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A new online scheduling approach for enhancing QoS in cloud

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Abstract

Quality-of-Services (*QoS*) is one of the most important requirements of cloud users. So, cloud providers continuously try to enhance cloud management tools to guarantee the required *QoS* and provide users the services with high quality. One of the most important management tools which play a vital role in enhancing *QoS* is scheduling. Scheduling is the process of assigning users' tasks into available Virtual Machines (VMs). This paper presents a new task scheduling approach, called Online Potential Finish Time (*OPFT*), to enhance the cloud data-center broker, which is responsible for the scheduling process, and solve the *QoS* issue. The main idea of the new approach is inspired from the idea of passing vehicles through the highways. Whenever the width of the road increases, the number of passing vehicles increases. We apply this idea to assign different users' tasks into the available VMs. The number of tasks that are allocated to a VM is in proportion to the processing power of this VM. Whenever the VM capacity increases, the number of tasks that are assigned into this VM increases. The proposed *OPFT* approach is evaluated using the *CloudSim* simulator considering real tasks and real cost model. The experimental results indicate that the proposed *OPFT* algorithm is more efficient than the *FCFS*, *RR*, *Min-Min*, and *MCT* algorithms in terms of schedule length, cost, balance degree, response time and resource utilization.

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Keywords: Cloud computing; Task scheduling; *QoS*; Load balancing

1. Introduction

Cloud computing is another worldview of shared resources. It has enormous pools of resources that are accessible to clients for utilizing as pay-per-use on-demand over the Internet [1]. The cloud-computing environment provides three main service models: Software as a Service (SaaS), Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), and Platform as a Service (PaaS). In all cases, clients can utilize what they need on the cloud and pay just for what they utilize. Services suppliers, similar to Amazon, Google, and Microsoft, allow their clients to assign, get to, and

deal with a gathering of Virtual Machines (VMs) that keep running inside the server farms and just charge them for the time of utilizing the machines [2].

These days, cloud computing is turning into a proficient paradigm that gives high-performance computing resources over the Internet to execute large-scale complex applications. However, one of the key issues that debase the cloud computing performance is resource allocation. Resource allocation is characterized by the presence of limited number of virtual machines that should be allocated to execute several tasks. Subsequently, management of cloud resources is important especially when numerous tasks are submitted at the same time to the cloud computing [3].

Numerous researchers have presented distinctive methods to solve resource allocation. The primary objective of some of existing methods is to decrease the makespan. Yet, they overlook critical imperatives like, time complexity, response

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time, resource utilization, and sometimes they don't take into account the cost. This metrics evaluate the Quality of Service *QOS* of cloud system. The *QOS* is defined as the required benefit desires as consented to be given by the service supplier to users in light of their needs [4]. Users need to execute their applications in low time and with low cost. The problem of allocating resources is a part of *QOS* management issue.

This article presents a new resource allocation algorithm for cloud computing environment to solve *QOS* management issue. It considers many terms like, makespan, cost, resource utilization, and time complexity. The *OPFT* enhances the overall performance of cloud computing by taking into account both the tasks requirements and resources availability, and improving both total execution cost and resource utilization with low time complexity. It also considers minimizing the response time, where it checks continuously, if new tasks submitted or not to take them in consideration.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces the cloud computing and the task scheduling problem. Section 3 presents the related work while the proposed *OPFT* is developed in section 4. Section 5 discusses the simulation results while section 6 presents the conclusion of this research work.

2. Cloud computing and task scheduling problem

There are main components [5] of task scheduling in cloud computing system, client, cloud information system,

Datacenter Broker, and *VMs*. Fig. 1 discusses the relationship of these components.

Client component: Client is responsible for submitting his/her task(s) to supplier and wait until it is executed. The submitted tasks determine the requirement resources.

Information system: All tasks information stores in cloud information system. This component is very important. It provides the necessary information of tasks arrived into cloud computing environment for execution. Information such as task length, arrival time, resources information, number of submitted tasks, and other information are stored in the information system.

Datacenter broker: The main component in task scheduling model is datacenter broker. It is the backbone of scheduling process. Datacenter broker include the scheduler (by default FCFS scheduler), which is responsible for scheduling the tasks. It determines the execution order of each task.

Virtual machines: *VMs* is the component that executes client tasks and returns the results. It is the critical component, because the numbers of them are less than the number of submitted tasks. *VMs* component called also the available resources.

In this article, we focus on the IaaS model. Our model looks like Amazon EC2 model. IaaS provides virtual computing, storage, and network resources without returning to the physical resources complexity. Cloud computing technology uses the virtualization technology to provide all resources in virtual form [6]. The users will rent high-performance computing resources in the form of *VMs* to execute their applications. Each *VM* has different configuration such as CPU

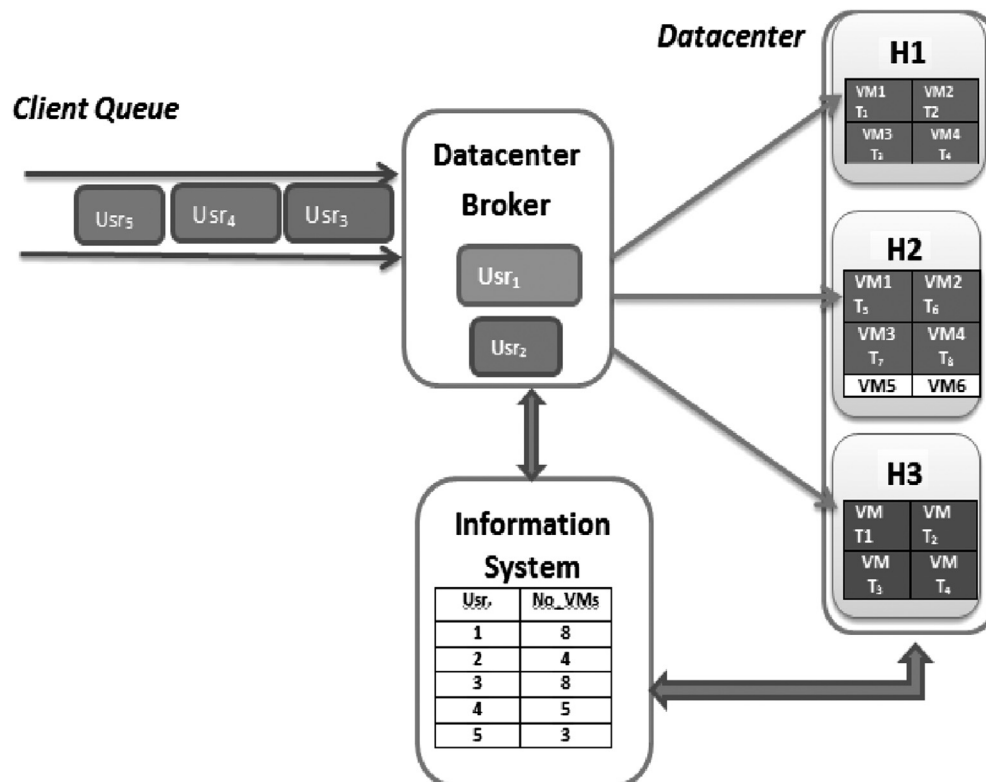


Fig. 1. Components of scheduling in cloud computing.

speed, number of CPU cores, memory size, cost per time spent, and so on.

Resource allocation algorithm is a method to allocate the available resources to execute the submitted tasks. Each algorithm should consider some of conditions to allocate the tasks in a correct way. These conditions [7] are:

1. Any task should be assigned into exactly one VM.
2. Ensure that a task assigned on only one a VM which is running.
3. Total processing requirements of all tasks, in Million Instructions (MI), assigned into a virtual resource should not exceed the available processing capacity of that virtual resource.
4. Total memory requirements of all tasks assigned into a virtual resource should not exceed the maximum memory available with that a virtual resource.

3. Related work

Two types of algorithms are developed for task scheduling; heuristic algorithms and meta-heuristic algorithms. Heuristic algorithms depend extremely on the predictions to achieve a near optimal solution. These algorithms have low time complexity, but they often provide high schedule length [8]. In opposition to heuristic-based, the meta-heuristic strategies search the solution space in a direct manner and create proficient outcomes on broad domain problems, yet these techniques often have high time complexity [9]. In this article we focus on the heuristic algorithms type. Many heuristic algorithms are developed to be used to achieve the near optimal solution. Here, we will discuss some of them:

OPFT Algorithm	
Input: Arrived Tasks	
Output: Scheduling Solution	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare information about available resources and tasks requirements 2. Sort the arrived tasks in descending order list 3. Calculate $Total_{req}$ and $Total_{avail}$ 4. Calculate PFT 5. Set $\alpha=1.00001$ 6. For $i=0$ to $n-1$ 7. Select task T_i from ordered List 8. For $j=0$ to $m-1$ 9. If $((TFT(VM_j) + FT(T_i, VM_j)) \leq PFT)$ 10. Assign selected T_i to VM_j 11. $TFT(VM_j) + = FT(T_i, VM_j)$ 12. Break 13. Else if $(TFT(VM_j)+FT(T_i, VM_j)) \leq \mu * PFT)$ 14. Assign selected task to VM_j 15. $TFT(VM_j) + = FT(T_i, VM_j)$ 16. Break 17. Else 18. $\mu = \mu + 0.00001$ 19. Continue 20. End if 21. End for 22. 23. If there are new submitted tasks go to step(1) 	

Fig. 2. Online Potential Finish Time scheduling algorithm (OPFT).

Table 1
Tasks length with millions of instructions (MI).

Task	Length
T ₀	1000
T ₁	1500
T ₂	2000
T ₃	2500
T ₄	3000
T ₅	3500
T ₆	4000
T ₇	4500
T ₈	4700
T ₉	5000
Total_{req}	31,700

First Come First Serve (FCFT) [10]: FCFS is the first method that is used in cloud computing systems [11]. In FCFS method, all tasks are combined in queue and wait until the resources are available. Once they become available, the tasks are assigned to them based on arrival time. The FCFS is simple method to implement in cloud computing, but it does not take into account any criteria for scheduling the tasks to VMs [11]. Therefore, the total time resulting from this way is very high and the balancing degree is very small.

Round-Robin (RR) [12]: It uses the same steps of FCFS for scheduling some tasks, but RR scheduler mostly utilizes time-sharing, presenting each task a time slot or quantum, and stopping the task if it is not completed. RR is very useful for load balancing, but it gives a high makespan.

Min-Min algorithm [13]: it is a heuristic method used for task scheduling [12–14]. Min-min algorithm computes minimum completion time of each task overall VMs. Then, it finds the task with minimum completion time and assigns it to VM that gives this completion time. The algorithm iterates until all tasks are scheduled. Min-min algorithm without improving has a high makespan and it doesn't consider the system load balancing, because it assigns smaller tasks in faster VMs.

Minimum Completion Time MCT [11]: algorithm assigns each process in arbitrary order to the VM that has the minimum completion time.

Table 2
Illustration of scheduling solution.

VM No.	Tasks	TFT(VM _j) by Sec.
VM ₀	T ₉ , T ₈ , T ₇ , T ₁	$(5000 + 4700+4500 + 2000)/550 = \mathbf{29}$
VM ₁	T ₆ , T ₅ , T ₀	$(4000 + 3500+1000)/250 = \mathbf{34}$
VM ₂	T ₄ , T ₃ , T ₂	$(3000 + 2500+1500)/200 = \mathbf{35}$

Table 3
Amazon EC2 pricing model.

Type	vCPU	ECU	Memory (Giga)	Cost (\$)
t2.small	1	Variable	2	\$0.023 per Hour
t2.large	2	Variable	8	\$0.0928 per Hour
m4.large	2	6.5	8	\$0.1 per Hour
c4.large	2	8	3.75	\$0.1 per Hour
r3.large	2	6.5	15	\$0.166 per Hour

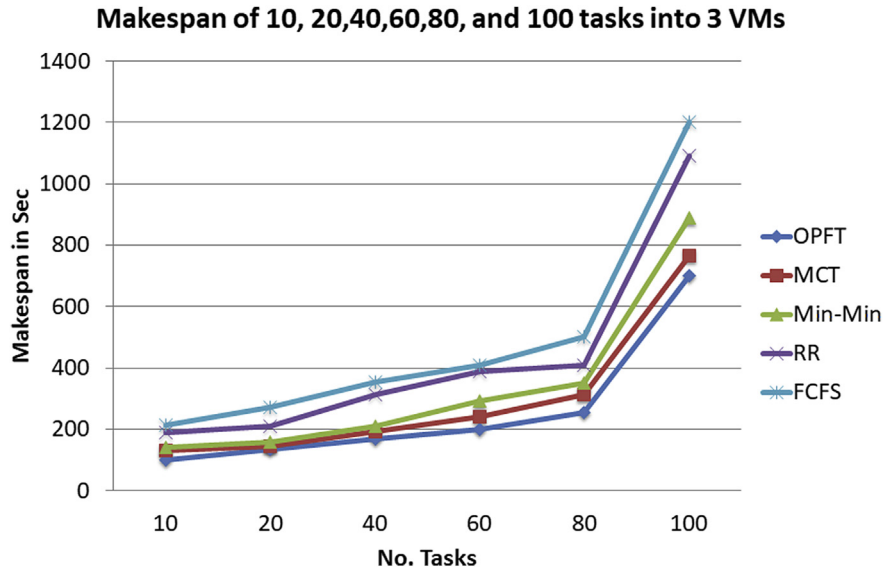


Fig. 3. Schedule length results.

4. Online Potential Finish Time (OPFT) algorithm

This section presents a new *OPFT* task scheduling algorithm to solve the task-scheduling problem in cloud computing. The main goal is to enhance the overall system performance through improving some parameters like, total execution cost, achieving task requirements without violating system resources and *VM* utilization with low time complexity.

4.1. Proposed OPFT

The main idea of the proposed algorithm is taken from the idea of the vehicles traffic in highways. Whenever the width of the road increases, the number of vehicles, in the traffic,

increases. We use this idea to assign tasks into the available *VMs*. The highest number of tasks should be scheduled into the *VM* that has highest capacity. We can do this by calculating the Potential Finish Time (PFT) (see Eq. 3 below) of the arrived tasks and schedule the tasks according to this value. That is, give each *VM* the best fit group of tasks to achieve approximately finish time equal to PFT, although each *VM* executes a different number of tasks from the other *VMs*.

The *OPFT* consists of two stages: a **preparing stage** and a **selection stage**.

1. **Preparing stage:** Firstly, the datacenter broker prepares all information about resource availability and task requirements. Secondly, the algorithm sorts the arrived tasks into descending order. Thirdly, the algorithm calculates the

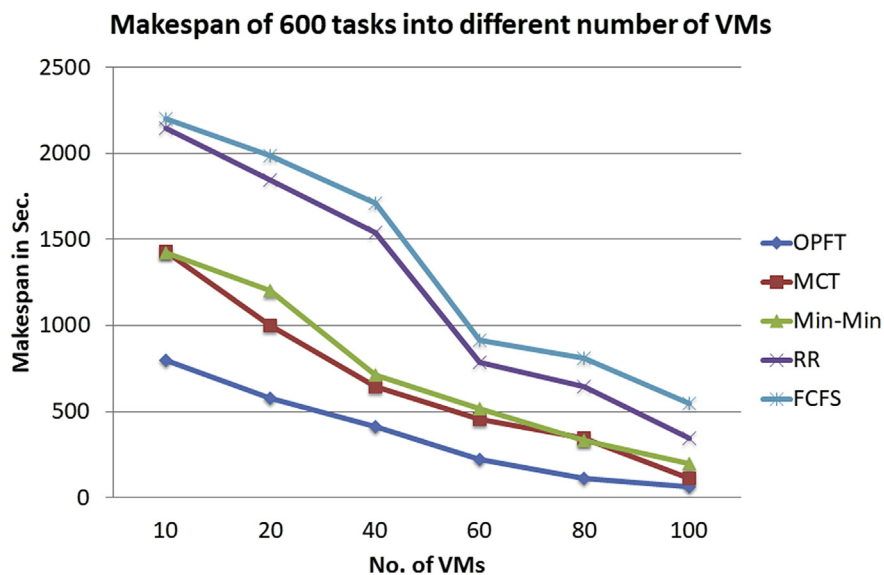


Fig. 4. Schedule length results of 600 tasks.

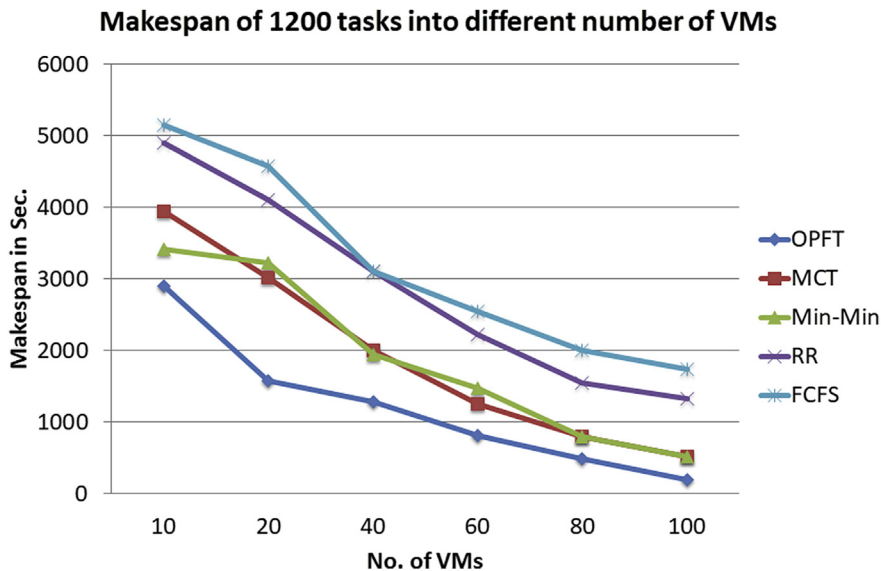


Fig. 5. Schedule length results of 1200 tasks.

Potential Finish Time PFT of the scheduling model. It can compute the PFT using Equations (1)–(3). It calculates $Total_{Req}$ and $Total_{Avail}$ values, where $Total_{Req}$ is the total requirement processing power of the arrived tasks and $Total_{Avail}$ is the total processing of the available VMs, and $Mean$ is the average of all tasks length.

$$Total_{Req} = \sum_{j=0}^m MIPS_j \tag{1}$$

$$Total_{Avail} = \sum_{i=0}^n MI_i \tag{2}$$

$$PFT = (Total_{req} + Mean) / Total_{Avail} \tag{3}$$

2. **Selection stage:** in this stage, The $OPFT$ algorithm assigns tasks into VM according to the PFT value. By another way, each VM_j should take number of tasks where the total finish time $TFT(VM_j)$ of these tasks is approximately equal to the PFT value. Where the $TFT(VM_j)$ is the summation of finish time FT of all tasks that are assigned to VM_j . We use PFT as a reference for all VMs to detect the time that each VM should be spent in processing.

We cannot assign the exact group of tasks with $Total_{Req}$ that gives the same PFT value for each VM . So, we use α value as the control parameter to monitor the selected tasks that are

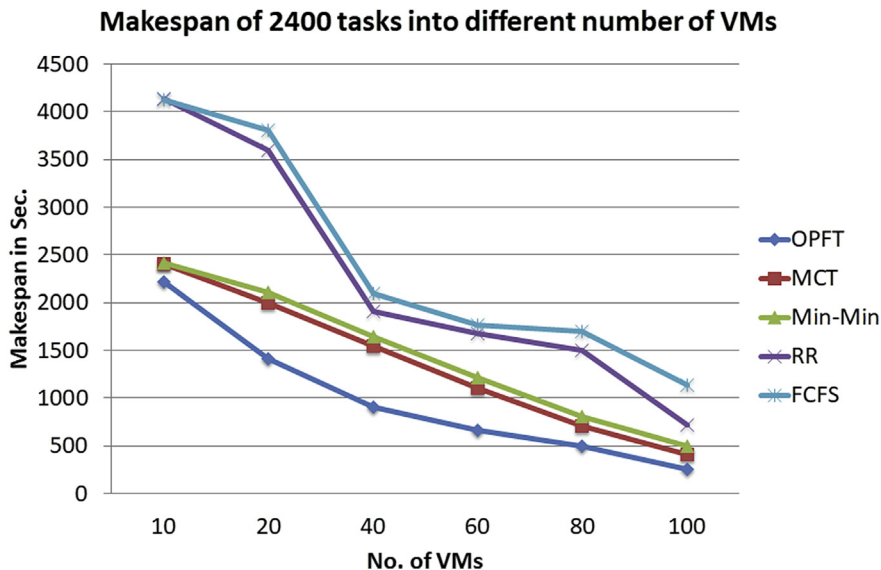


Fig. 6. Schedule length results of 2400 tasks.

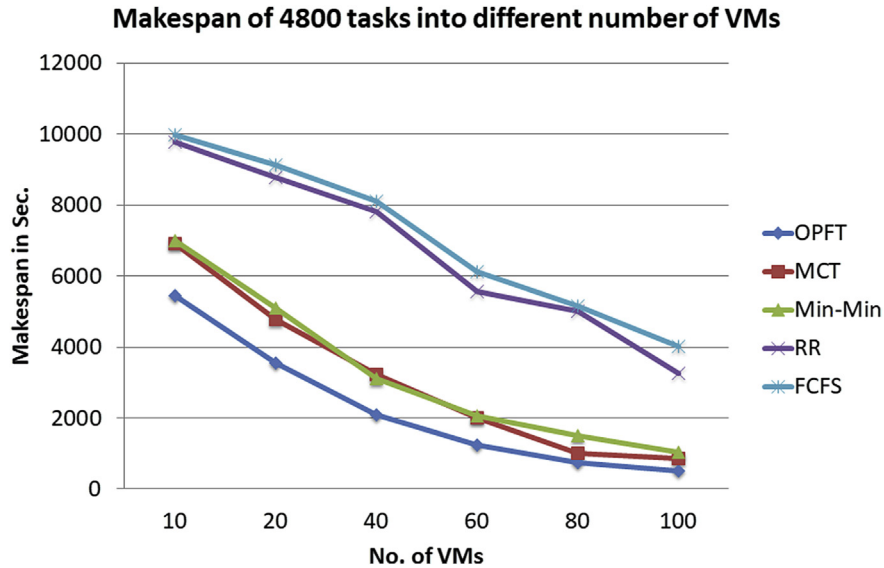


Fig. 7. Schedule length results of 4800 tasks.

assigned to each VM. α value can eliminate the amount of gab between PFT and the actual TFT of each VM. We start with small value ($\alpha = 1.00001$) and add another value $=0.00001$ for each iteration. This gives good results.

4.2. Time complexity

The time complexity of the proposed OPFT algorithm is analyzed according to the algorithm that is shown in Fig. 2. The time complexity is the summation of time complexity of stage 1 and stage 2. In the stage 1, the OPFT sorts the arrived tasks by using the insertion sort with time complexity $O(n \log n)$. After that it calculates TFT for each VM with time complexity $O(m)$. Finally, it assigns each task to the fit VM with time complexity

$O(n)$. So we can say that the total time complexity is $O(n (\log n + 1) + m)$ or $O(n \log n + m)$. If the number of VMs is small, We can rewrite it as $O(n)$.

4.3. Case study

To understand the working sequence of the proposed OPFT, let's take an example to assign ten independent tasks, shown in Table 1, into three VMs. The VM_0 has 550 MIPS, VM_1 has 250 MIPS, and VM_2 has 200 MIPS. So the $total_{Avial} = 1000$ MIPS. The proposed OPFT schedules the tasks into the available three VMs by applying two stages.

In the first stage: the OPFT collects information about tasks requirements and resources availability. Indeed, it sorts

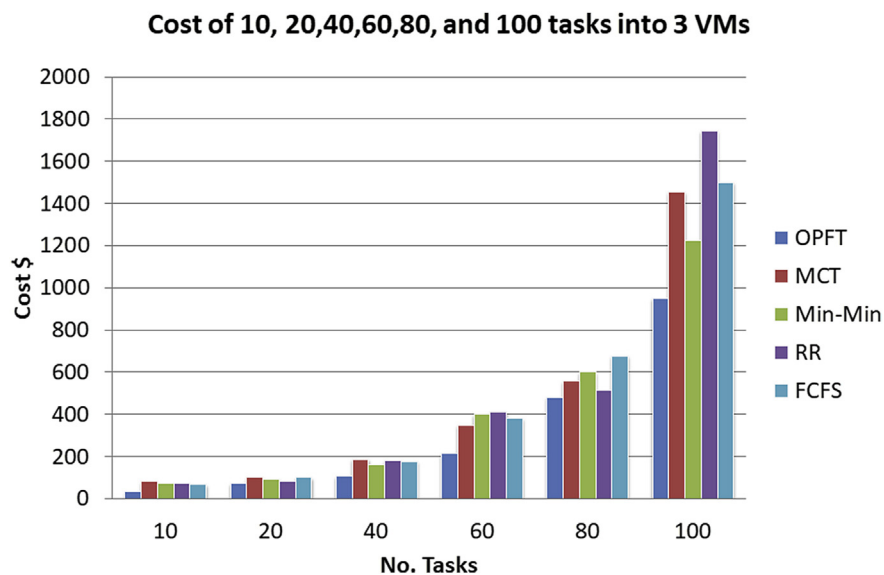


Fig. 8. The cost results of 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100 tasks into 3 VMs.

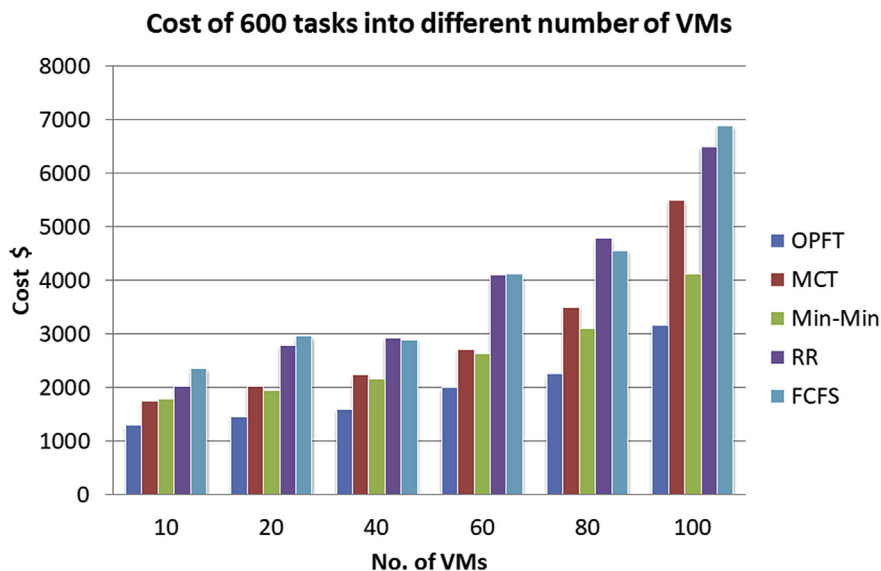


Fig. 9. The cost results of 600 tasks.

the tasks in descending order according to their lengths (i.e. number of MI). After that it computes the *PFT* value according to Equation (3). $PFT = (31,700 + 3170)/1000 = 34.87 s$.

In the second stage: the algorithm assigns the ordered tasks according to the *PFT* value. Table 2 shows the scheduling solution.

5. Simulation results

This section presents performance evaluation of the proposed *OPFT*. In this evaluation, the well-known *CloudSim* [14] is used to simulate the cloud-computing environment. The

simulation environment is a 64-bit windows 7 operating system installed in laptop core i5 with 8 GB RAM.

To evaluate the performance of the new algorithm, a list of tasks is generated by using a standard formatted workload of a high-performance computing center called *HPC2N* in Sweden as a benchmark [15]. In addition, a list of VMs is generated according to Amazon EC2 model shown in Table 3. We compare the new algorithm against *FCFS*, *RR*, *Min-Min*, and *MCT* algorithms as the most famous algorithms which are used as schedulers in cloud computing.

We have used some of metrics to measure the performance of our paper and compare it against the others. These metrics are a schedule length, cost, and balancing degree. Also we

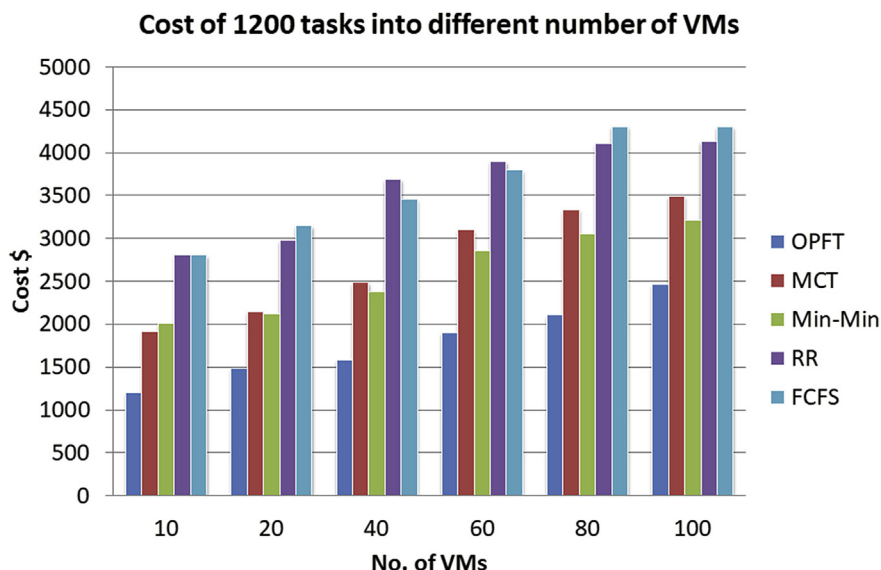


Fig. 10. The cost results of 1200 tasks.

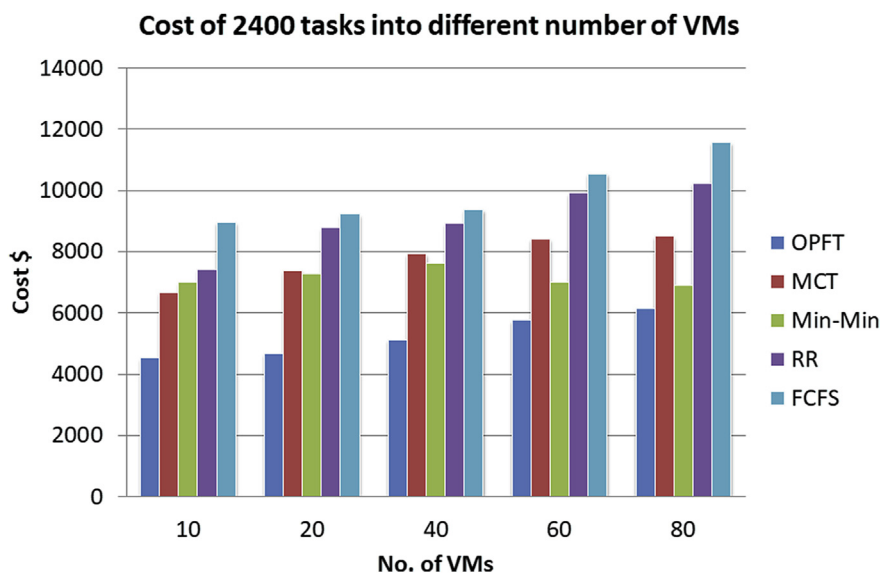


Fig. 11. The cost results of 2400 tasks.

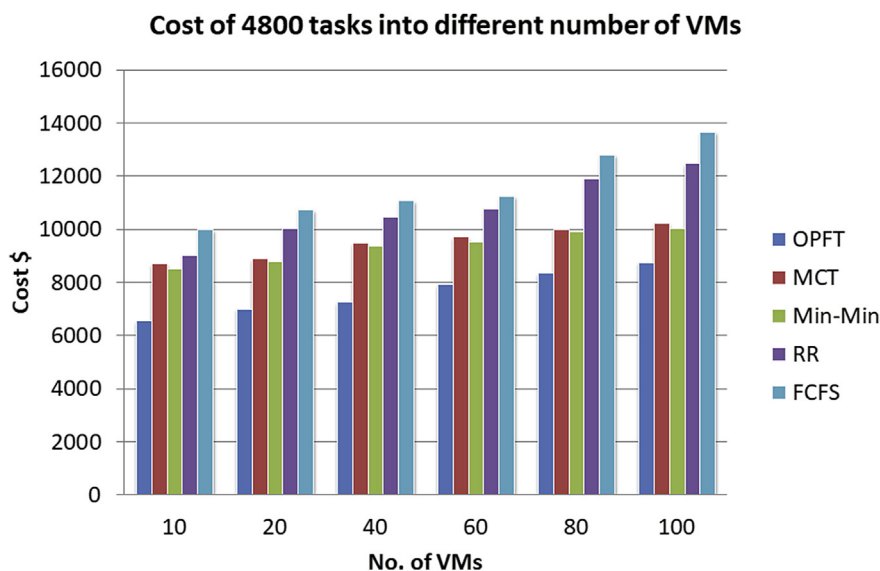


Fig. 12. The cost results of 4800 tasks.

show how the new algorithm can improve in resource utilization, response time and time complexity.

5.1. Schedule length (SL)

The *SL* or makespan is the maximum execution time at the most loaded virtual machine. It is the most important metric which should be used to show the efficient of any new algorithm. Figs. 3–7 show the schedule length results of different group of tasks which are assigned into different *VMs*. The results show that the new algorithm is better than the other algorithms. It gives low *SL*. As may be seen below, *OPFT* algorithm can manage any number of *VMs* to achieve the best solution. Let's take an example to show that. With number of 100 tasks, the new algorithm gets $SL = 700$ sec., whereas *MCT* and *Min-min* gives more 780 Sec., and *FCFS* and *RR* algorithms

achieve *SL* is more than 1000 S these results are taken at 3 *VMs*. Another example, let's take 600 tasks at 10 *VMs*. We find that *OPFT* algorithm can finish the tasks execution and save more than 16 minutes than the other algorithms. Finally if we take another case at 4800 tasks and 40 *VMs*, we will find that *OPFT* algorithm can save more than 15 minutes than the other algorithms. In summary, we can say that our algorithm can achieve the solution with a lowest schedule length.

5.2. Cost

Amazon EC2 presents four different instances to the end user. Each instance has special way to pay. These instances are On-Demand, Reserved Instances, Spot Instances, and dedicated hosts. We choose On-Demand model to evaluate our algorithm, because it is famous and has many advantages for

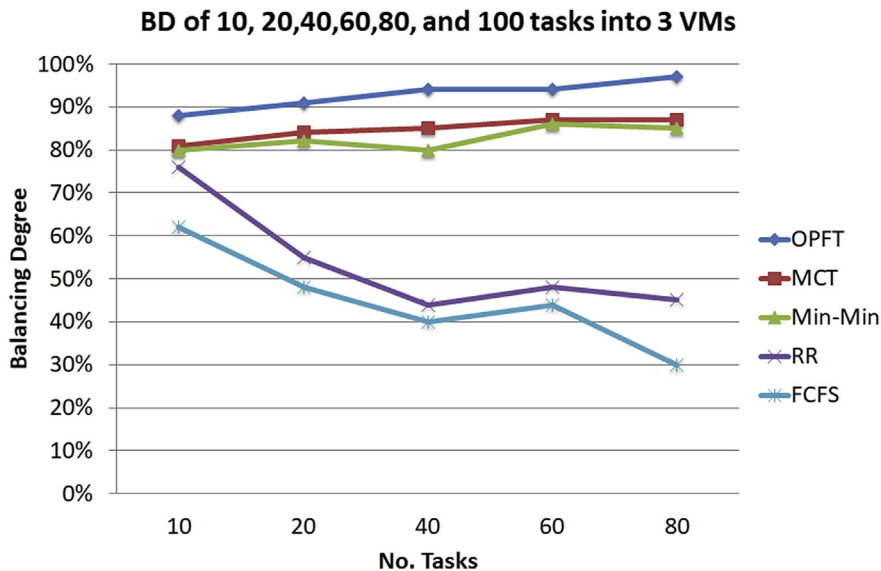


Fig. 13. The balancing degree results of 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100 tasks at 3 VMs.

users. See Table 3, where we select some of different VMs with different characteristics [16].

Figs. 8–12 show the cost results of different tasks on different VMs. From the figures, we note that the OPFT algorithm achieves solutions with very low cost than the other algorithms.

In summary, we notice that our algorithm gives inexpensive solutions.

5.3. Balance degree (BD)

The optimal solution of the task scheduling problem may be achieved by applying an optimization method such as exhaustive search algorithm or branch-and-bound. However, the drawbacks of applying such methods are that they have

very large time complexity and it is very difficult to be used in case of large number of tasks. Therefore, most of the research works trend to use heuristic methods, which achieve near optimal solution. The optimal solution (S_{opt}) may be defined as the best solution that achieves the lowest makespan. According to [3], the system can achieve the lowest makespan (i.e. optimal solution) if and only if the next conditions are met:

1. Each task is assigned to distinct VM.
2. Each task starts execution as soon as possible.

The BD is the degree of balancing the workload on the available VMs after scheduling. The BD may be calculated as follows.

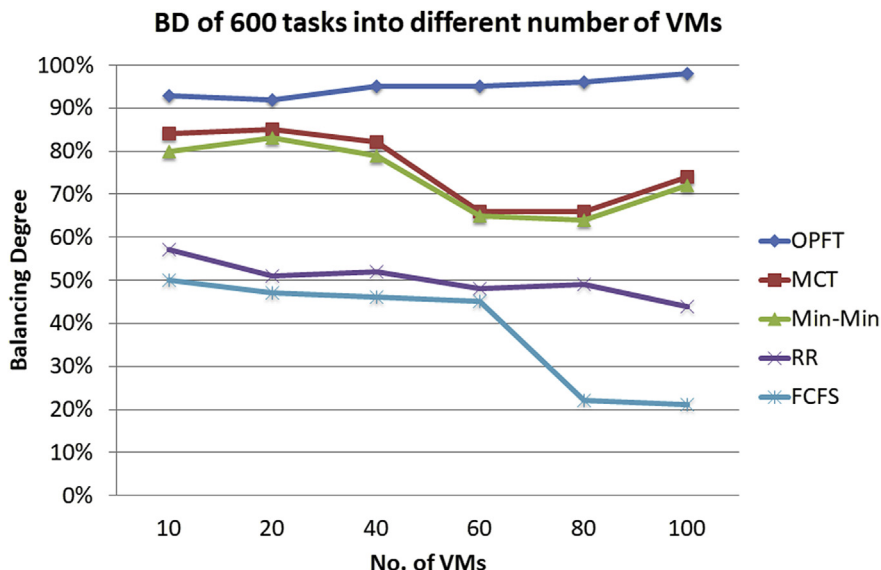


Fig. 14. The balancing degree results of 600 tasks.

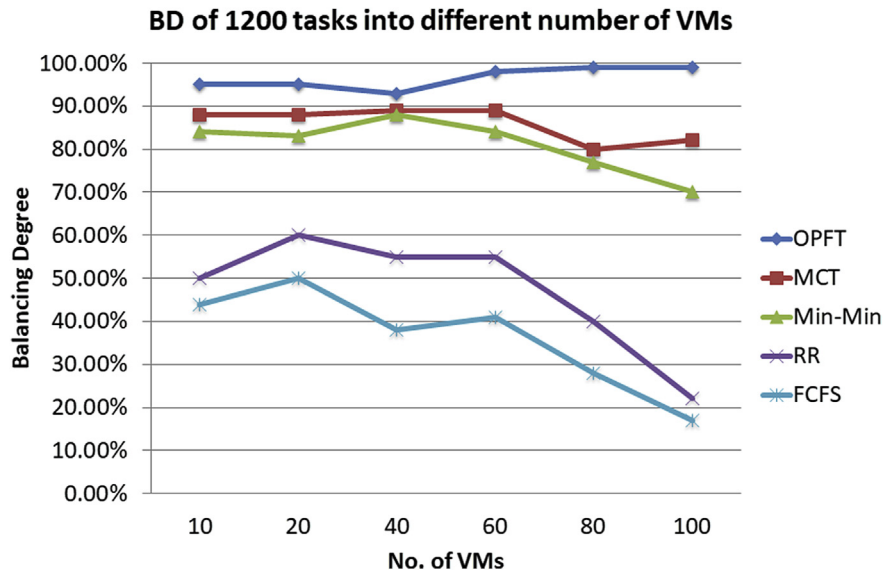


Fig. 15. The balancing degree results 1200 tasks.

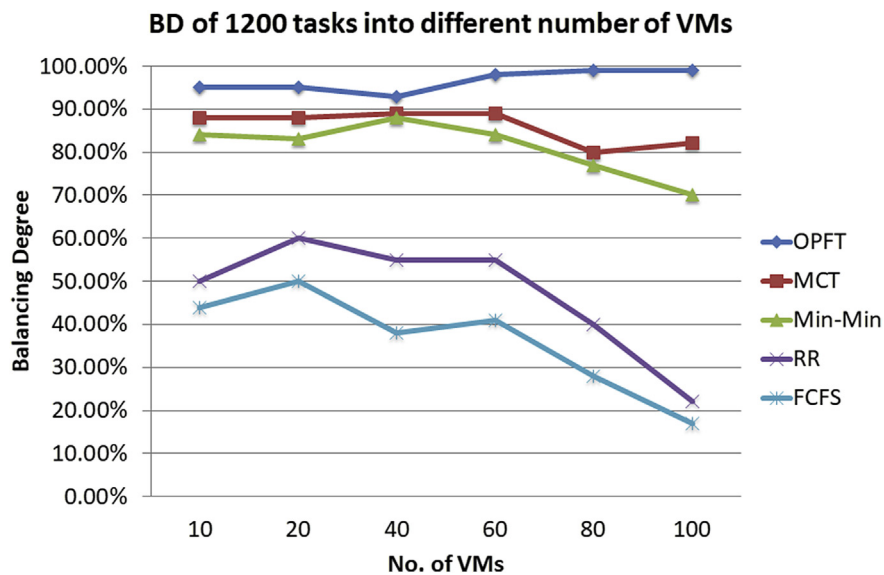


Fig. 16. The balancing degree results of 2400 tasks.

$$BD = SL(S_{opt}) / SL(S_{fin}) \tag{4}$$

where, S_{opt} is the optimal solution and S_{fin} is the final solution obtained from the applied algorithm. In this article, S_{opt} is assumed as the ideal solution, where S_{opt} is computed as the summation of total MI of all the tasks over the total $MIPS$ of the available VMs . That is, $S_{opt} = Total_{Req} / Total_{vail}$. From Equation (4), the algorithm with high balancing degree achieves the near optimal solution.

Figs. 13–17 show the results of BD for different tasks and different VMs . From the figures we see that the new algorithm is better than the other algorithms, because it gives the lowest SL . In the all cases, our algorithm has higher BD than the others. It is always close from the optimal solution and gives a degree more than 88%.

Authors in Ref. [17] define load balancing as “A technique to spread work between two or more computers, in order to get optimal resource utilization, maximize throughput, and minimize response time has high load balancing degree”. So, we can say that our algorithm not only achieves the highest BD value, but also it minimizes the response time and utilizes the available resources in a good way.

5.4. Summary

From the above figures, we note that the new algorithm can improve in the cloud computing performance. It gives the near optimal solutions at different number of tasks and different number of VMs . The algorithm can achieve these solutions under load balancing consideration. Thus, it eliminates the response time and increases the resource utilization. The

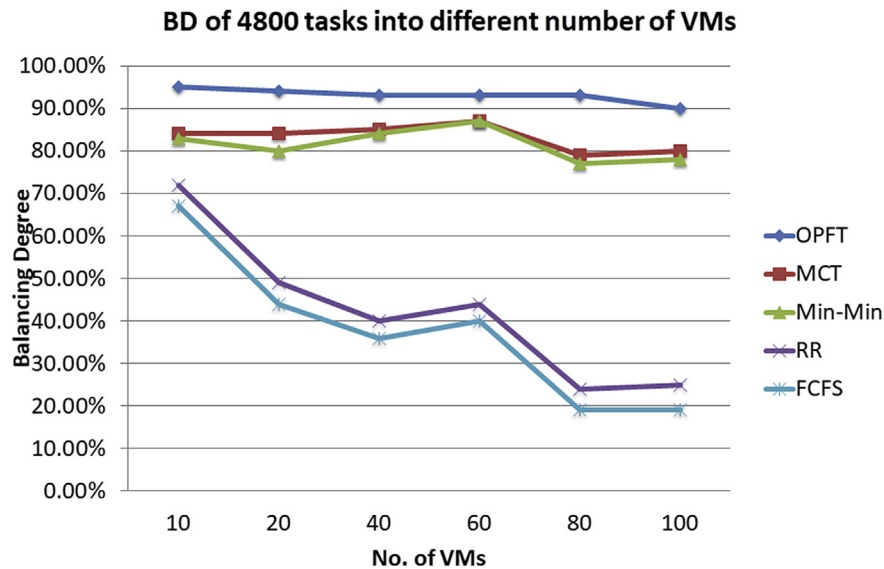


Fig. 17. The balancing degree results 4800 tasks.

Table 4
Summary of comparison between *OPFT* algorithm and other algorithms.

Algorithm	OPFT	FCFS	RR	MCT	Min-Min
Time complexity	O(n)	O(1)	O(1)	O(mn)	O(mn)
Schedule length	Low	V. High	V. High	V. High	Medium
Cost	Low	V. High	V. High	V. High	High
Balance degree	V. High	V. low	V. low	Medium	Medium
Resource utilization	V. High	V. low	V. low	Medium	Medium

algorithm also considers any new submitted tasks. It acts as a static algorithm for submitted group of tasks and as a dynamic algorithm after completing the scheduling of this group. It always checks if a new group of tasks are submitted or not. Table 4 shows comparison between the new algorithm and *FCFS*, *RR*, *Min-Min*, and *MCT* algorithms. From the table we see that *OPFT* algorithm is better than the others in terms of *SL*, *BD*, cost, resource utilization. However, *FCFS* and *RR* are better than it in time complexity. But if we compare the new algorithm against *FCFS* and *RR* with considering the total time of execution, we will find that the new algorithm is better than them, where the total time of execution is the submission of *SL* plus Running time (i.e. running time present time complexity in seconds).

6. Conclusion

In this article, a new *OPFT* for task scheduling in cloud computing is proposed. The main idea of the new algorithm is inspired from the vehicles traffic in the highways, where the width of the way has an important effect in the vehicles speed and their arrival time. Thus we can allocate a submitted group of tasks by using this rule, where the number of tasks that are allocated to specific virtual machine proportion to the power processing of this virtual machine. It applies this in two stages; the preparing stage and the selection stage. From the results, we find that the new algorithm can achieve the best solution at low running time. It improves *QOS* for cloud system through considering some

terms like execution time, cost, response time, load balancing degree, and resource utilization. The results of our algorithm are always close from the optimal solution value. It always gives balancing degree higher than 88%. As a future work, we will use the algorithm to develop meta-heuristic algorithms. It will be used as an initial stage for some of meta-heuristic algorithms like Genetic Algorithm *GA*, Simulated Annealing *SA*, and ant Colony Optimization algorithm *ACO*. This is because; it gives low schedule length and low time complexity. This makes it one of good choices to be initial stage and give good solutions.

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