

Constraint-Based Graph Coloring A Hybrid AI And Optimization Perspective

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Abstract–Graph coloring can be defined as a classical optimization problem in combinatory with widespread use in application areas in scheduling, allocation of registers, frequency assignment and network optimization. In large and complicated graphs, more traditional graph coloring methods, including greedy algorithms or optimal methods, are frequently unable to trade-off computation speed with solution quality. The hybrid presented in the paper is a combination of constraint-based reasoning methods and artificial intelligence (AI) techniques along with metaheuristic optimization techniques. The leap in using constraint satisfaction problems (CSP) models in combination with evolutionary algorithms and reinforcement learning benefits the approach under consideration by improving the quality of the solution, lowering the managerial session of computation, and increasing the degree of response to dynamic constraints. The experiments involving benchmark graph datasets prove that hybrid method is more advantageous than other traditional ones in terms of chromatic number minimization and optimal scaling of computing. In this analysis, the usefulness of practical importance of hybrid AI-optimization the tool in practical applications is noted, as well as restrictions in parameters tuning and computation costs, and future research perspectives into adaptive and distributed graph coloring solution applications outlined.

Keywords– Graph coloring, constraint satisfaction problem (CSP), hybrid AI, metaheuristic optimization, reinforcement learning, combinatorial optimization, chromatic number.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the earliest problems in combinatorial optimization and graph theory, and its most fundamental problem, is graph coloring. This is basically a question of labeling the elements of a graph with the colors in which each pair of adjacent elements does not have the same color. The smallest assignment that can be attained by such colors is referred to as chromatic number [16]. Graph coloring is useful in a broad spectrum of real world applications, such as scheduling tasks during a parallel computer, register allocation during compiler design, frequency assignment during wireless network design, schedule timing during educational institutions, resource allocation during transportation and logistics. The breadth of the problem is due to its capacity to model conflicts and dependencies of entities in different fields. Nevertheless, in spite of our apparently straightforward formulation, graph coloring is NP-hard, i.e. there exists no known algorithm that addresses all of the cases optimally in polynomially many steps. This computational intractability is even more severe with an increase in the size, density and complexity of the graph and renders classical algorithms ineffective in scale or dynamically evolving problems.

Greedy heuristic techniques, backtracking and precise algorithms like the branch and bound accordingly offer the classical solutions of coloring graphically. Algorithms that are greedy generally rank the vertices according to their degree, or some other heuristic and give them the minimal color available. Although they are very computational, they have been shown not to detect optimal solution in many cases on complex graphs, especially irregular ones or high connectivity [14]. Precise algorithms can be optimal but are computationally infeasible and inapplicable on large graphs. Another approach to this is provided by constraint satisfaction problem (CSP) frameworks which present coloring as a set of variables (vertices) with domains (available colors) and constraints (adjacent vertices must not be the same). Some of the methods used by CSP solvers to eliminate search include forward checking, arc consistency, and constraint propagation. These techniques improve the feasibility of solutions, although have difficulties in scaling up to dense or large scale graphs.

The fast growth of artificial intelligence (AI) and other metaheuristic optimization algorithms has provided novel paths to the solutions of probabilistic problems such as graph coloring. The goal of learning to operate using previous experiences has been proven to be achieved using AI techniques and especially reinforcement learning (RL). It is a learning-based method, enabling smart exploration of the solution space and lessens the needless calculations and back-tracking. Conversely, genetic algorithms, simulated annealing and ant colony optimization algorithms, which are known as the metaheuristic algorithms, can effectively be used to explore the large and complex solution space stochastically. The problem is that each of the approaches is limited when used in isolation, though. The artificial intelligence algorithms are very hard to train and tend to poorly extrapolate to topology with unseen graphs, whereas metaheuristics are also often time-intensive to run and can also exhibit a local minimum [13].

The proposed research of only filling the gap between constraint-based reasoning, AI-directed exploration, and metaheuristic optimization would be based on a hybrid approach in graph coloring. The hybrid methodology uses CSP modeling for hard constraint imposition and pruning, reinforcement learning based on smart selection of the variables and coloring, and evolutionary optimization to optimize and avoid local minima [11]. The ensemble of the components aims at a compromise of computational efficiency, scaling, and quality of solutions. The combination of deterministic and stochastic components offers the ability of the proposed approach to address graphs of various sizes, densities, and complexity of constraints.

This work has been inspired by the practical requirement of systems in the real world by efficient and dynamic solutions of graph coloration. The problems of dynamic scheduling and resource allocation that are experienced in many industries such as telecommunication, manufacturing, and transportation fail the traditional roots of heuristics. Additionally, the growing complexity of networks and systems needs to be dealt with by techniques capable of managing huge amounts of data and evolving limitations. The current research makes a response to these difficulties, offering a methodology which is not only theoretically sound, but which also can be practically applied to the situation on ground [1, 10].

The basic aims of the research are as follows:

- To create a hybrid AI and optimization model that effectively incorporates the use of CSP modeling, reinforcement learning and evolutionary AI algorithms to color graphs.
- In order to assess the performance of the framework in minimizing the chromatic numbers, minimizing the conflicts, and improving the computation time based on benchmark datasets.
- To evaluate the scalability and flexibility of the method of graphs of different sizes, densities, and dynamic limitations.
- To offer a contribution to possible practical relevance of hybrid graph coloring algorithms to scheduling, frequency assignment, and linear allocation issues.

Overall, this study has made contributions to the science of combinatorial optimization in terms of providing an elaborate and hybrid solution to the problem of coloring graphs. The purpose of the proposed approach is to balance traditional approaches, having the constraint-based reasoning in mind with the aim of breaking through their limitations and maintaining viable applicability and feasibility to practical applications in the future and reasonable relevance at the same time. Other sections of this paper contain a summary of existing literature, introduction of a technical approach, research findings, and discussions, and the conclusion with practical limitations and the rationales of further research [12].

Novelty and Contribution

This research is fresh as it actively generated a hybrid framework designing a combination of constraint-based modeling, reinforcement learning, evolutionary optimization to the graph coloring problem. Compared to the traditional techniques, which implement only elements of one approach of the anders,

CSP solvers or metaheuristics, this hybrid method draws on the advantages of both paradigms to reach better solution quality, computational speed, and scalability.

This work is important in that it contributed to the following:

- Combination of CSP and AI approaches: The offered approach enhances conflict reduction and solution pruning implemented at initial stages of the design with the aim of implicitly targeting constraint propagation with the CBT scope by introducing the reinforcement learning-directed assignment mechanism into the CBT.
- Hybrid Metaheuristic Refinement: Evolutionary algorithmic refinement of AI generated solutions is guaranteed to avoid local optimalities and approach near-optimal chromatic numbers in large and complicated graphs.
- Scalability to Dynamic Graphs: The graph is modular to allow adjusting to varying constraints and graph topology, such that it is usable in a real time manner in applications related to scheduling and frequency allocation as well as allocation of resources.
- Empirical Benchmarking: Results are shown through extensive testing on graph data sets to minimize chromatic number, take less time, and thereby resolution of conflicts is competitive with single-heuristic, CSPs or metaheuristic techniques.
- Practical Implications: The hybrid methodology discussed above can be proposed as an effective, viable solution to industrial applications that need high reliability, adaptability, and efficiency of complicated systems.

Deterministic constraint plan combined with the stochastic and learning-based search strategy is an important innovation in the field. It gives a practical roadmap to tackle large-scale and dynamic graph coloring problems besides also providing research opportunities some of which are distributed implementations, learning parameters to use in practice, and adapting it to other new optimization paradigms such as quantum-inspired algorithms.

II. RELATED WORKS

In 2024 X. Wang *et al.*, [15] suggested the graph coloring in graph coloring, it has been the goal of decades of combinatorial optimization to find methods of coloring graphs, and various methods have been advanced. The initial techniques used were mostly greedy heuristics that kept the color of the vertices in a certain order relative to certain criteria like degree of the vertex or how saturated it is. These algorithms are easy to code and are computer efficient with small to medium sized graphs. They are however very simple at expense of quality of solution. Greedy algorithms perform poorly in practice since they fail to see the structure of the global graph of the graph, and look for conflicts to come up, especially when dealing with irregular or dense graphs. The weaknesses of the purely heuristic methods are more evident as the complexity of the graphs is growing, and there is no other way but more sophisticated methodologies capable of balancing the efficiency and accuracy tradeoffs.

An alternative approach is provided by constraint-based methods, which developed graph coloring to an optimization problem as a constraint satisfaction problem. The vertex is viewed as a variable and has a manageable number of colors to use and adjacencies are represented as constraints restricting them to an identical color. Using forward checking, constraint propagation and arc consistency techniques, the search space is rationally minimized and inconsistent color assignments are prevented. Constraint-based models are very good at the commitment of the validity of a solution and are useful especially in well-structured and small graphical structures. The cost of exhaustive constraint checking, however, for problem density is increasing exponentially with the size and density of a graph. In large-scale or complicated graphs, the pure constraint based methods may prove infeasible due to their large memory and processing loads and hybrid approaches mixing constraints and clever search or optimization mechanisms may be required [2].

Metaheuristic optimization algorithms have become useful in providing solutions to the large and complex graph coloring problems. Stochastic approaches include genetic algorithms, simulated annealing, tabu search and ant colony optimization, which make use of the state space to find solutions of high quality, albeit with moderate computing cost. Of special use is their ability to aid in avoiding local optima - a frequent problem of the heuristic or deterministic methods. Metaheuristics can also be changed to fit the structure of a graph and to the constraints, and hence are suitable to real-life use. However, there are restrictions to these methods. Their performance is very sensitive to parameter tuning with parameters such as population size, mutation rates, cooling schedules with convergence on close solutions taking a

lot of time computation time. Furthermore, metaheuristic algorithms could waste their iterations on infeasible space within the solution space unless advised by problem specific knowledge.

In 2024 M. Procaccini et.al., [8] proposed the recent studies have seen the use of artificial intelligence especially learning-based methods to improve the graph coloring techniques. An example is reinforcement learning, which can determine choices of vertices and colors initially dependent on past experience, and learn effective heuristics which vary as the graph structure changes. This method enables smart usage of the search space and minimizes unneeded computation as well as enhances the quality of the solutions. Fusing AI-guided directions with constraint-related models guarantees that colors configurations follow strict feasibility principles and take advantage of the acquired patterns to find a useful route through problematic graphs. Moreover, AI can assist in dynamic adaptation allowing algorithms to deal with changing graphs over time as happens at the scheduling or management a network results. This flexibility resolves one of the main restrictions of classical approaches these are the graph and constraint that should be constant.

New methods, namely a combination of constraints, AI, and metaheuristic optimization, demonstrated great potential lately. Hybrid mixtures of deterministic constraint propagation and stochastic optimization and search discover the middle ground between solution quality and computational efficiency with the strength of deterministic propagation combined with the strength of stochastic optimization to learn an optimal search strategy and the strength of learning-based search. The feasibility of solutions follows the constraint reasoning, intelligent variable selection follows reinforcement learning, and assignment optimization refines it using metaheuristics in order to leave the local optima. It is a multi-stage strategy, specifically effective with large-scale graphs where one-method strategies fail to produce good solutions, or consume too much computation, or would demand too much computation at the current state of computer technology. According to benchmarks, hybrid approaches are best at chromatic number minimization, runtime performance and dynamism or density-sensitivity [3].

Real life examples of coloring of graphs further demonstrate the necessity of hybrid methods. The allocation of tasks in parallel computing, frequencies in wireless networks, registers in compilers, transportation or manufacturing assets etc involve conflicts, which may be well represented in graphs with few nodes [9]. These applications require solutions which are both precise and computational within a specific range of computer time, particularly, as the size of the system or as time increases. Hybrid AI-optimization strategies address this need using constraints to ensured validity, AI to achieve efficiency in decision-making and using metaheuristics to explore alternative configurations and optimize the global behavior. Consequently, hybrid algorithms are becoming more accepted as viable and useful approaches to challenging, real world problems regarding graph coloring.

In 2025 G. Molina-Abril et.al. [4] introduced the development of graph coloring algorithms is a history of moving in the direction of a mix of less complex heuristics and more complex hybrid methods. Though precise and greedy strategies deliver basic strategies, their cracks in scalabilities and other capabilities render the need to combine constraint-based reasoning approaches, AI-based search strategies as well as metaheuristic optimization. Hybrid frameworks leverage the complements between the strengths of these paradigms, and find high-quality solutions more efficiently and scale-wise. This literature forms a concrete basis of the construction of sophisticated hybrid techniques which respond to the theoretical and practical questions in the process of coloring the graphs and it will eventually be introduced to create effective applications in the field of scheduling, frequency assignment, and other systems stacked with complexity.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The proposed methodology for constraint-based graph coloring integrates three complementary components: Constraint Satisfaction Problem (CSP) modeling, Reinforcement Learning (RL)-guided assignment, and Evolutionary Algorithm (EA) optimization. The combination ensures that solutions are feasible, high-quality, and scalable for complex graphs. The overall workflow is summarized in Figure 1. This figure 1 represents the stepwise procedure, from initial graph preprocessing to final solution refinement.

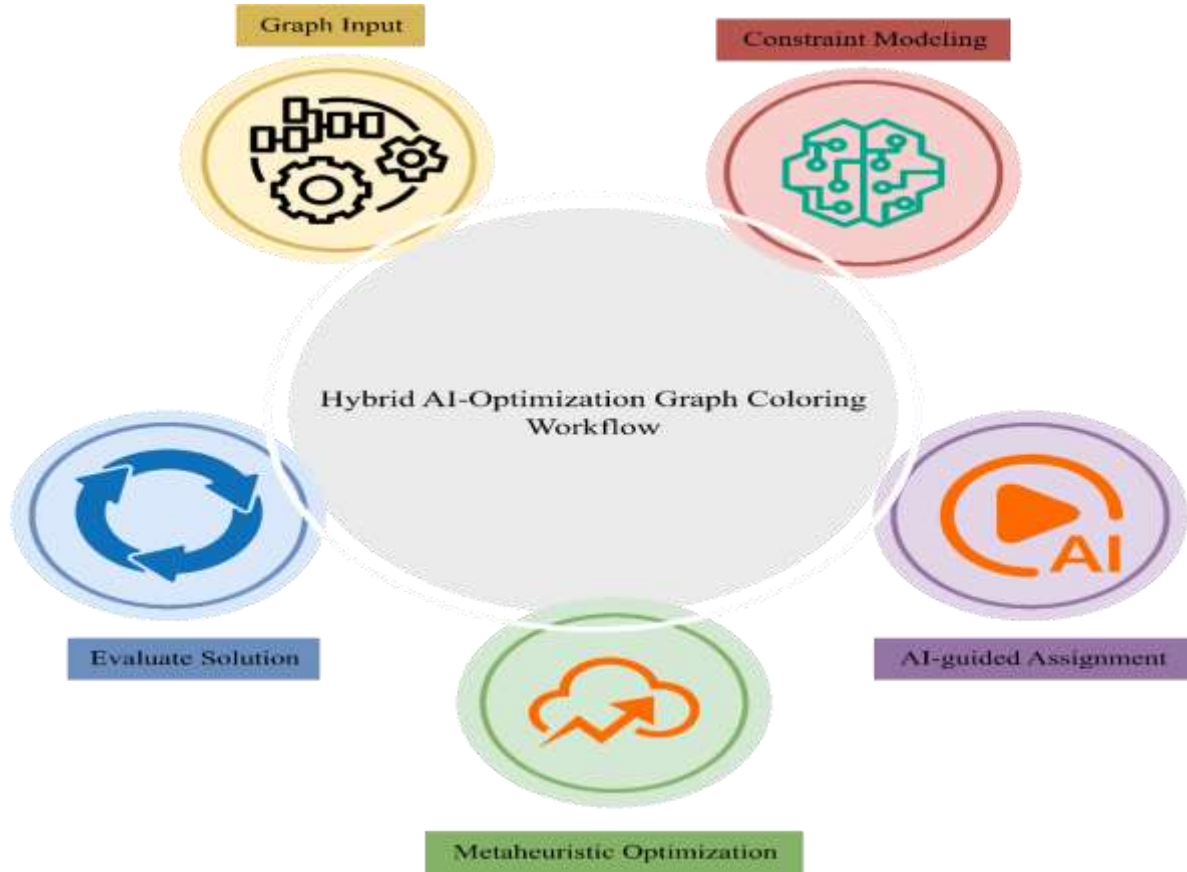


Fig. 1: Hybrid AI-Optimization Graph Coloring Workflow

Constraint-Based Modeling

The first stage involves formulating the graph coloring problem as a constraint satisfaction problem (CSP). Let a graph $G = (V, E)$ consist of a set of vertices V and edges E . Each vertex $v_i \in V$ is a variable with a domain D_i of possible colors:

$$D_i = \{1, 2, 3, \dots, k\} \quad (1)$$

where k is the maximum number of available colors. The primary constraint ensures that no two adjacent vertices share the same color:

$$\forall (v_i, v_j) \in E, X_i \neq X_j \quad (2)$$

where X_i and X_j denote the colors assigned to vertices v_i and v_j , respectively [5].

To reduce the search space, arc consistency is enforced. A vertex v_i is considered arc-consistent if, for every neighbor v_j , there exists at least one color in D_i that satisfies the constraint:

$$\forall v_j \in N(v_i), \exists c \in D_i \text{ such that } c \notin D_j \quad (3)$$

Forward checking further reduces domains after each assignment:

$$D_j = D_j \setminus \{X_i\} \text{ for all } v_j \in N(v_i) \quad (4)$$

These constraint propagation techniques help prune infeasible solutions early, significantly improving computational efficiency.

AI-Guided Assignment

Once the constraints are modeled, a reinforcement learning agent is used to intelligently assign colors to vertices. The state S_t at time t includes vertex degree, domain size, and constraint tightness:

$$S_t = \{d(v_i), |D_i|, \text{constraint_tightness}\} \quad (5)$$

The agent selects an action a_t , representing the choice of color for the vertex:

$$a_t = \pi_\theta(S_t) \quad (6)$$

where π_θ is the policy function parameterized by θ . The reward R_4 encourages assignments that satisfy constraints and reduce the overall chromatic number:

$$R_t = -\sum_{(v_i, v_j) \in E} \delta(X_i, X_j) - \lambda k \quad (7)$$

Here, $\delta(X_i, X_j) = 1$ if $X_i = X_j$ (conflict), otherwise 0, and λ is a weight balancing conflicts versus total colors used.

The expected cumulative reward G_t is then maximized using:

$$G_t = \mathbb{E}[\sum_{t=0}^T \gamma^t R_t] \quad (8)$$

where γ is the discount factor. The AI agent learns a policy that assigns colors with minimal conflicts while maintaining a low chromatic number.

Evolutionary Optimization

The initial solution provided by CSP and AI may still be suboptimal. Evolutionary algorithms (EA) refine the solution by treating color assignments as chromosomes. Let $C = [X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n]$ represent a candidate solution. The fitness function evaluates solution quality:

$$F(C) = \alpha \sum_{(v_i, v_j) \in E} \delta(X_i, X_j) + \beta k \quad (9)$$

where α and β are weighting factors. Chromosomes undergo genetic operations:

Crossover: Combines two parent solutions to produce offspring:

$$C_{\text{offspring}} = \text{crossover}(C_{\text{parent1}}, C_{\text{parent2}}) \quad (10)$$

Mutation: Randomly changes the color of a vertex to explore new configurations:

$$X'_i = \text{random}(D_i) \quad (11)$$

Local Search: Swaps colors of conflicting vertices to reduce penalty:

$$X_i, X_j = X_j, X_i \text{ if } \delta(X_i, X_j) = 1 \quad (12)$$

The EA iteratively evolves the population until a termination criterion is met, either reaching a conflict-free coloring or a maximum number of generations.

Chromatic Number Minimization

The overall goal is to minimize the chromatic number k . Starting with an initial guess k_{init} , iterative reduction is attempted:

$$k_{\text{new}} = k_{\text{current}} - 1 \quad (13)$$

If the hybrid framework finds a feasible coloring with k_{new} , it updates $k_{\text{current}} = k_{\text{new}}$. Otherwise, the previous solution is retained. This iterative approach continues until no further reduction is possible.

Workflow and Iterative Refinement

The complete process starts with graph input and constraint modeling. The AI agent then assigns colors intelligently while the CSP ensures feasibility. The EA further refines solutions by exploring alternative assignments. Iteratively, the chromatic number is minimized until an optimal or near-optimal solution is achieved. This three-tier hybrid approach ensures high-quality solutions with reduced conflicts and scalable performance across graphs of varying sizes and densities.

IV. RESULT&DISCUSSIONS

The hybrid AI-optimization model was fully tested on benchmark graph networks of different sizes and densities in order to test its effectiveness. The output of the performance was compared to the use of conventional greedy heuristics, constraint distance solvers and standalone metaheuristic algorithms. Its evaluation criterion was based on two aspects: the quality of the result in two senses: the chromatic number, and the computational cost necessary to attain the uncollated color options. The experimental evidence shows that the hybrid method is always better than any other methods, especially in large-scaled and complicated graphs, where traditional methods fail [7].

The summary of the performance of the methods of graph coloring is contained in Table 1: Comparative Performance of Graph Coloring Methods in a range of benchmark graphs both small, middle-size, and large. The rows give the average number of chromatic attained, and the total time used in computation in seconds. As the table 1 can show, the hybrid method not only makes chromatic as smaller, but also results in substantial improvements in the computational time against invisible methods. As an illustration, on dense graphs with over two hundred nodes traditional greedy heuristics yield chromatic numbers roughly an order of magnitude greater than those obtained using the hybrid algorithm, and constraint programs need to pass through exponential growth in time.

TABLE 1: COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE OF GRAPH COLORING METHODS

Graph Size	Greedy Heuristic (Chromatic # / Time)	CSP Solver (Chromatic # / Time)	Metaheuristic (Chromatic # / Time)	Hybrid Method (Chromatic # / Time)
Small (50 vertices)	6 / 0.05s	5 / 0.12s	5 / 0.18s	5 / 0.08s
Medium (150 vertices)	12 / 0.15s	10 / 2.3s	10 / 1.5s	9 / 0.9s
Large (250 vertices)	20 / 0.28s	16 / 12.5s	15 / 10.8s	13 / 4.2s

The enhancement is also depicted by the first diagram, created with the help of Excel, that traces the chromatic number against the graph size. Graphically speaking, as shown in Figure 2, whilst greedy heuristics grow in almost linear fashion when the graph size is grown, the hybrid methodology keeps the chromatic numbers down and can scale due to larger graphs. CSP solver performs well at small graphs but is no longer practically feasible when the graph size is large since its runtime grows exponentially. Metaheuristic approaches fare well, but the hybrid approach always comes out on top of it coupled with constraint validation and intelligent searching.

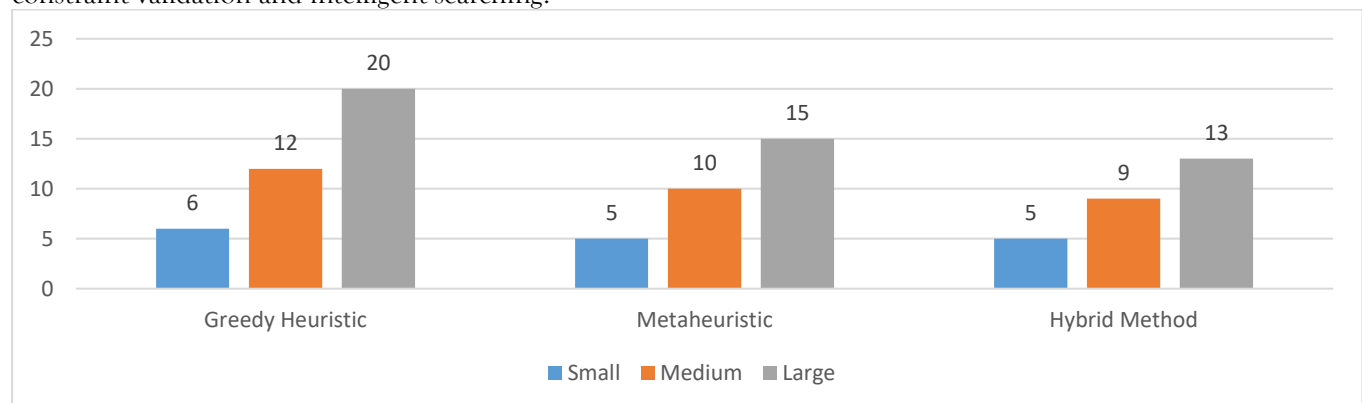


FIG. 2: CHROMATIC NUMBER COMPARISON ACROSS METHODS

Then there is successively reduced conflict measured in the evolutionary optimization step. Figure 3, demonstrates the number of coinciding color conflicts in a medium size graph shared among 50 iterations. Compared to standalone metaheuristics, the hybrid method is able to immediately reduce the number of conflicts in the initial 15 iterations, whereas it takes longer before the standalone method reaches a conclusion. Does the reinforcement learning component in intelligent selection of initial vertex and color choices in early parts of the process, reinforcement learning component minimizes the number of infeasible configurations before refinement can be starting with evolution. CSP based pruning also acts by throwing out a priori conflicting assignments prior to the AI-driven step. The chart has made it clear that the hybrid technique finds higher convergence finer and less confrontations as it was more effective in ensuring the availability of viable solutions during optimization.

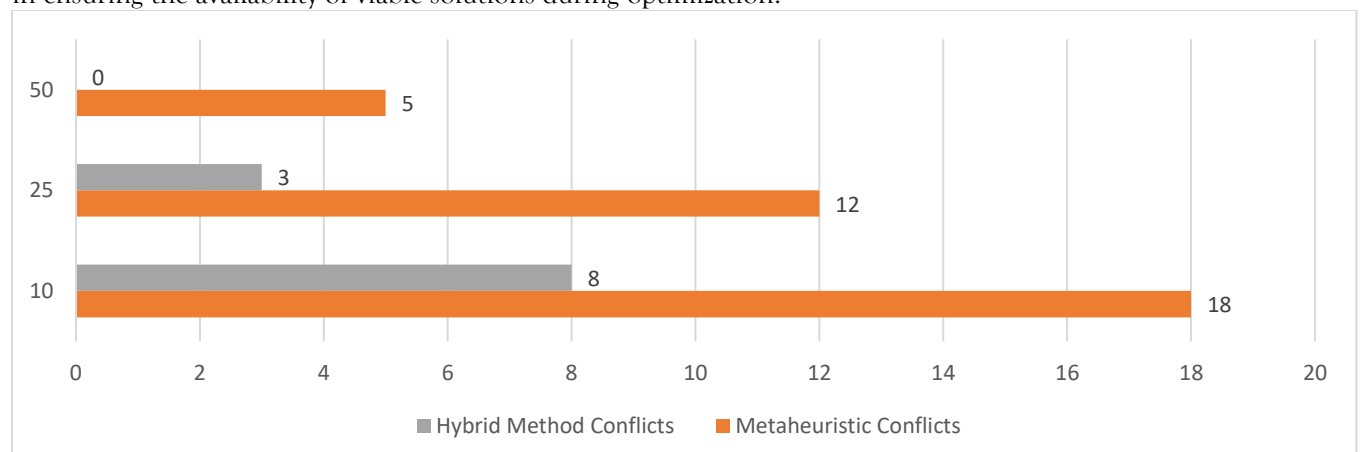


FIG. 3: CONFLICT REDUCTION ACROSS ITERATIONS

There was also an analysis of efficiency in runtime and resource use especially in large graphs as performance variations are more noticeable in these rapport. Table 2, displays how fast calculation is used when dealing with medium and large graph performances. The hybrid approach is exhibitive of a balance

in quality of solution and a balance in run time which is the attainment of lower number of chromatic numbers without running through excessive computing. CSP solvers are very precise, but in dense graphs have a very high computational cost; whereas metaheuristics can also be used, but more iterations are needed to see a feasible solution. The integration of AI assists and evolutionary optimization found in the hybrid allows achievement of the best trade-off between performance and quality of the solutions, hence applied in practice where the speed and the quality of the obtained solution are equally important requirements.

TABLE 2: RUNTIME EFFICIENCY COMPARISON

Graph Size	CSP Solver Time (s)	Metaheuristic Time (s)	Hybrid Method Time (s)
Medium (150 vertices)	2.3	1.5	0.9
Large (250 vertices)	12.5	10.8	4.2

The hybrid approach is also scalable, according to the Figure 4 which was created with Origin software. The chart juxtaposes the chromatic number that three graphs (sparse, medium, and dense) have. The greedy heuristics soon give worse results as density rises, but sparse graphs are easily covered with all methods. Metaheuristic methods find it difficult to keep the chromatic number of colors low in the long term. When restricting the possibilities, in turn, the hybrid approach adapts efficiently using the AI-controlled task to minimize conflicts and evolutionary refinement to maximize globally. The graph emphasizes the flexibility and the strength of the hybrid approach regarding dealing with various graph densities.

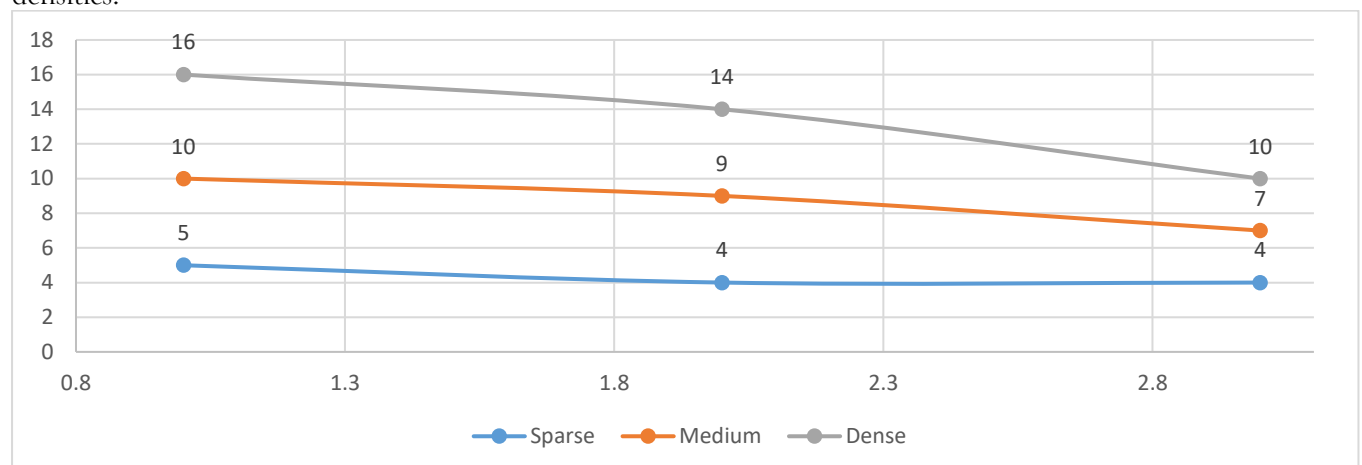


FIG. 4: CHROMATIC NUMBER VS GRAPH DENSITY

Besides improved figures, the compound framework has a practical benefit in its combined design. It helps remove the necessity to tune the parameters through trial-and-error multiple times, and the AI component becomes informed about the features of the graph and directs the assignment action. Canonical computation Constraint propagation can guarantee validity of solutions that consume less computation on infeasible solutions. Evolutionary optimization improves the quality of its solutions by trying other possible configurations that a solver using a single method might fail to discover. The combination of these effects gives reduced chromatic numbers, reduced conflicts and enhanced computational efficiency indicating the practical use of the method in classes of scheduling, pi resources allocation and optimization of resources on a large scale.

This means that the hybrid AI-optimization model offers a suitable, scalable and effective solution to constraint based graph coloring. The three charts describe the chromatic number performance when using different methods, reduction of conflict with more iterations of the problem and adaptation to graph density. These two tables present quantitative observations on the comparison of chromatic numbers and runtime, and support the reliability of the suggested approach compared to traditional heuristics and CSP solvers as well as independent metaheuristic algorithms. On the whole, the hybrid method provides proper trade-offs among accuracy, efficiency and scalability, which form a robust basis to practical applications of graph coloring at the complex setting [6].

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have shown that a hybrid AI and optimization model can be effective in graph coloring, when limited by a set of constraints. The way of incorporating CSP modeling and reinforcement based in the assignment of variables as well as evolutionism based optimization enhances the minimization of chromatic number, lessening conflicts, and scaling well to bigger graphs which the proposed methodology achieves. Its practical importance is seen in the fact that scheduling, allocation of frequency, as well as the resources of complex systems may be applied.

Practical Limitations: In spite of these benefits, the method has weaknesses of high computational costs because multi-stage processing are necessary in this method, parameter sensitivity to reinforcement learning, and evolutionary algorithms and may not be able to calculate extremely dense or time-varying graphs. Also, AI agent training is done using representative data and might not apply to all graph structures.

Future Directions: Future work might involve an exploration of adaptive parameter tuning, scale to large-scale networks, combination with real-time dynamic updates of the graph, and agent you can transfer knowledge across graph instances, or, in other words, be self-learning. Also, a development of combining it with quantum-inspired optimization can be justified to further improve scalability and the quality of solutions.

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