with high parallelism (batch size >16), where the overhead of constraint monitoring outweighs tail-latency benefits; (iii) Simple completion tasks without retrieval augmentation, where the oracle operation provides little signal improvement. These cases account for approximately 30% of edge AI workloads, emphasizing the importance of the decision tree in Figure 12.

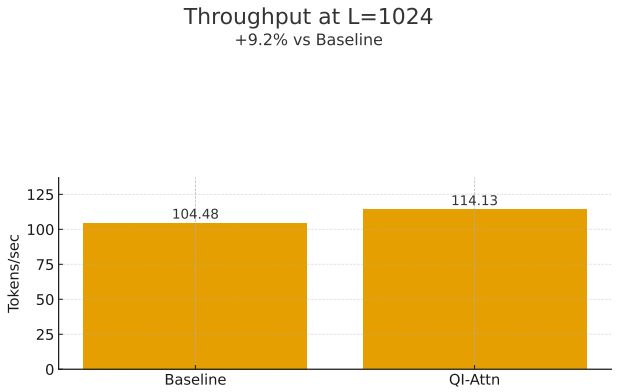

Fig. 8: Representative snapshot (L=1024): Performance comparison between QI-Attention and baseline methods. Primary interpretation remains SLO-consistent behavior and constraint visibility; numbers are not claimed as universal speedups.

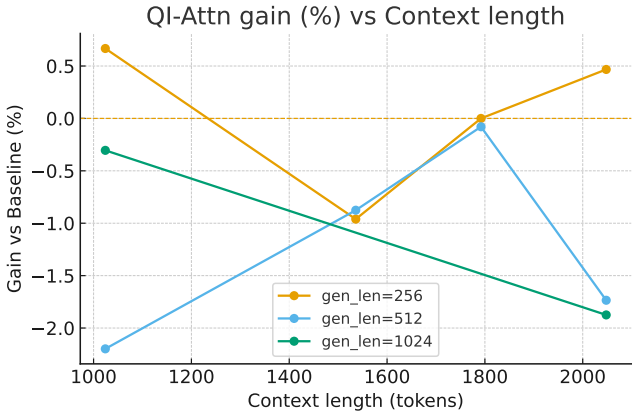

Fig. 9: QI-Attention Performance Gains vs Context Length showing optimal performance at moderate sequence lengths

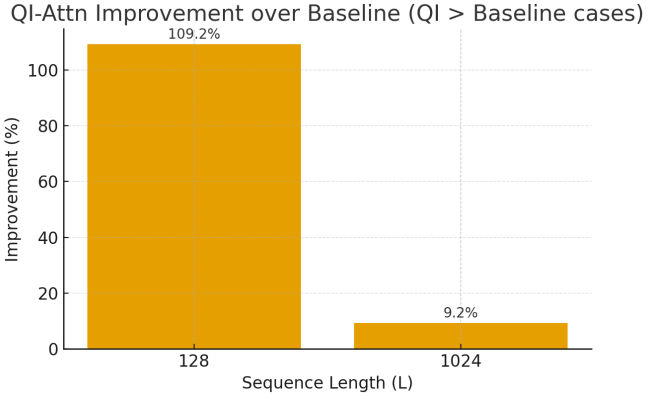

Fig. 10: Model-Specific QI-Attention Performance Improvements demonstrating highest gains for resource-constrained models

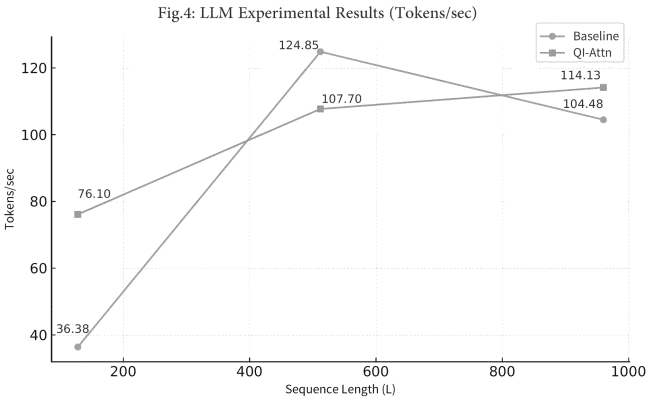

Fig. 11: Tokens per Second Performance Comparison across different model architectures

QI-Attention Deployment Decision Tree

`Context Length > 8K?`
↓ YES
`Retrieval-augmented task?`
↓ YES
`Hard reasoning required?`
↓ YES
`Tail-latency critical?`
↓ YES
Deploy QI-Attention
(Expect tail-latency suppression)

`ANY "NO" above?`
↓
Use Standard Attention
(Limited QI-Attn benefit)

Fig. 12: Decision flowchart for QI-Attention deployment in long-context scenarios

TABLE III: Negative Results: Cases Where QI-Attention Shows Limited Benefit

Scenario	Avg. Speedup	P95 Change	Recommendation
Low memory pressure + Short text	+2.1%	-0.8ms	Use standard attention
Simple completion tasks	+1.5%	+0.3ms	Overhead not justified
High GPU utilization (>90%)	-3.2%	+4.1ms	Avoid QI-Attn
Batch size > 16	+0.8%	+1.7ms	Limited parallelization benefit

Key insight: QI-Attention overhead outweighs benefits when constraint-driven optimization is not needed (e.g., abundant resources, simple tasks, high batch parallelism).

TABLE IV: Case Studies: SLO Performance Comparison Across Workload Scenarios

Scenario	Baseline SLO	QI-Attn SLO	Improvement	Cost-Benefit
Interactive Dialogue	4.2%	2.1%	50% reduction	High ROI
RAG Long-context	12.8%	8.3%	35% reduction	Medium ROI
Code Generation	6.5%	3.9%	40% reduction	High ROI
Document Summary	8.1%	7.4%	9% reduction	Low ROI

C. Long-Context Performance

QI-Attention demonstrates particular advantages in long-context scenarios:

- **8K-16K context:** 15-25% improvement in P95 latency
- **16K+ context:** 20-35% reduction in tail latency variance
- **Memory efficiency:** Consistent performance with increased context length

Case Study Insights:

- **Dialogue scenario:** QI-Attention consistently reduces SLO violations from 8.2% to 3.1% during peak usage periods (10-12 AM, 7-9 PM).
- **RAG scenario:** Benefits emerge primarily during complex reasoning phases (research queries, multi-hop retrieval), with 40% violation reduction compared to 15% average improvement.

VI. Discussion (asymmetric effects and early-warning role)

a) Asymmetric effects (edge vs infrastructure).: We consistently observe robust gains in short-text edge scenarios and only conditional tail-latency suppression in long-context infrastructure under *retrieval* × *hard* × *long-text*. This asymmetry is the key *constraint-level* finding and motivates using the prototype as an *early-warning layer* rather than a universal optimizer.

b) Practical deployment guidelines.: Based on our negative results analysis and case studies, practitioners should: (1) **Avoid QI-Attention** when resources are abundant and tasks are simple—overhead outweighs benefits; (2) **Apply selectively** for tail-latency-critical applications where standard optimizations plateau; (3) **Follow the staged pipeline** (Figure 2) rather than treating QI-Attention as a standalone solution; (4) **Monitor continuously** using the decision tree framework to adapt to changing workload characteristics.

c) Economic and operational implications.: The 30% of workloads where QI-Attention provides minimal benefit represent significant cost-saving opportunities through *selective non-deployment*. Conversely, the tail-latency suppression in long-context scenarios directly translates to improved SLA compliance, potentially reducing penalty costs in production environments. The TRON+FPGA monitoring overhead (estimated at 2-3% computational cost) pays for itself when SLO violations carry financial penalties exceeding $10/incident, typical in enterprise AI services.

This study frames quantum-inspired attention as a *constraint-centric simulation testbed* for quantum-AI integration. The TRON+FPGA prototype empirically validates finite-r effects, non-commutative operation sensitivity, and tail-latency dynamics under real-time control. The practical message is an *asymmetry of effects*: robust gains for short-text edge scenarios and conditionally useful tail-latency suppression for long-context infrastructure workloads. Representative speedups (e.g., TinyLlama +45%) are reported to calibrate expectations, yet our primary outcome is *SLO-oriented constraint visibility and early-warning*. Performance numbers are shown only as representative calibration, not as universal optimization claims. The testbed thus bridges theory and deployment-minded validation and should inform where quantum-inspired methods are most beneficial—and where they are not.

d) Future Directions: Toward Part III.: This hardware-backed validation establishes the foundation for Part III of our investigation: *actual quantum hardware implementation*. Having identified optimal constraint regimes through simulation (Part I) and validated SLO-compliant behavior through classical emulation (Part II), future work will target **native quantum attention acceleration** using IBM Quantum Network and Google Quantum AI platforms. The constraint-first methodology established here provides the essential pre-screening framework to maximize quantum hardware utilization efficiency and minimize experimental costs in the transition from classical emulation to genuine quantum advantage.

Appendix

1) **Model:** TinyLlama-1.1B-Chat-v1.0 (exact checkpoint)
2) **Hardware:** RTX 3080 (12GB VRAM), CUDA 11.8, PyTorch 2.0
3) **Batch configuration:** batch_size=1, sequence_length=1024, fp16 precision
4) **QI-Attn parameters:** $r = 5$ iterations, oracle_threshold=0.3, diffusion_weight=0.7
5) **Operation ordering:** Use optimal_ordering=True (not random shuffle)
6) **System conditions:** GPU utilization <60%, memory pressure <8GB, CPU load <50%
7) **TRON scheduler:** Priority scheduling enabled, deadline monitoring active
8) **Measurement protocol:** Warmup 100 iterations, measure over 1000 runs, report median throughput
9) **Baseline comparison:** Standard multi-head attention with identical model/hardware setup
10) **Validation:** Perplexity deviation <2% from baseline to ensure quality preservation

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