A Simulation-Optimization Approach to Control Production, Subcontracting and Maintenance Decisions for a Deteriorating Production System

Héctor Rivera-Gómez, Eva Selene Hernández-Gress, Oscar Montaño-Arango, Jose Ramon Corona-Armenta

Abstract—This research studies the joint production, maintenance and subcontracting control policy for an unreliable deteriorating manufacturing system. Production activities are controlled by a derivation of the Hedging Point Policy, and given that the system is subject to deterioration, it reduces progressively its capacity to satisfy product demand. Multiple deterioration effects are considered, reflected mainly in the quality of the parts produced and the reliability of the machine. Subcontracting is available as support to satisfy product demand; also, overhaul maintenance can be conducted to reduce the effects of deterioration. The main objective of the research is to determine simultaneously the production, maintenance and subcontracting rate, which minimize the total, incurred cost. A stochastic dynamic programming model is developed and solved through a simulation-based approach composed of statistical analysis and optimization with the response surface methodology. The obtained results highlight the strong interactions between production, deterioration and quality, which justify the development of an integrated model. A numerical example and a sensitivity analysis are presented to validate our results.

Keywords—Deterioration, simulation, subcontracting, production planning.

I. INTRODUCTION

In many industries, firms are faced to a number of factors (i.e. delays, defectives, failures, wear, etc.) that limit progressively its capacity to satisfy product demand. Furthermore; customers require that production systems respond quickly to their demand, thus, subcontractors can be an attractive option. Certainly, the higher costs related with subcontracting can be justified by the reduction in the inventory, and in the risk of lost sales. Also in real production, maintenance strategies could be available to mitigate the effects of deterioration. In this context, we investigate the joint production, subcontracting and maintenance strategies for an unreliable manufacturing system, where the effects of its deterioration are reflected in several performance indices, reducing progressively its capacity to satisfy product demand.

The production control problem for a failure prone machine was introduced by [1], who derived the optimality conditions that led to the control policy of a small production system. Subsequent papers refined and extended the HPP in different directions, as in [2], who described the connection between the HPP and other scheduling policies for manufacturing systems. Some papers have highlighted the importance of the relationship of quality issues and production. For instance [3], [4] introduced analytical and computational methods to evaluate the performance of small and long manufacturing lines with defective production. A recent area of research, integrates the influence of quality issues on the production control policy, as in [5], where they presented a joint strategy of lot production and preventive maintenance, where the rate of nonconforming units is used to determine the conduction of preventive maintenance. Reference [6] dealt with the joint optimization of the batch size, the production threshold and the sample size for inspection, of an unreliable machine. As we can notice since the manufacturing system can be subject to progressive deterioration, the relationship between quality and production can be studied from a different angle. Thus, the concept of deterioration may provide useful insight to our research.

In most existing deterioration models, uses the age of the machine or the number of repairs to denote the level of deterioration of the machine, as in [7], where the failure intensity can be partially reset with a repair or it can be completely refresh with a major maintenance. A model for the performance evaluation of a multi-state degraded system is provided in [8], where if inspection finds that the system is in an unacceptable state, where it cannot satisfy the demand, preventive maintenance is performed to restore partially the machine. Reference [9] addressed the case of a deteriorating system, where preventive maintenance causes an age reduction and a decrease in the failure rate. In [10] it is proposed a general theory to analyze the production rate of conforming units in production systems with progressively deteriorating machines and preventive maintenance. From the presented papers, we observe that deterioration can have multiple severe effects. However, it is needed more research to fully understand such effects on the production control policy.

Operation planning is critical for the proper profitability of a firm, and in the context of limited capacity, subcontracting can be a viable solution as indicated in [11], who derived a feedback policy to determine the production rate and the rate at which subcontractors are required for the case of backlog-dependent demand. In [12] it is studied the joint maintenance and production management for a production system which satisfies a principal customer, but that also performs subcontracting tasks. We find also in [13], a production
control policy of an unreliable machine, where a reserve machine is called upon in support to satisfy product demand. From a practical point of view, [14] treated the case of a pharmaceutical industry with multiple facilities producing two medications (brand name and generic), where subcontracting was applied to compensate for insufficient production capacity. Indeed, in these papers, subcontracting is not analyzed in the case where the machine progressively reduces its capacity by deterioration. In real production, a degradation process may have multiple effects, reflected mainly in the reduction of quality and reliability of the system.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze a manufacturing system subject to deterioration, which increases the rate of defectives, and the failure intensity. The problem is formulated as a stochastic dynamic programming model, and given the difficulty to obtain analytical solutions, a simulation-based approach is proposed, to jointly optimize the related control parameters. We seek to minimize the total incurred cost, and an extensive sensitivity analysis is conducted to provide a better insight about the production system behavior.

The rest of the paper is organized as follow: Section I presents an Introduction for the addressed problem; the notations are introduced in Section II. The problem’s motivation is explained in Section III. The formulation of the model is described in Section IV. In Section V, we detailed the structure of the control policy. Section VI describes the simulation-based approach applied. A numerical example is illustrated in Section VII. In Section VIII we present a sensitivity analysis. Finally, Section IX concludes the paper.

II. NOTATION

The following notations are used in the formulation of the production control model:

- \( x(t) \): Inventory level at time \( t \)
- \( a(t) \): Age of the machine at time \( t \)
- \( d \): Constant demand rate of products
- \( \xi(t) \): Stochastic process
- \( q(t) \): Transition rate matrix of the stochastic process
- \( u_M(t) \): Production rate of the manufacturing system
- \( u_S(t) \): Subcontracting rate
- \( \beta(t) \): Rate of defectives
- \( \rho \): Discount rate
- \( \pi_i \): Limiting probability at mode \( i \)
- \( \eta_{ad}(a) \): Transition rate from mode \( a \) to mode \( a' \)
- \( f(t) \): Cost rate function associated with the process
- \( \phi(t) \): Expected discounted cost function
- \( \omega \): Control variable for the overhaul activity
- \( \omega_o \): Maximum overhaul rate
- \( \omega \): Minimum overhaul rate
- \( \tau \): Jump time of \( \xi(t) \)
- \( c^+ \): Inventory holding cost / units / time unit
- \( c^- \): Backlog cost / units / time unit
- \( c_r \): Repair cost
- \( c_o \): Overhaul cost
- \( c_d \): Cost of defectives
- \( c_{M1} \): Cost of production of the manufacturing system per unit of produced parts
- \( c_{M2} \): Cost of production of subcontracting per unit of produced parts
- \( \theta_d \): Adjustment parameter for the rate of defectives
- \( \theta_f \): Adjustment parameter for the failure rate

III. MOTIVATION

Our paper is mainly motivated by [15], who studied a real production case of a multiple unreliable manufacturing facilities with limited production capacity, which produce two chemicals that are difficult and expensive to store. They determined production and subcontracting policies, and in order to simplify their model, these authors formulated a continuous-time stochastic optimal control problem, assuming a constant failure rate. Nevertheless, the actual failure rate of such system is not constant; in fact, it increases very slightly as the time since the last repair increases. Hence, this condition implies a deterioration process. However, the effect of deterioration has been disregarded in that paper. In practice, deterioration may have a severe influence not only in the failure rate, but also in other performance indices of the system such as quality, safety, throughput, etc. that may reduce progressively its production capacity, as presented in [16], [17]. In this context, subcontracting can be an attractive option to provide additional capacity to achieve high levels of customer service. The study presented in our paper has many applications in several production sectors, such as the textile, apparel, retail channel, pharmaceutic, semiconductor, etc., normally in situations where the production system has a limited capacity and subcontracting is used to achieve capacity flexibility to gain and maintain a competitive advantage.

IV. CONTROL MODEL FORMULATION

Without loss of generality, we focus on the case of one machine subject to a double deterioration in order to gain insight about the behavior of the production system. Our formulation begins with a stochastic process \( (\xi(t), t \geq 0) \), with values in \( \Omega = \{1,2,3\} \). The machine is operational when \( (\xi(t) = 1) \), and unavailable when under repair \( (\xi(t) = 2) \) or under overhaul \( (\xi(t) = 3) \). The repair refers to a minimal maintenance that leaves the machine to as-bad-as-old conditions (ABAO). Meanwhile, overhaul is a perfect maintenance that restores the machine to as-good-as-new conditions (AGAN).

At any instant of time, the production rate must satisfy the capacity constraint: \( 0 \leq u_M(t) \leq u_o \), where \( u_o \) is the maximum production rate of the machine. Since deterioration increases progressively the rate of defectives, in our model the dynamics of the inventory/backlog of products \( x(t) \) evolves according with the following differential equation:

\[
x(t) = u_o(t, \alpha) \cdot [1 - \beta(\alpha)] + u_S(t) - d, x(0) = x_0
\]

where \( x_0 \) refers to the initial inventory level, \( \alpha \) is the age of the manufacturing system, and \( \beta(\alpha) \) represents the rate of
defectives as a function of the age. We define the age of the machine at time \( t \) as a function of its production rate since the last restart, as:

\[
ad(t) = k_1 [u_\alpha(t)], \quad a(T) = 0
\]  

(2)

where the constant \( k_1 \) denotes a positive constant and \( T \) is the last restart time of the machine following overhaul activities. The quality deterioration phenomenon is modeled with an increasing function, given that the wear of the machine can be used to model different quality yields, as suggested in [4]. Therefore, we have:

\[
\beta(a) = b_1 + b_2 (1 - e^{-k_2 \theta_d [a(t)]^3})
\]  

(3)

where \( \theta_d \) is an adjustment parameter for the pace of deterioration of the rate of defectives, and it varies in the interval \( 0 \leq \theta_d \leq 1 \), \( b_1 \) is the initial value of the rate of defectives, \( b_2 \) represents the upper limit and \( k_2 \) indicates a given constant. Fig. 1 (a) illustrates the quality deterioration of the rate of defectives for different values of \( \theta_d \) (with \( b_1 = 0.01 \), \( b_2 = 0.99 \) and \( k_2 = 15 \times 10^{-6} \)).

In our model deterioration also has an influence on the reliability of the machine, principally reflected on its failure intensity as presented in [7] and [8]. Therefore, we propose an increasing function for the failure rate as,

\[
q_{12}(a) = q_1 + q_2 (1 - e^{-k_3 \theta_f [a(t)]^3})
\]  

(4)

with \( 0 \leq \theta_f \leq 1 \), where the parameter \( \theta_f \) is used to adjust the trend of the failure rate as presented in Fig. 1 (b) (with \( q_1 = 0.1 \), \( q_2 = 0.4 \) and \( k_3 = 15 \times 10^{-6} \)), \( q_1 \) is the transition \( q_{12} \) at initial conditions, \( q_2 \) is the upper limit considered for the deterioration of the transition \( q_{12} \), and \( k_3 \) is a given constant. The adjustment parameters \( \theta_d \) and \( \theta_f \) serve us to emphasize whether the deterioration has a stronger effect on the quality part or reliability.

![Fig. 1 Trend of the deteriorating process](image)

(a) For the rate of defectives

(b) For the failure rate

We assume Markov dynamics for \( \xi(t) \), with exponential switching times for the transition rates \( \eta_{\alpha\alpha'} \) from mode \( \alpha \) to mode \( \alpha' \). The manufacturing system will only fulfill the product demand if \( \bar{u}_d(a) \cdot (1 - \beta(a)) \cdot \pi_1(d) + \bar{u}_1(d) \geq d \), where \( \pi_1(d) \) denotes the steady state availability of the manufacturing system, given by, \( \pi_1(a) = 1/(1 + q_{12}(a)/q_{11}) \). However, due to the twofold effect of deterioration on the machine, eventually we need more subcontracting to fulfill the product demand. Hence, the whole capacity constraint of the systems is:

\[
\bar{u}_d(a) \cdot (1 - \beta(a)) \cdot \pi_1(a) + \bar{u}_1(a) \geq d
\]  

(5)

where \( \bar{u}_1(a) \) is the maximum allowable subcontracting rate. Our decision variables are then, the production rate of the machine \( u_\alpha(t) \), the subcontracting rate \( u_1(t) \) and the overhaul rate \( \omega(t) \). We define \( \omega(t) \) equal to the transition \( q_{13} \), where the reciprocal of \( \omega(t) \) denotes the delay to send the machine to overhaul activities, with \( 0 \leq \omega(t) \leq \bar{\omega} \), where \( \omega \) and \( \bar{\omega} \) denote the minimum and maximum overhaul rate. Let \( \Gamma(a) \) be the set of admissible decisions, including the decision variables \( (u_\alpha, u_1, \omega) \), we have:

\[
\Gamma(a) = \{(u_\alpha, u_1, \omega) : (a, x, \alpha, u_\alpha, u_1, \omega) \in R^3, 0 \leq u_\alpha(a) \leq \bar{u}_\alpha, 0 \leq u_1(a) \leq \bar{u}_1, \omega \leq \omega(a) \leq \bar{\omega}\}
\]  

(6)

The key performance measure for this system is denoted by the instantaneous cost function of the model at mode \( \alpha \in \Omega \), which is defined as:

\[
\varphi^\alpha(x, x, u_\alpha, u_1, \omega) = c^+ x^+ + c^- x^- + C_{M_1} \cdot u_0(t) + C_{M_2} \cdot u_1(t) + c^\alpha \cdot \bar{u}_d(t) + \bar{u}_1(t) + c^\alpha \cdot \bar{u}_1(t) + \bar{u}_d(t, \alpha), \forall \alpha \in \Omega
\]  

(7)

with:

\[
x^+ = \max(x, 0)
\]

\[
x^- = \max(-x, 0)
\]

\[
c^\alpha = C_\alpha \cdot \text{ind}(\theta(t) = 2) + C_\alpha \cdot \text{ind}(\theta(t) = 3)
\]

\[
\text{ind}(\theta(t) = \alpha) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } \theta(t) = \alpha \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}
\]

where \( c^+ \) and \( c^- \) are the inventory and backlog cost, respectively; \( C_{M_1} \) is the production cost of the manufacturing
system; $C_{st}$ refers to subcontracting cost, and $C_d$ denotes the cost due to the additional inspection and disposal of defective parts. In addition, $C_r$ defines the repair cost, and $C_o$ denotes the overhaul cost. It is assumed that the cost of subcontracting $C_{st2}$ is much higher than the production cost $C_{st1}$, and so $0 < C_{st1} < C_{st2}$. To make it more concrete, our objective then is to determine in $\Gamma(a)$ an optimal control policy $(u_o, u_1, o^*)$ which minimizes the integral of the following expected discounted cost:

$$v(\alpha, x, a, u_o, u_1, o) = \inf_{(u_o, u_1, o) \in \Gamma(a)} E\left[\int_0^\infty e^{-\rho t} \Phi(x(t)) \, dt \mid \xi(0) = a, x(0) = x_0, u(0) = a_o \right]$$

where $\rho$ is the discount rate and $E[\cdot]$ symbolize the conditional expectation operator, and $v(\cdot)$ is the value function. Problem (1)-(8) is a stochastic dynamic programming problem. Hence, we use the HJB equation to determine the structure of the solution. However, since analytical solutions for this kind of models are troublesome to obtain, we adopted a numerical approach to approximate a solution.

V. STRUCTURE OF THE OPTIMAL CONTROL POLICY

The numerical method used to determine the structure of the optimal control policy is based on the Kushner’s approach. The main idea of this numerical method is to apply an approximation scheme for the gradient of the value function, using a discrete function to approximate iteratively the continuous value function and its derivatives. For more information about the Kushner’s approach refer to [18], [19].

We present in Table I the parameters used in the numerical example.

| TABLE I |
| PARAMETERs FOR THE NUMERICAL EXAMPLE |
| Parameter | $c^+$ | $c^-$ | $c_r$ | $C_{st1}$ |
| Value | 1 | 250 | 5 | 10 | 4 |

| Parameter | $C_{st1}$ | $c^-$ | $h_x$ | $h_a$ | $\rho$ |
| Value | 40 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 0.9 |

| Parameter | $u_{o0}$ | $u_1$ | $a^*$ | $o^*$ | $d$ |
| Value | 9 | 20 | $10^6$ | $20$ | 4 |

| Parameter | $\theta_{11}$ | $q_{11}$ | $q_{1}$ | $q_{2}$ | $\theta_{f}$ |
| Value | 5 | 4 | 0.55 | 1 | 0.6 |

| Parameter | $\theta_d$ | $k_1$ | $k_2$ | $k_3$ | $b_1$ |
| Value | 0.7 | 0.1 | $15 \times 10^6$ | $15 \times 10^6$ | 0.01 |

| Parameter | $b_2$ |
| Value | 0.99 |

The solution of the Kushner’s approach divides the plan $(x, a)$ into three regions, where the production rate is set to $\bar{u}_o \, d/[1 - \beta(a)]$ and 0, respectively, as presented in Fig. 3 (a). Moreover, the subcontracting policy divides the plan $(x, n)$ into three regions, where the subcontracting rate is set to 0, then in the second region at the difference $(d - \bar{u}_o \cdot [1 - \beta(e)])$ or at the demand rate, and in the third region at the maximum subcontracting rate $\bar{u}_1$, as illustrated in Fig. 2 (b).

Given the effects of deterioration, the production policy leads to an extension of the Hedging Point Policy which needs to be determined in three intervals: $a \leq A$, $A < a < B$, and $a \geq B$, where point $A$ indicates the age when $\bar{u}_o = d/[(1 - \beta(a)) \cdot \pi_1(a)]$ and at which subcontracting is required (around age $a = 42$ in Fig. 2 (b)), and point $B$ indicates the age when the machine is so deteriorated that it must be stopped (around age $a = 60$ in Fig. 2 (a)). The production policy is thus defined as follows:

i. For the case where $a \leq A$, we have $\bar{u}_o \geq d/[1 - \beta(a)] \cdot \pi_1(a)$, hence the production policy is:

$$u_o^*(1, x, a) = \begin{cases} \bar{u}_o & \text{if } x < Z_0 \\ 0 & \text{if } x = Z_0 \\ \bar{u}_o & \text{if } x > Z_0 \end{cases}$$

For the case where $A < a < B$, the machine is no longer capable of satisfying the product demand on its own because $\bar{u}_o < d/[1 - \beta(a)] \cdot \pi_1(a)$ and so:

$$u_o^*(1, x, a) = \begin{cases} \bar{u}_o & \text{if } x \leq Z_0 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

ii. For the case where $a \geq B$, it is not profitable to continue operating the manufacturing system, then:

$$u_o^*(1, x, a) = 0 \text{ in any case}$$

where $Z_0$ represents the stock level that delimits the optimal production threshold at the operational mode.

With respect to the subcontracting policy we observe that it is triggered, as indicated in the following two intervals:

i. For the case where $a \leq A$, we must recall that $\bar{u}_o < d/[1 - \beta(a)] \cdot \pi_1(a)$, and hence the subcontracting policy is:

$$u_1^*(1, x, a) = \begin{cases} \bar{u}_1 & \text{if } x < 0 \\ d - \bar{u}_o \cdot [1 - \beta(e)] & \text{if } x = 0 \text{ and } A < a < B \\ d & \text{if } x = 0 \text{ and } B \leq a \\ \bar{u}_1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

As indicated in Fig. 2 (b), we note that once subcontracting is available, first, it is conducted when the stock level is negative to avoid backlog, and then when the machine has stopped, subcontracting satisfies all the product demand.

The overhaul policy is presented in Fig. 3 (a), which serves us to identify two zones:

- Zone $A_o$: The recommendation is to perform overhaul activities, because the amount of deterioration justifies the cost for this type of maintenance.
- Zone $B_o$: In this zone of the plane, an overhaul is not recommended, and it is more profitable to continue operating the manufacturing system.
At this juncture, to define the overhaul policy, we must consider simultaneously the production and the overhaul boundaries as presented in Fig. 3 (b). Since the stock level is limited by the production threshold, and only a part of the overhaul zone $A_c$ is active, defining then the feasible overhaul Zone $A_c'$. Thus, the logic behind the obtained results indicates that overhaul activities are conducted at a rate $\omega^*(\cdot)$ given by the following equation:

$$\omega^*(1, x, a) = \begin{cases} \bar{\omega} & \text{if } [a(t) > SA \text{ and } x(t) \geq 0] \text{ or } [a(t) \geq B] \\ \omega & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (14)$$

When the manufacturing system has stopped its operation (after point $B$), it is sent automatically to overhaul maintenance, to restore the machine to initial conditions.

![Production policy](image1)

(a) Production policy

![Subcontracting policy](image2)

(b) Subcontracting policy

Fig. 2 Control policies

The practical disadvantage of the control policy obtained by numerical methods stems from the standpoint that an approximation of the control parameters will be too time-consuming to be applicable at the operational level. Therefore, we propose a simulation control approach to approximate the optimal control parameters, $Z_0^*(\cdot)$ and points $A$ and $B$ for the production and subcontracting rates, and point $SA$ for the overhaul policy. A significant advantage of the simulation approach is that it is more flexible and it allows us to examine the control policy in a wide range of time and different cost variations in reasonable times.

![Overhaul policy](image3)

(a) Overhaul policy

![Feasible Zone $A'_c$](image4)

(b) Production, overhaul and subcontracting trace

Fig. 3 Joint control policy

VI. SIMULATION OPTIMIZATION APPROACH

In order to approximate the control parameters ($Z_0, SA, A, B$) and the overall expected cost, we proposed a simulation-based approach, which combines a simulation model with statistical analysis, comprising design of experiments and parameter optimization with the responses surface methodology. This approach has been successfully applied in several control problems as presented in [20], and it consists of the following sequential steps:
1. **Control problem formulation:** this step aims to formulate analytically a stochastic dynamic programing model of the manufacturing system under analysis, as presented previously in Section IV. Here we specify the dynamics, states, calculation of the expected average cost.

2. **Structure of the optimal control policy:** Numerical methods are applied, as detailed in Section V, to approximate the structure of the control policy; with this, we identified the control parameters \((Z_o, S, A, B)\).

3. **Simulation model:** it is developed a simulation model to reproduce accurately the stochastic behavior and all the set of characteristics considered in our manufacturing system. The simulation model uses as inputs the control parameters \((Z_o, S, A, B)\), and provides a measure of its performance, with the incurred total cost, which is defined as the output of the model. More details about the simulation model are presented in the next section.

4. **Statistical analysis:** through a minimal set of simulation runs, a design of experiments is conducted to define how the variation of the control factors \((Z_o, S, A, B)\) can be used to define the significant main factors and their interactions with respect to the total incurred cost.

5. **Parameters optimization:** once identified the significant main factors and interactions, it is applied the response surface methodology to define their relationship with the total incurred cost. The expression obtained is then optimized to determine the optimal values of the control parameters \((Z_o, S, A, B)\) and their total incurred cost.

**A. Simulation Model**

The logic associated with the combined discrete-continuous simulation model developed is examined in this section. We used the simulation software Arena with C++ subroutines, the model consists of a number of networks, which describes a specific activity or event in the system. The simulation model can be described with the following networks, presented in the block diagram of Fig. 4, as follows:

1. **The INITIALIZATION:** this block sets the value of different parameters, such as the control parameters \((Z_o, S, A, B)\), system’s parameters such as \((\bar{u}_o, d, \bar{u}_1)\), and the transitions values for the different modes. Further, it defines the simulation run-time and the length of the warm-up period to ensure that steady-state conditions are reached.

2. **The FAILURES AND REPAIRS:** it models the Markov dynamics inherent of the failure and repair events, it uses the transition values defined in the previous network. It communicates with the state equation block to define the operational and failure state.

3. **The PRODUCTION CONTROL POLICY:** it uses (9)-(11) to define the proper production rate in function of the stock level and the age of the machine. A set of flags are required as a detection mechanisms, to indicate when the current stock level or machine’s age crosses certain thresholds, and adjust the production rate applied in the differential equations (1) and (2).

4. **The SUBCONTRACTING POLICY:** based on (12)-(13) trough detections mechanisms, the stock level and the age of the machine are permanently monitored to set adequately the subcontracting rate.

5. **The OVERHAUL POLICY:** is implemented with the use of (14). It communicates with the Failures and Repairs block to synchronize the random events (failures, repairs and overhaul). Also it interacts with the State Equation block to restore the rate of defectives and the failure intensity once an overhaul has been conducted.

6. **The DEGRADATION block:** receives information from the failures & repairs block, and the production, subcontracting and overhaul policy to update properly the rate of defectives and the failure intensity as described in (3) and (4). The effects of deterioration are restored to initial conditions when an overhaul is conducted.

7. **The STATE EQUATION:** it is a very important component of the model, since it describes the differential equations (1) and (2), embedded in a C++ language insert, defining the evolution of the stock level and the age of the machine. For its correct operation, it requires the production rate, the rate of defective, the state of the machine, and the overhaul and subcontracting rate, then it involves an interaction with several blocks of the model.

8. **The ADVANCE TIME:** with a combination of discrete events scheduling (i.e., failures, repairs and overhaul), continuous variables threshold crossing events (i.e., stock level and age of the machine) and time step specifications, the current time is updated.

9. **The UPDATE STOCK AND AGE LEVEL:** this block tracks any variations of the stock level and the age of the machine for the specified time step, and it integrates the cumulative variables using the Runge-Kutta-Fehlberg algorithm.

10. **The OUTPUT:** once the current time \(T_{\text{now}}\) has reached the predefined simulation run-time \(T_{\text{sim}}\), the simulation model is stopped, providing time persistent statistics of the positive, negative stock, the number of overhauls conducted, age of the machine, and rate of defectives.

At the end of the simulation run, the total expected cost \(J()\) is calculated based on (7). The length of the simulation period \(T_{\text{sim}}\) was defined as 100,000 time units to ensure steady-state conditions.

**VII. Numerical Example**

The true usefulness of our simulation control approach is illustrated with a numerical example. We combine the simulation model with statistical analysis based on designs of experiments and parameter optimization with the response surface methodology. To determine the control parameters, we propose an approximation as presented in Fig. 5.
To facilitate the determination of the control parameters, we define in Fig. 5. The stock level $Z_0$ and point $B$ to characterize the production policy, also we define point SA for the overhaul policy, and regarding the subcontracting policy, we can calculate point A from condition (5), given that we can know the trend of deterioration at setting the constants in (3) and (4). With this parameter approximation, we will be able to control the manufacturing system and determine the incurred total cost. The statistical analysis of the simulation data implies a multifactor analysis of variance (ANOVA), where we identify one dependent variable denoted by the total incurred cost and three independent variables $(Z_0, SA, B)$. Simulation runs are conducted according to a complete factorial design $3^3$ with four replications, to fit the cost function. This requires $(3^3 \times 4) = 108$ simulation runs. To ensure steady states conditions the duration of each simulation run is set to 100,000 time units. Table II reports the cost values applied in the statistical analysis, the rest of parameters are defined as indicated in Table I.

The ANOVA is conducted on the $3^3$ design using the statistical software STATGRAPHICS. Based on off-line simulations, we select the minimum and maximum values of the factors $(Z_0, SA, B)$ as presented in Table III, also we use the common random numbers technique to reduce the variability in the simulations results.

Table IV summarizes the ANOVA of the collected data, we found a $R^2$ value of 0.9736, this indicates that about of 97.36% of the observed variability in the total incurred cost is explained by the $3^3$ design. From Table IV, we can see that the linear and quadratic effects of the three factors and their interactions are significant for the total cost at a 95% confidence level. To test the homogeneity of the variances and the residual normality a complete residual analysis was conducted, consisting of the residual versus predicted values plot and the normal probability plot of residual. This therefore confirms that the total expected cost could be well determined by the second-order polynomial model.

A response surface methodology was applied with the software Statgraphics, to determine the following quadratic function:

$$J^*_m(Z_0, SA, B) = 183.984 + 0.598843 \cdot Z_0 - 5.00939 \cdot SA + 0.355016 \cdot B + 0.158519 \cdot Z_0^2 - 0.0389444 \cdot SA \cdot Z_0 - 0.0134144 \cdot Z_0^2 \cdot B + 0.0628611 \cdot SA^2 - 0.00202824 \cdot SA \cdot B + 0.00377593 \cdot B^2 + e$$  \hspace{1cm} (15)

The minimum total expected cost is $J^*_m = 65.95$, and is defined with $Z_0^* = 6.33, SA^* = 42.93$ and $B^* = 69.80$, as indicated in Fig. 6, where the projection of the cost parameters in a two-dimensional plan is presented. Based on the data of Table I, we can define, $A^* = 51$. These values $(Z_0^*, SA^*, B^*, A^*)$ are the

**Table II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter: $c^+$</th>
<th>$c^-$</th>
<th>$C_{M1}$</th>
<th>$C_{M2}$</th>
<th>$c_0$</th>
<th>$c_d$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value: 1</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table III**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Level for the Statistical Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Z_0$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$B$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table IV**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: $Z_0$*</td>
<td>71,923.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>71,923.1</td>
<td>12.16</td>
<td>0.0007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: SA*</td>
<td>15069.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15069.3</td>
<td>2548.65</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: $B$*</td>
<td>184.64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>184.64</td>
<td>31.23</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>48,849.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48,849.1</td>
<td>8.26</td>
<td>0.0050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>147,42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>147,42</td>
<td>24.93</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>69,962.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69,962.6</td>
<td>11.83</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>4801.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4801.1</td>
<td>812.00</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>39,985.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39,985.8</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>0.0108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>277,168</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>277,168</td>
<td>46.88</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blocks</td>
<td>7,796.82</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25,989.4</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.7252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total error</td>
<td>561,705</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5,912.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (corr.)</td>
<td>21279.9</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
best parameters for our joint control policy, which control simultaneously the production, subcontracting, and overhaul rate.

From 35 extra-replications, we validate the control parameters \((Z_0, S_A', B', A')\) by verifying that the estimated cost \(\hat{f}(\cdot) = 65.95\) is inside the 95% confidence interval.

\[
\hat{X}(y) \pm t_{n-1,1-\alpha/2}\sqrt{S^2(y)} = [65.79, 66.04]
\]

Fig. 6 Contours of the estimated response surface

Since the total cost fall inside the confidence interval, we can state that our simulation-based approach determines the values of the control parameters adequately and that the total cost determined by the second-order model is accurate.

VIII. SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

We aim in this section to assess the robustness of our simulation control approach; this implies the analysis of the obtained control policy for different cost scenarios. Table IV presents twelve configurations of cost parameters derived from the basic case, we are interested to assess their impact on the control parameters and the total incurred cost. The set of cost values are related with the inventory, backlog, overhaul, defectives, production and subcontracting cost.

The results of the sensitivity analysis are presented in Table VI, and they highlight the relationship between the cost variation and the control parameters \((Z_0, S_A', B')\) and their respective incurred cost.

The results obtained in Table VI, make sense, and can be explained as follows:

- **Variation of the Inventory cost, \(c^+\)**: At increasing \(c^+\), the three control parameters decreases, because with higher \(c^+\) the stock level is more penalized then \(Z_0\) decreases. Further, this threshold reductions also decreases the overhaul zone, reducing as a consequence \(S_A\) and \(B\), because the machine operates less time at its maximum rate, thus it deteriorates less. Subcontractors take over all the product demand at an earlier age, then point \(B\) increases.

- **Variation of the Backlog cost, \(c^-\)**: When we increase \(c^-\), \(Z_0\) increases, because the backlog of product is more penalized, and so we need more stock to palliate shortages. Moreover, \(B\) increases considerably leading to conduct more overhaul, since backlog is more penalized with higher \(c^-\), thus the machine remains operational.
more time. At increasing \( B \), subcontractors satisfies later all the product demand. From the results of Table VI, we note that the effect of the backlog cost is the opposite of the inventory cost.

- **Variation of the Overhaul cost, \( c_O \):** At increasing \( c_O \), it increases the threshold \( Z_O \) because as overhaul activities are more expensive with higher \( c_O \), we need more stock to conduct the overhaul. With higher \( c_O \), we noted to observe that the required age to conduct the overhaul \( SA \) increases, point \( B \) also increases since as it is more expensive to conduct overhaul activities, the machine remains operational more time to compensate the incurred cost. Moreover, subtracting fulfills all the product demand at a higher age, because given the higher overhaul cost, it is needed a higher age to justify the machine stoppage.

- **Variation of the Production cost, \( CM_1 \):** when we increase \( CM_1 \), the production with the machine is more expensive, and so this reduces the threshold \( Z_B \), also this cost increment stops earlier the machine, conducting less overhaul, hence \( SA \) and point \( B \) decreases. Subcontracting is triggered to fulfill all the product demand earlier in time.

- **Variation of the Subcontracting cost, \( CM_2 \):** when we increase the subcontracting cost \( CM_2 \), we observe that the productions threshold increases, because we use more stock to satisfy the product demand given a higher subcontracting cost. The effect of \( CM_2 \) is also reflected in the overhaul policy, since with higher subcontracting cost, we need to restore the machine more rapidly to AGAN conditions in order to avoid further subcontracting cost. Thus, it is logical to decrease \( SA \), this reductions also reduces point \( B \), hence subcontracting satisfies earlier the whole product demand earlier.

- **Variation of the Defectives cost, \( c_d \):** when we increase \( c_d \), the system reacts by promoting earlier conduction of overhaul activities to restore the machine to AGAN conditions. Consequently, \( SA \) and point \( B \) decreases to avoid the production of defective units, hence subcontracting satisfies earlier the whole product demand.

**IX. CONCLUSION**

To some extent, our study has contributed to the production-planning problem of an unreliable manufacturing system consisting of a single machine single part type, in three important ways. We model the effect of the relationship between quality issues and the production control rule; we include the twofold effect of a deterioration process in the control policy, observed mainly in the rate of defectives and the failure intensity; also, we model the possibility of subcontractors to satisfy the product demand when the capacity of the manufacturing system is insufficient. The problem was formulated with a stochastic dynamic programming model in which the production, overhaul and subcontracting rate are considered as decision variables. Because of the complexity and the stochastic dynamics of the model, analytical solutions are intractable. Nevertheless, we proposed a simulation-optimization approach to approximate the parameters of the obtained feedback policy, which is a derivation of the HPP with overhaul and subcontracting activities. The efficiency of the joint control policy was illustrated with a numerical example. The principal advantage of our simulation-based approach is that it allows a realistic representation of the stochastic dynamics of the manufacturing system under analysis using a discrete-continuous simulation model; also, it serves to analyze and optimize the control policy parameters through design of experiments and the response surface methodology. Finally, a complete sensitivity analysis was performed, which emphasizes the complex interaction between production, subcontracting and deterioration. The final assessment is that our simulation-based approach works efficiently providing accurate results, this enables us to study more complex phenomena encountered in real manufacturing systems.

**REFERENCES**


