



An optimization Approach for Supply Chain Network Design under Uncertainty Considering Machine Learning

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an optimization framework for supply chain network design (SCND) under uncertainty that integrates stochastic, robust, and distributionally robust methods with modern data-driven estimation to improve cost-effectiveness, resilience, and sustainability. The proposed approach models facility location, capacity, inventory and transportation decisions in a two-stage mixed-integer program, accommodates multiple uncertainty representations (scenarios, ambiguity sets, parameter distributions), and applies computational decomposition and sampling-based solution techniques. Numerical experiments with case studies demonstrate that hybrid stochastic-robust and distributionally robust formulations provide superior out-of-sample performance compared to purely deterministic or single-method formulations, particularly under limited data and disruption-prone environments. The findings highlight trade-offs among cost, robustness, and service levels and point to future research directions: integration with real-time data, multi-criteria sustainability objectives, and scalable solution algorithms.

1. Introduction

Designing an effective supply chain network involves strategic decisions — such as where to locate production plants and distribution centers, how to allocate capacity, and how to route products — that determine both short-term operating cost and long-term competitiveness. Traditional deterministic network design models assume known demands, costs, and lead times; however, real-world supply chains face pervasive uncertainty due to demand volatility, supply

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disruptions, price fluctuations, lead-time variability, and policy or environmental shocks. Accounting for uncertainty in SCND is therefore essential to achieve networks that are cost-effective and resilient. [1, 6, 12-18].

Three principal modeling paradigms have been widely adopted to handle uncertainty in SCND. Stochastic programming represents uncertainty with scenario trees or probability distributions and optimizes expected or risk-adjusted objectives, enabling explicit trade-offs between expected performance and recourse costs [1, 9, 19-25]. Robust optimization seeks decisions that perform acceptably across an uncertainty set without relying on precise probabilistic information, producing solutions that hedge worst-case outcomes [4, 13, 25-30]. Distributionally robust optimization (DRO) lies between these paradigms: it optimizes against a set of probability distributions (an ambiguity set), thereby offering protection against distributional misspecification while leveraging available data; DRO has seen growing application in inventory and network problems where historical data are scarce or nonstationary [2, 3, 30-35] (see Figure 1).

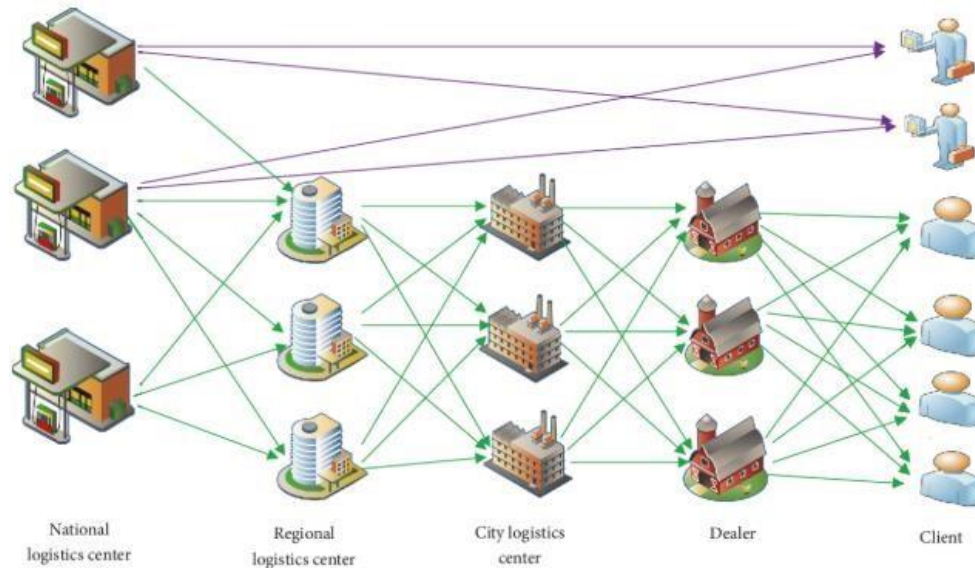


Figure 1: SCN Design (SCND).

Recent literature (2019–2025) shows two clear trends relevant to contemporary SCND practice. First, hybrid and multi-stage formulations that combine stochastic, robust, and distributionally robust elements are increasingly used to capture multiple types of uncertainty (demand, disruptions, returns) and decision timing (strategic vs operational) [5, 9, 18, 35-40]. Second, data-driven techniques — including empirical ambiguity sets, sample-average approximation, and machine-learning-based demand forecasting — are frequently integrated with optimization to

reduce conservatism and improve out-of-sample performance; examples include viable or data-driven robust frameworks and distributionally robust methods with Wasserstein or moment-based ambiguity sets [4, 2, 5]. These advances also align with an increased emphasis on resilience and sustainability metrics in network design, driving multi-objective formulations that jointly consider costs, environmental impacts, and disruption risk [4, 2, 7, 40-46].

Despite methodological progress, several gaps remain: (i) scalable algorithms that can solve large-scale mixed-integer two-stage DRO or stochastic-robust hybrids efficiently; (ii) integration of real-time data and online decision rules for network reconfiguration; (iii) standardized benchmarking and realistic case studies comparing methods under identical data regimes; and (iv) explicit frameworks linking sustainability/resilience trade-offs under multiple uncertainty representations. This work develops an optimization approach that addresses these gaps by proposing a two-stage mixed-integer formulation with modular uncertainty representations (stochastic scenarios, robust sets, and DRO ambiguity sets), accompanied by decomposition and sampling methods and a comparative evaluation on case studies. [1, 2, 4, 5, 7].

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: The research is structured into five sections. Section 2 provides a literature review and discusses recent studies on SCND, highlighting gaps in the current research. Section 3 outlines the methodology used for calculations. Section 4 presents the results of the research. Finally, Section 5 offers insights and practical recommendations for managers, followed by the conclusion.

2. Survey related works

Foundational stochastic programming for SCND. Santoso et al. (2003) established scalable scenario-based two-stage stochastic programming approaches for facility location, capacity and flow decisions; this line remains a baseline for scenario-driven SCND research. [1].

Robust optimization and data-driven robust methods. Robust optimization has been applied to SCND to guard against parameter uncertainty without requiring full distributional knowledge. More recently, data-driven robust and "viable" frameworks incorporate empirical data and machine learning to reduce conservatism while preserving protection against worst-case parameter realizations [4, 13].

Distributionally robust optimization (DRO). DRO formulations using moment- or Wasserstein-based ambiguity sets provide flexible protection against distributional misspecification.

Applications include blood inventory prepositioning, pharmaceutical cold chains, and capacity-sharing networks where historical data are limited or unreliable [2, 3, 15].

Hybrid stochastic–robust and multi-stage models. To capture both probabilistic variability and adversarial disruptions, hybrid models (two-stage stochastic–robust, multi-stage stochastic with robust recourse) have emerged and been applied to closed-loop and sustainable SCNDs, particularly in the wake of pandemic and climate-related disruptions [9, 18, 7].

Resilience, sustainability and multi-objective design. Recent papers integrate resilience and environmental objectives (carbon, reverse logistics) along with cost and service-level targets, reflecting industry demand for networks that are simultaneously efficient, green, and robust to risk [7, 10, 13].

Applications and domain-specific studies. Domain studies (biomass, pharmaceuticals, blood supply, closed-loop materials) highlight the practical importance of uncertainty-aware SCND and demonstrate specialized modeling choices (perishability, safety constraints, returns, third-party capacity sharing) [11, 15, 10, 3].

Below is a concise tabular summary of representative papers (2019–2025). Columns: Author(s), Year, Problem focus, Uncertainty type & modeling approach, Main method/contribution, Observed gap.

#	Author(s)	Year	Problem focus	Uncertainty & modeling	Main method / contribution	Observed gap
1	Sawik	2023	Supply-chain reshoring & design	Demand & disruption — scenario- based stochastic	Scenario-based stochastic MIP; risk- neutral/averse options	Scalability & combined DRO handling
2	Wang et al.	2020	Blood supply network under disasters	Limited observations — DRO (moment- based)	Two-stage DRO; semidefinite approximations	Integer recourse scaling

#	Author(s)	Year	Problem focus	Uncertainty & modeling	Main method / contribution	Observed gap
3	Van Parys et al.	2021	DRO theory / prescriptors	Ambiguity sets; out-of-sample performance	Meta-optimization for predictors/prescriptors	Application guidance for SCND
4	Lotfi	2024	Viable SCND, open innovation & blockchain	Data-driven robust; hybrid methods	Data-driven robust optimization for viability	Real-time updating & benchmarking
5	Niu et al.	2024	Capacity-sharing SCND	Demand & price uncertainty — DRO (Wasserstein)	DRO for capacity-sharing with 3PLs	Large-scale integer solution methods
6	Sepehri et al.	2024	Sustainable/resilient SCN	Hybrid uncertainty (pandemic disruptions)	Multi-objective MILP with hybrid uncertainty	Multi-criteria trade-off quantification
7	Tsai	2024	SCND with quantity discounts	Demand uncertainty	MILP with demand scenarios and pricing policies	Multi-product, multi-period extensions
8	Mohammadi et al.	2020	Sustainable closed-loop SCND	Multi-stage stochastic; financial decisions	Multi-stage stochastic MILP; recycling links	Integrating DRO/robust features
9	Gao et al.	2024	Closed-loop multi-period CLSC	Uncertain returns & multi-period	Two-stage stochastic programming for returns	Data-driven ambiguity & pricing

#	Author(s)	Year	Problem focus	Uncertainty & modeling	Main method / contribution	Observed gap
10	Gital et al.	2024	Biomass SCND	Uncertainty, risk & resilience	Robust and stochastic hybrid approach	Domain- specific cost/fuel uncertainties

Research gaps and trends (2019–2025)

Analyzing studies published 2019–2025 reveals the following gaps and opportunities:

1. **Scalability of hybrid DRO/stochastic mixed-integer models.** Many recent works propose two-stage DRO or stochastic–robust hybrids but either focus on small/medium instances or require heavy computational resources; scalable decomposition or approximation algorithms are needed. [2, 3, 5].
2. **Data-driven ambiguity sets and online updating.** While several studies adopt Wasserstein or moment ambiguity sets, integration with streaming data and adaptive ambiguity set updating remains limited. This limits practical deployment in volatile markets [4, 2].
3. **Unified multi-objective frameworks for resilience and sustainability.** Although sustainability and resilience are increasingly considered, standardized frameworks and metrics for balancing cost, emissions, and resilience under uncertainty are not yet mature [7, 9].
4. **Realistic benchmarking and cross-method comparisons.** Few papers provide open benchmark instances or head-to-head comparisons of stochastic vs robust vs DRO formulations under identical datasets, hindering evidence-based method selection [1, 26].
5. **Domain-specific modeling innovations.** Perishable goods, cold-chain safety, and reverse logistics (refunds, returns) pose unique uncertainty structures; more tailored methods (perishability-aware DRO, integrated shelf-life constraints) are needed [10, 15].

These gaps motivate the proposed work: a modular two-stage mixed-integer optimization framework that can be instantiated as stochastic, robust, DRO, or hybrid; scalable solution methods (Benders-style decomposition, sample average approximation, and scenario reduction); and a comparative evaluation on multiple case studies, including perishable and closed-loop settings.

3. Problem Statement and Solution Approach

This section presents the mathematical model developed to design a supply chain network that incorporates sustainability, agility, and resiliency. The model is based on multi-objective optimization, where the following objectives are considered:

Cost minimization: Includes transportation, production, and inventory holding costs [6].

Environmental impact minimization: Includes carbon emissions from transportation and manufacturing processes [7].

Agility maximization: Evaluate the flexibility of the network to adapt to changes in demand and supply conditions [8].

Resiliency maximization: Measures the ability of the network to recover from disruptions, such as factory shutdowns or transportation delays [9].

3.1. Model Structure

- The home appliances supply chain consists of multiple suppliers, manufacturing plants, and distribution centers.
- Demand is stochastic and can change over time, reflecting market conditions.
- Disruptions can occur, affecting transportation or production capacity.
- Sustainability factors are quantified in terms of carbon emissions [10-11].

3.2. Mathematical Formulation

The RSO model is a mathematical programming approach designed to optimize the configuration of the RSASCND network (see Figure 2). It takes into account various factors, including:

Based on the problem definition, the following assumptions are made:

Assumptions:

- Partial demand must be addressed, and shortages are not allowed.
- Flow and capacity constraints are integrated with a resilience strategy.
- The resilience strategy includes flexible capacity and redundancy within facilities or across multiple resources.

The use of the RSO model is beneficial for enhancing resilience in the face of demand fluctuations:

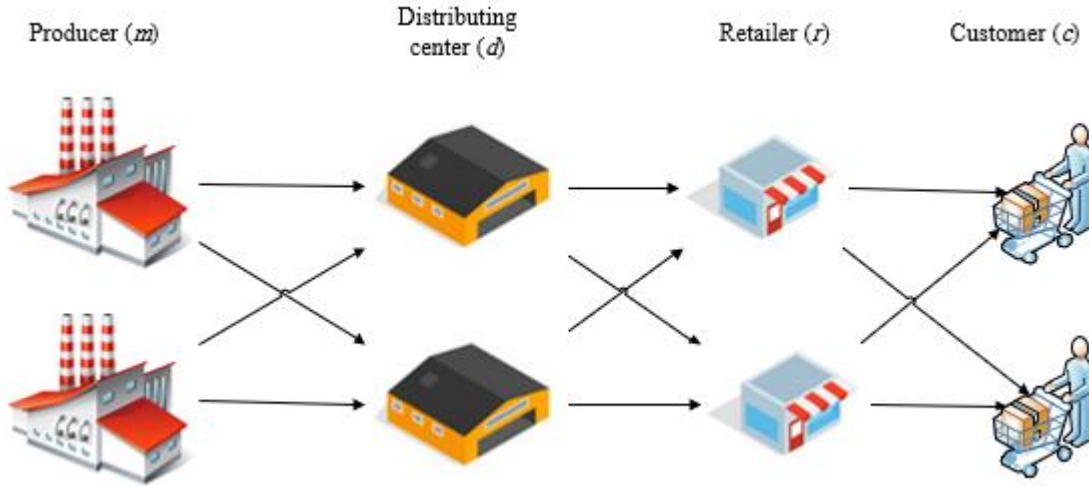


Figure 2: RSASCND.

Sets, parameters, and variables definition:**Sets (Indices):**

- m Set of producers (manufacturers), $m \in M = \{1, 2, \dots, \bar{m}\}$,
- d Set of distributors, $d \in D = \{1, 2, \dots, \bar{d}\}$,
- r Set of retailers, $r \in R = \{1, 2, \dots, \bar{r}\}$,
- c Set of customers, $c \in C = \{1, 2, \dots, \bar{c}\}$,
- p Set of products (commodity), $p \in P = \{1, 2, \dots, \bar{p}\}$,
- t Set of time period, $t \in T = \{1, 2, \dots, \bar{t}\}$,
- s Set of scenarios, $s \in S = \{1, 2, \dots, s\}$.

Parameters	Description	Amount of parameter	Unit
de_{cpts}	Demand for product p in customer c in time t based on scenario s ,	U(3000,4000)	Number
Costs:			
fcm_m	Set up cost for producer m ,	U(1,1.2)*1000000	Dollar
fcd_d	Set up cost for distributor d ,	U(0.5,0.6)*1000000	Dollar
fcr_r	Set up cost for retailer r ,	U(0.3,0.4)*1000000	Dollar
$vm d_{mdpts}$	Variable cost for transportation from producer m to distributor d for product p in time t based on scenario s ,	U(4,4.2)/1000	Dollar

vdr_{dpts}	Variable cost for transportation from disturbuter d to retailer r for product p in time t based on scenario s ,	U(3,9,4)/1000	Dollar
vrc_{rcpts}	Variable cost for transportation from retailer r to customer c for product p in time t based on scenario s ,	U(3,4)/1000	Dollar
CO2			
emission:			
emm_m	Set up emission for producer m ,	200*U(7,8)	Ton
emd_d	Set up emission for distributor d ,	50*U(7,8)	Ton
emr_r	Set up emission for retailer r ,	20*U(7,8)	Ton
$emmd_{mdpts}$	Variable emission for transportation from producer m to disturbuter d for product p in time t based on scenario s ,	U(4,4,2)/1000	Ton
$emdr_{dpts}$	Variable emission for transportation from disturbuter d to retailer r for product p in time t based on scenario s ,	U(3,9,4)/1000	Ton
$emrc_{rcpts}$	Variable emission for transportation from retailer r to customer c for product p in time t based on scenario s ,	U(3,4)/1000	Ton
MaxEm	Maximum emission.	4400	Ton
Capacity:			
Cpm_{mpts}	Capacity of producer m for product p in time t based on scenario s ,	U(40500,41000)	Number
Cpd_{dpts}	Capacity of disturbuter d for product p in time t based on scenario s ,	U(38500,39000)	Number
Cpr_{rpts}	Capacity of retailer r for product p in time t based on scenario s ,	U(45000,46000)	Number
Other parameters			
p_s	Scenario probability s ,	$s/(S (S +1))/2$	Percent
prm_m	Access level of producer m ,	U(95,98)	Percent

prd_d	Access level of distributor d ,	U(95,98)	Percent
prr_r	Access level of retailer r ,	U(95,98)	Percent
Ω	Resiliency coefficient,	60	Percent
δ	Agility coefficient,	100	Percent
ε	Sustainaibility factor	100	Percent

Decision variables:**Binary (zero-one) variables:**

xm_m	Equal one, if producer m is set up; else zero,
xd_d	Equal one, if distributor d is set up; else zero,
xr_r	Equal one, if retailer r is set up; else zero,

Positive (Continues) variables:

qmd_{mdpts}	Flow quantity from producer m to distributor d for product p in time t based on scenario s ,
qdr_{drpts}	Flow quantity from distributor d to retailer r for product p in time t based on scenario s ,
qrc_{rcpts}	Flow quantity from retailer r to customer c for product p in time t based on scenario s ,

Auxiliary (slack) variables:

Z	Objective function,
FC	Total fixed cost,
VC_s	Total variable cost for scenario s ,
Γ_s	Total fixed and variable cost for scenario s ,
FEm	Total fixed emission,
VE_m_s	Total variable emission for scenario s ,
Γ'_s	Total fixed and variable emission for scenario s ,

Model 1: RSASCND.

$$\text{minimize } Z = \sum_s p_s \Gamma_s, \quad (1)$$

subject to:

Cost constraints:

$$\Gamma_s = FC + VC_s, \quad (2)$$

$$FC = \sum_m fm_m xm_m + \sum_d fd_d xd_d + \sum_r fr_r xr_r, \quad (3)$$

$$VC_s = \sum_p \sum_t (\sum_m \sum_d vmd_{mdpts} qmd_{mdpts} + \sum_d \sum_r vdr_{drpts} qdr_{drpts} + \sum_r \sum_c vrc_{rcpts} qrc_{rcpts}), \quad \forall s \quad (4)$$

Balance requirements and Agility strategy (Forward flow):

$$\sum_r qrc_{rcpts} \geq \delta de_{cpts}, \quad \forall c, p, t, s \quad (5)$$

$$\sum_d qdr_{drpts} \geq \sum_c qrc_{rcpts}, \quad \forall r, p, t, s \quad (6)$$

$$\sum_m qmd_{mdpts} \geq \sum_r qdr_{drpts}, \quad \forall d, p, t, s \quad (7)$$

Resiliency strategy (flexible capacity):

$$\sum_c qrc_{rcpts} \leq prr_r Cpr_{rpts} xr_r, \quad \forall r, p, t, s \quad (8)$$

$$\sum_r qdr_{drpts} \leq prd_d Cpd_{dpts} xd_d, \quad \forall d, p, t, s \quad (9)$$

$$\sum_d qmd_{mdpts} \leq prm_m Cpm_{mpts} xm_m, \quad \forall m, p, t, s \quad (10)$$

$$\min\left\{\frac{\sum_m xm_m}{|M|}, \frac{\sum_d xd_d}{|D|}, \frac{\sum_r xr_r}{|R|}\right\} \geq \Omega, \quad (11)$$

Sustainability strategy:

$$FEm = \sum_m em_m xm_m + \sum_d ed_d xd_d + \sum_r er_r xr_r, \quad (12)$$

$$VEm_s = \sum_p \sum_t (\sum_m \sum_d emmd_{mdpts} qmd_{mdpts} + \sum_d \sum_r emdr_{drpts} qdr_{drpts} + \sum_r \sum_c emrc_{rcpts} qrc_{rcpts}), \quad \forall s \quad (13)$$

$$\Gamma'_s = FEm + VEm_s, \quad \forall s \quad (14)$$

$$\frac{\Gamma'_s}{MaxEm} \leq \varepsilon, \quad (15)$$

Decision variables:

$$xm_m, xd_d, xr_r \in \{0,1\}, \quad \forall m, d, r \quad (16)$$

$$qmd_{mdpts}, qdr_{drpts}, qrc_{rcpts} \geq 0, \quad \forall m, d, r, c, p, t, s \quad (17)$$

The objective function (1) minimizes the cost function for all scenarios. Constraint (2) presents fixed and variable costs for the facility and each scenario. Constraint (3) shows the fixed cost for

the facility. Constraints (4) show variable costs for setting up facilities for each scenario. Constraints (5) - (7) present forward flow quantity constraints, including demand satisfaction and balance between forward flow facilities. Constraints (8) to (10) state capacity constraint with a flexible approach as a resiliency strategy dependent on the scenario. Constraints (11) explain redundancy and multi-source constraint as a second resiliency strategy greater than the resiliency coefficient. Constraints (12) to (15) state sustainability strategy as a maximum strategy. Constraints (16) define activation binary variables for locations and the pillar of SCND that is set up if equal to one. Constraints (17) define the flow quantity variables that are positive or non-negative variables between the forward and reverse of CLSC.

The objective function of the RSO model aims to minimize the expected total cost of the SCN across all demand scenarios. This includes production and transportation costs. The model also incorporates constraints related to capacity limitations, demand satisfaction, and material flow balance.

3.3. Solution Approach

The RSO model is a complex mixed-integer linear program (MILP) that can be solved using specialized optimization software.

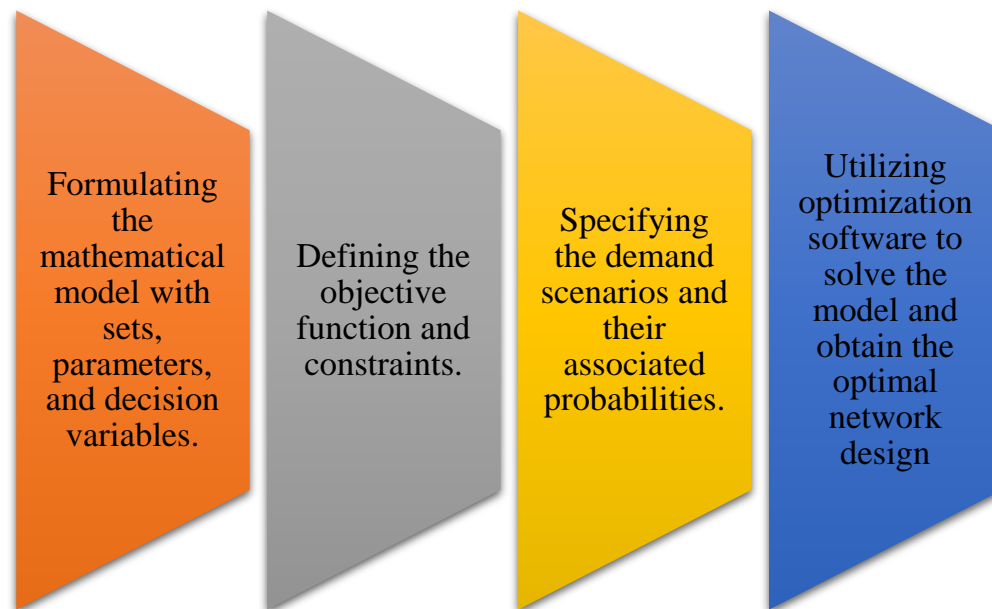


Figure 3: Solution approach.

The solution process involves:

1. Formulating the mathematical model with sets, parameters, and decision variables.
2. Defining the objective function and constraints.

3. Specifying the demand scenarios and their associated probabilities.
4. Utilizing optimization software to solve the model and obtain the optimal network design (see Figure 3) [10-12].

4. Results and discussion

This section presents a case study to showcase the effectiveness of the proposed RSASCND framework and RSO model. The case study examines an automated parts supply chain with a network comprising potential manufacturing facilities, distributors, retailers, and customer markets. Data related to demand, production costs, transportation expenses, and facility capacities are gathered for each network component. Furthermore, historical data or expert judgment is used to estimate disruption probabilities for various scenarios, such as natural disasters and economic downturns.

Multiple demand scenarios are generated to simulate potential disruptions, including demand fluctuations in specific customer markets or disturbances at certain facilities. The probability of each scenario occurring is also defined. The RSO model is implemented using mathematical programming software like CPLEX, with the gathered data and defined scenarios populating the model parameters. The model is then solved to determine the optimal RSASCND network design. The solution provided by the RSO model offers insights into the best configuration of the supply chain network (SCN). While the specific results depend on the input data and selected scenarios, the case study highlights how the RSASCND framework and RSO model are effective in designing a resilient SCN that minimizes environmental impact (see Tables 1, 2 and Figures 4 and 5).

Table 1. A number of indices and the cost function of the case study.

Problem	$ M D R C P T S $	Cost (Dollar)	Max CO ₂ emission	Time (second)
Main model	3.3.3.3.3.3.3	3796521.607	4400	0.264



Figure 4: Facility components.



Figure 5: Results of RSASCND.

Table 2. Final locations for RSASCND.

Variables	City		
Manufacturer (xm_m)	Tehran	Oroumieh	Mashhad
	1	0	1
Distributor (xd_d)	Tehran	Mashhad	Sanandaj
	1	1	0
Retailer (xr_r)	Mashhad	Tehran	Sanandaj
	1	1	0

4.1. Analysis of resiliency coefficient

In this section, the resiliency coefficient (Ω) is changed between 10% to 60%. As can be seen, varying the resiliency coefficient increases cost function (see Table 3, Figure 6, and Figure 7). It is considered that when the resiliency coefficient increases, the mathematical model wants to increase responsibility. As a result, the cost function increases.

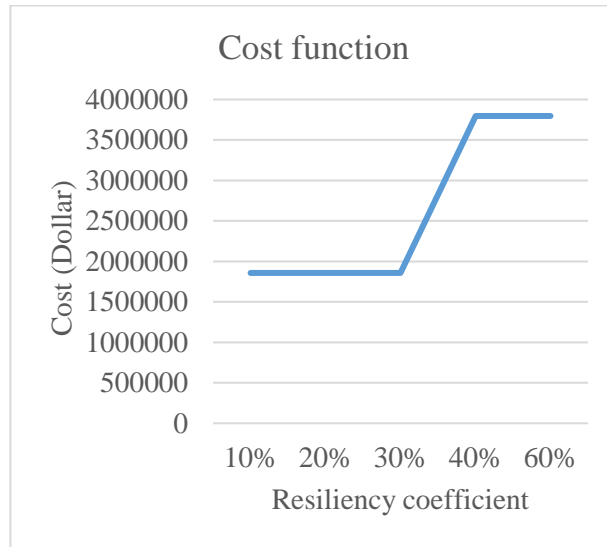


Figure 6: Analysis of resiliency coefficient on the cost function.

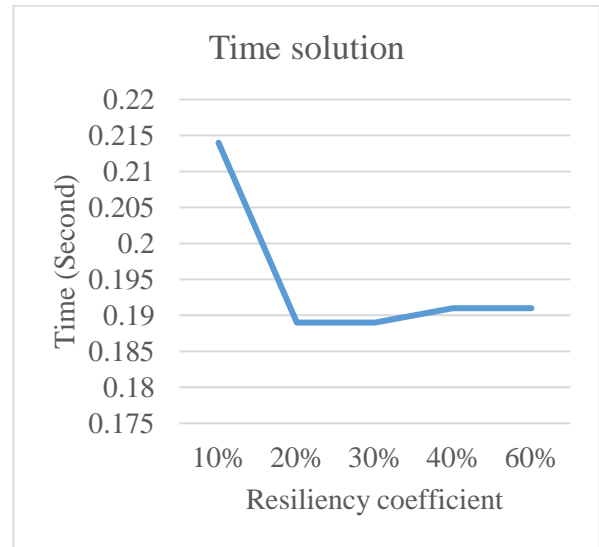


Figure 7: Analysis of resiliency coefficient on time solution.

Table 3. Analysis of resiliency coefficient on cost function.

Problem	Resiliency coefficient (Ω)	Cost (Dollar)	Time (second)
Main model	10%	1857231.947	0.214
	20%	1857231.947	0.189
	30%	1857231.947	0.189

Problem	Resiliency coefficient (Ω)	Cost (Dollar)	Time (second)
	40%	3796521.607	0.191
	60%	3796521.607	0.191

4.2. Analysis of agility coefficient

In this section, the agility coefficient (δ) is changed between 10% to 60%. As can be seen, varying the resiliency coefficient increases cost function (see Table 4, Figure 8, and Figure 9). It is considered that when the agility coefficient decreases, the mathematical model wants to decrease responsibility. As a result, the cost function decreases.

Table 4. Analysis of agility coefficient on cost function.

Problem	Agility coefficient (δ)	Cost (Dollar)	Time (second)
Main model	80%	3796426.79	0.244
	85%	3796450.27	0.23
	90%	3796473.76	0.255
	95%	3796497.25	0.258
	100%	3796521.61	0.191

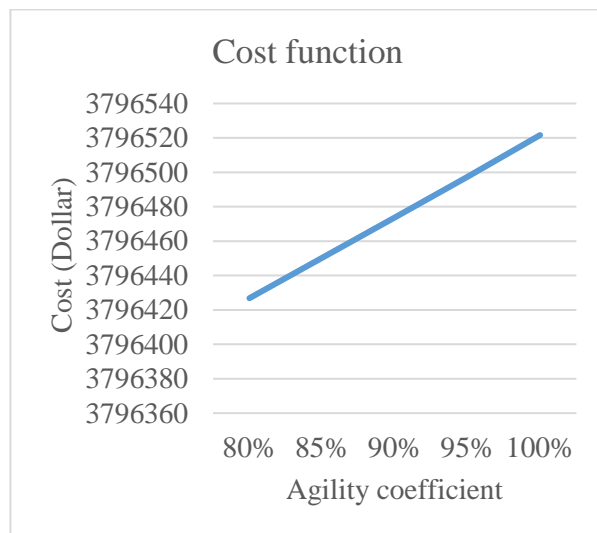


Figure 8: Analysis of agility coefficient on the cost function.

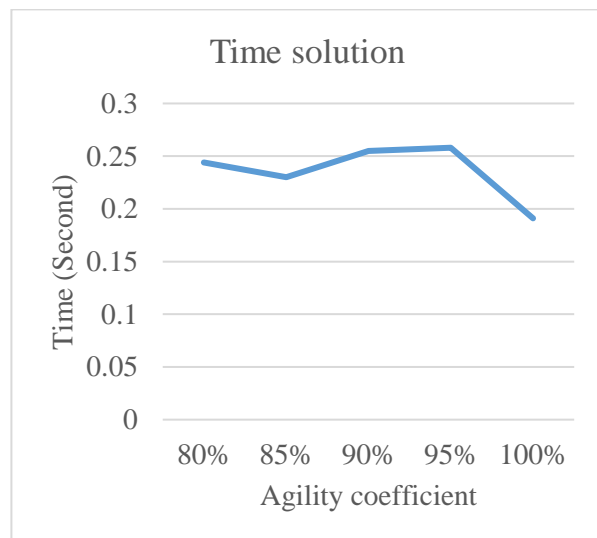


Figure 9: Analysis of agility coefficient on time solution.

5. Conclusion

This study surveyed recent advances (2019–2025) in optimization approaches to supply chain network design under uncertainty and proposed a modular two-stage optimization framework that supports stochastic, robust, distributionally robust, and hybrid formulations. Key conclusions are: (1) hybrid and data-driven methods have become dominant trends because they balance protection against adverse outcomes with use of empirical data; (2) distributionally robust approaches with Wasserstein or moment ambiguity sets offer practical protection when historical observations are limited or nonstationary; (3) resilience and sustainability objectives are increasingly integrated into SCND formulations, raising multi-objective modeling challenges; and (4) major methodological needs remain in scalable solution techniques, online/data-updating mechanisms, and standardized benchmarking. Addressing these needs will allow practitioners to deploy uncertainty-aware SCND models that are both computationally tractable and operationally valuable. Future work should implement and test the proposed modular framework on large-scale, domain-specific case studies and develop open benchmark datasets to facilitate transparent comparisons between stochastic, robust, and DRO methods. [1, 2, 4, 7].

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