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Abstract

Simulation is a useful technique for engineers and operations researchers. One of the primary advantages of simulation models is that they are able to provide users with practical feedback when analyzing real-world systems. This thesis builds a discrete event simulation of the sortie generation process, to help decision makers in performing analyses regarding quantity of manpower, bottlenecks in supply and maintenance activities; as well as utilization of maintenance manpower, cost and number of sorties produced in a specific time. We only model one aircraft system with four Line Replacement Units (LRU), but any system and its LRUs can be included in our simulation. Our analysis focuses on eight Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) from our simulation. The final simulation provides a reasonable representation of many, but not all, characteristics of the sortie generation process. It is a preliminary simulation tool for further research on the sortie generation process in the Turkish Air Force, and provides decision-makers with the ability to analyze the sortie generation process in support of future decisions.

SIMULATION MODELING OF THE SORTIE GENERATION PROCESS IN TURAF

I. Introduction

Background and Problem Statement

Turkey is taking an increased role in the international environment, and carrying its area of interest and sphere of influence beyond its boundaries. Turkey is rising as a decisive power in regional matters and influential actor in global affairs.

The Turkish Air Force (TURAF) provides unique capabilities that Turkey needs in adopting the vision to be the “Most Powerful Air and Space Power of its Region” (Turkish, 2014). Turkish Air Force supports this vision under the guidelines of six strategic goals given below.

- Possessing strong corporate culture and qualified manpower
- Improving independent operational capabilities reinforced by indigenous systems
- Ability to carry out effective missions in required time and geography
- Transforming information and decision superiority to operational superiority
- Providing continuous operational support until final outcome
- Establishing Turkish Military Aviation style with our education system

The Air Force’s primary force application tools are aircraft. These aircraft are operated and supported by a host of personnel across a variety of organizations. From a logistics perspective, the strategies focus on manpower in mission-related maintenance activities, decision support systems to provide superior advantage of using information in logistics-related decision making process, and logistics activities which includes planning

II. Literature Review

Chapter Overview

This chapter examines research conducted in the area of the sortie generation process. In addition, this chapter reviews discrete event simulation, defense related aircraft maintenance and the associated supply chain, along with simulation models and simulation projects in each of these areas.

Discrete Event Simulation

Discrete Event Simulation (DES) is a methodology to simulate dynamic systems based on a series of sequential events (Banks et al., 2005). Each event occurs at an instant in time and signals a change of state in the system. The DES process is based on events, state variables, and a calendar or event list to schedule events. The simulation starts with the first event in the event list, and then other scheduled events are processed as the simulation progresses. The time advance of the simulation varies and is characterized by the scheduled events in the event list. Typically an event, such as an entity arrival, schedules another event, such as an end of service, with specific conditions and time delay (Ouerghi, 2008).

Computer-based discrete-event simulation has long been a tool for analysis of logistics and supply chain systems (Manuj, Mentzer, and Bowers, 2009). The capability of simulation to include stochastic variables makes simulation a powerful research and decision-making tool. Computer-based discrete-event simulation enhances our understanding of logistics and supply chain systems by offering the flexibility to

understand system behavior when cost parameters and policies are changed (Rosenfield, Copacino and Payne, 1985).

Sortie Generation Process

The sortie generation process is the cycle of inspection, service, flight and maintenance used to maintain a viable air force wing (AFLMA, 1991). In AFI21-101 sortie generation is defined as a process by which mission capable aircraft are generated in a minimum amount of time, during peacetime or wartime, through separate maintenance, logistics and munition tasks or by concurrent servicing operations. Combat sortie generation may include fueling, munitions/ammunition loading/unloading, aircraft reconfiguration, technical order inspections, and other servicing requirements.

The basic sortie generation process has remained constant over the past few decades. An aircraft flies a sortie, lands, taxis to a parking location, and receives service from a ground crew. The aircrew then debriefs the maintenance personnel and the aircraft is checked for failures. If none exist, it is scheduled and then prepared for the next mission, taxis out, and takes off for another sortie. If a failure occurs, the aircraft is sent to unscheduled maintenance, and several other actions are conducted to repair the aircraft in the most expeditious manner (Faas, 2003). This cyclical process is repeated according to the daily flying schedule or until either a failure occurs or phase maintenance is required. Figure 1 illustrates this general process.

Due to the fact that the sortie generation problem is not new, there have been many studies from different aspects of the sortie generation process. These research efforts have employed many methods, including discrete event simulation, Markov

These studies evaluate sortie production with a different focus and measures performance through different metrics. Faas' (2003) model contains not only maintenance activities but also supply chain activities whereas MacKenzie (2010) focused only maintenance specialty and manpower. However, Faas didn't measure the effect of manpower in his model. This research does not consider ALS and is a mixture of Faas' and MacKenzie's studies with more detailed supply activities. The next section highlights simulation studies focused on supply chain activities.

Simulation Studies of Supply Chain Management

The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) defines supply chain management as “the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities” (CSCMP, 2010).

Simulation is a powerful tool to identify potential opportunities for improvement in logistics organizations (Cao et al., 2003). Due to the wide variety of supply chains and their extreme impact on a business' efficiency, computer-based discrete-event simulation has long been used as a common tool for analysis of supply chain activities. Simulation provides an excellent and cheap way to understand the interactions between logistics performance metrics (Cheng et al., 2008).

Parson (2010) develops a discrete event simulation to investigate factors which influence Total Non-Mission Capable [due to] Supply (TNMCS) rates for the B-1B by modeling the key processes within the Air Force supply chain. TNMCS is a key metric used by leadership to evaluate effectiveness of the spares supply chain. He used an

chapter. However, other MOEs are also very critical for different situations, positions and environments.

The simulation results showed that all factors have different amounts of influence on sortie numbers, although some of the factors explored did not have any statistical significance. Both maintenance factors we used in our analysis are highly significant for MOE-1 (Number of Sorties), whereas supply factors are more influential for other MOEs, in particular MOE-7 (Inventory Level). It is apparent that there are many factors that should be considered for the sortie generation process at a base, many involving different organizations above the base level.

According to results of the current supply and maintenance factors used in this research, even though broader analysis is required, the maintenance factors we examined had a larger impact than the supply factors on operational performance. However, the supply factors we examined did show the expected impact on supply metrics such as inventory level. In terms of cost it is more straight forward to associate a dollar figure to inventory size than to increased maintenance performance through additional manpower or an increase in repair time.

Recommendations for Further Study

Every study has limitations and can be improved. Therefore, there are many possible opportunities to make enhancements to our model. This section explains possible improvements that make the simulation model built for this study more realistic.

First, more aircraft systems should be added to the simulation model for more accurate results. Although our model allows using multiple LRU's, data for other LRU's

