



## A Two Stage Stochastic Programming Model of the Price Decision Problem in the Dual-channel Closed-loop Supply Chain

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### ABSTRACT

In this paper, we propose a new model for designing integrated forward/reverse logistics based on pricing policy in direct and indirect sales channel. The proposed model includes producers, disposal center, distributors and final customers. We assumed that the location of final customers is fixed. First, a deterministic mixed integer linear programming model is developed for integrated logistics network design. Then, the stochastic counterpart of the proposed mixed integer linear programming model is developed by using scenario-based stochastic approach. We use the value of the stochastic solution (VSS) as a measure to evaluate the accuracy of stochastic programming approach. VSS value showed that using stochastic approach for solving the proposed model is sufficient. Moreover, we could obtain optimal values of sale prices in direct and indirect sale channel and service level by considering forward and reverse flow together.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Logistic network design problem that takes into account the facility locations and the shipment of product flows have been an area of increasing attention during the last decade in both practice and academia [1]. While the traditional supply chain network design, namely forward logistic, considers the direct flow from producer to the customer in logistic networks, Nowadays, the emphasis on environmental, economic, legislative reasons and potentials of value recovery from the used products have caused many industries to focus on reverse logistic and recovery activities [2-8]. Reverse logistics (RL) is the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the cost effective flow of raw materials, in-process inventory, finished goods, and related information from the point of consumption to the point of origin in order to reuse of products and raw materials or dispose them [9]. The literature of represented models concerning the logistics network design problem dividing into forward logistics network, reverse logistics

network, and finally integrated forward/reverse logistics network [1]. A comprehensive review of reverse and integrated logistics can be found in (Fleischmann [2]; Pokharel and Mutha [6]; Govindan [8]). In this paper, we survey specific network design problems for reverse and integrated logistics network design problems. Some authors like Üster et al. [10], Amiri [11], Patia et al. [12], and Aras et al. [13] are those ones, who carried out investigations about the integrated logistics. Keyvanshokoo [1] presented a mixed-integer linear programming to consider dynamic pricing approach for used products, forward/reverse logistics network configuration and inventory. Kamali et al. [14] proposed a single product, multi-echelon, multi-period closed loop supply chain for high-tech products (which have continuous price decrease). Four heuristics-based methods including genetic algorithm (GA), particle swarm optimization (PSO), differential evolution (DE), and artificial bee colony (ABC) are proposed for solving their model. Sahraeian et al. [15] introduced a supply chain network design problem which contains environmental concerns in arcs and nodes of network and there are some routes such as road, rail and etc. in each pair of nodes. Demand uncertainty and uncertainty

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in the quality of returned products is an important factor to be considered in designing supply chain networks. Some researchers consider the uncertainty in reverse logistics. Pishvae et al. [5] proposed an integrated logistic model. They presented a single-period and single-product Mixed Integer Linear Programming (MILP) for integration of their logistic model. Then, they developed the model using scenario-based stochastic approach. Their model was aimed at minimization of total costs. Pishvae et al. [16] proposed a robust optimization model to design a closed-loop supply chain network. With presentation of single-product and single-period model, Pishvae and Torabi [17] proposed a bi-objective possibilistic mixed integer-programming model. They considered two groups of customers: the recycled material customer and the product customers. To solve the presented possibilistic optimization model, an interactive fuzzy solution approach is used. Pishvae et al. [18] suggests a dual-objective credibility-based fuzzy mathematical programming model to design a green logistic network under uncertainty conditions. Their model is aimed at minimization of environmental effects and total cost for creating network synchronously. Vahdani et al. [19] proposed a bi-objective model to design a reliable network of hybrid reliable facilities in logistic network under uncertainty conditions. They solved the model by combining queuing theory, fuzzy possibilistic programming and fuzzy multi-objective programming. Optimal decisions on price play a critical role in revenue management of supply chain.

Cattani et al. [20] and Tsay and Agrawal [21] presented comprehensive reviews on multi-channel models. Balasubramanian [22] considered competition in the multiple-channel environment from a strategic viewpoint. Tsay and Agrawal [23] considered the channel conflicts in dual channel supply chain. Chiang et al. [24] studied a price-setting game between a manufacturer and its independent retailer in a dual channel based on the consumer choice model. Mirzahosseini et al. [25] presented a dual channel inventory model based on queuing theory in a manufacturer-retailer supply chain, consisting of a traditional retail. They used simulated annealing to find a solution for inventory level in each echelon. The service level is rate of increase needed for the distributor to exert in order to raise the profit, demand, and customer's satisfaction. Defining the service level depends on type of production process and method of sale. Service level has significant effects on demand, profit, and pricing strategy. Ahmadvanda et al. [26] investigates the impact of provided service by the retailers and manufacturers on customers' demand and members' profit in a supply chain. In addition, in the most studied related to multi sales channel, the prices in each channel are determined without considering the

production and transportation constraints. The main advantage of our model could be summarized as follows: 1) Designing a dual sales channel supply chain considering important constraints like production and transportation constraints, 2) the concept of dual sales channel is considered in integrated supply chain, beside the prices defined in each channel, 3) the service level of retailers is determined by optimization of model.

The proposed model may be widely employed in some industries such as manufacturing of electronic devices and personal computers (PCs), etc., in which there are both indirect and direct selling channels. Several famous companies like Dell, Sony and Apple have use multi sale channels. Therefore, this model may be a useful tool for such companies. An alternative way to incorporate more information about the demand uncertainty into the model is by formulating a stochastic linear program. To the best of our knowledge from a review of the literature, there is no existing joint pricing network design decision model in dual channel integrated supply chain based upon stochastic programming and scenario generation method. In the rest of this paper, in section 2 we develop our stochastic model. The index VSS is calculated for proposed stochastic model in section 3. Finally, concluding remarks are presented in section 4.

## 2. MODEL DEVELOPMENT

The proposed integrated logistic model in this paper is a single-period, single-product, and multi-stage model including producers, distributors, customers, collection centers, recovery centers, and disposal centers. For saving cost, it is assumed in this model that collection process is done through reverse flow by distribution centers and the producers in forward flow will carry out recovery and repairing operations. These centers are called hybrid centers in logistic networks, which are utilized for cost-saving. In Figure (1), a general view of the presented logistic network is shown. As it characterized in Figure (1), the final products are sent from the producer to distribution centers. After inspecting, the distribution centers returns the repairable products to the producers. The percentage of products that are not repairable, are sent to disposal centers. The rest products will be shipped to end users (customers). The returned products from customers are sent to collection-distributor centers. After inspection, the recoverable products are shipped to producers/ recovery centers and the rest irreparable products will be sent to disposal centers. In addition to a regular forward flow where the producers sell the products to retailers via retail channel, the producers can select direct flow and sale product via e-tail channel to customers.

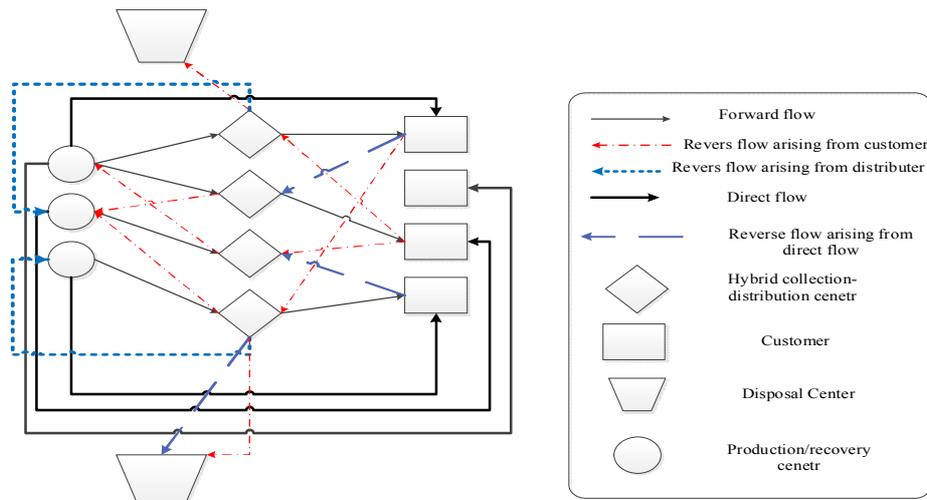


Figure 1. Proposed integrated logistic network

The defective or breakdown products received by customers in direct channel are also returned to collection-distributor centers as returned products in retail channel.

In the presented model, the subject of pricing is addressed within the close-loop integrated logistic network. The concept of pricing has been independently studied by various authors but it has been so far less proposed in the integrated logistic network and its relevant mathematical optimal model. The proposed model will be able to determine producer’s pricing policy in both retail and direct channels. The producers must set a direct channel price  $p_m$  and sell the product directly through the direct channel and the retailer competes against the direct channel by offering a mix of added service  $SS$  and retail price  $p_r$  to customers. We consider a centralized dual-channel supply chain in which an integrated manufacturer controls all three decisions: the traditional retail price, the direct sale price, and the service level in retail channel. Some parameters in logistics network design such as demand of customers, transportation costs and resource capacities are quite uncertain [27]. To handle this uncertainty and have a robust logistics network, we develop a stochastic integrated supply chain by incorporating demand uncertainty.

In the conducted studies regarding the pricing such as Chiang et al. [24] and Bin et al. [28], demand function is indicated by a linear function of base demand ( $dm_k, dr_k$ ), direct and indirect sale prices ( $p_r, p_m$ ) and service level ( $SS$ ), as follows:

$$Dr_k = dr_k - br_1 p_r + bm_2 p_m + \psi m * ss + \xi_k \quad (1)$$

$$Dm_k = dm_k - bm_1 p_m + br_2 p_r - \psi r * ss + \xi'_k \quad (2)$$

where, the coefficients  $br_1$  and  $bm_1$  are the coefficients of the price elasticity in the retail channel and direct channel demand functions, respectively. The cross-price sensitivities  $br_2$  and  $bm_2$  reflect the degree to which the goods are sold via two channels are substitutes, and  $\psi m$  and  $\psi r$  are the service sensitivity of the demand in the direct channel. If the service level  $SS$  increases by one unit,  $\psi m$  units of demand (customers) will be lost from the direct channel, of which  $\psi r$  units of demand will transfer to the retail channel. The total demand of the two channels should be downward sloping in the retailer’s price, direct sale price and upward sloping in the service level. Thus, we have  $bm_2 < br_1$ ,  $br_2 < bm_1$  and  $\psi m < \psi r$ .  $\xi_k$  and  $\xi'_k$  are random variable with PDF (probability density function)  $f(\cdot)$  and CDF (cumulative distribution function)  $F(\cdot)$ , that does not depend on the price and service level and shift the demand randomly about the mean. The related works that considered linear-additive functional demand form include (Chen & Simchi-Levi [29]; Dana & Petruzzi [30]; Federgruen & Heching [31]).

We will formulate this problem as a two-stage stochastic recourse model. Such a model includes primary decisions at first stage according to the related decisions to opening or non-opening the centers, prices, and service level at any channel, and quantity of products that transfers from producer to any retailer in such a way that after their determination, the values of the stochastic events may be characterized and decisions

are made at the second stage. The decisions at second stage include rate of supply by retailers, supply through direct channel and rates of the returned products. We employ the scenario-tree method to solve the stochastic model. For this purpose, suppose the given stochastic vector  $\xi = (\xi_1, \dots, \xi_k, \xi'_1, \dots, \xi'_k)$  with certain number scenarios  $\xi^s = (\xi_1^s, \dots, \xi_k^s, \xi'_1{}^s, \dots, \xi'_k{}^s)$  and probability  $\vartheta^s$  while  $s = 1 \dots S$ . With respect to the above-said definitions, the given indices, parameters, and the variables at first and second stage are defined according to the scenario as follows:

#### Sets

$I$  Set of potential production/recovery center locations  $i \in I$

$J$  Set of hybrid distribution-collection center locations  $j \in J$

$K$  Set of fixed locations of customer zones  $k \in K$

$M$  Set of potential disposal center locations  $m \in M$

#### Parameters

$\phi$  The Cost of providing a unit of service level

$br_1$  The coefficient of price elasticity in retail channel

$br_2$  The coefficient of cross-price sensitivities in retail channel

$bm_1$  The coefficient of price elasticity in direct channel

$bm_2$  The coefficient of cross-price sensitivities in direct channel

$\psi r$  The coefficient of service elasticity in retail channel

$\psi m$  The coefficient of service elasticity in e-tail channel

$dm_k$  Base level of direct channel demand for customer  $k$

$dr_k$  Base level of retail channel demand for customer  $k$

$r_k$  Rate of return of used products from retail channel customer  $k$

$r'_k$  Rate of return of used products from direct channel customer  $k$

$\gamma_j$  Rate of return of products by distributor  $j$  to producers

$\lambda$  Average disposal fraction in direct and indirect channels

$\lambda'$  Average disposal fraction for returned products by distributors

$f_i$  Fixed cost of opening production/recovery center  $i$

$g_j$  Fixed cost of opening hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$

$h_m$  Fixed cost of opening disposal center  $m$

$c_{ij}$  Shipping cost per unit of products from production/recovery center  $i$  to hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$

$ff_k$  Shipping cost per unit of products from production/recovery center  $i$  to direct channel customer  $k$

$a_{jk}$  Shipping cost per unit of products from hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$  to retail channel customer  $k$

$b_{kj}$  Shipping cost per unit of products from customer  $k$  to hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$

$e_{ji}$  Shipping cost per unit of products from hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$  to production/recovery center  $i$

$\pi_{jm}$  Shipping cost per unit of products from hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$  to disposal center  $m$

$\rho_i$  Manufacturing cost per unit of product at production/recovery center  $i$

$\theta_i$  Recovery cost per unit of product at production/recovery center  $i$

$v_j$  Processing cost per unit of product at hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$

$\eta_m$  Disposal cost per unit of product at disposal center  $m$

$\tau_i$  Penalty cost per unit of non-utilized capacity at production/recovery center  $i$

$\beta_j$  Penalty cost per unit of non-utilized capacity at hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$

$\alpha_m$  Penalty cost per unit of non-utilized capacity at disposal center  $m$

$cW_i$  Capacity of production/recovery center  $i$

$cY_j$  Capacity of handling products in forward flow at hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$

$cZ_m$  Capacity of handling products at disposal center  $m$

$cY_j$  Capacity of handling products in reverse flow at hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$

$cW_i$  Capacity of recovery for production/recovery center  $i$

$m\text{service}$  Upper limit of service level in retail channel.

The first stage variables are  $X_{ij}, N_{ji}, p_m, p_r, W_i, Y_j, Z_m$  and the second stage variables are as follows:

$O_{ik}^s$  Quantity of products in direct channel shipped from production/recovery center  $i$  to customer zone  $k$  under scenario  $s$

$U_{jk}^s$  Quantity of products shipped from hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$  to customer zone  $k$  under scenario  $s$

$Q_{kj}^s$  Quantity of returned products shipped from customer zone  $k$  to hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$  under scenario  $s$

$V_{ji}^s$  Quantity of returned products shipped from hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$  to production/recovery center  $i$  under scenario  $s$

$T_{jm}^s$  Quantity of irreparable products shipped from hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$  to disposal center  $m$  under scenario  $s$

$M_{kj}^s$  Quantity of returned products from direct channel customer zone  $k$  to hybrid distribution-collection center  $j$  under scenario  $s$

The formulation of proposed stochastic model is as follows;

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Max} Z = & \sum_k \sum_i \sum_s \theta^s p_m O_{ik}^s + \sum_j \sum_k \sum_s \theta^s p_d U_{jk}^s - \sum_i f_i W_i - \sum_j g_j Y_j - \\ & \sum_m h_m Z_m - \sum_i \sum_k \sum_s \theta^s f_{ik} O_{ik}^s - \sum_i \sum_j (\rho_i + c_{ij}) X_{ij} - \\ & \sum_j \sum_k \sum_s \theta^s (v_j + a_{jk}) U_{jk}^s - \sum_k \sum_j \sum_s \theta^s (v_j + b_{kj}) (Q_{kj}^s + M_{kj}^s) - \\ & \sum_j \sum_i \sum_s \theta^s (\theta_i + e_{ji}) (V_{ji}^s + N_{ji}^s) - \\ & \sum_j \sum_m \sum_s \theta^s (\eta_m + \pi_{jm}) T_{jm}^s - \sum_m \sum_s \alpha_m (Z_m c_{Z_m} - \sum_j \theta^s T_{jm}^s) \\ & - \sum_i \tau_i \left[ (W_i c_{W_i} - (\sum_j X_{ij} + \sum_k \sum_s \theta^s O_{ik}^s)) + (W_i c_{W_i} - (\sum_j \theta^s V_{ji}^s + \sum_j N_{ji}^s)) \right] - \\ & \sum_j \beta_j \left[ (Y_j c_{Y_j} - \sum_k X_{jk}) + (Y_j c_{Y_j} - (\sum_k \sum_s \theta^s Q_{kj}^s + \sum_k \sum_s \theta^s M_{kj}^s)) \right] - ss * \phi \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

s.t.

$$\sum_j U_{jk}^s \leq (d_k - b_1 p_r + b_2 p_m + \psi r * ss + \xi_k^s) \quad \forall k \in K, s \in S \quad (4)$$

$$\sum_i O_{ik}^s \leq (d_k - b_1 p_r + b_2 p_m + \psi r * ss + \xi_k^s) \quad \forall k \in K, s \in S \quad (5)$$

$$\sum_j Q_{kj}^s = r_k \sum_j U_{jk}^s \quad \forall k \in K, s \in S \quad (6)$$

$$\sum_j M_{kj}^s = r'_k \sum_i O_{ik}^s \quad \forall k \in K, s \in S \quad (7)$$

$$(1 - \gamma_j) \sum_i X_{ij} \geq \sum_k U_{jk}^s \quad \forall j \in J, s \in S \quad (8)$$

$$\sum_i V_{ji}^s - (1 - \lambda) (\sum_k Q_{kj}^s + \sum_k M_{kj}^s) = 0 \quad \forall j \in J, s \in S \quad (9)$$

$$\sum_m T_{jm}^s - \lambda (\sum_k Q_{kj}^s + \sum_k M_{kj}^s) - \gamma_j (\lambda') \sum_i X_{ij} = 0 \quad \forall j \in J, s \in S \quad (10)$$

$$\sum_i N_{ji} = \gamma_j (1 - \lambda') \sum_i X_{ij} \quad \forall j \in J \quad (11)$$

$$p_m \geq \rho_i \quad \forall i \in I \quad (12)$$

$$p_d \geq v_j \quad \forall j \in J \quad (13)$$

$$\sum_j X_{ij} + \sum_k O_{ik}^s \leq c w_i W_i \quad \forall i \in I, s \in S \quad (14)$$

$$\sum_i X_{ij} \leq c y_j Y_j \quad \forall j \in J \quad (15)$$

$$\sum_k Q_{kj}^s + \sum_k M_{kj}^s \leq c y_r Y_j \quad \forall j \in J, s \in S \quad (16)$$

$$\sum_j V_{ji}^s + \sum_j N_{ji} \leq c w_r W_i \quad \forall i \in I, s \in S \quad (17)$$

$$\sum_j T_{jm}^s \leq c z_m Z_m \quad \forall m \in M, s \in S \quad (18)$$

$$ss \leq M \text{service} \quad (19)$$

$$\begin{aligned} W_i, Y_j, Z_m \in \{0, 1\} \quad \forall i \in I, \forall j \in J, \forall m \in M \\ X_{ij}, U_{jk}, Q_{kj}^s, V_{ji}^s, T_{jm}^s, N_{ji}, M_{kj}^s, O_{ik}^s, p_d, p_m, ss \geq 0 \quad (20) \\ \forall i \in I, j \in J, k \in K, m \in M, s \in S \end{aligned}$$

Objective function is profit maximization including total revenue and costs from two channels. Constraints (4) and (5) guarantee that the sent products to the customer may meet the demand wholly or partially. The constraints (6) and (7) define respectively the collection of returned products in direct and indirect channel. The constraint (8) is the balancing constraint at production/recovery and hybrid distribution collection centers in forward flow.

The constraint (9) insures that, the flow of repairable products existing from hybrid distribution/collection centers is equal to the flow entering to production/recovery centers. The constraint (10) indicates quantity of the transferred products to disposal centers. The constraint (11) shows the amount of products, which are returned by distributor to the producer. The constraints (12) and (13) denote the sale prices should be greater than process costs at production and distribution/collection centers.

Constraints (14-18) are capacity constraints that ensure the production capacity in each center is not exceeded. Finally, the constraint (19) identifies the upper bound for the distributor's service level.

**TABLE 1.** Computational results for VSS and the stochastic programming solutions with respect to different probability distributions

	Uniform (-400, 400)			Uniform (-1000, 1000)		
	Q*	EEV	VSS	Q*	EEV	VSS
Optimal values	4410584	3318367	1092217	4354760	342602	4012158
	5016065	3277029	1739036	4450002	1043372	3406630
	4739643	3210228	1529415	2958003	1083916	1874087
	4524917	3182271	1342646	3618077	334466	3283611
	4663731	4032283	631448	5908565	1162397	4746168
	EXP(500)			EXP(1000)		
	Q*	EEV	VSS	Q*	EEV	VSS
Optimal values	6390871	4331456	2059415	6927227	4788495	2138732
	5943686	4256678	1687008	10795918	4635916	6160002
	5489227	4633543	855684	8657453	4900606	3756847
	6427444	4292808	2134636	8468587	4719520	3749067
	6240829	4498743	1742086	6962835	4881446	2081389
	Normal(100)			Normal(1000)		
	Q*	EEV	VSS	Q*	EEV	VSS
Optimal values	4275990	3695557	580433	12421250	8199371	4221879
	4391981	3449710	942271	10857782	9246283	1611499
	4460511	3783662	676849	11569736	4671529	6898207
	4404930	3737229	667701	11397324	2374829	9022495
	4229052	4058084	170968	9463103	4543860	4919243

### 3. VALUE OF STOCHASTIC PROGRAMMING

Stochastic programs are computationally expensive and difficult to solve. Therefore, for real-world problems, simpler models have been considered. For example, some researchers have solved the deterministic program by replacing all random variables with their expected values. The Value of the Stochastic Solution (VSS) has been used as measure of the accuracy in these studies. The concept of VSS can be used to determine whether putting extra effort into modeling and solving stochastic programming can be beneficial. Let  $\bar{Z}(\xi)$  be the optimal decision of the first stage in deterministic problem where all random variables are replaced by their expected values. The VSS is then defined as  $VSS = Q^* - EEV$ , with  $EEV = E_{\xi}(Q(\bar{Z}(\xi), \xi))$ . EEV is expected result of using EV (expected value program) solution. If this difference is large enough, it indicates that using the stochastic programming approach is beneficial. In this section, we compute this measure and study the effect of the distribution function type and variance of stochastic factor  $\xi$  in demand function, on VSS. For this purpose, sensitivity analysis has been carried out for different probabilistic functions as follows: In Table 1, it can be seen that as the mean value and variance of distributions increase, the VSS also increases. In Table 1, VSS value in mode (Uniform [-1000, 1000]) is greater than mode (Uniform [-400, 400]) in all cases. The VSS values for distributions with greater mean and variance are higher than the VSS

values for distributions with lower mean value and variance at all modes.

### 4. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we proposed a new mixed integer linear programming model for designing integrated forward/reverse logistics based on pricing policy in direct and indirect sales channel. We could calculate the optimal sale prices in direct and indirect sales channels using our model. The stochastic counterpart of the proposed MILP model was also developed by using scenario-based stochastic approach, considering uncertain demand with specific probability distribution.

Value of stochastic solution (VSS) was calculated to evaluate the accuracy of stochastic programming approach. By considering different probability distribution for uncertain demands, the results showed that the VSS values for distribution with greater mean and variance are higher than the VSS values for distributions with lower mean value and variance at all cases.

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## A Two Stage Stochastic Programming Model of the Price Decision Problem in the Dual-channel Closed-loop Supply Chain

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در این مقاله، یک مدل جدید برای لجستیک یکپارچه پیشرو/معکوس بر اساس سیاست قیمت گذاری در کانال فروش مستقیم و غیر مستقیم پیشنهاد شده است. مدل پیشنهادی شامل تولید کننده، مراکز دفن، توزیع کننده و مشتری نهایی می-باشد. ما فرض کردیم که مکان مشتری‌های نهایی ثابت است. در ابتدا، یک مدل برنامه ریزی خطی مختلط عدد صحیح قطعی برای طراحی شبکه لجستیک یکپارچه توسعه داده می‌شود. سپس مدل احتمالی همتای مدل خطی عدد صحیح مختلط پیشنهادی با استفاده از رویکرد سناریو سازی توسعه داده می‌شود. ما از شاخص ارزش حل احتمالی به عنوان یک معیار اندازه‌گیری برای دقت رویکرد برنامه‌ریزی احتمالی استفاده می‌کنیم. مقدار VSS نشان داد که استفاده از رویکرد احتمالی برای حل مدل پیشنهادی مناسب می‌باشد. علاوه بر این، ما توانستیم مقادیر بهینه قیمت فروش در کانال مستقیم و غیر مستقیم فروش و سطح خدمت را با در نظر گرفتن توام جریان مستقیم و معکوس به دست بیاوریم.

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