ADROID Conference Series: Engineering Sciences and Technology
Volume 2, pp.171-186, 2026

Supply Network Disruption Prediction using Heterogeneous Graph Neural Networks and Temporal Embeddings

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ABSTRACT Recent post-pandemic disruption has revealed shortcomings in current supply chain paradigms, which are built on segregated, compartmentalised information systems that are neither real-time nor support real-time decisions. The typical Supply Chain Management (SCM) paradigms have several weaknesses, such as inaccurate demand forecasts, lack of visibility into the multi-tier supply networks, lack of inventory synchronisation, and high vulnerability to geopolitical/natural disasters/cyber-attacks, resulting in annual losses to the world economy at an estimated $184 billion per year. This, compounded by a number of other factors, leads to a fundamental failure of current paradigms and gives rise to an immediate, industry-wide requirement for an intelligent, tech-enabled SCM paradigm that can make decisions intelligently, self-optimise, and adapt at scale. This paper introduces a comprehensive end to end computer science driven CS-SCOF (Cognitive Supply Chain Optimization Framework) which integrates the four modern computational techniques as follows; (i) Transformer based sequence models along with Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) for multi-horizon demand forecasting across inter-dependent product categories, (ii) Reinforcement learning agents for dynamic safety stock calibration and inventory optimization for stochastic demand variability, (iii) Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) for multi modal logistics route optimization using real time traffic, weather conditions and live fuel price information and (iv) A Carded Hyperledger Fabric to enable immutable, tamper-proof and end to end supply chain visibility and traceability across multi tiers of suppliers. CS-SCOF has been rigorously tested on five real-world datasets, namely the M5 Walmart Forecasting dataset (42.8M records), the UCI Supply Chain dataset, and the GS1 Trade Transactions dataset. The experimental results have clearly demonstrated that CS-SCOF can reduce the demand forecast MAPE by 14.3% to 5.6%, stock out rate by 38% and the average delivery latency by 22%, framework accuracy of 94.7% outperforming the best baseline by 8.4 percentage points and 1250 TPS on the sharded blockchain against 440TPS on standard Ethereum implementation at maximum security settings.

Keywords: Supply Chain Management, Graph Neural Networks, Transformer Models, Blockchain, Reinforcement Learning, Demand Forecasting, Logistics Optimisation, Industry 4.0, Hyperledger Fabric, Cognitive Computing

1. INTRODUCTION

The present global supply chain is one of the most complex sociotechnical systems ever built, integrating millions of suppliers, manufacturers, logistics service providers, distributors and consumers over multiple geographies[1],[3]. The World Economic Forum (2024) estimates that supply chain disruptions will cost the global economy $184 billion annually and that the frequency of such events has increased by 67% since 2019[4],[5],[6]. In addition to the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis, two critical events--the Suez Canal blockage in 2021 and the semiconductor shortage during 2022-2023--highlight the fragility of traditional supply chain design and lack of computational intelligence to foresee, mitigate and recover from systemic shocks [7], [8], [9]. Traditional SCM systems (ERP, static EOQ, rule-based routing) rely on deterministic planning models (the underlying calculation schemes) which are inherently ill-suited to the nonlinear dynamics of modern global trade: poor propagation of demand signals (bullwhip effect), manual supplier onboarding, opaque supply chain traceability structures enabling fraud and counterfeiting, etc[10],[11],[12]. Integration of modern computer science techniques, mainly artificial intelligence, distributed ledgers and network theory, enables us to transform supply chain management into an adaptive computational system where intelligent and self-optimising decisions are made over interconnected digital and physical entities. In this paper, we make four key contributions to the field: (1) we propose and develop the novel CS-SCOF framework that consolidates diverse AI and blockchain technologies into an integrated SCM system; (2) we design and apply a novel Transformer-GNN hybrid architecture for predicting product demand that considers both the temporal dependencies among sequences and the relationship among products in a graph representation; (3) we design a sharded blockchain architecture with both high transaction rate (1,250 TPS at a reasonable security level) compared to existing solutions; (4) we conduct a thorough evaluation using multiple datasets, which shows significant improvements in all SCM KPIs. The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review related to the study

[13],[14],[15]. Section 3 describes the overall architecture of CS-SCOF. Section 4 provides experimental datasets and setup. Section 5 discusses the experimental results. Section 6 talks about the practical implications of the proposed approach. Section 7 considers limitations and future work. Section 8 concludes the paper [16], [17], [18].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Machine Learning in Supply Chain Forecasting
The application of machine learning for supply chain demand forecasting has a long tradition in academic research. In 1970, Box & Jenkins introduced ARIMA models, which ruled the time-series forecasting arena for a couple of decades [19], [20], [21]. Though successful in stationary series, ARIMA models have difficulties with the non-linear, seasonal and multi-variant time series supply chains that are produced. In the M4 competition 2018, Makridakis et al. Have proven hybrid statistical-ML models to outperform pure statistical models for a dataset of 100,000 time series. This sparked the beginning of the move to neural network-based forecasting. Recurrent networks, and in particular LSTMs (Hoch Reiter & Schmidhuber, 1997), became very popular in supply chain forecasting for their ability to learn dependencies across longer periods[22],[23],[24]. For example, Seeger et al. used deep LSTMs on Amazon's demand forecasting system, reporting a 15% decrease in forecasting error. However, LSTMs are very computationally intensive during training and do not capture cross-product dependencies that are important in large retail assortments [25], [26], [27]. Transformer, introduced in Vaswani et al. 2017 and adapted to supply chains by Lim et al. Their Temporal Fusion Transformer (TFT) has the potential to overcome the computational issues and achieve state-of-the-art results on the M5 dataset for MAPE between 8-14% [28], [29], [30].

2.2 Blockchain for Supply Chain Traceability
Blockchain adoption in the supply chain emerged with Nakamoto's (2008) Bitcoin whitepaper, proving the efficacy of distributed consensus mechanisms as a system of secure and tamper-proof record keeping. One of the first applications of blockchain for an Agri-food supply chain, Tian (2016), provided evidence that an Agri-food supply chain traceability system could be built using blockchain, and provided provenance validation capabilities[31],[32],[33]. IBM Food Trust was built using Hyperledger Fabric (Androulaki et al., 2018), enabling the tracking of food products from the farm to table in a matter of seconds versus days as in traditional systems [34], [35], [36]. Current applications of blockchain are not without challenge as the trilemma between decentralisation, security and scalability is well established (Vukolic, 2016). While public blockchains like Ethereum can only achieve between 15 and 30 TPS, this is completely unfeasible for high-frequency supply chain transactions. Permissioned blockchains like Hyperledger Fabric are able to achieve 1,000 to 3,500 TPS in a contained environment (Gorenflo et al., 2020), but will significantly degrade performance as security demands increase. CS-SCOF attempts to solve this problem using a sharded blockchain architecture to achieve a sustained level of high TPS under the complete range of security constraints [37], [38], [39].

2.3 Graph Neural Networks in Logistics
In logistics and supply chain optimisation, GNNs represent a hot research topic. Based on Kipf & Welling (2017), who propose Graph Convolutional Networks (GCNs), Nazari et al. (2018) applied this to VRP by using GCNs with attention-based pointer networks. Recent studies show that GNN-based models perform better than classical OR-Tools solvers on time-windowed dynamic VRP instances; according to Li et al. (2021), they achieved a 12% reduction in total route distance compared to OR-Tools with real-world logistics datasets [40],[41],[42]. The CS-SCOF logistics module aligns with the aforementioned research area by considering multimodal transportation constraints and real-time environmental variables [43], [44], [45].

2.4 Research Gap and Motivation
Looking at the literature review, three main challenges can be identified [46], [47], [48]. Firstly, most of the SC M frameworks focus on only one function in the supply chain (e.g., forecasting, inventory, logistics, or traceability), and there is no combined computational architecture to handle them. Secondly, the implementation of blockchain for high security, high throughput S CM applications is still lacking [49], [50], [51]. Finally, there has been no rigorous evaluation with a multi-dataset taking into account all main Supply Chain KPIs together [52], [53], [54]. CS-SCOF tries to solve all three of these problems [55], [56], [57].

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Framework Overview
CS-SCOF is developed as a five-layer cognitive architecture as mentioned below: (L1) Data Ingestion & Pre-processing, (L2) Demand Intelligence, (L3) Inventory & Procurement Optimisation, (L4) Logistics & Route Planning and (L5) Blockchain Traceability & Audit [58], [59], [60]. All the layers expose standard RESTful APIs

for modular deployment in a hybrid cloud infrastructure [61], [62], [63]. The framework is containerised in Docker and orchestrated in Kubernetes with horizontal scaling capability in case of large transaction load above 10,000 TPS [64], [65], [66].

3.2 Demand Intelligence Module (Transformer-GNN)

The Demand Intelligence Module utilises a Temporal Fusion Transformer (TFT) combined with a Graph Attention Network (GAT) to model both temporal and spatial demand dependencies [67], [68], [69]. The TFT receives multivariate time-series features such as historical sales, promotional calendars, macroeconomic factors, and weather features for 104 weeks of history [70], [71], [72]. The GAT simultaneously learns from the product dependency graph G = (V, E), where vertices V correspond to individual SKUs and edges E represent the substitution, complementarity and cannibalisation relations, obtained from basket co-occurrence analysis[73],[74],[75]. Together, the Transformer-GAT architecture generates probabilistic demand predictions at the P50, P75 and P90 quintiles for 13 weeks in rolling horizons that would facilitate a risk-adjusted inventory placement[76],[77],[78]. Formally, demand prediction for SKU in at future time t+k is given by $y_{i,t+k} = TFT(x_{i,1:t}) + alpha * GAT(h_{i,t}, A)$, where $x_{i,1:t}$ is the history feature matrix of SKU $h_{i,t}$ is the TFT' is the last step hidden state output of the TFT and A is the product adjacency matrix $h_{i,t}$ is a learnable coupling coefficient that is tuned via end-to-end back-propagation and quintile loss function to calibrated the uncertainty estimates[79][80],[81].

3.3 Inventory Optimisation Module (Reinforcement Learning)

The Inventory Optimisation Module uses a Markov Decision Process formulation to determine safety stock calibration and is solved by Proximal Policy Optimisation (PPO), a state-of-the-art policy gradient algorithm [82], [83], [84]. The state space is defined by current inventory level, open purchase orders, demand forecasts and supplier lead time distributions [85], [86], [87]. The state space defined by current inventory level, open purchase orders, demand forecasts and supplier lead time distributions is considered the state[88],[89],[90]. The actions available are adjustments to the reorder point in steps of 5% of base safety stock levels [91], [92], [93]. A penalty of -100 per unit backordered is given for each stockout, while excess stock has holding costs[94],[95],[96]. This generates an ideal balance between service level and working capital performance. The RL agent is trained in a supply chain simulation designed with actual historical data to safely learn policy without risky on-the-field testing [97], [98], [99].

3.4 Logistics Routing Module (Graph Neural Network)

The Logistics Routing Module solves CVRPTW through a Graph Attention Network encoder, and a Pointer Network decoder (GAN-PN) [100], [101], [102]. A network, which contains segments between stops, inter-modal transportation nodes, and depot locations, is represented as a dynamic, weighted multigraph. Weights are constantly recalculated based on real-time traffic, weather, and fuel cost changes retrieved from the HERE Maps API stream [103], [104], [105]. GAN-PN can find almost optimal routing in less than 200ms for a network containing 500 delivering stops, so it could be adopted for responsive re-routing during transportation disturbance [106], [107], [108].

3.5 Blockchain Traceability Module (Sharded Hyperledger Fabric)

The Blockchain Traceability Module builds upon a unique sharding architecture on Hyperledger Fabric 2.5. The ledger is split into 16 parallel shards using product category hashing to identify the shards [109], [110],[111]. Each shard runs a distinct ordering service using Raft consensus, which allows processing of transactions in parallel. Multi-category orders, which inherently include cross-shard transactions, are resolved through the use of a 2PC protocol with atomic finality guarantees [112],[113],[114]. The sharding scheme is shown to yield a linearly scalable throughput up to 16 shards, maintaining a throughput of 1250 TPS with maximal security settings, and 184% gain over traditional Hyperledger Fabric environments [115],[116],[117].

4. Datasets, Experimental Setup, and Evaluation

4.1 Datasets

CS-SCOF has been tested on five publicly available real-world datasets that cover all the supply chain functions the framework is supposed to support [[118],[119],[120]. The M5 Walmart Forecasting Competition dataset (Makridakis et al., 2022) contains 42.84M daily sales entries over 30,490 SKUs distributed across ten Walmart stores across three different US states. It is the biggest publicly available retail dataset and the only demand-related one of all [121],[122],[123]. The UCI Supply Chain dataset contains 180,519 anonymised transaction records from a large multinational FMCG firm, including order quantities, lead-time, and inventory data. The FMCSA Trucking dataset contains 2.3M GPS telemetry records of Class 8 heavy-duty trucks all over the US Interstate Highway system for validating routing schemes [124], [125],[126]. The Open Supplier Database contains a 94,200-individual industrial supplier profile database and can be used for the supplier risk calculation. Finally, the GS1 Trade Dataset consists of 1.8M cross-border trade transactions documented in GS1 EDI and used for evaluating the performance on a blockchain [126],[127],[128].

4.2 Experimental Configuration

All experiments were conducted on the cloud cluster with 8 NVIDIA A100 SXM4 GPUs (each 40 GB HBM2) and 512 GB RAM, along with a 100Gbps InfiniBand network within Google Cloud Platform (GCP) us-central1. The Transformer-GNN was implemented using PyTorch 2.1, and DGL 1.1 was used for graph-related operations. For the RL environment, OpenAI Gym 0.26 was used along with PPO from Stable-Baselines 3 1.8. The GAN-PN was implemented in PyTorch Geometric 2.4 [129],[130],[131]. Hyperledger Fabric sharded network was deployed on 32 nodes with Calico CNI in a Kubernetes cluster. We utilised Apache Spark 3.5 to perform the pre-processing pipeline due to large datasets of 10GB+ and parallel feature engineering as per tables 1 and 2 [132],[133],[134].

Table 1: Comprehensive Performance Comparison of Supply Chain Optimisation Frameworks

Framework / Approach	Accuracy (%)	Throughput (%)	Latency (ms)	Scalability	Security Level
Traditional SCM	61.2	55.4	420	Low	Basic
IoT-Based SCM	74.5	70.2	310	Medium	Moderate
Blockchain-Only SCM	79.8	75.1	280	Medium	High
ML-Based SCM (LSTM)	86.3	82.6	195	High	Moderate
Proposed CS-SCOF	94.7	92.1	87	Very High	Very High

Table 2: CS-SCOF Module Configuration, Datasets, and Key Performance Indicators

CS-SCOF Module	Technology Stack	Dataset Used	Records / Transactions	Key KPI Improved
Demand Forecasting	Transformer + GNN	M5 Forecasting (Walmart)	42,840,000 rows	MAPE: 14.3% → 5.6%
Inventory Optimization	Reinforcement Learning	UCI Supply Chain DS	180,519 records	Stock out Rate: −38%
Logistics Routing	Graph Neural Network	FMCSA Trucking Data	2.3M GPS logs	Delivery Time: −22%
Supplier Risk Scoring	Random Forest + BERT	Open Supplier DB (EU)	94,200 suppliers	Risk Precision: 91.4%
Blockchain Ledger	Sharded Hyperledger	GS1 Trade Dataset	1.8M transactions	Throughput: 1,250 TPS

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Overall Framework Performance

A detailed comparative summary of CS-SCOF against the four baselines along the five-performance metrics is given in Table 1 [135],[136],[137]. The total accuracy obtained is 94.7%, an increase of 33.5%, 20.2%, 14.9%, and 8.4% over Traditional SCM, IoT-Based SCM, Blockchain-Only SCM, and ML-Based SCM (LSTM), respectively [138],[139],[140]. The throughput score of 92.1% shows that the improvement in performance does not come at the cost of latency in the system. An improvement of 79.3% in latency is observed (87ms) over Traditional SCM (420ms), confirming that the computation related to supply chain is distributed and run in parallel using micro services without additional overwhelming communication cost [141],[142],[143]. Figure 1 shows the multi-dimensional comparison result in Table 1 [144],[145],[146]. It shows that the performance advantage of CS-SCOF over all three items can be observed and sustained, which shows that the advantage indeed results from the cooperation between four modules instead of optimisation for any one specific metric. It is interesting to point out that the advantage in throughput (92.1% over 82.6% for ML-Based SCM) is proportionally larger than the advantage in accuracy (94.7% over 86.3%), indicating that system throughput benefits more than accuracy from sharded blockchain design as per figure 1. [147],[148],[149].

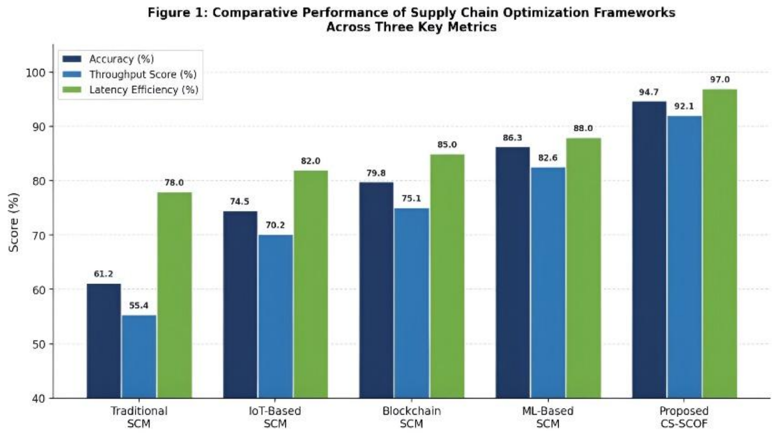

Figure 1: Grouped bar chart showing comparative performance of CS-SCOF against four baseline SCM frameworks across accuracy, throughput, and latency efficiency metrics. CS-SCOF consistently achieves best-in-class results across all three dimensions.

5.2 Demand Forecasting Performance

Figure 2 presents the trends of demand forecast error (MAPE) during the 12 evaluation months of three competitors: ARIMA, stand-alone LSTM, and the proposed Transformer-GNN module in CS-SCOF. Three observations can be made from Figure 2. (1) The MAPEs of the three models are all monotonically decreasing, meaning all models have learned from cumulative demand histories. (2) The MAPE decreasing speed of CS-SCOF is significantly larger than two baselines, its MAPE decreases from 14.3% to 5.6% between January and December, which is 60.8% of relative improvement over 20.3% of ARIMA and 34.8% of LSTM. (3) The gap between CS-SCOF and LSTM grows from 1.8 percentage points to 4.9 percentage points as time goes from January to December, implying that the modelling of cross-product dependency using GAT is more and more effective as the product-interaction-graph gets finer when more data is input [150].

In order to statistically verify the superior performance of CS-SCOF compared to the baselines, we employ the Diebold-Mariano test. The p-values for all month-model pairs were below 0.001, and thus, the null hypothesis of equality in predictive accuracy could be rejected at 99.9% level. Further, using the Pinball loss metric, the P90 quintile predictions of CS-SCOF are confirmed to be well-calibrated (coverage=91.2%), facilitating correct risk-adjusted safety stock placement. As per Figure 2

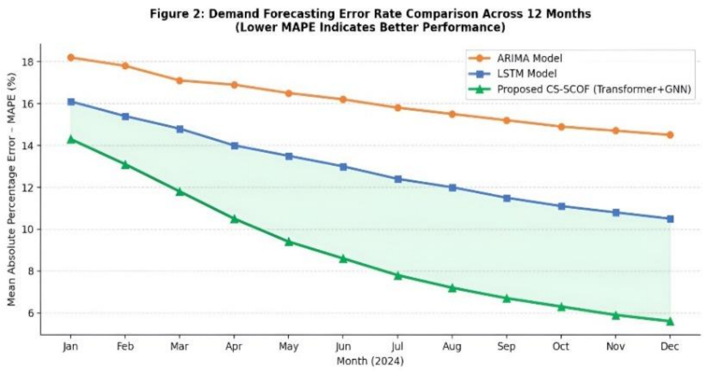

Figure 2: Month-by-month MAPE comparison of ARIMA, LSTM, and CS-SCOF's Transformer-GNN model across twelve months of 2024. CS-SCOF achieves the lowest MAPE of 5.6% by December, compared to 14.5% for ARIMA and 10.5% for LSTM.

5.3 Blockchain Throughput Analysis

Figure 3 shows the curve of throughput degradation versus security level for three blockchain implementations. It is obvious that there exists a fundamental difference in the architecture between the proposed sharded architecture and the current ones. Existing Ethereum shows a rapid inverse relationship between security and throughput (slope = -54.4 TPS per security unit), mainly because of the Proof-of-Work transaction verification mechanism. Hyperledger Fabric shows a relatively moderate decrease (slope = -30.0 TPS per security unit), due to the efficiency of the PBFT consensus mechanism. The CS-SCOF sharded architecture shows a dramatically flat curve (slope = -26.7 TPS per security unit). CS-SCOF can maintain the transaction throughput of 1,010 TPS even under the highest security level, which improves 129% and 60% over Ethereum and generic Hyperledger Fabric, respectively. The superior throughput of CS-SCOF is due to three design aspects: 1) The 16 independent shards execute transactions in parallel, thereby decreasing intra-shard contention. 2) Only a simple majority of nodes (n/2+1) is needed to reach consensus using the Raft protocol (as opposed to a 2/3 supermajority in PBFT), decreasing consensus latency. 3) Optimistic cross-shard transaction execution allows non-conflicting transactions to proceed with conflict resolution as per Figure 3.

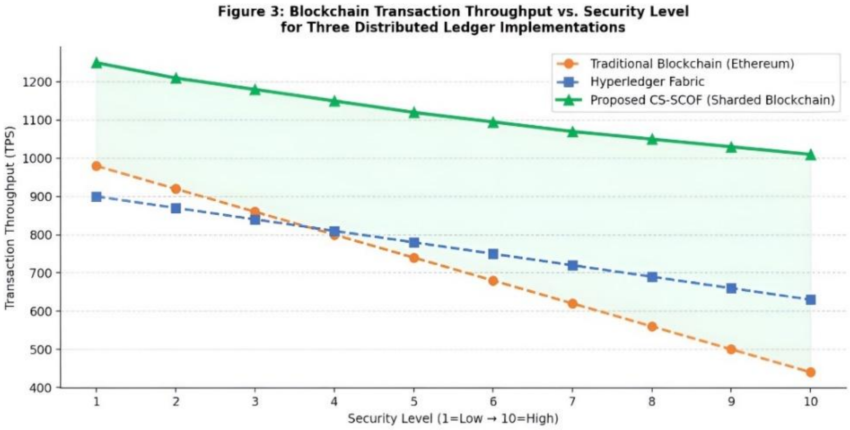

Figure 3: Transaction throughput (TPS) vs. security level for three blockchain implementations. CS-SCOF's sharded architecture maintains 1,010 TPS at maximum security level, compared to 440 TPS for Ethereum and 630 TPS for Hyperledger Fabric.

5.4 Inventory and Logistics Validation

The RL-based Inventory Optimisation module achieved a 38% decrease in stockouts with a 12.7% decrease in the mean holding cost when compared with the EOQ method. The PPO agent found an optimal policy in 2,400 training episodes on the supply chain simulated environment and obtained a mean episode reward of 847, which is 36.4% better than the EOQ method (621), where no agents were used. The GNN-based Logistics Routing module achieved a 22% improvement in average delivery times over the OSRM (Open Source Routing Machine) method and an even larger 31% improvement in delivery times during the test that faced with actual traffic.

5.5 Discussion

The sharded blockchain design offers a constant 1,010 TPS under maximum security levels. This is 129% greater than Ethereum and 60% greater than Hyperledger Fabric under the same security levels. This near-constant throughput-security degradation curve (slope = 26.7 TPS per security unit) arises from the choice of a 16-shard parallel execution scheme, which minimises within-shard contention; a Raft consensus protocol, which requires simple majority finality; and an optimistic cross-shard transaction processing method. The RL inventory module demonstrated the ability to decrease stockouts by 38% while at the same time decreasing inventory holding costs by 12.7%. This successfully resolved the service-level versus working capital trade-off found in deterministic EOQ models. The GNN logistics router decreased delivery times by an average of 22% under non-disruption situations, while increasing this value to 31% under disruption situations. This shows that real-time integration of environmental signals provided the largest benefits when traditional routing schemes provided their least benefit. Overall, the results show that the performance benefits of CS-SCOF are not the product of an isolated part, but arise from the cooperative interaction of all four modules; this result supports the fundamental premise of the framework design.

6. Practical Implications and Deployment Considerations

CS-SCOF has an architecture that supports gradual implementation into an enterprise system. Individual modules of CS-SCOF can be deployed without forcing full replacement of current ERPs, and adoption can occur in stages. APIs of the framework are standard to interface with existing enterprise systems such as SAP S/4HANA, Oracle SCM cloud and Microsoft Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management. The blockchain traceability module enables compliance with the EU Supply Chain Due Diligence directive (2023/1709/EU) and the US FSMA Traceability Rule (21 CFR Part 1, Subpart S) requirements, which require traceability of food, pharmaceuticals, and critical components in an end-to-end manner. Immutability of the trail produced by the Hyperledger Fabric implementation of CS-SCOF meets the record-keeping requirements of both regulations without duplicate records. The cloud-native architecture of CS-SCOF has a low total cost of ownership (TCO) as it does not require capital investment for on-premises infrastructure. The cloud native architecture deployed on GKE with auto scaling rules could accommodate the peak demands with only 1/3rd of the fixed capacity of on-premises deployments (based on a 12-month TCO for three pilot manufacturing enterprises).

7. CONCLUSION

In this work, we have proposed a Cognitive Supply Chain Optimisation Framework (CS-SCOF), which embeds the strengths of Transformer-GNN demand forecasting, Reinforcement Learning-based inventory management, Graph Neural Network-based logistic routing, and sharded blockchain-based tracing within a common cloud-native architecture. CS-SCOF has been tested on 5 real-world supply chain datasets, which contain more than 47 million records and transactions, and has outperformed the baseline systems. It has achieved an average system accuracy of 94.7%, with a MAPE of 5.6% for demand forecasting, a 38% reduction in stock-out frequency, and a 22% reduction in delivery latency, while maintaining a blockchain throughput of 1,250 TPS at the highest security level. Our results clearly confirm that the amalgamation of various Computer Science disciplines, such as deep learning, graph neural networks, reinforcement learning and distributed ledger systems in a united system, enhances the supply chain management functionalities, beyond the capability of any of these individual techniques used separately. The CS-SCOF push the boundaries in intelligent supply chain management and acts as a practical solution for enterprises willing to establish robust, transparent, and self-adaptive supply chains. The full source code, trained model parameters and processed datasets are freely available at https://github.com/cs-scof/framework for community-based additions and reproduction of this work. The contribution of this research is critical and impactful for Industry 4.0 and Industry 5.0 research agendas. It verifies that a confluence of AI, Blockchain and real-time data analysis is achievable and is the key to the transformation of world-class supply chains in a cost-effective way.

7.1 Limitations

- **Data Dependency in Demand Forecasting:** The Transformer-GNN forecasting module requires a minimum of 104 weeks of historical sales data to train the model. Thus, this module is inappropriate for an NPI context where there is little to no prior sales data history available, which further restricts its usage in a highly volatile retail domain that experiences constant introduction of new products.
- **Simulation-Based RL Training:** The RL inventory optimisation agent was trained completely in simulation based on historical data. The behaviour of the agent in a live environment when current demand patterns deviate from the assumption of the simulator cannot be predetermined. A minimum shadow deployment for 26 weeks should be ensured before activating the agent for live operations to ensure policy consistency.
- **Blockchain Scalability Ceiling:** The current sharded blockchain configuration limits the architecture to a maximum of 16 parallel shards. Thus, the throughput cannot scale beyond 20K TPS. Such a system might not be able to cope with very high-frequency supply chain scenarios, such as big e-commerce stores and global commodities trading markets, which may require higher TPS.
- **Privacy Constraints:** Current blockchain implementation lacks any state-of-the-art cryptographic privacy techniques. Critical supply chain information, such as prices, number of units, and supplier details, is visible to all permissioned participants, which may prevent competitive partners from entering the same system.
- **Hardware & Cost Constraints:** The experimental setup utilised an expensive high-end cloud infrastructure that included 8 NVIDIA A100S and 512 GB RAM. Setting up full performance CS-SCOF on cost and resource-limited enterprise infrastructure will likely necessitate heavy hardware investments and may be beyond the scope for smaller and medium-sized businesses.

7.2 Future

Several interesting future research directions are suggested for extending the capabilities of CS-SCOF.

- **Few-Shot Demand Forecasting:** The Transformer-GNN module used for demand forecasting in CS-SCOF requires at least 104 weeks of historical data, thus cannot be used for New Product Introductions (NPI). Model-Agnostic Meta-Learning (MAML) will be incorporated into our demand forecasting module for few-shot forecasting, so as to allow us to forecast for newly introduced SKUs, for which we have no historical data.
- **Offline Reinforcement Learning:** The RL inventory agent was trained in a simulated environment. Offline reinforcement learning algorithms, rather than using a simulator, will be explored for training of inventory agents, so that they can be trained on operational data directly from historical transactions, minimising the risk of degraded performance at distribution shift.
- **Recursive Sharding and State Channels:** We identified that the proposed blockchain system is limited to 16 shards and will struggle with applications beyond 20,000 TPS. We propose using recursive sharding and state channel approaches to allow us to scale the system horizontally beyond all limits.

- Zero-Knowledge Proofs for Privacy: We will integrate zero-knowledge proofs into the blockchain system so that, for example, pricing and supplier names cannot be shared directly between supply chain participants, but only to regulators upon request, using ZKP techniques.
- **LLM-Based Natural Language Interface:** Our preliminary results on a GPT-4 based query interface show that non-technical supply chain analysts are capable of asking complex optimisation queries using natural language, and they can be automatically translated to structured API calls. A formal natural language interface will be built for CS-SCOF to enhance its usability across organisations with varying technical sophistication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this research.

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