

Modeling an Interactive FMS Scheduler Using Colored Petri Nets

Dr. Kasim M. Al-Aubidy
Computer & Software Eng. Dept,
Philadelphia University, Jordan.
email: kasimal@yahoo.com

Dr. Ali A. Al-Titichi
Electrical & Computer Eng. Dept,
Applied Science University,
Jordan. email:aaali8@yahoo.com

Abstract

A new hierarchical model based on CPN for general FMS scheduler is presented. The designed model is partitioned into two levels to face the complexity of the manufacturing systems. The first level in the model is the cell-level, which supervises the jobs scheduling between cells. The second level is the machine-level, which supervises the scheduling of the manufacturing jobs between machines inside the active cells. The goal of the model is to interpret the output of the manufacturing route planner into graphical representation and to achieve the sequencing, dispatching and monitoring the real time execution of these manufacturing plans. Also the proposed CPN model generates feedback status to monitor the abnormal conditions. Sub CPN priority structures are embedded in the main model to control the election from the competitive jobs to use the limited resources in the system. The hierarchy organization will enhance the real time response of the sequencing and monitoring capabilities. The designed scheduler has been evaluated for different case studies and the achieved results are very encouraging.

1. Introduction

A flexible manufacturing system (FMS) is a real-time production system, where a discrete number of raw parts are processed and assembled by computer-controlled machines [1]. Flexible manufacturing systems consist of numerically controlled machine centers, industrial robots, automated vehicles, material handling, ...etc. Complex and real-time FMSs are hard to model and analyze. Several approaches [1], [2], [3] have been proposed to cope with FMS modeling requirements. Among those, Petri nets have been widely used due to their well known features [4],[5]. The major advantage of using Petri nets is the evaluation of the system status before implementation. Nevertheless building Petri net models of real-time FMSs is not an easy job, since the configuration of FMS may change over the system lifetime and during normal operation.

In a highly automated FMS, products are processed according to a job scheduling. This scheduler is a dynamical discrete event system whose events include: loading, processing,

unloading, occurrence of machine failures, repairing of machine tools,etc. In the case of a sudden change of production plans or a failure of machine tools or transportation links, it is necessary to obtain a new schedule immediately. Therefore, on-line scheduling has become very important task for obtaining efficiency and high productivity[6].

The idea of using Petri nets for the design and implementation of FMS's is not new [1],[6]. Hatono and Tamura [7] describe a rule-based on-line scheduling system and an FMS simulation system under certainty using stochastic Petri nets, which developed for creating, debugging, and evaluating the rule-base for on-line scheduling. However, simple Petri nets models tend to become highly complex for such systems. In this case, high-level Petri nets, called Colored Petri Nets (CPN's) are recommended [8],[9]. An approach for modeling FMS using CPNs was introduced by Colombo & Carelli [6] in 1996.

This paper deals with the design and simulation of an interactive on-line scheduler using CPNs. The paper is organized in seven sections. Section 2 outlines the interaction between the manufacturing route planner and the scheduling stages. The design and operations of the cell-level and machine-level scheduler CPN models are described in sections 3 and 4 respectively. The scheduler priority algorithms used in this work are given in section 5. Section 6 outlines a typical case study and the parameters used in the system evaluation. Finally, the conclusions of this research are summarized in section 7.

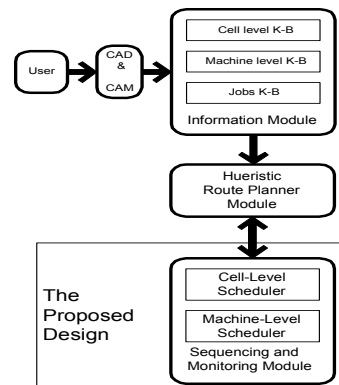


Fig.(1): System organization.

2. The scheduler organization

In our previous work [10], the design and implementation of a hierarchical route planner for FMS's based on heuristic algorithm were introduced. The aim of the planner is to obtain the optimal manufacturing routes for jobs according to well-designed cost function. This paper deals with an extension of our previous work, as illustrated in Fig.(1). The sequencing and monitoring module is an on-line scheduler modeled using CPN rules. It consists of two levels, the cell-level and the machine-level. The cell-level monitors the competitive jobs to use the manufacturing cells. The machine-level monitors the competitive jobs to use the machines inside the manufacturing cells of the first level. Also, a feedback is proposed in the model to discover the abnormal conditions in the system such as machine breakdown, and transportation link damage. This feedback which activated through the use of sensors are added to the CPN model as extended arcs. These arcs will pass signals to the route planner to modify the old manufacturing routes to avoid the problems that may occur.

It is obvious that CPN is a compact modeling tool for description of automated manufacturing system. Moreover, the CPN rules are very suitable to achieve the monitoring of real time activities of interaction between the jobs to be manufactured and the physical components, which are; manufacturing cells or machines, transportation links, storage buffers, and local robots. In fact, two factors affect the monitoring of the real-time job's flow in the FMS environment, these are; the manufacturing routes resulted from the route planner, and the CPN models, which represent the scheduling tasks. The proposed scheduler will have the following features;

- The CPN models work with multi cell/multi job manufacturing system illustrated in Fig.(2).
- The scheduler design has a hierarchical scheme incorporating two main parts; the cell-level and the machine-level.
- The aim of the suggested scheduler is to monitor and control the concurrency, synchronization and priorities between the jobs to use the limited manufacturing resources.
- Four CPN models are recognized in the scheduler design, these models are;
 - The cell level scheduler model.
 - The machine level scheduler model.
 - The FIFO algorithm model.
 - The heuristic priority algorithm model.

Appendix (A) describes the definitions of all places (p), and transitions (t) used in this paper.

3. Cell level scheduler

The scheduler of the FMS at cell level has been designed using the concepts of CPN, as illustrated in Fig.(3). It will control the sequencing and dispatching of the competed jobs to use the manufacturing cells. Three parameters will cooperate to make the decision about the jobs flow within the model. These parameters are;

- The manufacturing route for each job.
- The FIFO algorithm.
- The colors set and the functions that label the arcs of the cell level model itself.

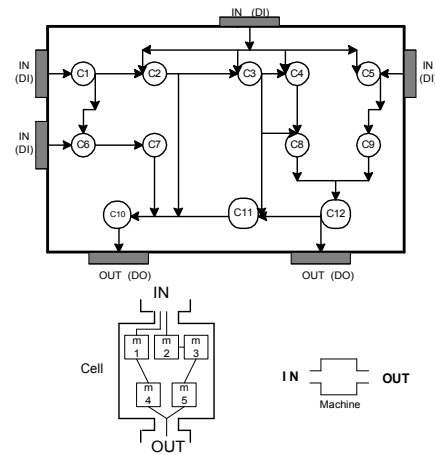


Fig.(2): General layout of an FMS.

The scheduler activity starts when jobs enter the FMS through the place p_1 , which represents such group of jobs in dummy input buffers. The transition t_1 will fire when $Jx1$ comes through f_1 , and there is workable robot through f_2 . However, t_1 can not fire unless the sensors indicate no problem in the resources through S_n . On firing t_1 , the token $\langle Jx1, Ry \rangle$ will enter the FIFO model. Now, on the availability of the input buffer $[INz]$ across f_3 , an output of FIFO will be fed to P_2 through f_3 as token $\langle Jx1, INz, N \rangle$ while the related robot will be released through f_6 . The argument N means the priority values given to the related job by the FIFO policy model. It is important to clarify that different colored tokens mean different jobs and resources. When (f_7, f_8, f_9, S_n) are valid according to their definitions, t_2 will fire and;

- release the related robot and a location in the input buffer across f_{10} and f_{13} respectively.
- Load the transportation link through f_{12} according to the result of the route planner.

Now the transportation mechanism assumes that the transportation will take place either across t_3 (when the transportation link is fallen, i.e. when the place (CAP) becomes empty or across t_4 after a certain period of time (T_i).

After firing either t_3 or t_4 , the jobs will move to the place (E) where tokens are of the shape $\langle Jxs, Lew, N \rangle$. This token means such a job on the related transportation link with such a priority value. From E, t_5 will fire which causes a movement of one displacement by the related link. Otherwise, t_8 or t_{12} will fire with respect to any job that reach such a target on its manufacturing route. However, t_8 and t_{12} represent deferent ways. The transition t_8 takes the jobs toward the input buffer of such a cell, while t_{12} takes the jobs to an intermediate or external output buffers. However, which of them will fire at any stage for each job depending upon the resulted manufacturing routes from the route planner. The next part of the transportation mechanism consists of the place (LOG) and the two transitions t_6 and t_7 . The place (LOG) works as logical representation for the locations already become free on the initial position of the related links in the FMS. Hence, its color tokens are of the shape $\langle Le0 \rangle$, where 0 means the starting position of a transportation link. The $\Sigma \langle Le0 \rangle$ in (LOG) will excite t_6 and t_7 depending on the function f_{23} . If f_{23} indicates that (CAP) is empty then t_6 will fire, otherwise t_7 will fire. As explained, any transportation link will end either at t_8 or t_{12} . For instance, when

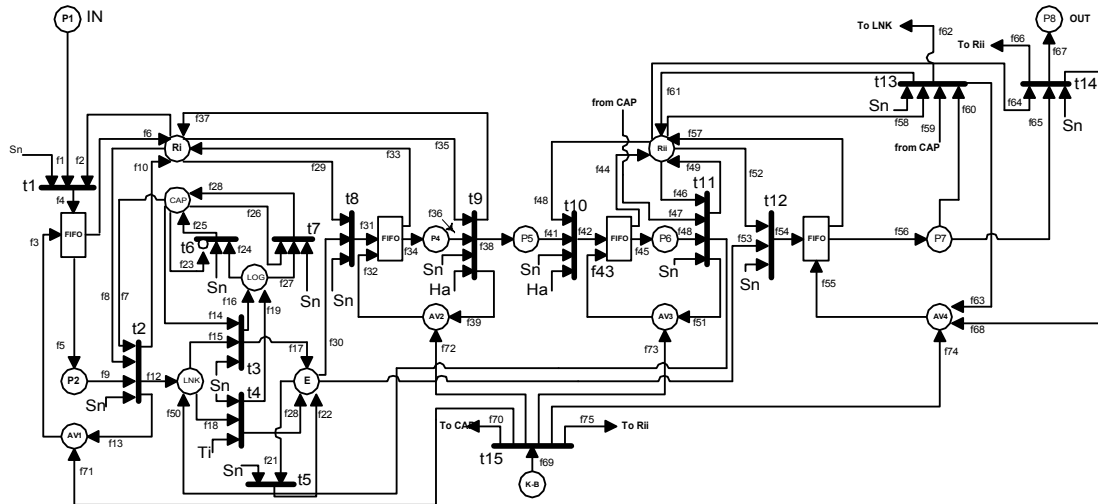


Fig.(3): The CPN model for cell-level scheduling.

a transportation link reaches the entrance of such a cell, then the jobs on that link which are decided by the route planner will be delivered to the cell by the local robot across f29. When t8 fires, this will take jobs to inside the FIFO policy model, and then push these jobs after tagging them with priority values to the input buffer of the related cell. The transition t9 will fire if it is enabled by (f35 ,f36) and the activation signals from Sn and Ha. The tokens <Jxs,Ca,N> in P5 means the jobs (Jxs) in a cell (Ca) where each job with its priority (N). The activity detail inside P5 is the responsibility of the machine level CPN model. When job's manufacturing process is completed inside the cell, the signal Ha for this cell will be active at t10. At this stage the jobs will travel through f42, FIFO and f45 to the related output buffer in P6. The jobs in the same place P6 don't mean the same physical buffers. This really depends upon the argument [Ba2] of the token <Jxs,Ba2,N> in that place. From P6 the jobs will be guided according to their manufacturing routes through f50 to the required transportation link. Again, at this point the manufacturing route will inform the model either to schedule the job to another cell through t8 as described above or to translate the job across f53 to enable t12. If t12 fires two types of tokens may flow through f54 to P7. These are <Jxs,Ob,N> or <Jxs,Df,N>. The first type means that the manufacturing of the job is completed and it is in an external output buffer (OUT), ready to get out of the FMS through f67. The second type is understood as the job in such an intermediate buffer (Df), and it is ready to be handled by the transportation links system through the sequence f60,t13, and f62. To complete the explanation of the model, two more points must be clarified. The first is to reduce the model complexity by representing the local robots availability by two places (Ri) and (RiI). The second is the transition (t15) will feed the model from the knowledge base place (K-B). It's firing will decide the initial conditions of the buffers and transportation links capacities in order to avoid the overload of these resources.

4. Machine-level scheduler

Figure (4) shows the CPN model of the machine level scheduler. It supervises the following activities:

- the manufacturing route of the jobs between the machines inside the cells
- the competition of the jobs to use the shared resources in the cells
- the abnormal conditions or damaging in the resources.

In other words, this model is really a zooming for the detailed activities inside place (P5) of the cell level. Figure (5) shows an example for the relation between the cell-level and the machine-level. However, the physical resources at this level, which interact with the jobs to be manufactured, are machines, transportation links, storage buffers, and robots.

As in the cell level model, three factors achieve decision making at this level, these are:

- the manufacturing route for each job that resulted from the route planner,
- the basic rules that define the places, transitions and the arcs functions of the CPN model itself, and
- the proposed priority policies which solve the competition problem to use the resources. These policies are the FIFO and the heuristic priority algorithms.

The machine-level model can be described in the same manner of the cell level model. Only some differences must be taken into account, these are:

- The colored tokens should be defined to deal with the components of the machine level. These are the machines, machines buffers, local robots,... etc.
- The functions (Sn) represent the sensors, which indicate the hardware condition and validation of the active elements inside a cell.
- The places (P2) and (P3) are equivalent to (P4) and (P6) in the cell level model.
- The place (m) is the manufacturing location in this model. It represents jobs manufactured at machines. This place is equivalent theoretically to the place (P5) in the upper level, which considers the cells as the manufacturing locations.

5. The scheduler priority algorithms

Two CPN priority algorithms are considered; the FIFO algorithm, and the heuristic priority algorithm. The FIFO model is used to control the sequencing of the jobs when they arrive to

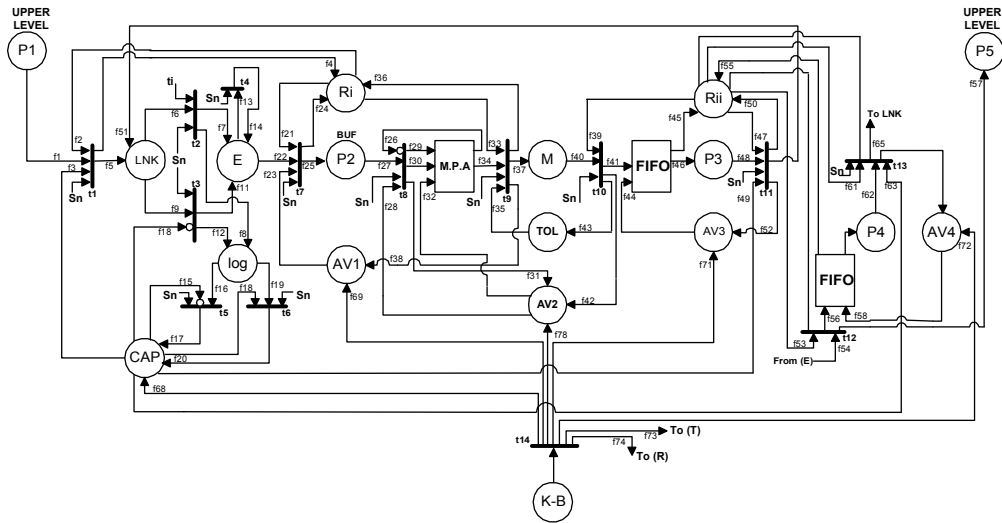


Fig.(4): The CPN model for machine-level scheduling.

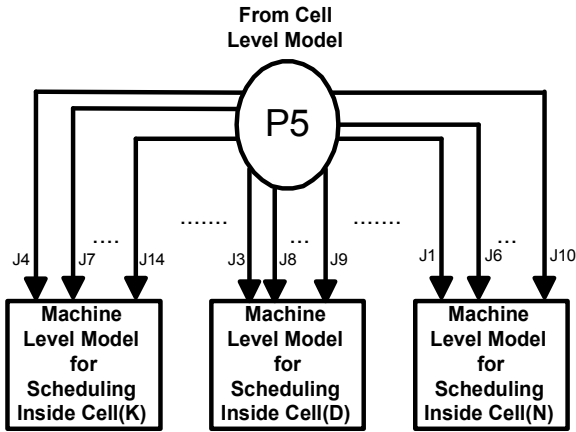


Fig.(5): The relationship between cell-level and machine-level CPN models.

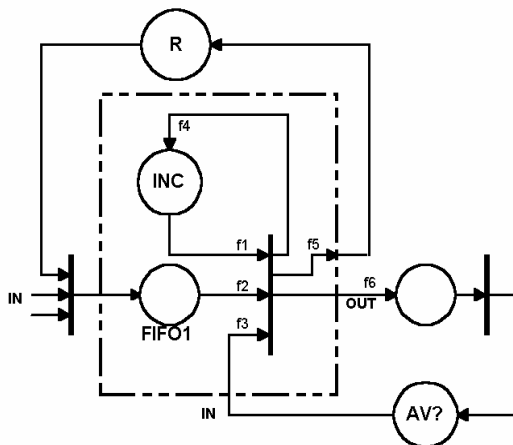


Fig.(6): The CPN model for FIFO priority algorithm.

utilize the transportation system. Hence, this model supports both the cell and the machine levels. The heuristic model is designed to achieve the sequencing of the jobs when they arrive to utilize the machines at machine level.

5.1. The FIFO model

This model works according to the principle of first in first served policy. Its operation starts at the arrows labeled IN, as illustrated in Fig.(6). At these points the model is connected to the cell-level and machine-level models. Assume that a job is coming into this model, it will wait at the place FIFO1 until the availability of the required resource through f3 is valid. At this moment the transition can fire and hence the job will be tagged with current priority value. Which is coming from the place INC. The job with its given priority will pass across f6 to the system. These token will be either in the form $\langle Jx,?,N \rangle$ for cell level or $\langle Jxt,?,N \rangle$ for machine level. It is important to clarify that (?) in the token means which resource such as $\langle Inz, Ba1, \dots \rangle$. Moreover, on firing the transition, function f4 will increment the value of the priority in place [INC] for the related resource. However, this model is of theoretical aspect. In other words no physical movement is achieved through the activities inside this model. Hence, the token in the place FIFO1 does not mean that a robot transfers a job to this place. In fact, it means only logical movement to label the job with the current priority value.

5.2. The heuristic priority model

Figure (7) illustrates the heuristic priority CPN model. Six priority policies, used as sequencing rules, are incorporated into this model. These rules are heuristically informed from the knowledge base already produced by the route planner. These rules are:

- Rule 1: Select the job with the highest user priority .
- Rule 2: Select the job with minimum processing time on the current machine.
- Rule 3: Select the job with minimum processing time on the previous machines.

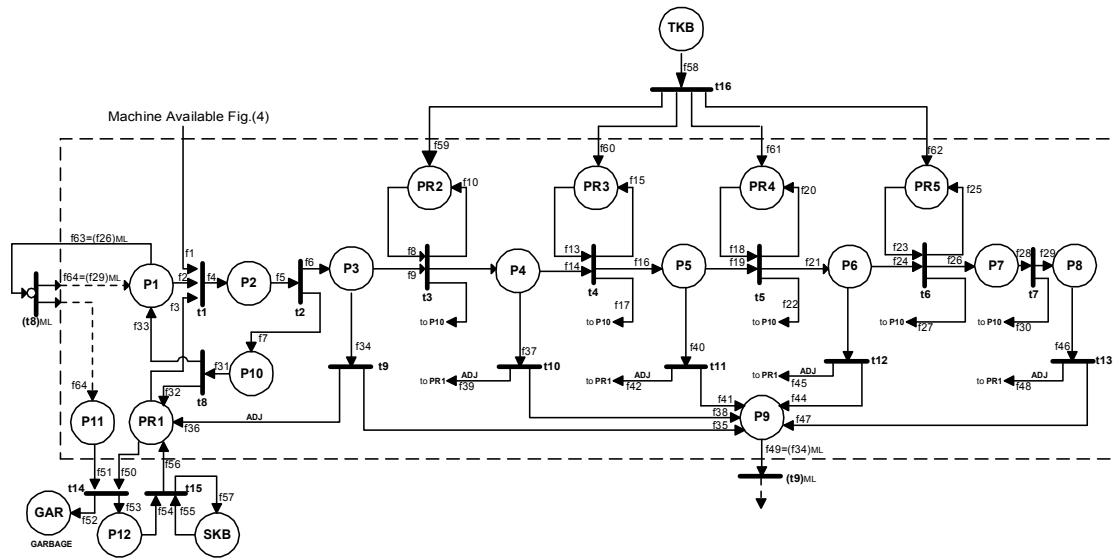


Fig.(7): The CPN model for heuristic priority algorithm.

- Rule 4: Select the job with the longest processing time on the next machines.
- Rule 5: Select the job with highest number of operations on the current machine.
- Rule 6: Select the job arbitrarily.

If more than one job is selected by a priority rule, the next rules will perform further selection until one job is decided to be processed on the machine before the others. However, the importance of the priority rules in the model is not fixed. It depends upon the expertise's requirements and this will achieve the generality and flexibility of the design. Also, the model can be extended for any number of priority rules if other parameters are required to control the sequencing of the jobs at the shared machines. Figure (4) shows the relation between the machine level model and this heuristic priority model. The operation of this model starts when such a group ($\Sigma <Jxt, Bg1 >$) of jobs on such a machine come in P1, as in Fig (7). Now, transition (t1) is enabled by the readiness of the desired machine over f1 and the first priority rule information over f3. The result of firing t1 will cause $\Sigma <Jxt, Mg, Bg1, RLx1 >$ to move to P2. The priority values RLx1 will work as filtering at t2. So the jobs with the highest priority values will pass to P3, while the rest jobs will go back on the path f7, P10, f31, f33 to place P1 again. However, if one job is passing to P3 then there is no problem and t9 will be enabled and fires to transfer this job through f35 to P9. The token in P9 will cause to enable t9_{ml} and so the job will pass to the machine level model. But if more than one job reach P3, then t3 will fire instead of t9. The transition (t3) works as the second filtering to select from the candidate jobs with respect to the second priority rule RLx2. The second priority rule is decided by f8 for all the related jobs in P3. The jobs that come out of firing t3 will be divided into two parts; one over f11 and the other over f12. It is clear that the transitions (t2, t3, t4,etc) work as filters to select a job with highest priority according to the sequence of the proposed priority rules. However, if there is no final decision to select only one job, then the selection will be done arbitrarily by pushing one job over f29 to P8 while the rest jobs will return to P10 and through it to P1 again. In this model the ADJ functions are used to reduce the value of the first priority rule (user priority) for the job already selected to be manufactured on the related machine.

The importance of this reducing is to weak the weight of this priority, so if there are other similar jobs in P1 then these jobs will not be selected again according to their user's priorities. This will give a way to other jobs in the group to take their chances to be manufactured on the desired machine. Also it is noted from the model that the original user's priorities are fed from the knowledge base by firing t15 with each new group of jobs coming from P12. This will cancel the effecting of reduction done on this type of priority for the previous group of jobs. It is clear that the user's priority is fed to the model through the f55 from the place that represents the static knowledge base, since this priority is of predefined type. The other types of priorities are of heuristic type so they are fed from another place that represents the temporary knowledge base. This can be achieved by firing t16 through f58.

6. System evaluation

The following points are considered in the evaluation of the designed scheduler, these points are;

- the model capabilities to handle the complexity and the generality of the FMS systems,
- the flexibility and efficiency of the proposed heuristic priority algorithm, and
- the efficiency of the model's monitoring facility.

The scheduler model presented in this paper has been compared with the model proposed in [11] to evaluate its capability. Figure (8) shows the FMS and its equivalent CPN model. This system has three machines (m1, m2, and m3), three robots (r1, r2, and r3), and a load/unload area. It is clear that such a model has lost the generality, because any change in the FMS resources or the manufacturing jobs route will change the model partially or completely. Moreover, the model suggested in [11] works at the machine-level only. In other word, this model will describe just one manufacturing cell. Hence, the advantages of the proposed model over the mentioned one is the flexibility to face the changes and the ability to represent multi cells manufacturing system based on a hierarchical scheme of cell and machine levels.

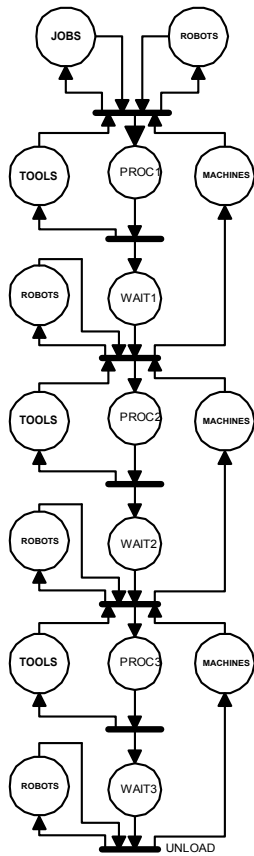


Fig.(8): The CPN model of an automated manufacturing system

Two algorithms are used to control the sharing of the resources. These algorithms are the FIFO CPN model, and the heuristic priority policy CPN model. The generality of the FIFO algorithm is clear and simple so it does not need more explanations. The second algorithm is more important since it is used to schedule the jobs when they compete at the machines themselves. Our proposal suggests a sequence of six-priority levels, which can be changed in type and sequence partially or completely according to the expertise's requirements. However, It is difficult to guess which combination of priority rules would lead to high performance. The following simulation will evaluate how the selecting sequence of these rules may affect the utilization of the manufacturing system.

Three measures of performance are tested for the manufacturing system evaluation [12], these measures are:

a). Maximum flow time (F_{max}):

$$F_{max} = \max_j \{F_j\} \quad j=1,2,\dots,m$$

b). Average flow time (F_{av}):

$$F_{av} = \frac{1}{m} \sum_j F_j$$

where; F_j is the flow time for machine j , and m is the number of the machines.

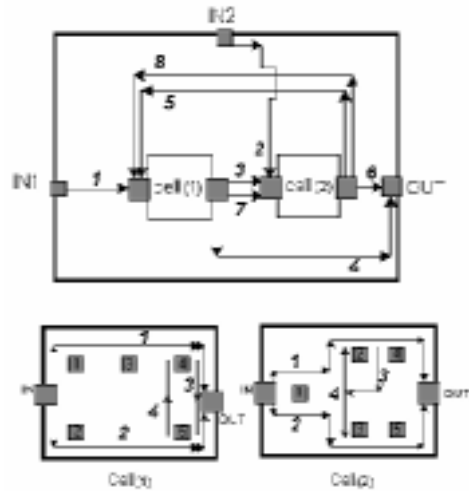


Fig.(9): Case study layout.

c). Machine utilization (U_m):

$$U_m = \frac{1}{m} \sum_j U_j, \text{ and } U_j = \frac{1}{F_j} \sum_{i \in m(j)} t_i$$

where;

t_i is the processing time of operation (i).

$m(j)$: is the set of operations processed on machine (j).

Test	Priority Sequence	Fmax (min)	Fav (min)	Um %
Cell (1)	PR1-PR2-PR3-PR4-PR5-PR6	458.4	454.0	97.5
	PR1-PR3-PR2-PR4-PR5-PR6	461.0	456.5	95.0
	PR1-PR4-PR3-PR2-PR5-PR6	463.5	456.2	96.3
	PR1-PR5-PR4-PR3-PR2-PR6	470.2	459.5	96.1
	PR1-PR5-PR3-PR2-PR4-PR6	462.3	454.1	93.2
	PR1-PR5-PR2-PR4-PR3-PR6	466.0	454.0	94.6
Cell(2)	PR1-PR2-PR3-PR4-PR5-PR6	430.5	423.7	98.0
	PR1-PR3-PR2-PR4-PR5-PR6	437.8	433.0	94.2
	PR1-PR4-PR3-PR2-PR5-PR6	443.8	429.2	95.9
	PR1-PR5-PR4-PR3-PR2-PR6	448.0	441.7	95.1
	PR1-PR5-PR3-PR2-PR4-PR6	451.2	439.6	95.3
	PR1-PR5-PR2-PR4-PR3-PR6	439.6	428.0	95.5

Time interval used in the test is 480 minutes.

Table(1): Simulation results of the priority sequences.

Test	Damaged Element	Response Time (sec)
Cell-level	LINK (3)	0.25
	LINK (4)	0.25
Machine-level	Machine(2) in Cell(1)	0.22
	Machine(2) in Cell(2)	0.21

Table(2): Recovery time for the damaged elements.

The simulation results for the case study described in Fig(9), are given in Table(1). It is clear that there is no sequence of priority rules is dominant in terms of the solution quality for all problems. Hence, our proposal will offer the expertise the ability to decide the desired sequence of these priorities according to the requirements. Since the FMS is of real time nature, the resources damaging and the response time to find an alternative is of critical significance. The designed model suggests software sensors that share with other input functions to enable the transitions. In fact, each software sensor interacts with hardware sensor, which in turn is related to the working condition of such a

resource in the system. However, these functions will not identify the type of the problem, but only indicate its appearance. Table (2) shows the response time for some simulated problems under the environment of the case study given in Fig.(9).

7. Conclusions

On-line scheduling is an important task for obtaining efficiency and high productivity in flexible manufacturing systems. A hierarchical on-line scheduler model based on CPN has been presented in this paper. This model consists of two levels; the cell-level and the machine-level. It has been used to:

- interpret the output of the manufacturing route planner into graphical representation,
- achieve the sequencing, dispatching and monitoring the real-time implementation of the manufacturing plans, and
- generate feedback status to monitor any abnormal condition.

This scheduler has the following features;

1. The CPN models deal with multi-cell/multi-job manufacturing systems.
2. It has hierarchical design.
3. It monitors and controls the concurrency and synchronization between jobs to use limited resources.

The designed scheduler has been evaluated for different case studies to demonstrate its capabilities. The achieved results are very encouraging.

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Appendix (A)

A.1 The cell-level model:

(a). The places definitions:

$C(P1) = \{ \langle Jxs \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs in the dummy input buffers (DI). The job (J) is denoted by x and s which mean the job's manufacturing stage number respectively.

$C(R) = \{ \langle Ry \rangle \}$: This place represents the availability of the robots in the FMS.

$C(P2) = \{ \langle Jxs, INz, N \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs in external input buffers (IN) of the FMS. The N value is the job's priority according to the FIFO policy.

$C(CAP) = \{ \langle Le0 \rangle \}$: This place represents the availability of the transportation links such as conveyor, AGV, ...etc.

$C(LNK) = \{ \langle Jxs, Le0, N \rangle \}$: This place represents the jobs at initial position on the related link.

$C(E) = \{ \langle Jxs, Lew, N \rangle \}$: This place represents the movement values of the jobs on the related link. This movement is scaled by the parameter (w).

$C(LOG) = \{ \langle Le0 \rangle \}$: This place represents the logical availability of the links at their initial positions.

$C(P4) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ba1, N \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs in the cells input buffers. Where a means the related cell and (1) means input buffer.

$C(P5) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ca, N \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs inside the related cell (Ca).

$C(P6) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ba2, N \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs in cells output buffers. Where a means the related cell and (2) means output buffer.

$C(P7) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ob, N \rangle \} \cup \{ \langle Jxs, Df, N \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs in external output buffer (Ob) or an intermediate storage buffer (Df) of the FMS.

$C(P8)$: This place is equivalent to $C(P1)$ but now it represents dummy output buffers (OD).

These places represent the availability of the buffers at the cell level.

$C(AV1) = \{ \langle INz \rangle \}$

$C(AV2) = \{ \langle Ba1 \rangle \}$

$C(AV3) = \{ \langle Ba2 \rangle \}$

$C(AV4) = \{ \langle Ob \rangle \} \cup \{ \langle Df \rangle \}$

 $C(K-B) = \{ \langle INz \rangle, \langle Le0 \rangle, \langle Ba1 \rangle, \langle Ba2 \rangle, \langle Df \rangle, \langle Ob \rangle \}$: This place represents the source of information about the types and the capacities of the resources

(b). The transitions definitions:

$C(t1) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ry \rangle \}$

$C(t2) = \{ \langle Jxs, INz, Ry, Le0 \rangle \}$

The following gates control the transportation mechanism, where # represents the actual length of the related transportation link;

$C(t3) = C(t4) = C(t6) = C(t7) = \{ \langle Le0 \rangle \}$

$C(t5) = \{ \langle Lew \rangle \}$

$C(t8) = \{ \langle Jxs, Le\#, Ry \rangle \}$

 $C(t9) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ba1, Ry \rangle \}$

$C(t10) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ca, Ry \rangle \}$

$C(t11) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ba2, Ry, Le0 \rangle \}$

$C(t12) = \{ \langle Jxs, Le\#, Ry \rangle \}$

$C(t13) = \{ \langle Jxs, Df, Ry, Le0 \rangle \}$

$C(t14) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ob, Ry \rangle \}$

$C(t15) = \{ \langle INz \rangle, \langle Le0 \rangle, \langle Ba1 \rangle, \langle Ba2 \rangle, \langle Df \rangle, \langle Ob \rangle, \langle Ry \rangle \}$

A.2 The machine-level model:

(a). The places definitions:

$C(P1) = \{ \langle Jxt, N \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs that are ready to be processed inside the related cell. The job (J) is denoted by x and t which are the job number and manufacturing operation number.

$C(CAP) = \{ \langle Lr0 \rangle \}$: This place represents the availability of related transportation link such as conveyor, AGV, ...etc.

$C(LNK) = \{ \langle Jxt, Lr0, N \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs at the initial position on the related link.

$C(E) = \{ \langle Jxt, Lrw, N \rangle \}$: This place represents the movement values of the jobs on the related link, which is scaled by the parameter (w).
 $C(LOG) = \{ \langle Lr0 \rangle \}$: This place represents the logical availability of the links at their initial positions.
 $C(P2) = \{ \langle Jxt, Bg1 \rangle \}$: This place represents the jobs in the machines i/p buffers, where g means the related machine and (1) the i/p buffer.
 $C(M) = \{ \langle Jxt, Mg, Ygy \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs under processing on the related machine (g) and the tool (y).

These places represent the availability of buffers, machines and machines tools inside the related manufacturing cell

$C(AV1) = \{ \langle Bg1 \rangle \}$
 $C(AV2) = \{ \langle Mg \rangle \}$
 $C(AV3) = \{ \langle Bg2 \rangle \}$
 $C(AV4) = \{ \langle Tk \rangle \}$
 $C(TOL) = \{ \langle Ygy \rangle \}$

$C(K-B) = \{ \langle Lr0 \rangle, \langle Bg1 \rangle, \langle Bg2 \rangle, \langle Mg \rangle, \langle Tk \rangle, \langle Ygy \rangle \}$: This place represents the source of information about the types and the capacities of the resources inside the related cell.

(b). The transitions definitions:

$C(t1) = \{ \langle Jxt, Lr0, Rq \rangle \}$

These gates control the transportation mechanism, where # represents the actual length of the related transportation link.

$C(t2) = C(t3) = C(t5) = C(t6) = \{ \langle Le0 \rangle \}$, $C(t4) = \{ \langle Lrw \rangle \}$
 $C(t7) = \{ \langle Jxt, Lr\#, Bg1, Rq \rangle \}$

$C(t8) = \{ \langle Mg, Bg1 \rangle \}$
 $C(t9) = \{ \langle Jxt, Mg, Ygy, Bg1, Rq \rangle \}$
 $C(t10) = \{ \langle Jxt, Mg, Ygy, Rq \rangle \}$
 $C(t11) = \{ \langle Jxt, Bg2, Lr0, Rq \rangle \}$
 $C(t12) = \{ \langle Jxt, Lr\#, Rq \rangle \}$
 $C(t13) = \{ \langle Jxt, Tk, Lr0, Rq \rangle \}$
 $C(t14) = \{ \langle Mg \rangle, \langle Lr0 \rangle, \langle Bg1 \rangle, \langle Bg2 \rangle, \langle Ygy \rangle, \langle Tk \rangle, \langle Rq \rangle \}$

A.3 The FIFO model:

(a) The places definitions

$C(FIFO1) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ry \rangle \}$ at cell-level
 $C(FIFO1) = \{ \langle Jxt, Rq \rangle \}$ at machine-level
 $C(INC) = \{ \langle ?, N \rangle \}$: This place represents the instant priority value (N) related to the argument (?), where ? is INz, Ba1, Ba2, Ob, or Df at cell-level, and it is Bg2 or Tk at machine-level.

(b) The transitions definitions

$C(tag) = \{ \langle Jxs, Ry, ? \rangle \}$ at cell-level
 $C(tag) = \{ \langle Jxt, Rq, ? \rangle \}$ at machine-level

$C(P3) = \{ \langle Jxt, Bg2, N \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs in the machines o/p buffers, where g means the related machine and (2) the o/p buffer.
 $C(P4) = \{ \langle Jxt, Tk, N \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs in an intermediate storage buffer (Tk) within the manufacturing cell.
 $C(P5) = \{ \langle Jxt \rangle \}$: This place represents jobs that are ready to be transferred to another manufacturing cell.
 $C(R) = \{ \langle Rq \rangle \}$: This place represents the robots inside the related manufacturing cell.

A.4 The heuristic priority algorithm model:

(a) The places definitions

$C(P1) = \{ \langle Jxt, Bg1 \rangle \}$: This place represent groups of jobs in dummy input buffers of the manufacturing machines. This dummy buffer denotes logical location contains the jobs that the heuristic priority algorithm selects from them to use the related machine.
 $C(P2) = \{ \langle Jxt, Mg, Bg1, RLx1 \rangle \}$: This place represents the jobs ready to be manufactured on the related machine according to the first priority rule (RLx1)
 $C(P3) = C(P4) = C(P5) = C(P6) = C(P7) = C(P8) = C(P10)$: These places have similar color tokens as C(P2). They contains jobs coming through the filters (the transitions) according to the next priority rules [2,3,4,5].
 $C(P9) = \{ \langle Jxt, Mg, Bg1 \rangle \}$: This place represents the selected job to be manufactured on the related machine.
 $C(P11) = C(P12) = \{ \langle Jxt, Bg1 \rangle \}$: These places represent the new groups of jobs in the input buffers of the related machines. They are used to initiate the user priority.

These places represent the priority values according to the rules of the heuristic priority algorithm.

$C(PR1) = \{ \langle RLx1, Mg \rangle \}$
 $C(PR2) = \{ \langle RLxt2, Mg \rangle \}$
 $C(PR3) = \{ \langle RLxt3, Mg \rangle \}$
 $C(PR4) = \{ \langle RLxt4, Mg \rangle \}$
 $C(PR5) = \{ \langle RLxt5, Mg \rangle \}$

$C(GAR) = \{ \langle RLx1, Mg \rangle \}$: This place works as garbage for the user priority tokens of the jobs, which are already manufactured on the related machine.

These places are the sources of information about the values of priorities for the jobs according to the heuristic priority rules.

$C(SK-B) = \{ \langle RLx1, Mg \rangle \}$
 $C(TK-B) = \{ \langle RLxt2, Mg \rangle \} \cup \{ \langle RLxt3, Mg \rangle \} \cup \{ \langle RLxt4, Mg \rangle \} \cup \{ \langle RLxt5, Mg \rangle \}$

(b) The transitions definitions

All the transitions in this model has the same definition which is $\{ \langle Mg \rangle \}$.