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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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servipub@uniovi.es

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Solving the Order Batching and Sequencing Problem with Multiple Pickers: A Grouped Genetic Algorithm

Cano JA⁵⁸, Cortés P⁵⁹, Campo EA⁶⁰, Correa-Espinal A⁶¹

Keywords: Grouped genetic algorithms; order batching; sequencing; multiple pickers; heterogeneous load capacity

1 Introduction (“H1” style)

The order picking problem is in charge of retrieving the set of items from storage locations to fulfil customer orders, while pickers walk or drive a picking device through the warehouse (Cano et al., 2017). The order batching groups customer orders into batches with a maximum fixed capacity, then the batches are assigned to a picking device and batch sequencing determines the picking scheduling and the completion time of all possible batches (Henn and Schmid, 2013). Therefore, the order batching and sequencing problem with multiple pickers (OBSPMP) is pivotal to enhance the efficiency and customer service (Zhang et al., 2017).

Group genetic algorithms (GGA) support the successful application to grouping problems because important information from the chromosome is preserved and is correctly transferred in the crossover operators (Koch and Wäscher, 2016). Metaheuristics such as genetic algorithms have not been found in the literature to solve the OBSPMP, as well as no OBSPMP models considering picking devices with heterogeneous load capacity.

⁵⁸Jose Alejandro Cano (✉e-mail: jacano@udem.edu.co)
Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Administrativas. Universidad de Medellín. Carrera 87 # 30-65, Medellín, Colombia.

⁵⁹Pablo Cortés (e-mail: fjexample@pittsburg.org)
Escuela Superior de Ingeniería. Universidad de Sevilla. Camino de los Descubrimientos s/n, 41092, Sevilla, Spain.

⁶⁰Emiro Antonio Campo (e-mail: eacampo@unal.edu.co)
ESACS – Escuela Superior en Administración de Cadena de Suministro. Calle 4 # 18-55, Medellín, Colombia.

⁶¹Alexander Correa-Espinal (e-mail: alcorrea@unal.edu.co)
Facultad de Minas. Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Av. 80 # 65 – 223, Medellín, Colombia.

2 Objectives

This study shows the application of a GGA for the OBSMP, considering picking devices with heterogeneous load capacity in order to minimize the maximum completion time (makespan).

3 Methods

The proposed group-oriented encoding scheme represents the assignment of orders to batches and the sequencing of batches in picking devices. Due to each gene represents a batch in a picking device; the chromosomes are of variable length. To create the initial population of size P , we follow an order group procedure that uses an order pool to place orders that have not yet been assigned to a batch. The fitness function represents the objective function of the OBSMP, which is minimizing total completion time. The proposed GGA use the crossover, survival, immigration, and mutation operators.

The experiments are configured combining different values for number of customer orders, number of items per order, and warehouse layouts. The results of the GGA are compared with six benchmark rules called FCFS-LH, FCFS-HL, SLOS-LH, SLOS-HL, LSOS-LH, and LSOS-HL.

4 Results

The proposed GGA saves on average between 14.3% and 23.5% of total completion time when compared to the benchmark heuristics. Likewise, the GGA saves on average 18.3% the total completion time when compared to the six benchmarks; thus, the proposed algorithm improves the efficiency of order picking significantly.

5 Conclusion

By means of several experiments, it was shown that the GGA generate solutions superior to those generated by rule-based heuristics. Implementing these solutions can improve profit margins by reducing the regular working hours of the order pickers, and improves customer service by reducing picking service times.

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