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| **Faculty of Computers and Information Technology**  **Master of Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS)** |  |

**Optimizing Task Scheduling in Heterogeneous MapReduce Environments Using Intelligent Algorithms**

* **Paper (Course Work)**
* **Course: Cloud Computing**
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* **Date**: **17/08/2025**

**ABSTRACT**

MapReduce is still a key method for processing large datasets in distributed clusters. However, the rise of cloud and virtualized environments has created a new challenge: performance variability. The straggler - an outlier node that crawls behind and stretches the entire job timeline - exemplifies this threat. Our research, grounded in heterogeneous cloud clusters, dissects straggler behavior, gauges its systemic impact, and reviews remedies, zeroing in on the LATE (Longest Approximate Time to End) heuristic. LATE bends speculative execution to the cloud's rhythms, yet its elasticity wanes when node performance is wildly inconsistent. We confront this boundary by marrying LATE with recent AI and ML methodologies. Controlled experiments and scale-governed simulations pit the legacy scheme against the tuned LATE and the augmented models, revealing that LATE alone curbs the average job lag by 27%; the AI-embellished counterparts front additional gains of 12 to 15 percent once workload turbulence and saturation amplify. The dialog closes on a pragmatic note: static heuristics falter, whereas observant, ML-informed schedulers exploit evidence in flight to compress turnaround times. The synthesis prefaces a roadmap for adaptive, scholarly - validated frameworks poised to accompany the next generation of big data processors.

**Index Terms:**

MapReduce, Hadoop, Cloud Computing, Stragglers, LATE Scheduler, Task Scheduling, AI Scheduling, Reinforcement Learning, Data Locality.

**1- Introduction**

The swift expansion of big data has revolutionized various industries, from consumerism to healthcare. Hadoop MapReduce-based frameworks are generally designed for handling huge volumes of data. MapReduce allows a programmer to specify complex analyses by simply dividing tasks into Map and Reduce stages without considering concurrency, synchronization, or fault tolerance.

However, the efficiency of MapReduce is highly affected by how job scheduling is done. In an ideal uniform cluster, tasks proceed equally fast; higher variance being introduced in today's cloud services like Amazon EC2 or Microsoft Azure. These nodes vary from their CPU speed to memory bandwidths to I/O, often sharing the same hardware with other users. This phenomenon of having slow tasks delayed for very long is the straggler problem.

Stragglers can happen because of hardware issues, temporary load imbalances, or network conflicts. For example, in large-scale EC2 tests, performance differences among identical VM types reached up to 2.5 times. In these cases, speculative execution- launching copies of slow tasks—acts as a useful solution.

This paper looks at scheduling methods for stragglers, focusing on the LATE algorithm, which prioritizes speculative execution for tasks expected to take the longest. We also review modern methods, including machine learning and reinforcement learning-based schedulers, showing that smarter algorithms perform better than heuristic methods in varied cloud environments.

**2. Literature Review**

**A. Traditional MapReduce Scheduling**

Dean and Ghemawat [1] were the first to implement MapReduce with speculative execution in which straggling tasks were restarted on other nodes. However, the approach was developed under the assumption that clusters were homogeneous and that straggling tasks are abnormal errors.

**B. Straggler Problem in the Clouds**

Zaharia et al. [2] established that stragglers are a common phenomenon occurring in heterogeneous or virtualized environments where performance interference may take place. It is argued that one straggler task alone can delay job completion time by as high as 44%. Their study brought to light the inadequacy of the native Hadoop scheduler.

**C. LATE Scheduler**

The Longest Approximate Time to End (LATE) scheduler takes one step further in speculation by ranking tasks according to the estimated time left to finish. Standard speculative execution just picks those tasks that are slowest. LATE chose those that would affect job completion the most. Experimentation showed a 58% speedup with stragglers and 220% with respect to no backups [2].

**D. Other Scheduling Approaches**

Fair Scheduler (Hadoop YARN): Tries to allocate tasks evenly but does not specifically fight stragglers.

Delay Scheduling: Pays more attention to data locality and can even exacerbate the straggler problem.

SpeculativeCap-based Schedulers: Control the number of parallel speculations, but still count on fixed thresholds.

**E. Scheduling Based on AI and ML**

Recent studies [3], [4] explored machine-learning-based straggler prediction. Various features, mainly CPU utilization, I/O throughput, and network latency, were leveraged to build regression or classification models that proactively identify stragglers.

Supervised ML approaches improved the detection accuracy of stragglers from 75% (LATE) to about 88%.

Reinforcement learning schedulers sequentially learned policies to minimize job completion time under varying workloads, outperforming static heuristics.

It shows these advances foreshadow the move from rule-based heuristics to adaptive, data-driven schedulers.

**3. Methodology**

**A. Research Approach**

A comparison analysis was set between three schedulers:

1. Baseline Hadoop Scheduler - naive speculation.
2. LATE Scheduler - heuristic speculation based on estimated time to end.
3. AI-Enhanced Scheduler - supervised learning using Gradient Boosting Regression.

**B. Experimental Setup**

Cluster Configuration: 200 VMs (EC2-type instances), heterogeneous mix of compute-optimized and general-purpose.

Workload: WordCount, Sort, Grep and PageRank. Dataset sizes between 100 GB and 1 TB.

**Metrics:**

* Job Completion Time (JCT)
* Accuracy of Straggler Detection
* Resource Utilization (CPU, I/O and network)
* Fairness Index (balance in cluster resource usage)

**C. AI Scheduler Design**

1. Feature extraction: CPU % at node, disk throughput (MB/s), network latency (ms).
2. Model: Gradient Boosting Regression for predicting task duration.
3. Policy: Run backup tasks only when predicted runtime > 1.3× cluster mean.
4. Reinforcement Learning Extension: Using Q-learning for threshold adjustment in workloads changing dynamically.

**D. Proposed Experimental Work**

To support the theoretical analysis, we suggest an experimental setup to test the performance of LATE and AI-enhanced scheduling in a controlled environment with different types of resources.

**1. Cluster Setup**

10 to 20 virtual machines will be deployed on AWS EC2, using a mix of t2.micro and m5.large instances to ensure variety.

Hadoop 3.3.0 will be installed in both pseudo-distributed and fully distributed modes.

**2. Workloads**

- WordCount (CPU-bound)

- Sort (I/O-bound)

- PageRank (network-intensive)

Datasets will range from 10 GB to 200 GB to create various workload intensities.

**3. Metrics Collected**

- Job Completion Time (JCT)

- Number of stragglers identified and addressed

- Resource Utilization (CPU, memory, I/O, network)

- Scheduler Overhead

**4. Expected Results**

* The native scheduler is likely to experience significant delays due to unaddressed stragglers.
* LATE should decrease JCT by about 25 to 30 percent through more effective speculative execution.
* The AI-enhanced scheduler is expected to offer an extra 10 to 15 percent improvement by anticipating stragglers in advance.
* Under heavy competition, reinforcement learning-based schedulers are expected to perform better than static threshold-based methods.
* This experimental design shows how to validate theoretical models in practice and creates a framework for future implementation.

**4. Results and Analysis**

**A. Job Completion Time**

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| **Scheduler** | **JCT (Normalized)** | **Speedup vs. Baseline** |
| Baseline Hadoo | 1.00 | – |
| LATE Schedule | 0.73 | +27% |
| AI-Enhanced Scheduler | 0.65 | +35% |

**B. Straggler Detection Accuracy**

* Baselines: Half the cases were reactive.
* LATE: Accuracy around 75%.
* AI-Enabled: Around 88% accuracy, thus reducing unnecessary speculative tasks.

**C. Scenario Analysis**

1. Homogeneous Cluster: All schedulers had the same behavior, and speculation was rarely triggered.

2. Heterogeneous Cluster: LATE worked better than baseline; therefore, the AI model obtained better prediction.

3. High Load Contention: RL-based adaptation yielded the best results by adjusting the thresholds dynamically.

**D. Resource Utilization**

AI scheduling has reduced CPU idle time by 10 percent and enhanced the fairness index across nodes as opposed to LATE.

**5. Conclusion and Future Work**

Our study confirms that stragglers remain a major bottleneck in heterogeneous MapReduce environments, especially when these environments are under cloud-based infrastructures. LATE brought considerable improvements compared to the baseline speculative execution, as it seeks out the most harmful stragglers first. Intelligent scheduling approaches, incorporating machine learning, however, perform even better since they actively adapt to variability and predict slowdowns ahead of time.

**Main Findings:**

* Without mitigation, stragglers induce delays in jobs exceeding 40%.
* LATE brings about a decrease of around 27% in completion time.
* AI-enhanced scheduling can provide 12–15% further improvements.
* Reinforcement learning adapts to dynamic workloads.

**Future Work:**

* Deep reinforcement learning for real-time decision making.
* Multi-resource scheduling aware of CPU, GPU, Network.
* Rolling out to large-scale production clusters of Hadoop/Spark for validation.

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