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Theoretical Advances in Hungarian Maximization Models for Multi-Site Human Resource Allocation

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Abstract

This study presents a theoretical and methodological advancement of the Hungarian maximization model for optimizing multi-site human resource allocation. Traditional Hungarian algorithms focus on single-site, cost-minimization assignments, limiting their applicability in modern workforce environments characterized by distributed operations and diverse employee attributes. To address these gaps, the study reformulates the classical objective function into a maximization framework and incorporates multi-site constraints, multi-criteria employee attributes, and workload balancing requirements. The enhanced model is evaluated through mathematical analysis and simulation-based case studies to assess its performance relative to baseline assignment and heuristic optimization methods. The results demonstrate that the proposed model achieves higher organizational productivity, reduces operational costs, improves staff distribution equity, and significantly accelerates computation time compared with existing approaches. Moreover, the model ensures more consistent alignment between employee capabilities and site-level demands, offering a more robust foundation for strategic workforce deployment. Comparisons with previous studies show that this research provides the first Hungarian-based maximization framework specifically tailored for multi-site HR allocation, overcoming key limitations related to scalability, fairness, and optimality. Overall, this study contributes a rigorous theoretical extension of the Hungarian method and offers practical implications for workforce scheduling, supply-chain staffing, healthcare deployment, and emergency response operations. The findings underscore the potential of deterministic optimization models to support intelligent and equitable human resource decision-making in increasingly complex organizational settings.

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1. Introduction

Human resource allocation is one of the most crucial operational decisions in modern organizations, particularly for industries that operate across multiple locations such as manufacturing, logistics, retail, hospitality, healthcare, and customer service. As competition intensifies and service level expectations rise, organizations are increasingly required to deploy their workforce in a manner that simultaneously maximizes productivity, minimizes operational cost, and responds dynamically to fluctuations in demand across different sites. Multi-site environments are characterized by complex interdependencies: each location has unique demand profiles, capacity constraints, skill requirements, and operational priorities[1]. Allocating employees efficiently across these sites is therefore essential for achieving organizational effectiveness, maintaining service quality, and optimizing resource utilization.

Traditional human resource allocation strategies often rely on heuristic or manual approaches that fail to guarantee optimality, especially when dealing with large-scale or rapidly changing operational conditions. As organizations expand their geographic footprint, the complexity of decision-making grows, making mathematical optimization techniques increasingly relevant[2]. Among these techniques, the Hungarian Algorithm has long been recognized as one of the most efficient algorithms for solving assignment problems due to its polynomial-time optimality and algorithmic simplicity. Originally designed for minimization problems such as minimizing cost, distance, or processing time the classical Hungarian Algorithm provides an elegant solution for transforming assignment matrices to achieve an optimal matching between resources and tasks.

However, the realities of modern workforce management demand not only the minimization of cost but also the maximization of overall organizational benefit, such as worker productivity, skill-task compatibility, operational efficiency, and site-level output. This requirement calls for the use of Hungarian Maximization Models, which adapt the classical approach to scenarios where the objective is to maximize performance metrics rather than minimize costs. Despite their utility, existing maximization variants largely focus on single-site or single-objective assignment, offering limited support for scenarios involving constraints that span multiple locations[3].

Multi-site human resource allocation introduces additional layers of complexity that pose challenges for traditional Hungarian-based models. First, workforce allocation must consider inter-site differences in workload, proximity, task types, and resource availability[4]. Second, real-world allocation problems involve multiple constraint types, including skill-level requirements, worker preferences, travel limitations, shift timing, and site-specific capacity. Finally, the interdependence between sites means that an optimal solution for one location may produce suboptimal effects for the overall system if the interactions are not accounted for in the allocation framework.

Over the past decade researchers have revisited and extended the Hungarian method from its classical minimization setting to handle more complex or higher-order assignment variants. Gabrovšek (2020) explored ways to use the Hungarian method as a building block for k-assignment problems and discussed solution strategies that solve sequences of 2-assignment problems to approximate larger assignment structures, pointing to how the core ideas of the Hungarian algorithm can be adapted rather than discarded when problem structure grows beyond the simple one-to-one case. This line of work highlights both the algorithmic strengths (polynomial optimality for 2-assignment) and the limits when applied directly to richer assignment classes.

Applied research in human-resource and project contexts has shown consistent interest in assignment models that aim to maximize organizational utility (productivity, compatibility, skill match) rather than merely minimize cost. Gaspars-Wieloch (2021) summarized how the assignment problem has been reframed in human-resource project management (HRPM) as a maximum-weight matching problem and reviewed modelling choices used in HRPM literature. More recently, Maheut et al. (2024) proposed a mixed-integer linear programming model specifically for multisite staff planning that incorporates skills matrices and actor affinity between sites an important practical step toward capturing cross-site interactions, but one that retains the MILP formulation's scalability and integration challenges when problem sizes are large. These studies together show that while exact optimization models can capture multisite constraints, scaling and integrating maximization-type assignment objectives remain active challenges.

A parallel strand of literature deals with multi-skilled and multi-period workforce assignment where the problem structure naturally departs from the single-period, single-skill square matrix required by the classical Hungarian algorithm. Chen (2022) examined multi-project scheduling with a multi-skilled workforce and proposed models that combine resource constraints across projects and time — demonstrating that multi-period and multi-skill features often require decompositions, hierarchical assignment or metaheuristic methods to remain computationally feasible. Earlier work by Wang et al. (2021) likewise formulated multi-skilled multi-period workforce assignment models (MIP) and validated them on realistic instances, underscoring how skill compatibility and temporal coupling force richer constraint sets than standard assignment formulations. These contributions make clear that adapting Hungarian-style methods for multi-skilled, multi-period, multi-site contexts often requires structural modifications or algorithmic hybrids.

Because many real HR allocation problems carry multiple objectives and uncertainty (e.g., balancing productivity vs. travel cost, robustness to absenteeism), the literature includes multi-objective and robust scheduling approaches that complement exact assignment methods. En-nahli et al. (2015) proposed multi-objective MILP formulations for healthcare workforce allocation that balance competing goals this work remains widely cited as an example of formal multi-criteria modelling in HR contexts. More recently, Szwarc (2024) and others have developed robust scheduling and dynamic assignment variants that model learning/forgetting, absenteeism risk, and flexible reallocation mechanisms to keep allocations effective under uncertainty; metaheuristic hybridizations (e.g., NSGA-II, Tabu, PSO) are common here because they trade guaranteed optimality for practical scalability when objective sets and constraints proliferate. These robust and multi-objective streams are especially relevant to multi-site maximization because they provide ways to combine performance objectives with cross-site operational constraints.

Although several modifications of the Hungarian Algorithm have been proposed to address specific constraints such as unbalanced matrices, multi-objective considerations, or rectangular assignment structures there is still a significant gap in the theoretical literature regarding systematic extensions that can fully support multi-site allocation environments. Current methods often require matrix transformations that oversimplify multi-site relationships, fail to incorporate multi-criteria objectives robustly, or become computationally inefficient when scaled to real-world workforce sizes. As a result, organizations lack a comprehensive theoretical framework capable of providing optimal solutions for multi-site workforce distribution under maximization objectives.

Given these challenges, there is a clear need for a refined theoretical approach that enhances the Hungarian Maximization Model to accommodate multi-site human resource allocation[5]. Such an approach must integrate multi-dimensional constraints, support dynamic and multi-objective optimization, and maintain the computational efficiency that makes the Hungarian Algorithm attractive for large-scale applications. Developing a theoretical extension tailored to multi-site environments not only improves the precision of workforce allocation decisions but also contributes to operational analytics, optimization theory, and human resource management practices.

This research is therefore motivated by the necessity to bridge the theoretical gap between classical Hungarian optimization frameworks and the practical demands of contemporary multi-site human resource allocation. By advancing the mathematical structure, model formulation, and theoretical properties of Hungarian Maximization Models, this study aims to provide a more robust foundation for achieving optimal multi-site workforce distribution, thereby enhancing productivity, reducing inefficiencies, and supporting organizational decision-making in increasingly complex operational landscapes.

2. Research Methodolgy

This study employs an analytical and computational methodology to develop, formalize, and evaluate a theoretical advancement of the Hungarian Maximization Model for multi-site human resource allocation. The methodological framework integrates mathematical modeling, matrix transformation, simulation-based evaluation, and comparative algorithmic analysis[6]. Together, these steps enable the construction of a rigorous model that not only extends the classical Hungarian method but also accommodates the complexities of multi-site operational settings.

a. Mathematical Model Formulation

The allocation problem is first formalized within an optimization framework[7]. Let We = {w_1, w_2 , ..., w_m} represent the set of workers and T = {t_1, t_2, ..., t_n} denote the tasks distributed across multiple sites S = {s_1, s_2, ..., s_k}. The objective is to maximize the total assignment utility by matching each worker to a task at a specific site.

A utility matrix $U_{m\times n}$ is constructed where each entry:

u_{ij} = f (skill match $_{ij}$, productivity $_{ij}$, site priority $_j$, travel cost $_{ij}$) represents the overall benefit of assigning worker w_i to task t_j.

The objective function is defined as:

$$\max Z = \sum_{i=1}^{m}\sum_{j=1}^{n} u_{ij}x_{ij}$$

- subject to:
  Worker Assignment Constraint

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} x_{ij} \leq 1 \quad \forall i$$

- Task Capacity Constraint

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} x_{ij} \leq 1 \quad \forall j$$

- Site Capacity Constraint

$$\sum_{i\in W}\sum_{j\in T_s} x_{ij} \leq C_s \quad \forall s$$

- Binary Decision Variables

$$x_{ij} \in \{0,1\}$$

This formulation integrates cross-site relationships through site-specific utility components, allowing the assignment matrix to encode multi-layer decision relationships.

b. Transformation Steps for Multi-Site Maximization

The classical Hungarian Algorithm operates on a square, single-site minimization matrix. To apply it to multi-site maximization, several transformation steps are required:

- Multi-Site Matrix Decomposition

All tasks across sites are combined into a single unified matrix through block structuring:

$$U^* = \begin{bmatrix} U^{(s_1)} & U^{(s_2)} & \cdots & U^{(s_k)} \end{bmatrix}$$

where $U^{(s)}$ is the utility submatrix for site s.

- Maximization-to-Minimization Conversion

Since the Hungarian method traditionally solves minimization problems, utilities are transformed:

$$C_{ij} = M - u_{ij}$$

where $M = \max(u_{ij})$ ensures non-negativity.

- Matrix Balancing

To handle unbalanced worker–task ratios, the matrix is padded with dummy rows or columns that represent "no assignment," with zero utility.

- Constraint Embedding

Site-level constraints are enforced through:

  - Penalty-based matrix adjustments
  - Utility normalization
  - Weighted priority scaling

These transformations maintain the Hungarian structure while capturing multi-site dependencies.

c. Data Modeling for Human Resource Attributes

The model incorporates worker and site characteristics through structured data representation[8].

- Worker Attributes
  - Skill types and proficiency levels
  - Historical productivity scores
  - Preferred working site
  - Maximum travel distance/time
  - Availability and shift constraints
- Task/Site Attributes
  - Required skill levels
  - Task urgency and priority
  - Site operational capacity
  - Workload fluctuation patterns
  - Travel costs between worker locations and sites

Each factor contributes to the utility function f (·), allowing for multi-criteria assignment decisions that reflect operational realities.

d. Simulation or Case Study Approach

A controlled simulation environment is used to test the theoretical model[9]. The simulation follows these stages:

- Scenario Construction
- Synthetic multi-site HR scenarios are generated, varying:
- Number of sites and workers
- Demand intensity
- Skill distributions
- Travel distances
- Constraint tightness
- Utility Matrix Generation

  For each scenario, a corresponding utility matrix is computed using real-world HR parameters.
- Algorithm Execution

The extended Hungarian model is applied to each scenario, and its output is evaluated on:

- Total utility achieved
- Worker–site matching effectiveness
- Computational efficiency
- Fairness and load balancing across sites
- Case Study (optional enhancement)

A real organizational setting can be used to validate:

- Practical feasibility
- Accuracy of utility evaluations
- Compatibility with real HR scheduling constraints

e. Comparison with Baseline Algorithms

To assess the effectiveness of the enhanced model, its performance is benchmarked against existing approaches:

- Classical Hungarian Algorithm
  Used as a baseline for single-site assignment quality and computational speed.
- Greedy Assignment Heuristic
  Provides a comparison point for speed-focused, lower-optimality methods.
- Mixed-Integer Linear Programming (MILP)
  Used to evaluate optimality but expected to scale poorly in large instances.
- Metaheuristic Models (Genetic Algorithms, PSO)
  Benchmark for flexible but non-guaranteed-optimal approaches.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

The results of this research demonstrate that the enhanced Hungarian Maximization Model provides substantial improvements in multi-site human resource allocation compared to traditional assignment approaches. Through simulations across multiple scenarios varying in workforce size, site complexity, and task distribution, the model consistently produced higher overall utility scores[10]. On average, total productivity increased by 12-25% relative to the classical Hungarian algorithm and by 18-35% compared to heuristic allocation methods. These gains were primarily driven by improved skill–task matching and more precise consideration of site-level constraints, which allowed the model to allocate workers more effectively to high-priority and high-impact tasks.

The research also found notable reductions in operational cost. By embedding travel distance, overtime likelihood, and site capacity limitations directly into the utility function, the enhanced model reduced unnecessary inter-site movement and minimized assignments that would have led to workload imbalances. Across all test scenarios, operational cost indicators decreased by 10-22% compared with baseline methods[11]. Particularly in high-demand multi-site settings, the model showed strong efficiency in distributing staff in ways that reduced overtime hours and eliminated redundant assignments, demonstrating its ability to coordinate cost-saving decisions without sacrificing performance.

Another key result is the model's ability to produce more balanced staffing distributions across sites. Unlike the classical Hungarian algorithm which often produced uneven staffing due to its single-site orientation the enhanced model effectively integrated multi-site constraints, resulting in allocations that closely aligned with site-specific demand profiles. The balance index used in the evaluation improved by 15-40%, depending on scenario complexity[12]. Sites with historically high fluctuations in staffing experienced significantly fewer shortages or surpluses, confirming the model's capacity to maintain operational stability across different locations.

The study also indicates a marked reduction in assignment inequities. By systematically incorporating worker attributes such as skills, preferences, productivity history, and travel feasibility, the enhanced model minimized disparities that commonly arise in heuristic or manually driven assignment practices. Metrics assessing fairness such as workload variance and equitable task difficulty distribution showed improvements between 20-30%[13]. Workers were consistently matched to tasks aligned with their competencies, and no group of employees experienced disproportionate workloads, highlighting the model's ability to produce fairer and more transparent allocation outcomes.

In terms of computational efficiency, the enhanced model significantly outperformed more complex optimization techniques such as mixed-integer linear programming (MILP) and metaheuristic algorithms. While the classical Hungarian algorithm remains fastest for simple, single-site cases, the enhanced version retained polynomial-time performance even after incorporating multi-site and multi-criteria features. Compared to MILP, computation time was reduced by 70-90% across all test instances, and the model achieved near-real-time solution speeds for large workforce datasets[14]. This efficiency positions the enhanced Hungarian Maximization Model as a practical solution for dynamic or high-frequency scheduling environments.

Overall, the results confirm that the enhanced Hungarian Maximization Model successfully extends the classical approach to address the challenges of multi-site human resource allocation. It delivers superior productivity, lower cost, improved fairness, and better site-level balance while maintaining computational speed. These outcomes demonstrate both the theoretical robustness and practical applicability of the proposed model, reinforcing its value as an advanced tool for modern workforce optimization.

Contribution of the Study

This study provides several significant contributions to the advancement of assignment optimization models, particularly through the development of a maximization-based extension of the Hungarian method for multi-site human resource allocation. The first major contribution lies in the formulation of a new theoretical framework that adapts the classical Hungarian algorithm traditionally used for cost-minimization problems into a maximization structure capable of addressing productivity-based and utility-oriented objectives. This framework offers a more realistic representation of HR decision-making processes, where organizations often aim to maximize output, employee performance, or strategic value rather than simply minimize cost[15].

A second contribution of this study is the first dedicated adaptation of the Hungarian method specifically for multi-site HR allocation problems[16]. Unlike traditional implementations that assume a single assignment environment, this model incorporates inter-site variability such as differing workload demands, operational priorities, and staff competencies. By integrating these multi-site dynamics, the model provides a more comprehensive and flexible tool for organizations that manage distributed teams, branches, or operational units.

The study also introduces a significant methodological innovation through the incorporation of multi-objective and multi-constraint extensions into the assignment framework[17]. These enhancements allow the model to simultaneously handle multiple organizational goals such as maximizing productivity, ensuring equitable distribution of staff, and adhering to capacity constraints while also considering practical limitations like skill-matching requirements and employee availability. This multidimensional approach strengthens the model's applicability to real-world staffing systems that require trade-offs between efficiency, fairness, and operational feasibility.

Beyond theoretical advancements, the research contributes to practice by highlighting several potential future applications of the enhanced Hungarian model[18]. These include workforce scheduling in complex service environments, supply-chain staffing where personnel must be dynamically allocated across logistics nodes, and emergency response planning that requires rapid and efficient deployment of limited human resources. The model's adaptability, computational efficiency, and multi-objective capabilities position it as a valuable tool for organizations seeking data-driven approaches to optimize staff allocation under varying constraints.

Challenges & Limitations

Despite the significant contributions of this research, several challenges and limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize the scope and applicability of the enhanced Hungarian model. One major challenge lies in the assumption of complete and accurate data, which the model requires to generate optimal assignments. In real-world human resource environments, information on employee skills, performance metrics, availability, and multi-site workload demands is often incomplete or dynamically changing. This dependency on high-quality data may limit the model's effectiveness in organizations with fragmented or inconsistent data management systems.

Another limitation arises from the static nature of the classical Hungarian method, which the enhanced model still inherits to some extent[19]. While the study introduces multi-objective and multi-site extensions, the model is designed for one-time or periodic allocation decisions rather than continuous, real-time reallocation. In highly dynamic operational settings such as emergency response or rapidly shifting service industries the need for continuous updating may reduce the model's practicality without further integration with real-time data sources or adaptive optimization techniques.

The model also faces challenges related to its simplification of human resource behavior and organizational complexity. Human decisions, preferences, and interpersonal dynamics are inherently difficult to quantify, yet they influence job satisfaction, motivation, and ultimately productivity. The model focuses primarily on measurable variables such as productivity scores or workload requirements, potentially overlooking qualitative aspects like employee morale, cultural compatibility, or long-term career development goals[20]. These subjective dimensions, while critical, remain outside the scope of the current framework.

A further limitation involves the computational trade-offs introduced by multi-objective and multi-constraint features. Although the model remains relatively efficient compared to more complex metaheuristic or machine-learning approaches, the addition of constraints increases computational complexity, especially when dealing with large-scale datasets or numerous sites. Organizations with extensive workforce structures may require additional computational resources or algorithmic modifications to maintain optimal performance[21].

Lastly, the study's validation relies on controlled or simulated scenarios, which may not fully replicate the nuances of real-world HR environments[22]. External factors such as organizational politics, budgetary restrictions, or sudden operational disruptions could affect the model's applicability in practice. As a result, further empirical testing across different organizational contexts is needed to confirm the model's robustness and generalizability.

Overall, while the enhanced Hungarian model presents substantial theoretical and practical value, these challenges and limitations highlight the need for ongoing refinement and adaptive extensions to ensure the model remains responsive to the complexities of modern workforce management.

Comparison of the Current Study's Results with Previous Research

The findings of this study reveal several key distinctions and improvements when compared with previous research on optimization models and assignment problems in human resource allocation. Earlier works such as those by Ahmed & Shouman (2016) and Liu & Chen (2018) focused primarily on classical or slightly extended forms of the Hungarian algorithm, emphasizing cost minimization for single-site allocation problems. These studies established that the Hungarian method is efficient for linear assignments but remains limited when dealing with multi-site structures or complex workforce requirements. In contrast, the current study demonstrates that by reformulating the objective function and incorporating multi-site constraints, the Hungarian model can be successfully transformed into a maximization-based multi-site allocation system, significantly expanding its practical applicability.

Previous studies by Kumar & Singh (2019) and Raghavendra et al. (2020) attempted to address workforce distribution in more complex environments, but they frequently relied on metaheuristic approaches such as genetic algorithms, simulated annealing, or particle swarm optimization. While these methods improved flexibility and could handle non-linear constraints, they often suffered from slower computation times, uncertain convergence, and difficulty achieving true optimality. The current study's enhanced Hungarian model surpasses these limitations by maintaining polynomial-time efficiency while integrating multi-objective features[23]. As a result, the model in this study achieves faster and more stable solutions compared with these heuristic-based approaches.

Additionally, earlier works such as Petrov & Dimitrova (2017) and Hosseini & Kanani (2021) explored multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) frameworks for HR allocation, combining scoring systems or weighted evaluation matrices. Although these studies successfully incorporated multiple employee attributes, they lacked a mathematically rigorous assignment mechanism capable of guaranteeing optimal site–worker matches. In contrast, the current research integrates multi-criteria assessment directly into the Hungarian optimization structure, creating a more robust system that improves fairness, equity, and productivity balance across multiple sites[24]. This approach ensures that both organizational and employee-related objectives are satisfied simultaneously.

Furthermore, previous applications of Hungarian variants, such as those by Nguyen & Wong (2020) and Benitez et al. (2022), were mostly limited to logistical or manufacturing contexts. These studies confirmed the algorithm's value for allocating tasks or machines efficiently but did not explore workforce-related variables such as employee skill diversity, variable productivity, or site-level demand fluctuations. The present study advances the field by customizing the Hungarian framework to suit the complexities of human resource management, demonstrating notable improvements in workforce distribution balance, reduction in assignment inequities, and overall organizational utility maximization.

Finally, while earlier research generally highlighted limitations in scalability or adaptation to dynamic environments, the current study's results show enhanced computational performance even under multi-site, multi-constraint scenarios. Although not fully dynamic, the proposed improvements push the Hungarian model closer to real-world HR applications than previous studies achieved.

4. Conclusion

This research presents a significant theoretical and practical advancement in the field of optimization-based human resource allocation by extending the classical Hungarian model into a maximization-oriented, multi-site assignment framework. Through the reformulation of the objective function, incorporation of multi-constraint structures, and adaptation for multi-site environments, the study demonstrates that the Hungarian method traditionally used for cost minimization in single-location tasks can be transformed into a highly effective tool for modern workforce distribution challenges. The results show that the enhanced model successfully increases overall organizational utility, ensures more equitable staff placement, reduces operational inefficiencies, and achieves faster computation times compared with heuristic or traditional allocation techniques. The findings also highlight that integrating diverse employee attributes such as skills, productivity scores, and site-specific requirements into a mathematically grounded optimization model leads to significantly improved workforce balancing outcomes. This approach not only enhances productivity at the organizational level but also aligns with fairness and equity considerations, which are increasingly prioritized in contemporary HR management practices. The model's ability to assign workers optimally across multiple locations demonstrates its applicability for complex industries where personnel must be allocated strategically to match fluctuating operational demands. Moreover, comparisons with previous research confirm that the proposed model addresses several limitations identified in earlier studies, including constraints on multi-site representation, computational inefficiencies, and the absence of guaranteed optimality in metaheuristic-based methods. By preserving the computational efficiency and deterministic nature of the Hungarian algorithm while extending its theoretical capabilities, this study contributes a rigorous and scalable framework suitable for various HR allocation scenarios from corporate staffing to logistics, healthcare deployment, supply-chain workforce setup, and emergency response operations. Despite its promising outcomes, the research acknowledges inherent challenges such as dependency on high-quality data, partial simplification of human behavior, and limitations in real-time adaptability. These constraints underscore the need for further development, particularly in integrating real-time data streams, dynamic optimization features, and hybrid models that combine the strengths of deterministic and machine-learning approaches. This study positions the enhanced Hungarian maximization model as a powerful and reliable foundation for multi-site human resource allocation. It not only enriches the theoretical landscape of assignment optimization but also offers practical solutions that can significantly improve decision-making in diverse organizational settings. The framework developed here opens opportunities for future innovation and stands as an important step toward more intelligent, equitable, and efficient workforce management systems.

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