

DETERMINING A GRAPH'S CHROMATIC NUMBER FOR PART CONSOLIDATION
IN AXIOMATIC DESIGN

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Mathematics

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Jeffery A. Cavallaro

December 2019

© 2019

Jeffery A. Cavallaro

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

DETERMINING A GRAPH'S CHROMATIC NUMBER FOR PART CONSOLIDATION
IN AXIOMATIC DESIGN

by

Jeffery A. Cavallaro

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2019

Sogol Jahanbekam, Ph.D.

Department of Mathematics

Wasin So, Ph.D.

Department of Mathematics

Jordan Schettler, Ph.D.

Department of Mathematics

ABSTRACT

DETERMINING A GRAPH'S CHROMATIC NUMBER FOR PART CONSOLIDATION IN AXIOMATIC DESIGN

by Jeffery A. Cavallaro

Mechanical engineering design practices are increasingly moving towards a framework called *axiomatic design*, which starts with a set of independent *functional requirements* (FRs) for a manufactured product. A key tenet of axiomatic design is to decrease the *information content* of a design in order to increase the chance of manufacturing success. One important way to decrease information content is to fulfill multiple FRs by a single part: a process known as *part consolidation*. Thus, an important parameter when comparing two candidate designs is the minimum number of parts needed to satisfy all of the FRs. One possible method for determining the minimum number of parts is to represent the problem by a graph, where the vertices are the FRs and the edges represent the need to separate their endpoint FRs into separate parts. The answer then becomes the solution to a vertex coloring problem: finding the chromatic number of such a graph. Unfortunately, the chromatic number problem is known to be NP-hard. This research investigates a new algorithm that determines the chromatic number for a graph and compares the new algorithm's computer runtime performance to existing Zykov branch and bound algorithms via random graph analysis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation–USA under grants #CMMI-1727190 and CMMI-1727743. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
1 Axiomatic Design	1
1.1 Design	1
1.2 The Framework	2
1.3 The Axioms	5
1.4 Part Consolidation	8
Literature Cited	10

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1. Axiomatic Design Framework	3
Fig. 2. Mapping FRs to DPs	4
Fig. 3. An Uncoupled Design	5
Fig. 4. A Decoupled Design	6
Fig. 5. A Coupled Design	6
Fig. 6. Decoupling by Adding DPs	8
Fig. 7. Part Consolidation Example	8

1 AXIOMATIC DESIGN

The axiomatic design framework was developed in the late 20th century by Professor Nam P. Suh while at MIT and the NSF [1]. This was in response to concern in the engineering community that *design* was being practiced almost exclusively as an ad-hoc creative endeavor with very little in the way of scientific discipline. In the words of Professor Suh:

It [design] might have preceded the development of natural sciences by scores of centuries. Yet, to this day, design is being done intuitively as an art. It is one of the few technical areas where experience is more important than formal education.

It is important to note that Professor Suh was not making these claims in an educational vacuum, but in the shadow of several recent major design failures such as the Union Carbide plant disaster in India, nuclear power plant accidents at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, and the Challenger space shuttle O-ring failure. Furthermore, Professor Suh asserts that design-related issues resulting in production problems and operating failures were increasingly happening in everything from consumer products to big-ticket items.

The following sections provide an overview of axiomatic design as specified in detail by Professor Suh in [1], and summarized in [2]–[4]. Following the overview is a description of how an algorithm proposed by this research can be a helpful tool to a designer using the axiomatic design framework.

1.1 Design

Design is defined as the process by which it is determined *what* needs to be achieved and then *how* to achieve it. Thus, the decisions on what to do are just as important as how to do it. Creativity is the process by which experience and intuition are used to generate solutions to perceived needs. This includes pattern matching to and adapting existing solutions and synthesizing new solutions. Thus, creativity plays a vital role in design.

Since different designers may approach the same problem differently, their level of creativity may lead to very different, yet plausible, solutions. Thus, there needs to be a design-agnostic method for comparing different designs with the goal of selecting the best one.

This discussion will sound familiar to mathematicians, since creativity is a very important part of solving math problems, and in particular, writing proofs. Starting with the work of Peano in the 19th century, the field of mathematics has established various tests on what constitutes a good proof. For example:

- Does every conclusion result by proper implication from existing definitions, axioms, and previously proved conclusions?
- Is direct proof, contrapositive proof, proof by contradiction, or proof by induction the best approach for a particular problem?
- Do proofs by induction contain clear basic, assumptive, and inductive steps?
- Are all subset and equality relationships properly proved via membership implication?
- Are all necessary cases included and stated in a mutually exclusive manner?
- Are degenerate cases sufficiently highlighted?
- Are all equivalences proved in a proper circular fashion?
- Are key and reused conclusions highlighted in lemmas?

In short, Professor Suh was looking for a similar framework for the more general concept of design.

1.2 The Framework

The *best* design among a set of choices is the design that:

- 1) exactly satisfies a clearly defined set of needs.
- 2) has the greatest probability of success.

In a desire to not hinder the creative element needed for design, yet provide some methodology to distinguish bad designs from good designs from better designs, the diagram in Figure 1.2 establishes the overall framework for axiomatic design.

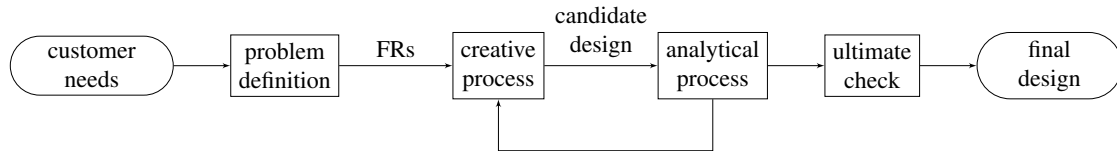


Fig. 1. Axiomatic Design Framework

Design starts with the desire to satisfy a set of clear *customer needs*. The term *customer* refers to any entity that expresses needs, and can be as varied as individuals, organizations, or society. The designer, in the *problem definition* phase, determines how these customer needs will be met by generating a list of *functional requirements* (FRs). It is this list of FRs that determines exactly *what* is to be accomplished.

Once the set of FRs has been determined, the designer begins the *creative process* by mapping the FRs into solutions that are embodied in so-called *design parameters* (DPs). The design parameters contain all of the information on *how* the various FRs are satisfied: parts lists, drawings, specifications, etc. The FRs exist in a design-agnostic *functional space* and the DPs exist in a solution-specific *physical space*. It is the designer's job to provide the most efficient mapping between the two spaces. This process is represented by Figure 1.2.

Simple problems may require only one level of FRs; however, more complicated designs may require a hierarchical structure of FRs, from more general to more detailed requirements. This type of design is often referred to as *top-down* design. Each individual FR layer has its own DP mapping. In fact, the mapping process on one level should be completed prior to determining the FRs for the next level. This is because DP choices on one level may affect requirements on the next level. For example, consider an FR related

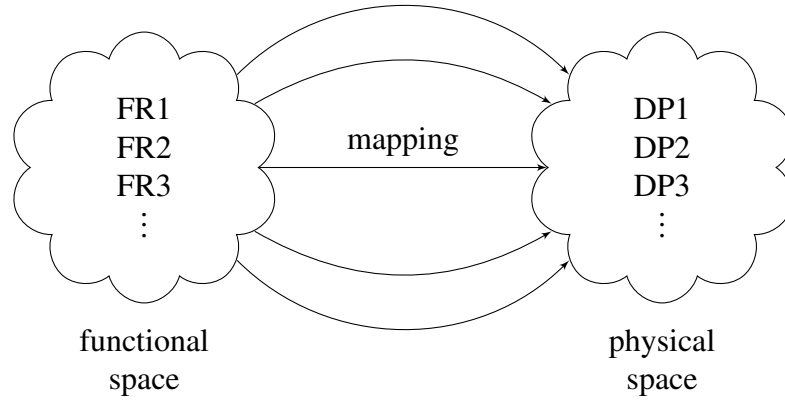


Fig. 2. Mapping FRs to DPs

to a moving part in a design. The DP for this FR could specify that the part be moved manually or automatically. Each choice would result in different FRs for the actual mechanism selected by the DP.

The FR/DP mapping at each level in the design hierarchy is described by the *design equation*, which is shown in Equation 1.

$$[\text{FR}] = [\text{A}][\text{DP}] \quad (1)$$

The design equation is a matrix equation that maps a vector of m FRs to a vector of n DPs via an $m \times n$ design matrix A . As will be shown, good designs require $m = n$, and thus the design matrix is a square $n \times n$ matrix. A full discussion of the design matrix element values is beyond the scope of this research. Instead, we will use the following two values:

$$A_{ij} = \begin{cases} X, & \text{FR}_i \text{ depends on DP}_j \\ 0, & \text{FR}_i \text{ does not depend on DP}_j \end{cases}$$

Since the FR/DP mapping is non-unique, there needs to be a method to compare different plausible designs so that the best design can be selected as the final design. Thus,

the framework in Figure 1.2 includes an *analytical process* where designs are judged by a set of axioms, corollaries, and theorems that specify the properties common to all good designs. Once the best design, according to this analysis, is selected, it undergoes an *ultimate check* to make sure that it sufficiently meets all of the customer's needs. If so, then that design is selected as the final design.

1.3 The Axioms

The analytical process is based on two main axioms: the independence axiom and the information axiom. This section describes these axioms and their related corollaries and theorems.

The independence axiom imposes a restriction on the FR/DP mapping:

Axiom 1 (Independence). *An optimal design always maintains the independence of the FRs. This means that the FRs and DPs are related in such a way that a specific DP can be adjusted to satisfy its corresponding FR without affecting other FRs.*

The ideal case is when the design matrix is a diagonal matrix, and so each FR is mapped to and is satisfied by exactly one DP. This is referred to as an *uncoupled* design, which is demonstrated in Figure 1.3. Uncoupled designs completely adhere to the independence axiom.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{FR1} \\ \text{FR2} \\ \text{FR3} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} X & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & X & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & X \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \text{DP1} \\ \text{DP2} \\ \text{DP3} \end{bmatrix}$$

Fig. 3. An Uncoupled Design

The next best situation is when the design matrix is a lower-triangular matrix. The idea is to finalize the first DPs before moving on to the later DPs. Thus, DP_i can be adjusted without affected FR_1 through FR_{i-1} . This is referred to as a *decoupled* design, which is demonstrated in Figure 1.3. Although decoupled designs do not completely

adhere to the independence axiom, they may be reasonable compromises in designs that address complex problems.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{FR1} \\ \text{FR2} \\ \text{FR3} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} X & 0 & 0 \\ X & X & 0 \\ X & X & X \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \text{DP1} \\ \text{DP2} \\ \text{DP3} \end{bmatrix}$$

Fig. 4. A Decoupled Design

The worst solution is a non-triangular matrix where every change in a DP affects multiple FRs in an unconstrained fashion. This is referred to as a *coupled* design, which is demonstrated in Figure 1.3. Coupled designs are in complete violation of the independence axiom and generally should be decoupled by reworking the FRs or adding additional DPs. Unfortunately, adding additional DPs runs counter to the second axiom.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{FR1} \\ \text{FR2} \\ \text{FR3} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} X & X & X \\ X & X & X \\ X & X & X \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \text{DP1} \\ \text{DP2} \\ \text{DP3} \end{bmatrix}$$

Fig. 5. A Coupled Design

Axiom 2 (Information). *The best design is a functionally uncoupled design that has the minimum information content.*

The *Information* contained in a particular DP is inversely related to the probability that the DP can successfully satisfy its corresponding FR(s) by Equation 2.

$$I = \log_2 \left(\frac{1}{p} \right) \quad (2)$$

where p is the probability of success and I is measured in bits. This probability must take into consideration such things as tolerances, ease of manufacture, failure rates, etc. The information content of a design is then the sum of the information content of the individual DPs.

From these two axioms come the following seven corollaries:

Corollary 1: Decouple or separate parts or aspects of a solution if the FRs are coupled or become interdependent in the designs proposed.

Corollary 2: Minimize the number of FRs.

Corollary 3: Integrate design features in a single physical part if FRs can be independently satisfied in the proposed solution.

Corollary 4: Use standardized or interchangeable parts if the use of these parts is consistent with the FRs.

Corollary 5: Use symmetrical shapes and/or arrangements if they are consistent with the FRs.

Corollary 6: Specify the largest allowable tolerance in stating FRs.

Corollary 7: Seek an uncoupled design that requires less information than coupled designs in satisfying a set of FRs.

We will now consider the theorems, arising from these axioms and corollaries, which prove that an optimal design results from a square design matrix. In other words, the number of FRs m should be equal to the number of DPs n . First, consider the case where $m > n$. Intuitively, this forces a single DP to be mapped to multiple FRs. Otherwise, some FRs cannot be satisfied by the DPs. This result is stated in Theorem 1.

Theorem 1. *When the number of DPs is less than the number of FRs, either a coupled design results or the FRs cannot be satisfied.*

The solution to this problem is given by Theorem 2.

Theorem 2. *A coupled design due to more FRs than DPs can be decoupled by adding new DPs if the additional DPs result in a lower triangular design matrix.*

An example is shown in Figure 1.3. Note that the addition of DP3 results in a decoupled design.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{FR1} \\ \text{FR2} \\ \text{FR3} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} X & 0 \\ X & X \\ X & X \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \text{DP1} \\ \text{DP2} \end{bmatrix} \Rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{FR1} \\ \text{FR2} \\ \text{FR3} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} X & 0 & 0 \\ X & X & 0 \\ X & X & X \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \text{DP1} \\ \text{DP2} \\ \text{DP3} \end{bmatrix}$$

Fig. 6. Decoupling by Adding DPs

The case where the number of FRs is less than the number of DPs is covered by Theorem 3.

Theorem 3. *When there are less FRs than DPs then the design is either coupled or redundant.*

Finally, the previous three theorems lead to the conclusion in Theorem 4.

Theorem 4. *In an ideal design, the number of FRs is equal to the number of DPs.*

1.4 Part Consolidation

One particular area of design focus is the number of parts in a product design. According to Professor Suh:

Poorly designed products often cost more because they use more materials or parts than do well-designed products. They are often difficult to manufacture and maintain.

Decreasing the number of parts in a design while maintaining the independence of the FRs, consistent with Corollary 1.3, lowers the information content of the design. An informative example is the combination can/bottle opener shown in Figure 1.4.

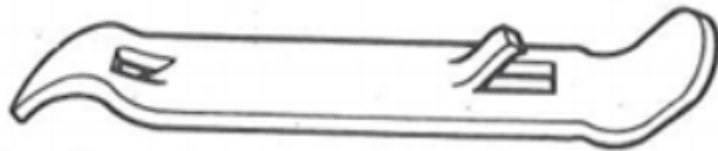


Fig. 7. Part Consolidation Example

The design of this handy utensil has two FRs:

FR1: Open beverage cans

FR2: Open beverage bottles

Both FRs are consolidated into a single part, yet remain independent as long as there is no desire to open a can and a bottle simultaneously.

The goal of this research is to provide designers with a tool that they can use to determine the minimum number of parts required to realize a particular design at a particular level of the FR hierarchy. The designer is required to construct a graph where the vertices are the FRs and the edges indicate that the endpoint FRs need to be realized by separate parts due to independence or other reason. Note that how the edges are determined is beyond the scope of this research. Adjacent FRs are candidates for part consolidation. The goal is to find the chromatic number of the resulting graph, which corresponds to the minimum number of parts.

Unfortunately, finding the chromatic number of a graph is known to be an NP-hard problem [5]. Thus, an algorithm is proposed with improved runtime complexity that can be run on a computer in order to provide a designer with an answer in a reasonable amount of time. Designs with different minimum part requirements can then be compared during the analytical process as part of the overall process of selecting the best design.

Literature Cited

- [1] N. P. Suh, *The Principles of Design*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- [2] S. Behdad, J. Cavallaro, P. K. Gopalakrishnan, and S. Jahanbekam, “A graph coloring technique for identifying the minimum number of parts for physical integration in product design,” No. DETC2019-98251 in Proceedings of the ASME 2019 International Design Engineering Technical Conferences & Computers and Information in Engineering Conference, (Anaheim, CA), Aug 18–21 2019.
- [3] S. Behdad, P. K. Gopalakrishnan, S. Jahanbekam, and H. Klein, “Graph partitioning technique to identify physically integrated design concepts,” No. DETC2018-85646 in Proceedings of the ASME 2018 International Design Engineering Technical Conferences & Computers and Information in Engineering Conference, (Quebec, Canada), Aug 26–29 2018.
- [4] N. P. Suh, “Axiomatic design theory for systems,” *Research in Engineering Design*, vol. 10, pp. 189–209, 1998.
- [5] C. McDiarmid, “Determining the chromatic number of a graph,” *SIAM Journal on Computing*, vol. 8, pp. 1–14, 02 1979.