

Learn heuristics in routing and scheduling problems: A review

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Abstract

Combinatorial optimization problems (COPs) are the most important class of optimization problems, with great practical significance. This class is concerned with identifying the best solution from a discrete set of all available options. The transportation (routing) and distribution (scheduling) systems are considered the most challenging optimization examples of the COPs. Given the importance of routing and scheduling problems, many methods have been proposed to address them. These methods can be categorized into traditional (exact and metaheuristics (MHs) methods) and machine learning (ML) methods. ML methods have been proposed to overcome the problems that traditional methods suffer from, especially high computational time and dependence on the knowledge of experts. Recently, ML methods and MHs have been combined to tackle the COPs, and then the learn heuristics term emerged. This combination aims to guide the MHs toward an efficient, effective, and robust search and improve their performance in terms of solution quality. This work reviews the publications in which the collaboration between MHs and ML has been utilized to propose a guideline for the researchers to put forward new algorithms that have a good ability to solve routing and scheduling problems.

1. Introduction

Achieving the balance between resource reduction and profit increase represents the most important factor in real-life applications. All companies work to achieve that balance, which guarantees their success and continuity. However, this balance is the main challenge that faces the managers of these companies due to the fact that all these applications are complex and highly constrained, and their resources are limited. Consequently, such a balance is very difficult to achieve. COPs are the name given to this type of problem [1]. COPs are the most important class of optimization problems, which are concerned with finding the best solution among a discrete group of all available ones for a specified problem instance. Routing and scheduling problems represent the most challenging optimization problems in the COP, belonging to the NP-hard class of optimization problems that require exponential time to be solved to optimality [2]. So, finding the global optimum for these problems is quite a daunting process. Given the importance of these problems, researchers from various fields have been attracted to solving them, and many algorithms have been proposed to address them [3].

These algorithms can be categorized into exact (exhaustive), heuristic, and MHs algorithms [1]. MHs are computational intelligence paradigms widely used for solving complex optimization problems, particularly COPs. Despite the positive characteristics of MHs and their successful application to various problems, they still suffer from different problems when addressing constraint problems, especially COPs. These problems prevent them from obtaining the best solutions. Several researchers have attempted to address these issues by modifying MHs and combining them with other optimization algorithms. But this hybridization involves adding extra components as well as the COP's components. The appropriate selection of these components has a significant impact on the balance between exploration and exploitation, which is essential for helping the MHs work well for different COPs and at different periods of the search [4].

ML can assist the MHs by extracting useful knowledge from the generated data during the search. Adopting such knowledge during the search makes MHs more intelligent and enhances their performance in terms of solution quality. Recently, there has been a growing research interest in hybridizing and integrating ML with MHs for tackling and solving COPs [4]. This integration aims to guide the MHs toward an efficient, effective, and robust search and improve their performance in terms of solution quality. Since many integration and hybridization methods have been proposed for different purposes, the need to review the recent advances in using ML to improve MHs is still present and urgent [5].

Apart from the literature, this paper provides a comprehensive review of the integration of ML algorithms into MHs algorithms in the following components of MHs: Algorithm selection problem (ASP), Objective function (OF), Initial solution (IS), Operator selection (OS), and Parameter Setting (PS). We considered these components for both routing and scheduling in the literature in recent years. This work provides researchers and students with the most recent published works in this area by providing a collective analysis of both problems and solutions in each publication considered based on the classification offered in the advanced sections of this paper.

This paper is organized as follows: The concepts of the routing problem and the scheduling problem, MHs, and ML are covered in Section 2. Section 3 offers a taxonomy and a search methodology. Algorithm selection is covered in Section 4. Section 5 explains the objective function, while Section 6 gives the details of the initial solution. Operator selection is the main topic of Section 7. The final section presents parameter settings.

2. Preliminaries

2.1. Routing problems

Routing problems are a class of optimization problems with finite search spaces and discrete variables. The main objective of solving routing problems is to design a set of routes that serve a set of geographically distributed points (cities, customers, etc.) at the minimal cost (minimum traveling distance or time) while respecting all the imposed constraints [5]. Routing problems have numerous applications that are applicable in real life. The vehicle routing problem (VRP) and the traveling salesman problem (TSP) are popular problems that have attracted significant attention through the decades [5,6]. Table 1 provides a list of the routing problems that are referred to in this work.

Table 1: A list of routing problems

NO.	Abb.	Problem name	Description
1	LRP [7]	Location-Routing Problem	Sets the locations of facilities and the routes of vehicles to provide a service; some of its constraints are route length and capacity of vehicles.
2	TSP [8]	Traveling Salesman Problem	Finding minimum routes without reaching the visited cities
3	VRP [9]	Vehicle Routing Problem	Cost minimization of the tour to provide demands to set of customers and start with a depot and ends with the same depot
4	CVRP [10]	Capacitated Vehicle Routing Problem	A variant of VRP that deals with the capacity of the vehicles
5	EMVRP [11]	Energy minimizing Vehicle Routing Problem	A variant of GVRP that aims to minimize the energy consumption
6	GVRP [12]	Green Vehicle Routing Problem	A version of VRP that interested in climate and sustainability by reducing CO2 emissions
7	CEVRP [13]	Capacitated Electric Vehicle Routing Problem	A special variant of GVRP that focuses on the capacity of electric vehicles in transportation services

2.2. Scheduling problems

Scheduling problems are another class of optimization problems that focus on reducing the time required to accomplish a certain task in a given time [14]. The researchers paid significant attention to these problems due to their applications in manufacturing, cloud computing, etc. For instance, the Job Shop Problem (JSP) and its variants have been well studied and have been applied to large-scale applications. In contrast, the machine is given a set of tasks that need to be executed in a certain order and within a given time. The objective is to minimize the makespan and obtain the best possible and valid schedule [15]. Table 2 shows the scheduling problems referred to in this work.

Table 2: A list of scheduling problems

NO.	Abb.	Problem name	Description
1	FSP [16]	Flowshop Scheduling Problem	A version of JSP a set of N jobs in a certain sequence with the aim of minimizing the makespan or tardiness
2	JSP [17]	Job-Shop Scheduling	Find a set of N jobs in a certain order with the aim of minimizing the makespan or tardiness
3	MSP [18]	Multiprocessor Scheduling Problem	Minimize the makespan of schedules for network of processors

4	NRP [19]	Nurse Rostering Problem	Finding the best schedules for nurses with the goal of minimize the cost for hospitals and maximize the preferences for nurses
5	PMSP [20]	Parallel Machine Scheduling Problem	Minimize makespan for N job on M parallel machines
6	SMSP [21]	Single-Machine Scheduling Problem	A variant of FSP that deal with only one machine
7	TTP [22]	Timetabling Problem	Finding the best schedule for teacher and rooms to classes to prevent disorder in the classes
8	WSRP [23]	Workforce Scheduling and Routing Problem	Interested in scheduling the workforce to locations and the goal is to minimize the travelling time among locations
9	PLO [24]	Product-line Optimization	Maximize the profit and minimize the cost of productions
10	UPMS [25]	Unrelated parallel machine scheduling problem	A variant of PMSP minimize makespan for N job on M parallel machines each job J available at time zero on M unrelated parallel machine
11	EDSSP [26]	electromagnetic detection satellite scheduling problem	Mapping satellite resources to execute a certain task
12	SBS [27]	School bus scheduling	Find the best schedule for school buses to serve a set of schools

2.3. Metaheuristics

MHs are viewed as an iterative, generating process that drives a subordinate heuristic by mixing intelligently distinct concepts for exploring and exploiting the search space. MHs are characterized as being able to provide near-optimal solutions for a given optimization problem in a reasonable amount of computation time [1]. MHs can be classified in several ways. One of the classifications is **(i) "nature-inspired" and "non-nature-inspired."** Nature-inspired algorithms based on evolutionary algorithms (EA) such as the genetic algorithm (GA) [28], memetic algorithm (MA) [29], and differential evolution (DE) [30] swarm intelligence-based algorithms such as particle swarm optimization (PSO) [31], ant colony optimization (ACO) [32], artificial bee colony (ABC) [33], and bat algorithm (BA) [34]. Non-nature inspired societal algorithms, such as the Imperialist Competitive Algorithm (ICA) [35], music-based algorithms, such as Harmony Search (HS) [36], and physics-based algorithms, such as Simulated Annealing (SA) [37]. The second classification is **(ii) "memory" and "memoryless"** which refer to whether or not memory is used during the search process. GA, SA, etc. are examples of memoryless algorithms. Tabu search (TS) [38], and harmony search (HS) are algorithms that use memory to improve the solution found during the search while avoiding revisiting previously visited solutions. The third MHs classification is **(iii) "stochastic" and "deterministic"**. Deterministic means obtaining the same final solution when beginning with the same initial solution, such as TS, while stochastic means the final solution is always different, such as GA and SA [1]. The fourth category is **(iv) "population-based" and "single-solution"**. Single solution algorithms such as iterated local search (ILS) [39], breakout local search (BLS) [40], variable neighbourhood search (VNS) [41], hill

climbing (HC) [42], large neighbourhood search (LNS) [43], TS, SA, and etc. As for the population-based algorithms, Water Wave Optimization (WWO) [44], Cuckoo Search (CS) [45], GA, PSO, and etc. are some examples. **(v) "iterative" and "greedy"** are the final classifications. Iterative algorithms that use search operators in each iteration, such as ILS and GA, Greedy algorithms are also called constructive heuristics that generate an initial solution from an empty solution, such as nearest neighbour (NN) [46], greedy heuristics (GH) [47], iterated greedy (IG) [47], and the greedy randomized adaptive search procedure (GRASP) [48].

2.4. Machine learning

ML is a subfield of artificial intelligence (AI) that has received a great deal of attention in recent years and has evolved into powerful techniques for a wide range of applications and problem-solving [49]. The basic objective of ML is to automate systems and extract hidden knowledge from data in order to train the system to carry out tasks in an intelligent and autonomous manner [50]. ML algorithms can be categorized into three categories: supervised learning, unsupervised learning, and reinforcement learning [51].

i) Supervised learning

The first class of ML, supervised learning (Sup.), receives input variable values and produces output variables whose values are already known. Finding the connection between the input and the output and using it to predict the output of a new input is the basic objective of supervised learning. Methods for supervised learning are divided into classification and regression tasks. Artificial Neural Network (ANN) [52], Linear Regression (LR) [53], Support Vector Machine (SVM) [54], Gradient Boosting (GB) [55], Decision Tree (DT) [56], Random Forest (RF) [57], k-Nearest Neighbour (KNN) [58], Naive Bayes (NB) [59], and Convolution Neural Network (CNN) [60] are the most popular algorithms of supervised learning.

ii) Unsupervised learning

Unsupervised learning (Unsup.) is different from supervised learning in that the data is not labelled and the input variables' values are known, but the output variables' values are not. Based on this, the primary objective of unsupervised learning is to apply two well-known approaches, clustering, and association rules (ARs), to discover the hidden patterns in the data. The most popular algorithms of unsupervised learning are K-means [61], C-means [62], Shared Nearest Neighbour Clustering (SNNC) [63], the Apriori algorithm [64], and the Frequent Pattern (FP) algorithm [65].

iii) Reinforcement learning

The third class of ML (ML) is reinforcement learning (RL), which bases its training process on rewarding desired action and punishing undesirable behaviour. The agents repeatedly take actions that decrease or increase the reward. Through a process of trial and error, RL carries out its actions and the learning process. RL algorithms are SARSA [66], Q-Learning [67], Monte Carlo (MC) [68], Proximal Policy Optimization (PPO) [69], Epsilon Greedy (ϵ -G) [70], Thompson Sampling Algorithm (TSA) [71], Upper Confidence Bound 1 (UCB1) [72], and Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL) [73].

4. Algorithm Selection Problem

Low-level operators make up MHs, which are regarded as high-level schemes [4]. The algorithm selection process involves selecting an algorithm from a provided portfolio of algorithms based on its performance and the problem instances identified after evaluation [80]. According to the no free lunch theorem, no single metaheuristic algorithm surpasses every other algorithm in terms of performance and problem instances; hence, we must agree that there is no such thing as the global best [81]. Which method is the best to solve those COPs? is the question that still needs to be answered [82]. The use of meta-learning, a sub-field of ML, in the algorithm selection problem (ASP) was advantageous [83]. ASP enabled researchers to examine a wide range of MHs and select the best approach from a set of algorithms to use on specific problem situations, resulting in significantly improved performance [84]. In the literature, ML efficiency is frequently mentioned in relation to ASP [85, 86]. The ASP can be divided into offline and online categories [79]. By using occurrence includes, offline learning may be viewed as a model for accumulating information from numerous preparation instances, which will ideally sum up to resolve new instances [87]. On the other hand, the dynamic creation of the online learning model occurred during the optimization process [88].

Table 3: Algorithm selection problems in literature.

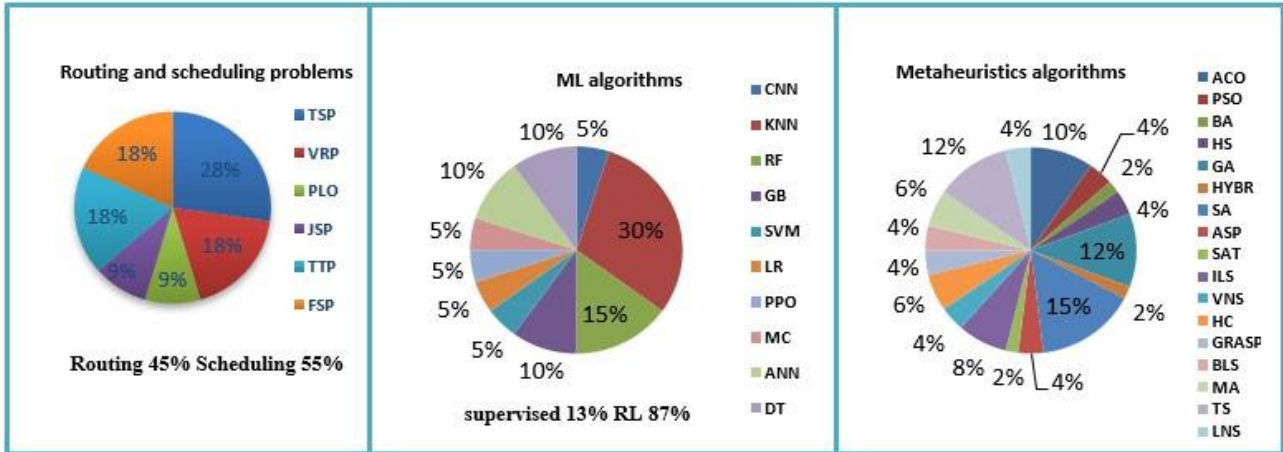
Ref.	MHs.	ML	Learning	Class	Problem	Rout./sched.
[89] 2022	ACO, PSO, BA, HS, GA	CNN	Offline	Supervised	TSP	Routing
[90] 2021	HYBR, SA, ASP, SAT	KNN, RF, GB, SVM	Offline	Supervised	TTP	Scheduling
[91] 2021	ILS, SA, VNS	LR	Offline	Supervised	TTP	Scheduling
[92] 2021	GA, ACO	PPO	Offline	RL	JSP	Scheduling
[93] 2020	GA, SA, MA	MC	Offline	RL	PLO	Scheduling
[94] 2019	GA, PSO	ANN	Offline	Supervised	VRP	Routing
[95] 2018	TS	RF	Offline	Supervised	AP	Routing
[96] 2018	HC, SA, TS, ILS	DT	Offline	Supervised	FSP	Scheduling
[97] 2018	HC, SA, TS, ILS	GB	Offline	Supervised	FSP	Scheduling
[98] 2017	LNS	KNN	Offline	Supervised	VRP, TSP	Routing
[99] 2016	TS, SA, GA, ACO	ANN, KNN	Offline	Supervised	TSP	Routing

In Table 3, the studied papers are categorized by the various types of MHs that have been used in the literature, the learning environment (offline vs. online), the class of ML (supervised vs. unsupervised vs. reinforcement learning), and the routing and scheduling problems that have been addressed. (Refer to Tables 1 and 2 in sections (2.1) and (2.2), respectively.) There are five papers for routing problems and six papers for scheduling problems pertaining to the problems in Table 3 and Fig. 1a, therefore both of them are fairly discussed in the literature. From Table 3, we deduced two important findings: 1) It appeared that offline learning was more considered than online learning, and 2) The majority of ASP literature uses supervised learning techniques (Fig. 1b). Most of the MHs algorithms studied are used to solve routing and scheduling problems and achieve significant performance (Fig. 1c); Isaas I. Huerta et al. 2022, provide an automatic method selection based on the anytime algorithm for TSP, which is used to handle routing and scheduling problems and obtain substantial performance. By using an input matrix grid and an output staggered representation, CCN's job is to categorize the best MH solver [89]. The researchers' proposed algorithm selection method for the curriculum-based course timetabling problem (CB-CTT) was presented in Arnaud De Coster et al., 2021. The right approach is chosen using four classifiers: support vector machines (SVM), random forest (RF), gradient-boosted trees (GB), and k-nearest neighbour classification (KNN) [90]. Algorithms with a single solution are used in [91]. Felipe de la Rosa-Rivera et al.'s description of the algorithm selection of MHs using LR to solve TTB in 2021 gave rise to this concept. To do this, the authors employed the meta-learning concept. In order to choose heuristics to solve JSP, Tilo van Ekeris et al. presented Proximal Policy Optimization (PPO), a DRL based on reinforcement learning. The DRL agents discover MHs automatically based on several features after learning problem classes through trial and error [92].

4.1. Discussion

Although ASP may offer the best MHs to resolve COPs, it is not always the best option. In this section, we first outline the circumstances in which ASP is helpful before delving into the prerequisites for doing so. The purpose of offering a study guideline for ASP is to aid researchers in better comprehending MHs. When there are only a few computing resources (i.e., time and cores) available to solve a particular problem, learning about ASP is helpful [93]. This is true for optimization problems at the operational level where there is a time limitation. Running all algorithms and selecting the best one is the best option for solving strategic optimization problems [94]. When there are many possible algorithms and little prior understanding of the problem, the typical trial-and-error optimization effort can take the place of ASP. Additionally, ASP can assist non-experts in choosing the best method or algorithm to solve optimization challenges. An adequate training instance pool that accurately represents brand-new examples must be offered for building the meta-model [95]. Instance dissimilarity and algorithmic discrimination are two crucial ASP criteria. The algorithms require a variety of instances in order to provide such a rich collection of data [96]. If there are many instances produced, it could take a long time to execute all candidate algorithms on them. Characterizing the problem instances using a set of criteria, known as meta-features, is a significant challenge in the development of a meta-model. Instance characteristics that have an impact on the algorithm's performance must be revealed by meta-features. Feature extraction [98] can be a computationally inexpensive process for simple features and an expensive one for more complicated ones, depending on the type of features. By switching

from problem-specific characteristics to more broad, straightforward features that cost less to extract computationally, ASP can be enhanced [97]. Another interesting area for future investigation is creating online ASPs. The goal is to assure instance dissimilarity by using EAs to evolve COP instances that are as different from one another as possible [99]. As alterations (if necessary) can be made to the algorithm selection mechanism during the resolution of COP instances, the online ASP imposes an additional computational burden. Scheduling numerous suggested algorithms to address a problem could be one future research area. The main emphasis has been on COPs with discrete value-based and permutation-based representations. Fig. 6 refers to the percentage of papers considered in the algorithm selection problem, where the papers were 11 out of 56.



5. Objective Function Evaluation

A frequent MHs search component known as fitness (in the evolutionary community) is called objective function [1]. By modifying the objective function, ML can help MHs by guiding them to better regions of the search space and improving convergence [3, 100]. It may also aid MHs in the approximation of the objective function, which is assessed more quickly than the initial fitness due to the high computational cost of the optimization problem [101, 102]. Surrogate models can be utilized in the optimization process [103, 104, 105]. Surrogate models have been used to evaluate the objective function and explore more promising areas of the search space, which leads to improved convergence [106, 107]. An example of a special case of approximation is evolutionary approximation, which is used in evolutionary algorithms (EAs) to approximate the components of EAs to lower computation costs [108]. It can be divided into two types: fitness inheritance, in which the calculation of the population depends on the similarity with the parents of the individual [109, 110]. The second type is fitness imitation, in which clustering algorithms are included to help calculate the fitness value of the individual from the siblings [111, 112].

Table 4: Objective function Evaluation in the literatures.

Ref.	MHs.	ML	Single/Multi. Objective	Class	Problem	Rout./Sched.
[113] 2022	SA, HC	ϵ G, TSA,UCB1	Single	RL	CEVRP	Routing
[114]	GA	C-means	Single	Unsupervised	CVRP	Routing

2022						
[115] 2020	VNS	DT	Single	Supervised	VRP	Routing
[116] 2016	DE	ANN	Single	Supervised	SMSP	Scheduling
[117] 2014	GA	KNN	Single	Supervised	JSP	Scheduling

In the objective function evaluation of MHs applied to the routing and scheduling problem, Table 4 reveals and categorizes certain information about ML (Fig. 2b). In the literature that has investigated these two problems, single objectives have been considered over multi-objectives. Both problems are fairly well discussed in the literature; two and three publications, respectively, are devoted to scheduling and routing (Fig. 2a). Three classes of ML (ML) are used for supervised learning, three papers founded in the literature, and one paper each for RL and unsupervised learning (Fig. 2b). To the best of our knowledge, the only routing problems examined in the papers are VRP and its variants. MHs significantly contribute to the resolution of these problems (Fig. 3c). To address the CEVRP, Erick Rodriguez-Esparza et al. proposed RL with SA in 2022. The use of hyper-heuristics (HH) has been shown to improve fitness. The acquired solution then enters a phase of perturbation until it reaches the maximum amount of fitness permitted [113]. Ji Zhu presented enhanced GA using C-means clustering in 2022 to break down CVRP into smaller-scale sub-problems. To improve fitness and reduce the search space for the best solutions, this involves modifying the crossover and mutation rates [114]. New MHs were proposed by Flavien Lucas et al. in 2020, namely feature-guided MNS (FGMNS), which combines LS and ML. The purpose of DT was to find promising regions in the search space and enhance fitness [115]. A hybrid strategy was proposed by Jing-hua Hao et al. in 2016 to address the SMSP problem, utilizing a surrogate model of the ANN and DE algorithms. To evaluate the fitness value, they used DE to enhance ANN performance [116]. Su Nguyen and co. In 2014, researchers looked at how surrogate KNN and GA models could help tackle JSP. Combining two strategies can increase the quality of the solution and provide a better balance between exploration and exploitation [117].

5.1. Discussion

It is not as simple to use objective function approximation in MHs as one might think, and there are difficulties involved. To ensure that MHs with an approximate objective function converge to the near optimum solution of the original function, the original objective function of the MH must be replaced. The optimum method for estimating the fitness function of COPs is still up for debate in the field of fitness approximation. It is possible to utilize more complex methods such as polynomial regression, Kriging, RBF, and clustering/classification [113]. Usually, more complicated systems take longer to construct but offer better fitting accuracy. In MHs, objective approximation can be expanded to allow for the creation of fresh objective functions depending on details about the current optimization challenge and features gleaned from areas visited during the search process. Real-time COPs are ones that must be regularly solved within a time constraint. For these MHs, even one MH iteration's worth of calculation time might be too much for real-time applications. To reduce the computational work required for objective function evaluation, one potential path is to use objective

approximation. Fig. 6 refers to the percentage of papers considered in objective function evaluation, where the papers were 5 out of 56.

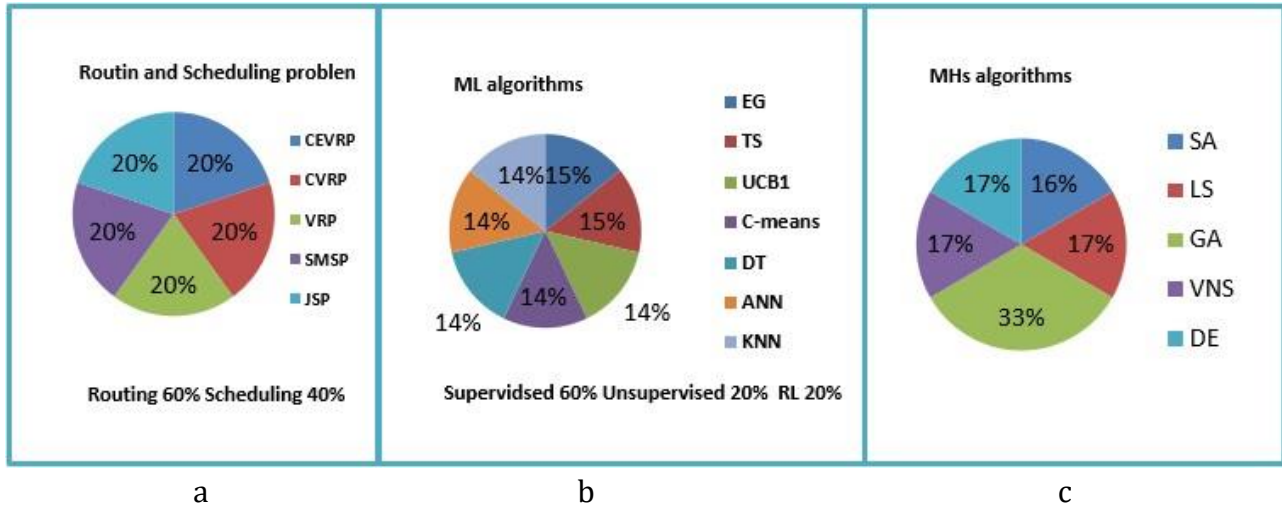


Fig. 2 Objective function evaluation; (a) Routing and Scheduling problems in the Literature; (b) ML class and techniques in Literature; (c) MHs in the literature.

6. Initial solution

Initialization of several MHs' solutions occasionally happens at random [118]. The crucial issue the researchers are dealing with is the first solution's inadequate initialization, which may have an adverse effect on the solution's diversification [119]. Three initialization types are: hybrid initialization, greedy initialization, and random initialization [1]. In the previous two decades, ML has proven to be a useful initialization strategy for scholars. In offline learning approaches, ML can help MHs by extracting knowledge to produce solutions for valid patterns [120]. Sometimes, that knowledge can be used to help solve problems that are similar to ones that have already been solved, which is known as transfer learning [121]. The decomposition of the search space or data is another application for applying a variety of applications [122]. By separating the data into smaller sub-spaces, decomposition has a nontrivial role in reducing the computing cost of the process and facilitating the generation of better first solutions [123]. Decomposition is used in search space to increase the variety of the initial solution, which will result in diverse solutions from various search space regions and prevent the search space from becoming stuck in local optima [124].

Table 5: Initial solution in the literature

Ref.	MHs.	ML	Single/Multi. Obj.	Class	Problem	Route./Sched.
[125] 2022	ACO	SARSA	Multi.	RL	TSP	Routing
[126] 2022	GRASP	RF	Single	Supervised	CVRP	Routing
[127] 2021	ABC	K-means	single	Unsupervised	UPMSP	Scheduling
[128] 2020	DE	K-means	Single	Unsupervised	TSP	Routing
[129] 2019	GA,PSO	Apriori	Single	Unsupervised	JSP	Scheduling
[130] 2019	TS	K-means	Single	Unsupervised	VRP	Routing

[131]	2019	GA	K-means	Single	Unsupervised	VRP	Routing
[132]	2019	GA,DE	K-means	Single	Unsupervised	TSP	Routing
[133]	2018	MHs	DRL	Single	RL	TSP	Routing
[134]	2018	GA	QL	Single	RL	TSP	Routing
[135]	2018	ACO	K-means	Single	Unsupervised	WSRP	Scheduling
[136]	2018	GA	LR	Single	Supervised	TSP	Routing
[137]	2017	ACO	K-means	Single	Unsupervised	TSP	Routing
[138]	2017	MHs	QL	Single	RL	TSP	Routing
[139]	2017	ACO	K-means	Single	Unsupervised	VRP	Routing
[140]	2016	ACO	K-means	Single	Unsupervised	LRP	Routing
[141]	2016	GA	Apriori	Single	Unsupervised	TSP	Routing
[142]	2015	GA	K-means	Single	Unsupervised	TSP	Routing

The studies on this topic are summarized in Table 5. ML was helpful in the initialization of the MHs. Except for one paper that looked at a multi-objective problem, the majority of publications only considered single objective when solving the problem at hand. There are only three types of scheduling problems, and many researchers are more interested in routing problems than scheduling problems (Fig. 3a). Unsupervised learning algorithms are used more frequently than other classes in ML algorithms, as shown by Table 5 and Fig. 3b, and the majority of these algorithms employ clustering techniques (Fig. 3d), supporting the claim that the initialization of MHs significantly depends on the problem instances. With the help of ML, MH's algorithms (Fig. 3c) produced effective initialization techniques that outperformed the traditional ones. In order to solve TSP, Haitong Zhao et al., 2022, presented ACO with the SARSA algorithm. Their work is based on the theory that by initializing the pheromone using a Q-table and choosing the largest reward received, the convergence performance can be improved [125]. To tackle CVRP, Juan Pablo Mesa et al. proposed RF and GRASP in 2022. In order to simplify the setup of LS and enhance the multi-start MHs (MSM) used to solve the problem, RF's role is to extract features from the domain of the problem [126]. In their investigation, Chen-Yang Cheng et al. (2021) demonstrate the viability of employing the unsupervised K-means clustering technique on UPMSP using the ABC algorithm. This prevents local optimal solutions and improves the population's initialization method [127]. Ismail M. Ali et al.'s discrete DE with K-means clustering for solving TSP is presented in their 2020 paper. In order to improve the population's initialization, this work tries to map continuous variables to discrete variables and vice versa [128]. In their 2019 paper, Mohammad Mahdi Nasiri et al. established association rules to extract JSP scheduling rules and then applied these rules to heuristically solve the problem using GA and PSO. For population-based approaches, the resulting solution may be regarded as the initial solution [129].

6.1. Discussion

The way an MHs is initialized significantly affects its capacity for exploration and exploitation. The diversity of solutions can be preserved while producing initial solutions of high-quality using ML approaches [130]. A complete solution can be created from an incomplete one using ML techniques. Additionally, they are utilized to create partial initial solutions and divide the data space into smaller portions. In search space decomposition, ML approaches are used to diversify the initial solutions for each sub-space. Online and offline learning are also possible. Knowledge is collected during offline learning from the initial solutions produced for a set of training instances [131,132]. Online learning entails the extraction and application of dynamic knowledge while producing the initial solution(s) to a problem instance [133]. Even though the retrieved knowledge may not be particularly rich, it perfectly fits the current case.

In order to improve performance in terms of the trade-off between exploration and exploitation, ML approaches are being incorporated into MHs. Because of this phenomenon, less computing time is spent throughout the search process looking for initial (local) solutions and more time is spent exploring and exploiting more promising regions in the solution space. Instead of expending considerable work on locating the best local solutions, this saves computing effort and directs it toward exploring or exploiting more promising regions in the solution space. The initial population [134] of COPs can be produced using effective opposition-based learning tactics. This is a novel idea in ML that was motivated by the opposing interactions between things. An initial population can also be created using an interpolation technique. Interpolation and opposition-based learning have not yet been used in COPs, but this could be a future research area. Fig. 6 refers to the percentage of papers considered in the initial solution, where the papers were 18 out of 56.

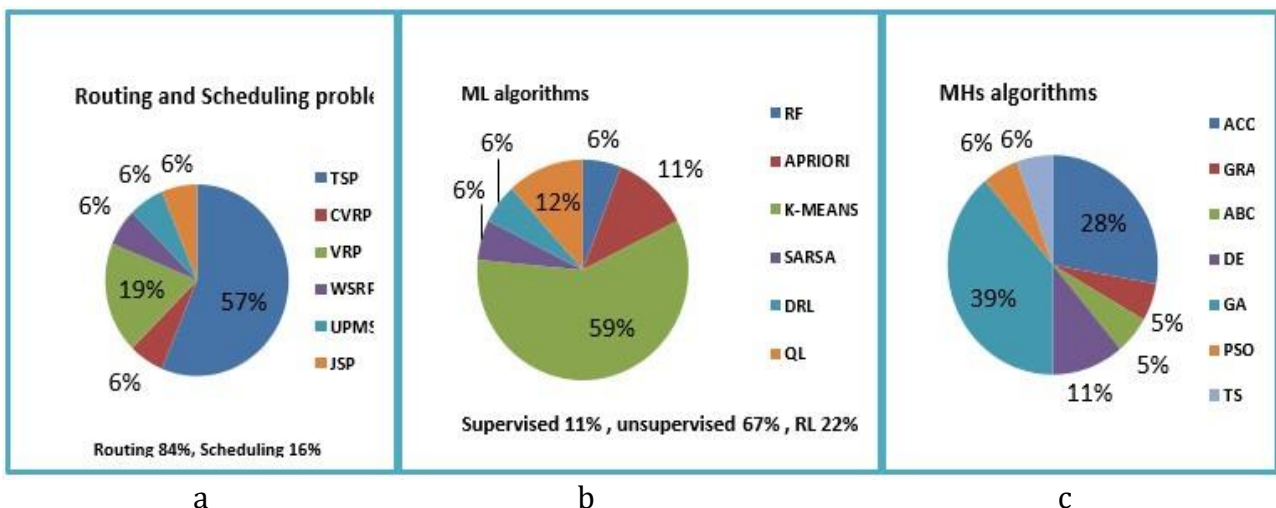


Fig. 3 Initial Solution; (a) Routing and Scheduling problems in the Literature; (b) ML class and techniques in Literature; (c) MHs in the literature.

7- Operator selection

Low-level MH components can be thought of as operator selection [143]. Operators' primary characteristic is that they can be effective for one search method or problem but ineffective for another [144,1]. Search operators are divided into the following categories: mutation, binary operators (such as crossover), perturbation, local search (hill climbing), and ruin

recreate. By properly implementing search operators, it may be possible to achieve a balance between exploitation and exploration during the search process [145]. While a search is being conducted in an online learning environment, the performance of MHs can be assessed using various search operators [146]. When ML is included in MHs, for example, RL is involved in operator selection by treating the operators as a problem space and taking various actions to select better operators [147]. The best neighbourhood at a certain iteration can be chosen using ML [148].

Table 6: Operator selection in the literatures

Ref.	MHs.	ML	Search operator	Class	Problem	Rout./Sched.
[149]2022	GA	QL	Crossover, mutation	RL	EDSSP	Scheduling
[150]2022	IG	QL	Perturbation	RL	FSP	Scheduling
[151]2021	WWO, VNS	QL	Perturbation	RL	FSP	Scheduling
[152]2019	ILS	L2I	Local search	RL	VRP	Routing
[153]2019	MA, ILS	QL	Local search	RL	GVRP	Routing
[154]2017	ILS	RL	Local search, Perturbation	RL	NRP	Scheduling
[155]2016	GA	RL	Perturbation, Crossover, mutation	RL	LRP	Routing
[156]2016	VNS	RL	Local search	RL	VRP	Routing
[157]2016	VNS	RL	Local search	RL	VRP	Routing
[158]2015	ILS	RL	Local search, Perturbation	RL	VRP	Routing

Operator selection is classified in Table 6 based on MHs and ML methods that have been studied in the literature, search operators employed throughout the search process, ML classification (see Section 2.4), and problem type. Table 6 demonstrates that all of the studies under consideration used the RL class of ML. The variance in search operators that can be attributed to the variations in the several MHs under study can also be observed in Table 6 and Fig. 4b. To the best of our knowledge, Table 6 and Fig 4a show that scheduling problems receive more attention in 2022 than routing problems, whereas the converse was apparent in the last decade. The majority of ML (Fig. 4d) algorithms use QL techniques because of their <action, reward> capabilities. Selecting the right operators is critical for directing the search space to the best possible solutions. Several MHs (Fig. 4c) have a variety of operators. To address EDSSP, Yanjie Song et al. (2022) presented a QL and GA framework. They added an operator selection process in their study that updated the Q value in the Q-table based on the cumulative reward attribute of QL [149]. The (PFSP) was addressed by Maryam Karimi-Mamaghan et al. in 2022 utilizing a novel perturbation mechanism and a Q-learning (QL) technique (JSP). The purpose of integrating (QL) into (IG) is to offer adaptive operator selection, which can define which operator should be used for each iteration of the search stages. The selection depends on the status of the search and the operator's performance. In other words, the integration enabled the algorithm to avoid becoming trapped in a local optimum and provided various strengths for perturbation operators [150]. A model to solve the FSP using WWO and QL was presented by Fuqing Zhao et al. in 2021. To improve the balance between exploration and exploitation and prevent being stranded in local optima, the researchers used VNS as a breaker operator when choosing operators [151]. The L2I technique with ILS was suggested by Hao Lu et al. in 2019 to solve CVRP. Using RL-based improvement operators, L2I learns to iteratively enhance the solution. A pool of operators is

used to choose the operators [152]. In their study, Bo Peng et al. 2019 used MA population based with QL to address GVRP. To provide workable systems with a good balance between exploration and exploitation, they combined ILS with RL to manage neighbourhood moves and crossover operators [153].

7.1. Discussion

Selecting and using these operators within an MHs requires a high level of domain understanding. However, in order to choose the operators effectively for COPs outside of this common framework, one must be familiar with the operators that are unique to the given situation. The most popular RL-based approach utilized in operator selection is QL. One must first specify the range of potential states and actions before applying them. The states can be defined in three different ways, including search-dependent, problem-dependent, and instance-dependent. When compared to the non-learning version of MHs, ML approaches in operator selection have significantly improved performance. Both the quality of the solutions and the computational efficiency have improved as a result of the incorporation of ML approaches into operator selection. New best-known solutions for a few COPs have also been found. The purpose of operator selection is to offer an optimal design for MHs such that the MH converges more quickly to the near optimal solution and, as a result, the user's time is preserved and the additional computational burden of learning in MHs minimized. Before using operator selection, the majority of credit assignment and selection methods add new factors that need to be modified. Tuning the discount factor and learning rate responsible for creating a balance between MHs' exploration and exploitation capabilities is a significant problem in operator selection. The performance of operator selection may decline as the number of operators rises. Fig. 6 refers to the percentage of papers considered in operator selection, where the papers were 10 out of 56.

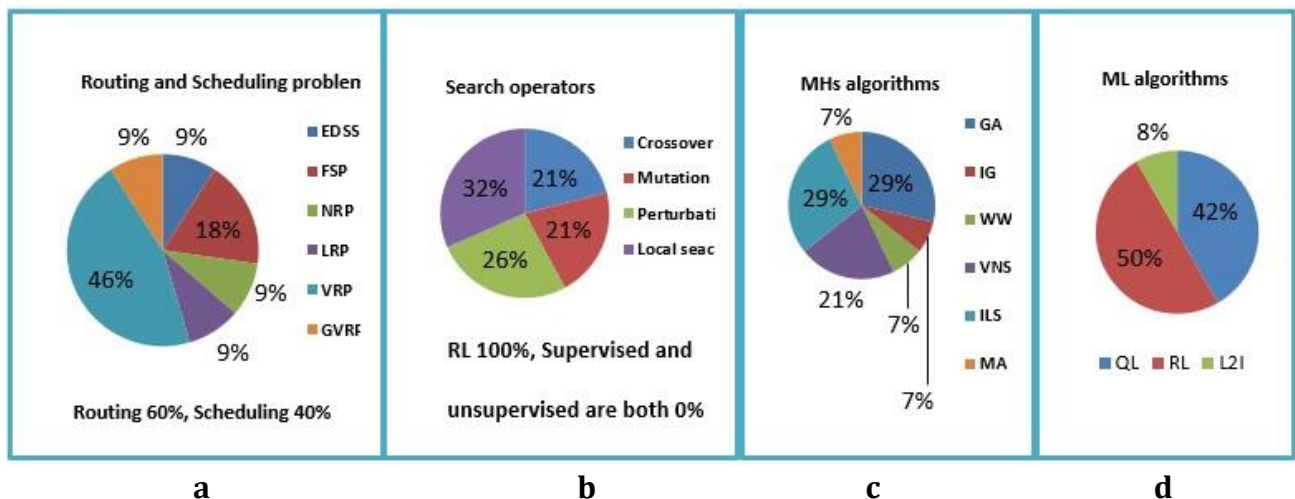


Fig. 4 Operators Selection; (a) Routing and Scheduling problems in the Literature; (b) Search operators in Literature; (c) MHs in the literature; (d) ML techniques in the literature.

8- Parameter setting

The settings of MHs parameters, which govern how the algorithm behaves, have a significant impact on it [159]. Any parameter's value has an impact on the search process, so setting them correctly will result in the best performance [160, 161]. Manual parameter setting by MHs experts is difficult and time-consuming, but it is done in accordance with their level of knowledge [162]. Parameter setting categorized into parameter control and parameter tuning

[1]. Setting the parameters prior to the start of the optimization process is known in the literature as offline parameter tuning. Online parameter setting, sometimes referred to as parameter control, modifies the value of parameters throughout the optimization process in accordance with certain criteria [163, 164]. To assist MHs in choosing the appropriate values for the parameters, ML is used in parameter setting. Based on the action reward functionality and addressing the problem space of MH's algorithms, RL was used to set the parameter values [165]. In fact, parameter setting is comparable to AOS (section 5) when feedback data is taken into account when choosing parameter values.

Table 7: Parameter setting in the literature

Ref.	MHs	ML	Tuning /Control	Parameter	Class	Problem	Rout./Sched.
[166] 2022	GA	QL	Control	Crossover, Mutation	RL	FSP	Scheduling
[167] 2022	GA	SARSA	Control	Crossover, Mutation	RL	SBS	Scheduling
[168] 2021	PSO, ACO ,GA	QL	Control	Crossover, Mutation, inertia weight, acceleration coefficient, pheromone concentration, heuristic matrix	RL	SBSR	Scheduling, Routing
[169] 2021	GA	QL	Control	population size, mutant rate, elitism rate,	RL	TSP	Routing
[170] 2021	GA	QL	Tune	Crossover, Mutation	RL	CVRP	Routing
[171] 2021	ABC	RF	Control	Number of bee	Supervised	TSP	Routing
[172] 2020	VNS	QL	Control	Acceptance	RL	FSP	Scheduling
[173] 2020	GA	QL	Control	Crossover, Mutation	RL	FSP	Scheduling
[174] 2020	TS	DRL	Tune	Tabu length, Max Iterations, Termination threshold	RL	TSP	Routing
[175] 2020	CS	SARSA	Control	Population size, Max Iterations	RL	FSP	Scheduling
[176] 2017	GA	K- means	Control	Number of generation, Mutation, Population size	Unsupervised	EMVRP	Routing

[177] 2017	GA, ICA	ANN	Control	population size, number of generations, crossover rate, mutation rate, elitism rate, number of local search, assimilate rate, revolution rate, number of imperialists	Supervised	UPMS	Scheduling
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Due to its feedback information, RL (Fig. 5d), the class of ML that is most frequently utilized in the literature, is listed in Table 7. In comparison to offline parameter setting, online parameter setting (control) appears more in Table 7 and Fig. 5b in the majority of the publications under consideration. Routing and scheduling problems have each been considered separately, and the research direction has taken both concerns into account (Fig. 5a). Table 7 and Fig. 5e show that there are several parameters that can be adjusted depending on the many MHs that have been identified in the literature. In terms of MHs algorithms (Fig. 5c), GA is the algorithm that has been employed to solve the issues the most frequently. In order to tackle the school bus routing and scheduling problem (SBRS), Eda Koksall and colleagues published a performance characterization for RL-enabled evolutionary algorithms (EAs) dubbed GA, Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO), and Ant Colony Optimization (ACO). Because EAs are sensitive to the values of the parameters, RL is employed to select the parameters' values. RL provided new means for exploring and utilizing the search space, allowing the EAs to manage hyper-parameters. Crossover and mutation rates are the parameters that are regulated in GA; inertia weight and acceleration coefficient are controlled in PSO; and pheromone concentration and heuristic matrix are controlled by RL in ACO [168]. In order to solve TSP, Antonio Augusto Chaves and Luiz Henrique Nogueira Lorena (2021) proposed combining Q-Learning with The Biased Random-key genetic algorithm (BRKGA). The parameter control of BRKGA based on QL is the main topic of this work. For BRKGA, the following variables are controlled: population size, elites, mutation rate, and probability of inheriting a key from an elite parent. Each parameter has a single state, and the operation is predetermined by the Q-table [169]. GA and RL were suggested by Jose Quevedo et al. in 2021 to address the problem of capacitated vehicle routing (CVRP). Their method is based on the idea of solving the CVRP by adaptively adjusting the GA and RL parameters. To execute actions that influence how GA evolves, RL agents engage with GA as its environment. The agents of RL were used to create a new population with the associated reward using mutation and crossover probabilities that were tuned based on feedback from the evolutionary process that is the GA environment [170].

8.1. Discussion

The capacity of an MHs to explore and utilize promising search space regions has a substantial impact on the MH's performance. The crossover and mutation rates, using the GA as an example, should vary according to the algorithm's effectiveness and the characteristics of the search space. Despite the computational overhead put on the search process, parameter management is advised [178]. The trade-off between choosing the existing best configuration or looking for good new ones is the choice between exploration and exploitation. Another characteristic that needs to be adjusted or managed during the search process is the rate of

configuration change itself. As one approach to solving this, consider parameter setting as a separate optimization problem. Creating a self-adaptive parameter control mechanism is an additional option. The precision of the intervals would be higher if the levels of a parameter were split into numerous small intervals but choosing between the intervals would require substantially more calculation [179]. To fully comprehend how minor variations in the values of continuous parameters affect MHs performance, more research is necessary. Future studies should concentrate on creating a method to regulate SA using variables like the cooling temperature and others that haven't gotten much attention up to now. It should be mentioned that defining the feedback as a single value is one of the difficulties with adaptive parameter management in multi-objective optimization problems. Fig. 6 refer to the percentage of papers considered in parameter setting, where the papers were 12 out of 56.

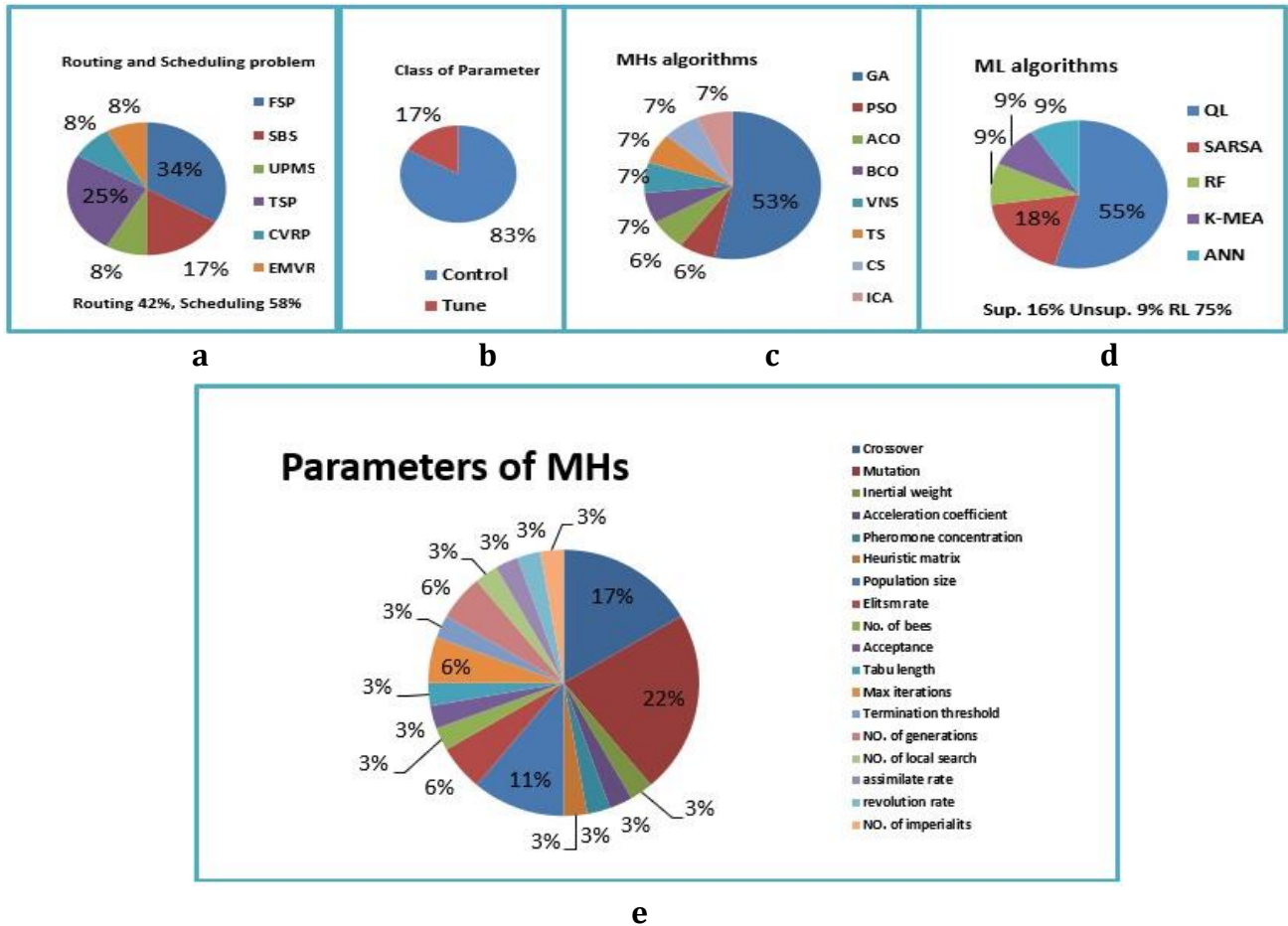


Fig. 5 Parameter Setting; (a) Routing and Scheduling problems in the Literature; (b) ML class in Literature; (c) MHs in the literature; (d) ML techniques in the literature; (e) Parameter of MHs

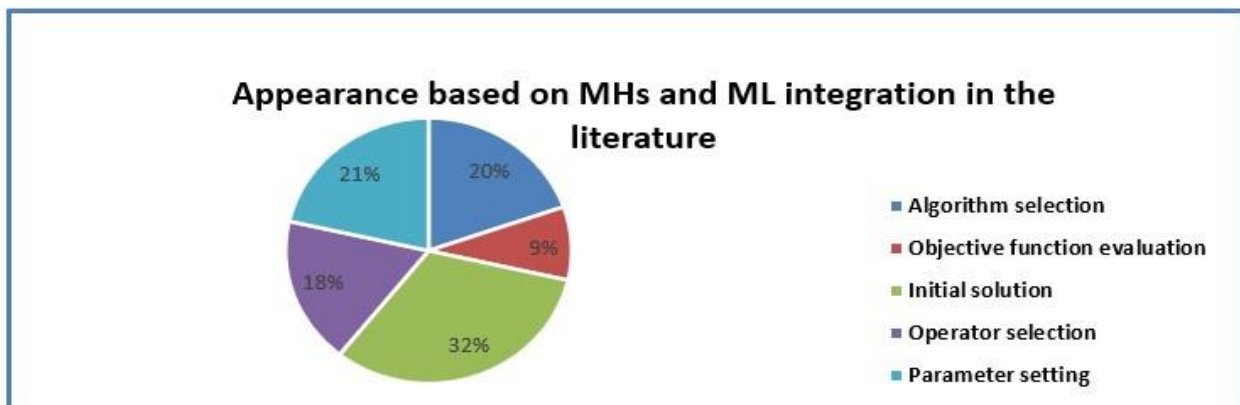


Fig. 6 Learnheuristics in the literature

Conclusion

Learnheuristics have gained substantial attention in place of more conventional approaches since they enhance the performance of MHs. We have provided a thorough taxonomy for several MHs components managed via ML, including operator selection, parameter control and tuning, initial solution, algorithm selection, and objective function evaluation to solve COPs which is a complex class of optimization problems. In fact, the integration of ML algorithms into MHs algorithms has extra effects when solving different COPs rather than solving the same COPs in traditional ways, where the components of MHs managed based on the knowledge of the experts, which is time consuming. When an ML technique is integrated into an MH, a new set of parameters is added that must be properly tuned or controlled to achieve the best results. To overcome this issue, dynamically adjusting the additional parameters based on the integration's features. In large scale problems (e.g., routing, and scheduling problems), the training of ML on problem instances corresponds to a specific size, which requires larger instances during the training, but this approach may be time consuming. Most of the studies examined in this paper only focus on the integration of ML approaches into MHs for a singular objective, although improved MH performance is expected when ML techniques serve MHs for several objectives. As a result, incorporating ML approaches with MHs for multiple objectives at the same time could be an attractive future study direction. The algorithm selection problem depends heavily on supervised learning in deciding which algorithms perform well in particular routing and scheduling problems, while unsupervised learning and RL need to be investigated more. The majority of studies that investigated routing and scheduling problems took a single objective into account for objective function evaluation and initial solution, while multi-objective optimization (MOP), as previously mentioned, was poorly considered by the researchers. Operator selection offered an optimal design for MHs such that the MHs converged more quickly to the near optimal solution and, as a result, the time preservation and additional computational burden of learning in MHs relieved. The parameter variables are compiled when ML algorithms are integrated with MH algorithms, so those parameters must independently determine their values. Most of the examined articles concentrate on using well-known ML methods like K-means, KNN, SVM, etc., which makes it possible to look into additional algorithms. In terms of most widespread use, MHs algorithms were similar to ML algorithms; GA, PSO, and ACO, among others, regularly appear in the literature, albeit there are alternative options to take into account.

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التعلم الإرشادي في مشاكل التوجيه والجدولة: مراجعة

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الخلاصة:

تعد مشاكل التحسين الاندماجية أهم فئة من مشاكل التحسين نظراً لتطبيقاتها العملية الكثيرة. تهتم هذه المشاكل بتحديد أفضل حل من مجموعة منقطعة من جميع الحلول المتاحة. تعتبر أنظمة النقل (التوجيه) والتوزيع (الجدولة) من أكثر أمثلة التحسين الاندماجي صعوبةً. نظراً لأهمية مشاكل التوجيه والجدولة، فقد تم اقتراح العديد من الطرق لمعالجتها. يمكن تصنيف هذه الأساليب إلى طرق تقليدية (طرق دقيقة ومتعددة المسارات) وطرق التعلم الآلي. تم اقتراح طرق التعلم الآلي للتغلب على المشكلات التي تعاني منها الطرق التقليدية، وخاصة الوقت الحسابي العالي والاعتماد على معرفة الخبراء. في الأونة الأخيرة، تم الجمع بين أساليب التعلم الآلي والأدلة الإرشادية العليا للتعامل مع مشاكل التحسين الاندماجية، ثم ظهر مصطلح التعلم الإرشادي. يهدف هذا المزيج إلى توجيه الأدلة الإرشادية العليا نحو بحث فعال وكفء وقوي وتحسين أداء الأدلة الإرشادية العليا من حيث جودة الحل. يستعرض هذا العمل الأدبيات والمنشورات التي تم فيها استخدام التعاون بين الأدلة الإرشادية العليا والتعلم الآلي لاقتراح مبادئ توجيهية للباحثين لطرح خوارزميات جديدة لديها قدرة جيدة على حل مشاكل التوجيه والجدولة

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