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Refining Software Clustering: The Impact of Code Co-Changes on Architectural Reconstruction

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ABSTRACT Version control systems are important for tracking and managing changes in software code, but they also offer information about the relationships between software entities. When multiple software entities (e.g., classes, interfaces) are modified together, it may indicate an underlying connection. These code co-changes represent a type of software dependency that can be used together with structural or lexical dependencies to improve the understanding of a system's architecture.

In this paper, we explore using code co-changes as input for software clustering for architectural reconstruction. Since structural dependencies are the most commonly used dependencies in software clustering, we investigate whether integrating them with code co-changes provides better results than using either dependency type alone.

Our experiments are applied to four open-source Java projects from GitHub. For each project, we apply three distinct clustering algorithms (Louvain, Leiden, and DBSCAN) and evaluate their performance using two clustering evaluation metrics. These metrics allow us to compare the effectiveness of clustering based on code co-changes alone or clustering that combines co-changes with structural dependencies, offering a better understanding of how these co-changes influence software architecture reconstruction.

INDEX TERMS Architectural reconstruction, code co-changes, logical dependencies, software clustering, software dependencies, versioning system.

I. INTRODUCTION

Software systems often face a lack of documentation. Even if there was original documentation at the beginning of development, over the years it may become outdated or lost. Additionally, the original developers may leave the company, taking with them knowledge about how the software was designed. This situation challenges the teams when it comes to maintenance or modernization. In this context, recovering the system's architecture is essential. Understanding the system's architecture helps developers better evaluate and understand the nature and impact of changes they need to make. One technique to aid reconstructing the system architecture is software clustering. Software clustering involves creating cohesive groups (modules) of software entities based on their dependencies and interactions.

Among the dependencies that can be used for software clustering are structural dependencies (relationships between entities based on code analysis), lexical dependencies (relationships based on naming conventions), and code co-changes/logical dependencies (relationships between entities extracted from the version control system), among others.

In this paper, we assess whether using structural dependencies combined with logical dependencies can provide better results than using each type of dependency alone. The structural dependencies are used as they are extracted from static code analysis, and the logical dependencies are filtered co-changes from the version control system [19]. The reason behind filtering the co-changes and not using them as they are in the versioning system is to enhance their reliability and make them easier to combine with structural dependencies, as their number can far exceed the structural dependencies number [1].

The following research questions guide our investigation:

- **RQ1:** Does using structural dependencies (SD) combined with logical dependencies (LD) improve software clustering results compared to traditional approaches using only structural dependencies (SD)?
- **RQ2:** Can using only logical dependencies (LD) produce good software clustering results?
- **RQ3:** How do different filtering settings for logical

dependencies (LD) impact clustering results, and which filtering settings provide the best performance?

To answer these research questions, we apply three different clustering algorithms (Louvain, Leiden, and DBSCAN) to each of the four open-source projects. We then evaluate the results using two metrics, MQ (Modularization Quality) [12] and MoJoFM (Move and Join eFfectiveness Measure) [4]. These metrics allow us to compare the effectiveness of using structural dependencies alone, logical dependencies alone, and a combination of both, providing a better understanding of how different dependency types and filtering settings impact the clustering results.

In Section II, we review the related work and previous studies that used various dependencies for software clustering and their metrics for evaluation. Section IV details the workflow and implementation of our approach, including the extraction and filtering of dependencies, and the clustering algorithm used. The plan and results of our experiments on four open-source projects are presented in Section V. Section VI evaluates our results by using the Modularization Quality (MQ) metric and the MoJoFM metric. We also manually analyze some of the clustering solutions. Finally, Section VII contains our conclusions and findings.

A. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

The following abbreviations and acronyms are used throughout this article:

- **LD**: Logical Dependencies
- **SD**: Structural Dependencies
- **MQ**: Modularization Quality
- **MoJoFM**: Move and Join Effectiveness Measure

II. RELATED WORK

Software clustering for architectural reconstruction is used to place software entities in meaningful modules (clusters). Various approaches and metrics have been used to improve the quality of clustering solutions. This section presents some of the works related to the use of dependencies, clustering algorithms, and evaluation metrics.

A. CLUSTERING ALGORITHMS

Various clustering algorithms are used to group software entities into modules. These include hierarchical clustering for building clusters based on their hierarchical relationships [16], [20], K-Means clustering for partitioning entities based on their nearest mean [21], graph-based clustering for identifying densely connected subgraphs, density-based clustering, such as DBSCAN, for grouping entities based on neighborhood density. The Louvain algorithm, which we will use in our experiments, was developed by Blondel et al., and it is a community detection algorithm commonly used for finding partitions in large networks [9], [10].

B. EVALUATION METRICS

Evaluating the quality of clustering solutions is important for assessing the effectiveness of both the clustering algorithm and the inputs to the clustering algorithm. Mancoridis et al. introduced the Modularity Quality (MQ) metric, which evaluates the difference between connections within clusters and connections between different clusters [12].

The Move and Join (MoJo) metric, introduced by Tzerpos et al., measures the effort required to transform one clustering solution into another through move and join operations. This metric provides a measure of similarity between the obtained clustering solution and a baseline clustering solution [14].

C. OVERVIEW

Table 1 provides a summary of related works that use various types of dependencies in software clustering and the algorithms applied.

TABLE 1. Summary of Related Work

Paper Ref.	Types of Dependencies Used	Clustering Algorithm
Corazza et al. [17]	Lexical dependencies (Code Comments)	Hierarchical Agglomerative Clustering (HAC)
Anquetil et al. [18]	Lexical dependencies (File Names, Routine Names, Included Files, Comments)	N-grams based clustering
Mancoridis et al. [12], [13]	Structural dependencies	Search based algorithm (Hill-climbing)
Sora et al. [16]	Structural dependencies	Minimum Spanning Tree based algorithms; Metric Based; Search based algorithm (Hill-climbing); Hierarchical clustering
Prajapati et al. [22]	Structural, Lexical, and Changed-history dependencies	Many objective optimization algorithm
Silva et al. [20]	Co-change dependencies	Agglomerative Hierarchical Clustering (Chameleon algorithm)

III. STRUCTURAL AND LOGICAL DEPENDENCIES IN SOFTWARE CLUSTERING

Software clustering relies on various types of dependencies to identify relationships between software entities. Structural dependencies, have been mostly used due to their reliability [16]. However, recent research has started incorporating other types of dependencies besides structural dependencies [17], [18], [22]. In this section, we will present an overview of structural and logical dependencies, focusing on how they are extracted and used in software clustering.

A. STRUCTURAL DEPENDENCIES

Structural dependencies are important for understanding the architecture of a software system because they reveal how different modules interact at the code level. In our research, we extract structural dependencies using a tool from our previous work [5]. This tool analyzes the source code to identify

various types of relationships between software entities and exports them in CSV format.

Not all structural dependencies have the same impact on the architecture and behavior of a software system. To reflect their importance, we assign weights to different types of dependencies. This weighting ensures that more important relationships have a greater influence on the clustering process.

The dependency types and weights were previously defined in related works on clustering [23], [24].

Table 2 shows the weights assigned to different categories of structural dependencies, as proposed in previous works.

Weight	Dependency types
4	Interface realization
3	Inheritance, parameter, return type, field, cast, type binding
2	Method call, field access, instantiation
1	Local variable

TABLE 2. Weights assigned to different structural dependency types. [24]

The weights are assigned based on the following considerations:

Weight 4 – Interface Realization: Assigned the highest weight because it signifies a strong architectural relationship. Implementing an interface means classes are expected to provide specific functionalities.

Weight 3 – Inheritance, Parameter, Return Type, Field, Cast, Type Binding: These dependencies represent significant connections between entities. They include inheritance relationships and shared data or types, which affect the behavior and properties of entities.

Weight 2 – Method Call, Field Access, Instantiation: These indicate interactions between classes but are less impactful than higher weights. They involve using methods or fields of other classes or creating instances.

Weight 1 – Local Variable: Given the lowest weight, local variables are the most basic level of interaction.

B. LOGICAL DEPENDENCIES

We refer to logical dependencies as the filtered co-changes between software entities. A co-change occurs when two or more software entities are modified together during the same commit in the version control system. Co-changes indicate that these entities are likely related or dependent on each other, directly or indirectly.

There is a degree of uncertainty associated with co-changes. Compared to structural dependencies, where the presence of a dependency is certain, co-changes are less reliable. For example, if the system was migrated from one version control system to another, the first commit will include all the entities from the system at that point in time. Should we consider all these entities as related to one another in this case? This would introduce false dependencies and reduce the likelihood of achieving accurate results when combining them with more reliable types of dependencies.

Even if we address the issue of the first commit, it can still happen that a developer resolves multiple unrelated issues in the same commit (even though this is not recommended by development processes).

To solve this problem, in our previous works, we refined some filtering methods to ensure that the co-changes that remain after filtering are more reliable and suitable for use with other dependencies or individually [5], [6], [7]. Based on our previous results, the filters we decided to use further in our research are the commit size filter and the strength filter. Both filters are used together, and the end result is the set of logical dependencies that we use to generate software clusters.

1) Commit Size Filter

The commit size filter filters out all co-changes that originate from commits that exceed a certain number of files.

We are interested in extracting dependencies from code commits that involve feature development or bug fixes because that is when developers change related code files. If multiple unrelated features or bug fixes are solved in a single commit, it will appear as though all the entities in those files are related, even if they are not.

One scenario where this issue arises is the first commit of a software system when it is ported from one versioning system to another. This commit will contain many changed code files, but these changes do not originate from any functionality change, so they generate numerous irrelevant co-changes for the system.

A similar scenario occurs with merge commits. A merge commit is created automatically when you perform a merge operation to integrate changes from one branch into another. After integration, all commits from the branch are added to the target branch, and on top of that, there is the merge commit containing all changes from the commits merged into a single commit. Since this commit contains only a merge of multiple smaller, related issues/features solved, it is better to gather information from the smaller commits rather than from the overall merge commit. What both scenarios above have in common is the large number of files involved in the commits. Based on our previous research and measurements regarding the number of files involved in a commit, we chose to set a threshold of 20 files [5], [6]. Therefore, all co-changes that originate from commits with more than 20 changed code files are filtered out.

Table 3 presents the commit statistics for the studied projects. The columns represent the percentage of commits that modified under 5 files, between 5 and 10 files, between 10 and 20 files, and above 20 files. We can observe that most of the commits have under 5 files changed, with Apache Tomcat having more than 90% of the commits with less than 5 files changed. On the opposite side, only a few commits involve more than 20 files changed, Hibernate ORM having the highest percentage at 8.39%. Overall, filtering based on commit size does not significantly reduce the number of commits considered.

TABLE 3. Commit statistics for studied projects

Project Name	Number of files changed			
	Under 5	5-10	10-20	Above 20
Apache Ant	83.83%	7.50%	4.17%	4.50%
Apache Tomcat	90.95%	5.44%	2.04%	1.58%
Hibernate ORM	71.74%	12.37%	7.50%	8.39%
Gson	83.63%	9.85%	3.70%	2.81%

2) Strength Filter

This filter focuses on the reliability of the co-changes. If a pair of co-changing entities appears only once in the entire history of the system, it might be less reliable than a pair that appears more frequently.

Zimmermann et al. introduced the support and confidence metrics to measure the significance of co-changes [8].

The *support metric* of a rule $(A \rightarrow B)$ where A is the antecedent and B is the consequent of the rule, is defined as the number of commits (transactions) in which both entities are changed together.

The *confidence metric* of $(A \rightarrow B)$, as defined in Equation (1) , focuses on the antecedent of the rule and is the number of commits together of both entities divided by the total number of commits of (A).

$$\text{Confidence}(A \rightarrow B) = \frac{\text{Nr. of commits containing } A \text{ and } B}{\text{Nr. of commits containing } A} \quad (1)$$

The confidence metric favors entities that change less and more frequently together, rather than entities that change more with a wider variation of other entities.

Assuming that (A) was changed in 10 commits and, of these 10 commits, 9 also included changes to (B), the confidence for the rule $(A \rightarrow B)$ is 0.9. On the other hand, if (C) was changed in 100 commits and, of these 100 commits, 50 also included changes to (D), the confidence for the rule $(C \rightarrow D)$ is 0.5. Therefore, in this scenario, we would have more confidence in the first pair $(A \rightarrow B)$ than in the second pair $(C \rightarrow D)$, even though the second pair has more than five times more updates together.

To favor entities that are involved in more commits together, we calculated a *system factor*. This system factor is the mean value of the support metric values for all entity pairs.

The system factor is multiplied with the calculated confidence metric value. In addition, since we plan to use the metric values as weights, together with the weights of the structural dependencies, we multiply by 100 to scale the metric value to be supraunitary, and we clip the results between 0 and 100.

We refer to this addition to the original calculation formula as strength metric, and it is defined in Equation (2).

$$\text{strength}(A \rightarrow B) = \text{confidence}(A \rightarrow B) \times 100 \times \text{system factor} \quad (2)$$

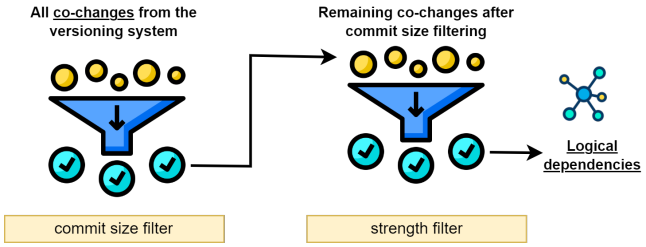

FIGURE 1. Filter application process

3) Filter Application Process

The overall filter application process is illustrated in Fig. 1. We begin by extracting all co-changes from the versioning system, and the first filter applied is the commit size filter. The commit size filter has a strict threshold of 20 files, meaning that any co-changes from commits involving more than 20 files are filtered out.

The co-changes that remain after applying the commit size filter are then processed using the strength filter. The strength filter uses multiple thresholds, specifically 10 different thresholds. We start with a threshold of 10 and increment it by 10 until we reach a maximum value of 100. The reason for not using a fixed threshold is to assess how different strength thresholds affect our cluster generation.

4) Dependency Extraction and Filtering Tool

To extract and filter the co-changes, we used a previously developed tool [5]. This tool takes as input the GitHub repository address and the threshold values for commit and strength filters. The tool clones the repository, downloads all commit diffs starting from the first commit, examines all files changed in each commit to identify which entities have changed in those files, and creates undirected co-change dependencies between all changed entities within a commit.

The commit size filter is applied to these undirected co-change dependencies, since the metric value for $(A \rightarrow B)$ is the same as for $(B \rightarrow A)$. For the strength filter, each co-change dependency is converted into a directed co-change dependency, so for each $(A \rightarrow B)$ dependency, we have both $(A \rightarrow B)$ and $(B \rightarrow A)$. This conversion is necessary because, as mentioned in the previous section, the confidence filter evaluates the antecedent of the rule. Thus, the metric value for $(A \rightarrow B)$ differs from the metric value for $(B \rightarrow A)$.

The remaining dependencies after applying the filters are then exported to a CSV file for further use.

It is important to note that the strength metric is only used for filtering and is *not considered as a weight* of the dependencies. The *weight assigned to each dependency is the number of commits in which both entities were updated together*.

5) Combining Structural and Logical Dependencies

When combining structural dependencies (SD) and logical dependencies (LD) in software clustering, both types of re-

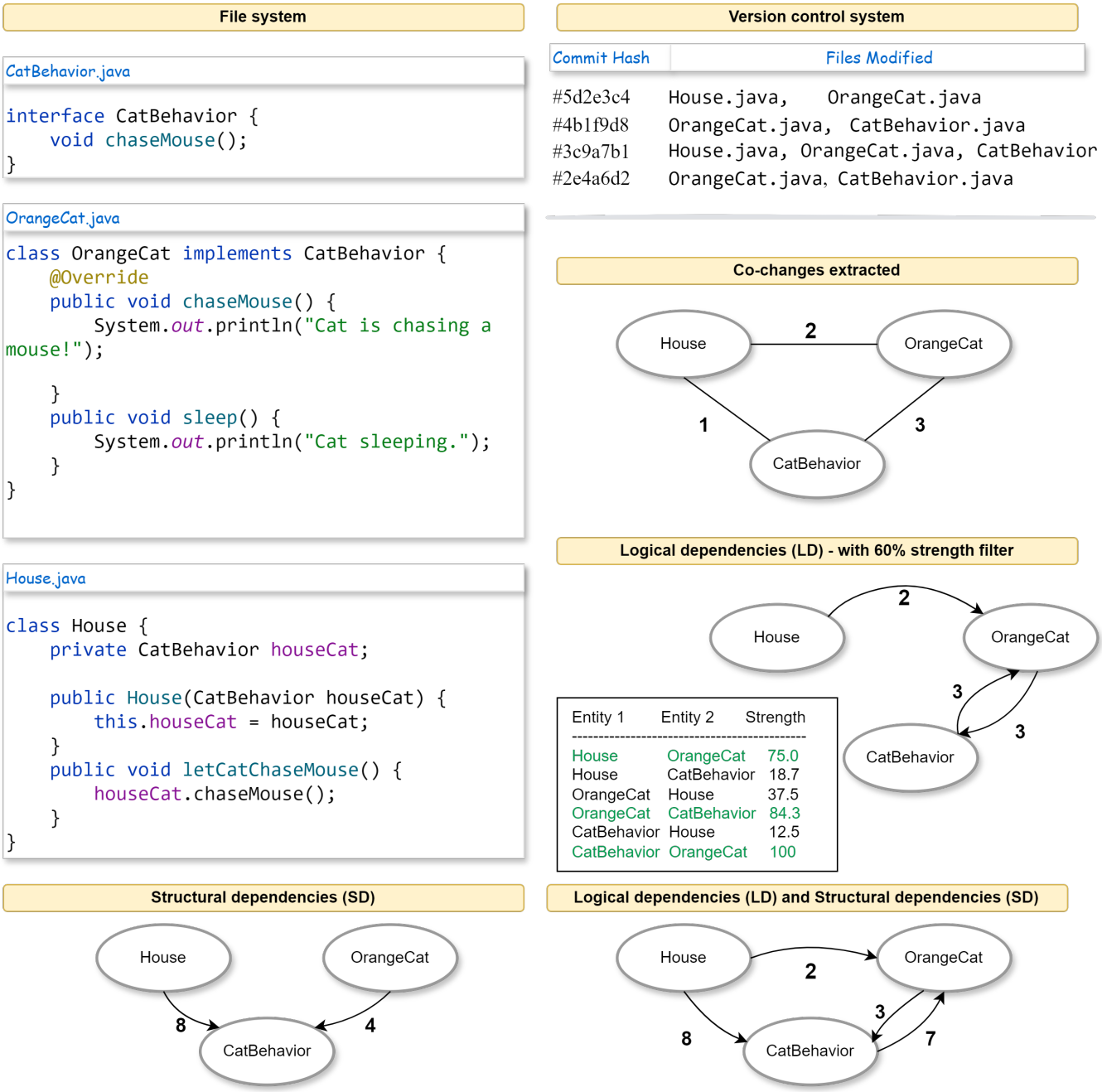

FIGURE 2. **Dependency Graph: Combining structural and logical dependencies.**

lationships are represented within the same graph.

Each entity in the system is represented as a node in the graph, and the dependencies between them are represented as directed, weighted edges.

SD and LD weights are combined when the same pair of entities appears in both types of dependencies. In this case, the weights from SD and LD are summed, giving more influence to those entity pairs. When a pair of entities appears only in SD or only in LD, the edge is added to the graph together with its corresponding weight.

Figure 2 illustrates the process of combining structural and logical dependencies in the same dependency graph. The structural dependencies between `House`, `OrangeCat`, and `CatBehavior` entities are visible from the source code analysis, showing relationships like interface implementation and method calls.

However, the combination of SD and LD reveals additional insights. One important observation is the logical dependency between `House` and `OrangeCat`, which is not observed from the structural analysis. This connection is extracted from version control and is further filtered using a 60% strength filter. The filter reveals that `House` and `OrangeCat` have

a significant co-change strength of 75.0, suggesting a strong logical relationship.

When SD and LD overlap, such as between `OrangeCat` and `CatBehavior`, their weights are summed. This summation process highlights relationships that are both structurally and logically significant.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

In this section, we present the methodology used to evaluate the impact of logical dependencies on the quality of software clustering solutions.

First, we describe the clustering algorithms used in our experiments: Louvain, Leiden, and DBSCAN. Next, we introduce the evaluation metrics used to assess the quality of the clustering results. Finally, we present the workflow and implementation of the tool developed for this research, which is built to process structural and logical dependencies, apply the selected clustering algorithms, and compute the evaluation metrics.

A. CLUSTERING ALGORITHMS

1) Louvain

The Louvain algorithm was originally developed by Blondel et al. and is used for finding community partitions (clusters) in large networks. The algorithm begins with a weighted network of N nodes, initially assigning each node to its own cluster, resulting in N clusters. For each node, the algorithm evaluates the modularity gain from moving the node to the cluster of each of its neighbors. Based on the results, the node is moved to the cluster with the maximum positive modularity gain. This process is repeated for all nodes until no further improvement in modularity is possible [9], [10].

2) Leiden

The Leiden algorithm, developed by Traag et al., is an improvement over the Louvain algorithm for community detection in large networks. Like Louvain, the Leiden algorithm begins with each node assigned to its own cluster and iteratively moves nodes between clusters to optimize modularity. However, the Leiden algorithm addresses some problems of the Louvain method, particularly regarding badly connected communities and runtime performance issues [11].

The Leiden algorithm introduces a refinement phase that ensures communities are locally optimally clustered and well-connected. This refinement step distinguishes the Leiden algorithm from Louvain.

3) DBSCAN

The Density-Based Spatial Clustering of Applications with Noise (DBSCAN) algorithm, introduced by Ester et al., is a density-based clustering algorithm for identifying clusters of arbitrary shape and detecting noise in data [15].

DBSCAN operates based on two main parameters:

- **Eps**: It defines the radius within which to search for neighboring points.
- **MinPts**: The minimum number of points required for a dense region. It determines the minimum number of neighbors a point must have to be considered a core point.

The algorithm classifies points into three categories:

1) **Core Points**: Points that have at least *MinPts* neighbors within a radius of *Eps*. These points are located in the interior of a cluster.
2) **Border Points**: Points that have fewer than *MinPts* neighbors within a radius of *Eps* but are in the Eps-neighborhood of a core point. They are located on the edge of a cluster.
3) **Noise**: Points that are neither core points nor border points.

The DBSCAN algorithm starts by visiting an arbitrary point in the dataset. If the point is a core point, the algorithm starts a new cluster and retrieves all points that are reachable from this core point. All points are then marked as part of the cluster. If the point is a border point, it moves to the next point in the dataset. This process is repeated until all points have been visited.

For software clustering, DBSCAN can be applied by considering software entities as data points. A distance measure based on dependency weights can be used to compute the neighborhood between entities.

B. CLUSTERING RESULT EVALUATION

To evaluate the clustering results, we use two metrics: the Modularity Quality (MQ) metric and the Move and Join Effectiveness Measure (MoJoFM) metric. Each of these metrics provides a different perspective on the quality of the clustering solutions.

1) Modularity Quality Metric

Mancoridis et al. introduced the Modularity Quality (MQ) metric to evaluate the modularization quality of a clustering solution based on the interaction between modules (clusters) [2], [12]. It evaluates the difference between connections within clusters and connections between different clusters.

The MQ of a graph partitioned into k clusters, where A_i is the Intra-Connectivity of the i-th cluster and E_{ij} is the Inter-Connectivity between the i-th and j-th clusters, is calculated using Equation (3) [2].

$$MQ = \left(\frac{1}{k}\sum_{i=1}^{k} A_i\right) - \left(\frac{1}{k(k-1)}\sum_{i,j=1}^{k} E_{ij}\right) \qquad (3)$$

The MQ metric's value ranges between -1 and 1. A value of -1 means that the clusters have more connections between the clusters than within the clusters, while a value of 1 means that there are more connections within clusters than between clusters. A good clustering solution should have an MQ value close to 1, since this indicates that the clusters are more cohesive internally and have fewer connections to other clusters.

The MQ metric is useful because it does not require any additional input besides the clustering result itself. It relies on the structure of the clustered entities and their interactions.

2) MoJoFM Metric

The Move and Join (MoJo) metric was introduced by Tzerpos et al. to evaluate the similarity between two different software clustering results. The metric measures the effort required to transform one clustering solution into another through move and join operations [3], [14].

To use the MoJo metric, we first generate a baseline clustering solution for comparison. This baseline is manually created based on our analysis of the code base. The MoJo metric then calculates the minimal number of move and join operations needed to convert the generated clustering solution into the baseline clustering solution.

The formula for the MoJo metric is represented in Equation (4), where $\text{mnr}(A, B)$ is the minimum number of operations to transform cluster A into cluster B and $\text{mnr}(B, A)$ is the minimum number of operations to transform cluster B into cluster A [3].

$$\text{MoJo}(A, B) = \min(\text{mnr}(A, B), \text{mnr}(B, A)) \tag{4}$$

By using the MoJo metric, we can evaluate the similarity between the generated clustering solutions and the expected clustering structure. We consider this metric useful when combining multiple types of dependencies because it clearly measures the similarity between the obtained clustering solutions and the same baseline.

C. TOOL WORKFLOW OVERVIEW

To achieve our goal of evaluating how the quality of clustering solutions is impacted by logical dependencies, we developed a Python tool capable of using any type of dependency, either alone or combined with other types of dependencies, as long as they are provided in CSV format. The tool clusters and evaluates software clustering solutions using either the MQ metric or the MoJo metric.

To generate the cluster solutions and evaluate the results, we created a tool in Python. The entire workflow of the tool is presented in Fig. 3.

1) Input

The tool takes as input one or multiple dependency CSV files and the baseline solution required for the MoJoFM metric. We designed the tool to accept multiple dependency files so that we can generate clustering solutions based on either a single type of dependency (structural or logical) or a combination of both.

Since the MoJoFM metric requires a baseline solution to evaluate the generated solution, we manually inspected the code and created baseline clustering solutions, which we then provide as input for the tool.

2) Processing

The dependencies are saved in the CSV file in the following format: antecedent of a dependency, consequent of a dependency, weight. The tool reads each line, adds the antecedent and consequent as nodes in a directed graph, and creates an edge between them, with the weight from the CSV file becoming the edge weight. If multiple dependency files are processed and the same dependency is found in multiple files, the edge weights are summed.

After all dependencies are read, the directed graph is passed to the Louvain clustering algorithm to generate the clustering result. The clustering result is then evaluated. The MQ metric requires the directed graph and the clustering result, while the MoJo metric requires the baseline clustering solution provided as input and the clustering result.

3) Output

After both evaluations are done, we export the clustering result, the cluster count, and the values for both metrics.

V. EXPERIMENTAL PLAN AND RESULTS

A. EXPERIMENTAL PLAN

1) Overview of projects used

In Table 4, we have synthesized all the information about the four projects used in our experiments. The 'Project Name' column contains the names of the software projects sourced from GitHub. The 'Release Tag' column contains the specific release tag of the project that was analyzed. For logical dependency extraction, we processed all the commits starting from the first commit up to the commit associated with the specified tag. For structural dependencies, we extracted the dependencies from the code of that specific tag. The 'Number of Commits' column provides the total number of commits used for logical dependencies extraction. The 'GitHub Repository Link' column includes the URL link to the project's repository on GitHub. Finally, the 'Repository Description' column provides a brief description of the project's purpose and functionality.

We mostly chose projects with more than 10,000 commits in their commit history, so that the logical dependencies extraction can be done on a larger information base. However, we selected 'Gson', which has a relatively small commit history (1,772 commits), to determine if our experiments work with a smaller information base.

2) Tool runs

To assess the impact of logical dependencies and to answer the research questions from section I, we run the tool presented in Section IV-C in three different scenarios for all the projects from table 4. All three scenarios are illustrated in Fig. 4.

In the first scenario, we run the tool once, providing only the structural dependencies of the system as input for the clustering algorithm.

In the second scenario, we run the tool ten times, using only logical dependencies as input. We perform ten runs because

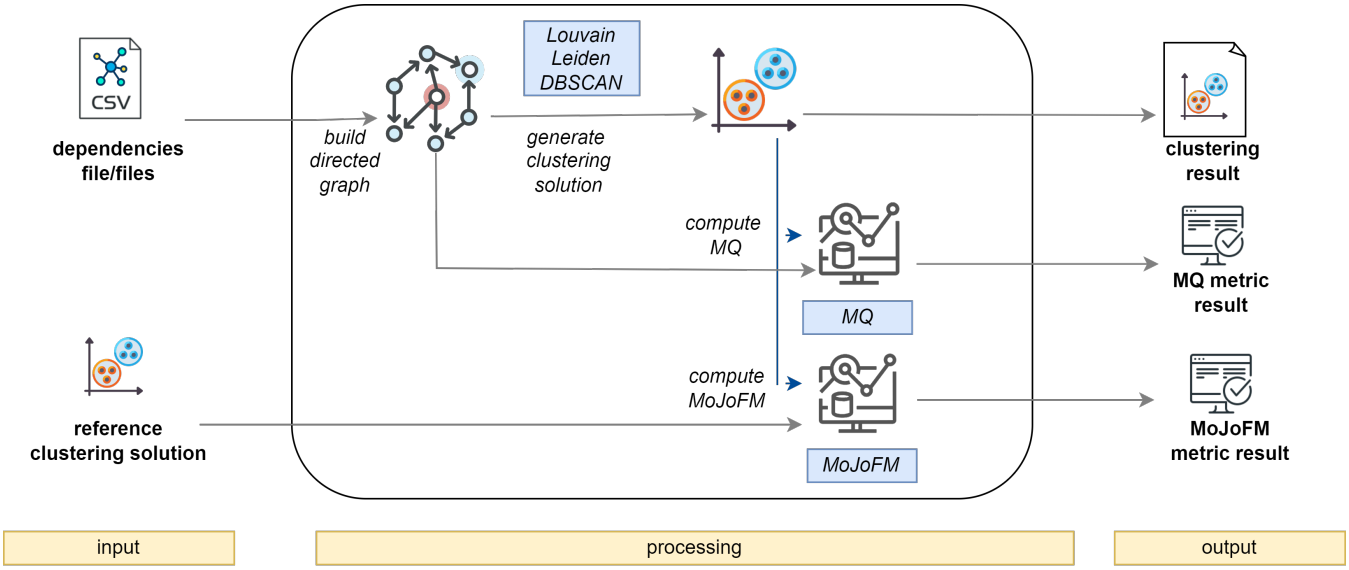

FIGURE 3. Tool workflow overview: input, processing and output.

TABLE 4. Overview of projects used in experimental analysis

Project Name	Release Tag	Commits Number	GitHub Repository Link	Repository Description
Apache Ant	rel/1.10.13	14917	https://github.com/apache/ant	Apache Ant is a Java-based build tool.
Apache Tomcat	8.5.93	22698	https://github.com/apache/tomcat	Apache Tomcat software powers numerous large-scale web applications across a diverse range of industries and organizations.
Hibernate ORM	6.2.14	16609	https://github.com/hibernate/hibernate-orm	Hibernate ORM is an object/relational mapping solution for Java.
Gson	gson-parent-2.10.1	1772	https://github.com/google/gson	A Java serialization/deserialization library to convert Java Objects into JSON and back.

we generate logical dependencies with different threshold values for the strength filter. We start with a threshold of 10 and increase it in steps of 10 up to 100, where 100 is the maximum value for the threshold.

In the third scenario, we combine logical with structural dependencies. Similar to the second scenario, we run the tool ten times, each time using structural dependencies and logical dependencies generated with different strength thresholds.

B. RESULTS

1) Detailed Results

The experimental results are presented in this subsection in four tables, each corresponding to a different project. Table 5 presents the results for Apache Ant, Table 6 presents the results for Apache Tomcat, Table 7 presents the results for Hibernate ORM, and Table 8 presents the results for Gson.

Each table includes the following columns:

- **Dependency Type:** The types of dependencies used are as follows: SD for Structural Dependencies, LD for Logical Dependencies, and SD+LD for their combination. The strength threshold used is specified in parentheses right after LD.
- **Entities Count:** The total number of software entities (such as classes, interfaces, enums) involved in clustering.
- **System Cover:** Considering that the total number of entities extracted from the code base is the maximum number of entities in the system (first line of each table), we calculated the percentage of entities contained in the other inputs relative to the number of entities from the code base.
- **Louvain/ Leiden/ DBSCAN:** The clustering algorithms used in the experiments.
- **Nr. of Clusters:** The number of clusters from the clustering solution.
- **MQ (Modularization Quality):** The result obtained when applying the MQ evaluation metric to the clustering solution.
- **MoJoFM:** The result obtained when applying the MoJoFM evaluation metric to the clustering solution.

The rows in each table represent different dependency types and strength filter thresholds used in the clustering experiments.

TABLE 5. Clustering results based on different dependency types and strength filter thresholds for repository: https://github.com/apache/ant

Dependency Type (strength threshold)	Entities Count	System Cover (%)	Louvain			Leiden			DBSCAN		
			Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo	Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo FM	Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo FM
SD	517	100.00	14	0.114	46.02	14	0.101	52.99	34	0.144	25.1
LD (10)	320	32.85	55	0.506	65.57	55	0.506	65.57	30	0.435	39.02
LD (20)	215	30.02	53	0.547	68	53	0.547	68	23	0.505	53.5
LD (30)	174	27.68	44	0.558	71.7	44	0.558	71.7	19	0.585	50
LD (40)	152	20.73	40	0.580	71.53	40	0.580	71.53	19	0.602	53.06
LD (50)	138	20.39	35	0.604	73.98	35	0.604	73.98	17	0.633	56.1
LD (60)	120	19.21	34	0.587	70.48	34	0.587	70.48	14	0.650	51.43
LD (70)	106	10.40	32	0.577	71.43	32	0.577	71.43	11	0.661	51.65
LD (80)	92	10.19	29	0.576	70.13	29	0.576	70.13	9	0.709	50.65
LD (90)	79	9.79	24	0.606	71.88	24	0.606	71.88	8	0.705	56.6
LD (100)	64	8.07	19	0.611	75.51	19	0.611	75.51	6	0.691	56.93
SD+LD (10)	517	100.00	18	0.355	55.18	15	0.254	54.98	37	0.147	25.9
SD+LD (20)	517	100.00	17	0.318	52.39	19	0.365	53.78	32	0.149	26.49
SD+LD (30)	517	100.00	16	0.282	53.19	16	0.265	54.78	30	0.159	24.5
SD+LD (40)	517	100.00	17	0.340	51.99	17	0.317	53.19	31	0.146	24.7
SD+LD (50)	517	100.00	15	0.248	52.59	19	0.298	56.77	31	0.146	24.7
SD+LD (60)	517	100.00	16	0.244	50.8	16	0.271	54.38	32	0.155	25.1
SD+LD (70)	517	100.00	15	0.238	51.00	18	0.281	52.99	32	0.155	25.1
SD+LD (80)	517	100.00	13	0.246	45.22	15	0.255	45.82	32	0.155	25.1
SD+LD (90)	517	100.00	14	0.258	46.02	16	0.268	47.01	32	0.155	25.1
SD+LD (100)	517	100.00	15	0.214	50.8	15	0.227	50.4	32	0.155	25.1

TABLE 6. Clustering results based on different dependency types and strength filter thresholds for repository: https://github.com/apache/tomcat

Dependency Type (strength threshold)	Entities Count	System Cover (%)	Louvain			Leiden			DBSCAN		
			Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo	Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo FM	Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo FM
SD	662	100.00	26	0.186	77.76	24	0.184	76.99	43	0.142	73.31
LD (10)	406	61.33	42	0.505	72.47	42	0.505	72.47	60	0.393	67.93
LD (20)	303	45.77	45	0.538	68.26	45	0.538	67.24	41	0.510	72.7
LD (30)	249	37.61	46	0.532	69.87	46	0.532	69.87	32	0.561	80.33
LD (40)	208	31.42	42	0.590	69.70	42	0.591	70.71	28	0.572	83.84
LD (50)	198	29.91	44	0.604	70.21	44	0.604	70.21	22	0.631	85.11
LD (60)	177	26.74	45	0.601	70.66	45	0.601	70.66	18	0.662	85.63
LD (70)	164	24.77	45	0.598	75.32	45	0.598	75.32	17	0.676	88.96
LD (80)	127	19.18	36	0.618	79.49	36	0.618	79.49	15	0.713	89.74
LD (90)	116	17.52	32	0.623	81.13	32	0.623	81.13	14	0.718	89.62
LD (100)	110	16.62	30	0.640	85.00	30	0.640	85.00	13	0.735	89.00
SD+LD(10)	662	100.00	28	0.324	78.99	28	0.324	78.99	40	0.161	74.23
SD+LD(20)	662	100.00	31	0.287	78.22	30	0.320	80.06	50	0.189	73.31
SD+LD(30)	662	100.00	32	0.296	79.92	32	0.277	75.77	45	0.209	73.47
SD+LD(40)	662	100.00	34	0.292	79.91	32	0.326	78.22	43	0.198	73.47
SD+LD(50)	662	100.00	33	0.294	76.53	35	0.301	76.23	43	0.196	73.31
SD+LD(60)	662	100.00	35	0.304	77.15	33	0.286	76.84	41	0.177	73.62
SD+LD(70)	662	100.00	34	0.282	76.69	34	0.292	77.45	41	0.166	73.62
SD+LD(80)	662	100.00	34	0.283	76.23	33	0.282	76.38	42	0.153	73.47
SD+LD(90)	662	100.00	31	0.311	78.99	31	0.311	78.99	43	0.153	73.31
SD+LD(100)	662	100.00	31	0.311	78.83	31	0.305	78.37	43	0.153	73.31

2) Additional experiment on the impact of logical dependency weights

We conducted an additional experiment to evaluate whether our weight calculation strategy for logical dependencies is suitable for scenarios where they are combined with the weights from structural dependencies.

Table 9 presents the average dependency weights across all the projects. The first row shows the average weights for structural dependencies, while the other rows show the average weights for logical dependencies at different strength thresholds.

It can be observed that the average weights for logical dependencies increase as the strength threshold rises. This led us to question whether we are assigning sufficient weight to the logical dependencies in our system.

Therefore, in this experiment, we increased the weight assigned to each logical dependency filtered with a 100% strength threshold from the Apache Tomcat system and re-ran scenario III from Fig. 4.

We wanted to see whether the weights assigned to logical dependencies are suitable to be combined with the weights from structural dependencies in the same directed graph by observing how the two metrics (MQ and MoJoFM) change once we increase the weights of the logical dependencies.

The results of this experiment can be found in Table 10. To maintain consistency, we used the same columns as in the

TABLE 7. Clustering results based on different dependency types and strength filter thresholds for repository: https://github.com/hibernate/hibernate-orm

Dependency Type (strength threshold)	Entities Count	System Cover (%)	Louvain			Leiden			DBSCAN		
			Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo	Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo FM	Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo FM
SD	4414	100.00	30	0.09	52.23	23	0.071	52.44	373	0.128	46.32
LD (10)	1450	32.85	44	0.389	57.22	45	0.39	58.22	99	0.395	57.08
LD (20)	1325	30.02	66	0.397	62.66	66	0.397	62.66	151	0.378	63.36
LD (30)	1222	27.68	66	0.38	62.45	67	0.38	63.04	148	0.378	65.42
LD (40)	915	20.73	84	0.417	63.68	85	0.412	63.56	110	0.382	66.9
LD (50)	900	20.39	84	0.409	64.56	84	0.409	64.56	105	0.386	67.02
LD (60)	848	19.21	82	0.406	63.26	81	0.41	63.39	104	0.379	65.13
LD (70)	459	10.40	89	0.516	69.08	89	0.516	69.08	41	0.467	58.21
LD (80)	450	10.19	91	0.506	68.64	91	0.506	68.64	39	0.479	60.49
LD (90)	432	9.79	92	0.492	66.93	92	0.492	66.93	40	0.473	58.66
LD (100)	356	8.07	81	0.524	65.92	81	0.524	65.92	29	0.537	58.2
SD+LD (10)	4414	100.00	19	0.096	53.93	19	0.099	52.28	282	0.121	46.01
SD+LD (20)	4414	100.00	21	0.126	52.85	23	0.122	56.21	309	0.135	47.4
SD+LD (30)	4414	100.00	26	0.121	55.76	26	0.15	54.54	317	0.135	49.45
SD+LD (40)	4414	100.00	27	0.182	54.57	28	0.163	55.89	350	0.134	49.35
SD+LD (50)	4414	100.00	26	0.16	52.37	24	0.147	53.31	350	0.134	49.37
SD+LD (60)	4414	100.00	26	0.161	52.35	27	0.153	53.19	352	0.135	49.31
SD+LD (70)	4414	100.00	28	0.139	52.78	29	0.154	54.34	366	0.13	47.13
SD+LD (80)	4414	100.00	28	0.142	52.83	28	0.147	53.35	366	0.13	47.72
SD+LD (90)	4414	100.00	28	0.136	52.62	30	0.153	53.83	365	0.13	47.72
SD+LD (100)	4414	100.00	30	0.128	52.78	28	0.114	55.23	365	0.128	47.75

TABLE 8. Clustering results based on different dependency types and strength filter thresholds for repository: https://github.com/google/gson

Dependency Type (strength threshold)	Entities Count	System Cover (%)	Louvain			Leiden			DBSCAN		
			Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo	Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo FM	Nr. of clusters	MQ	Mojo FM
gson SD	210	100.00	10	0.139	53.47	9	0.129	55.94	23	0.127	51.88
gson LD (10)	66	31.43	10	0.565	62.07	9	0.572	60.34	19	0.399	68.97
gson LD (20)	50	23.81	11	0.547	64.29	11	0.547	64.29	9	0.523	59.52
gson LD (30)	41	19.52	12	0.544	63.64	12	0.544	63.64	6	0.606	66.67
gson LD (40)	31	14.76	8	0.635	69.57	8	0.635	69.57	6	0.612	69.57
gson LD (50)	31	14.76	8	0.600	69.57	8	0.600	69.57	6	0.565	60.87
gson LD (60)	28	13.33	8	0.552	65.00	8	0.552	65.00	5	0.584	60.00
gson LD (70)	26	12.38	7	0.579	66.67	7	0.579	66.67	5	0.586	55.56
gson LD (80)	18	8.57	5	0.590	60.00	5	0.590	60.00	4	0.544	40.00
gson LD (90)	18	8.57	5	0.590	60.00	5	0.590	60.00	4	0.544	40.00
gson LD (100)	18	8.57	5	0.590	60.00	5	0.590	60.00	4	0.544	40.00
gson SD+LD(10)	210	100.00	11	0.317	64.36	11	0.317	64.36	20	0.172	63.86
gson SD+LD(20)	210	100.00	11	0.259	61.39	11	0.259	61.39	17	0.136	53.96
gson SD+LD(30)	210	100.00	11	0.277	61.39	11	0.277	61.39	20	0.136	55.94
gson SD+LD(40)	210	100.00	10	0.277	61.39	10	0.277	61.39	20	0.135	55.94
gson SD+LD(50)	210	100.00	10	0.270	60.40	11	0.270	60.89	20	0.135	55.94
gson SD+LD(60)	210	100.00	9	0.296	61.39	10	0.290	61.88	20	0.135	55.94
gson SD+LD(70)	210	100.00	8	0.295	59.41	8	0.295	59.41	20	0.135	55.94
gson SD+LD(80)	210	100.00	7	0.267	58.91	8	0.263	59.41	21	0.134	55.45
gson SD+LD(90)	210	100.00	7	0.267	58.91	7	0.267	58.91	21	0.134	55.45
gson SD+LD(100)	210	100.00	7	0.267	58.91	8	0.263	59.41	21	0.134	55.45

Dependency type	Ant	Tomcat	Hibernate	Gson
SD	5.91	6.91	5.41	5.24
LD(10)	11.17	12.82	2.45	14.15
LD(20)	16.01	19.65	3.00	19.10
LD(30)	18.08	23.56	3.27	27.58
LD(40)	19.08	25.57	4.63	29.85
LD(50)	19.94	26.31	4.80	29.97
LD(60)	24.26	28.91	5.14	33.93
LD(70)	26.70	30.35	9.53	34.37
LD(80)	30.83	35.33	10.18	43.00
LD(90)	32.11	36.90	10.47	43.00
LD(100)	33.93	37.04	12.00	43.00

TABLE 9. Average weights of Structural Dependencies (SD) and Logical Dependencies (LD).

other result tables (5, 6, 7, 8), with the addition of two new columns:

- **Multiplication Factor:** The value by which each logical dependency weight is multiplied.
- **Avg Weight:** The average weight assigned to each type of dependency used.

VI. EVALUATION

In evaluating the clustering results, we use two metrics: MoJo and MQ. The MoJo metric measures how close the generated clustering solution is to our manually generated clustering solution. A smaller MoJo value indicates that fewer move

Multiplication Factor	Avg. weight SD	Avg. weight LD	Louvain Nr. of clusters	Louvain MQ	Louvain Mojo FM	Leiden Nr. of clusters	Leiden MQ	Leiden Mojo FM	DBSCAN Nr. of clusters	DBSCAN MQ	DBSCAN Mojo FM
1	6.91	37.04	31	0.311	78.83	31	0.305	78.37	43	0.153	73.31
2	6.91	74.08	33	0.295	73.57	30	0.301	72.33	43	0.153	73.31
3	6.91	111.12	34	0.313	74.19	33	0.309	72.80	43	0.153	73.31
4	6.91	148.16	34	0.312	73.88	33	0.312	72.49	43	0.153	73.31
5	6.91	185.20	34	0.306	73.88	33	0.308	72.18	43	0.153	73.31

TABLE 10. Impact of multiplication factors on clustering results for LD(100) in Apache Tomcat

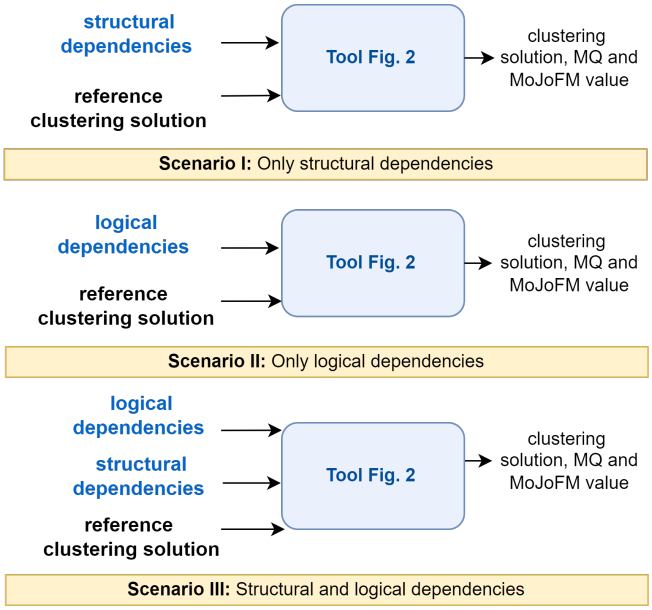

FIGURE 4. Experimental scenarios for analyzing the impact of logical dependencies on clustering quality

and join operations are required to transform the generated clusters into the expected clusters.

Delete:The MQ metric's value ranges between -1 and 1. A value of -1 means that the clusters have more connections between the clusters than within the clusters, while a value of 1 means that there are more connections within clusters than between clusters. A good clustering solution should have an MQ value close to 1, since this indicates that the clusters are more cohesive internally and have fewer connections to other clusters.

The overall analysis of all the results from subsection V-B indicates that combining structural and logical dependencies (SD+LD) provides better clustering solutions than using structural dependencies (SD) alone, with 100% coverage of the system, meaning that no entity is missed during cluster generation. On the other hand, logical dependencies (LD) alone result in better clustering quality metrics compared to both SD and SD+LD, but they do not cover the entire system.

The best results for SD+LD are observed with a strength threshold between 10-30%. For LD only, the best results are obtained at a 100% strength threshold. The overall trend shows that for LD only, the MQ metric increases in value with a higher strength threshold, indicating more cohesive clusters, while the MoJo metric decreases, indicating that fewer transformations are needed to reach the expected clustering. For SD+LD, the best MQ and MoJo values are obtained at lower strength thresholds, and then both metrics indicate less effective clustering solution obtained with higher strength thresholds.

In the sections below, we analyze each project in detail.

A. ANALYSIS OF CLUSTERING RESULTS

1) Apache Ant

The clustering results for Apache Ant (Table 5) show that the combined structural and logical dependencies (SD+LD) achieved the best values with a strength threshold of 10, resulting in an MQ of 0.144 and a MoJo of 178.

Compared with the SD only results, where we have an MQ of 0.081 and a MoJo of 203, all SD+LD clustering solutions have better MQ metric. The MoJo metric is not always better than the SD MoJo, but the values obtained are close to the SD result.

Logical dependencies (LD) alone produced the highest MQ value (MQ = 0.611) and the lowest MoJo value (MoJo = 15) at the 100% strength threshold, but the percentage of entities covered is significantly lower (LD[100] covers only 12.38% of the system). On the other hand, even at the LD 10% strength threshold (LD[10] covers only 61.9% of the system), both metrics are performing better than SD only or SD+LD[10].

An interesting observation is that, based on the LD-only results, where the metric results improve with a higher strength threshold, the SD+LD results do not follow the same pattern. On the contrary, the SD+LD metric results decline with a higher strength threshold. The explanation for this behavior may lie in the overlap between structural and logical dependencies. As presented in Figure 5, the overlap between structural and logical dependencies might influence the clustering outcomes differently when combined than when applied separately.

In our previous works ([5], [6]), we studied how these two types of dependencies overlap. The reason behind this study was to check how much new information we can get from using logical dependencies and how much is already present via structural dependencies.

Our overall findings were that with stricter filtering of logical dependencies, we obtain a higher percentage of overlap between the two dependencies, reaching at most 50% of logical dependencies that are also structural dependencies.

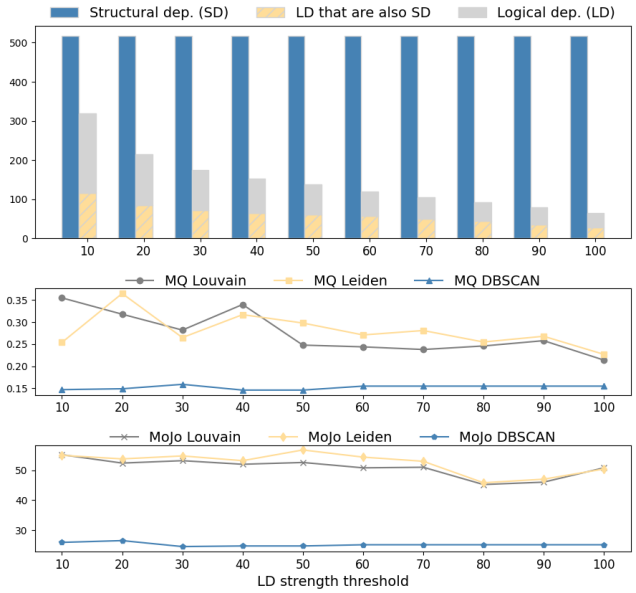

FIGURE 5. Apache Ant: Overlap between structural and logical dependencies and its correlation with clustering metrics.

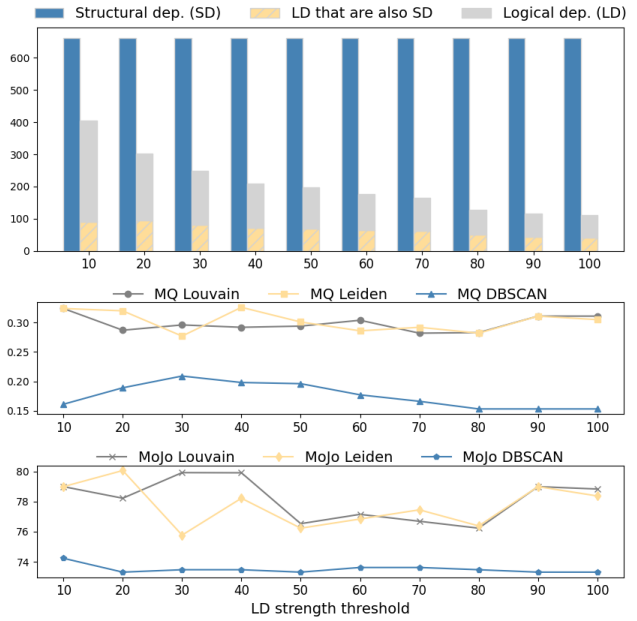

FIGURE 6. Apache Tomcat: Overlap between structural and logical dependencies and its correlation with clustering metrics.

So, we believe that the reason why SD+LD clustering solutions decline in performance with a higher strength threshold is that there is less and less new additional information being added to the system (logical dependencies that are not structural dependencies), causing the clustering solution to start resembling the performance of the SD-only solution. This redundancy between logical and structural dependencies might not introduce new meaningful information to the clustering algorithm and can instead introduce noise.

2) Apache Tomcat

For Apache Tomcat (Table 6), the SD+LD[20] combination achieved the best results for the MQ metric (MQ = 0.265), while SD+LD[10] achieved the best value for MoJo (MoJo = 71).

In comparison with Apache Ant, where both metrics reached their best value at the same strength threshold, there is a difference of one strength step between the metrics' best results for Apache Tomcat. Even so, the MoJo metric for SD+LD[10] and SD+LD[20] indicates that fewer transformations are required compared to SD-only or other SD+LD combinations.

The LD-only lines show the best MQ and MoJo values for LD[100], with an MQ of 0.640 and a MoJo of 21, but coverage remains an issue, as LD[100] covers only 16.62% of the system. On the other hand, LD[10] covers 61.33% of the system and still provides better clustering solutions according to the MQ and MoJo results.

We observe the same decline in results with a stricter strength threshold for SD+LD, and as with the previous system, these results can be linked to the percentage of LD that are also SD, as shown in Figure 6. LD filtered with a 10% strength threshold overlaps with SD approximately by 22%, and with a 100% strength threshold, the overlap is approximately 39%.

Compared with all the other systems, Apache Tomcat has the highest number of commits involved in LD extraction (Table 4), totaling 22,698. Due to this larger information base for LD extraction, the use of logical dependencies results in better MQ values compared to other systems, as seen in Tables 5, 7, and 8.

The high number of commits leads to more effective clustering results. This highlights the importance of having a substantial commit history to enhance the quality of logical dependencies used and, consequently, the clustering solutions generated.

3) Hibernate ORM

Hibernate ORM is the second largest in terms of the number of commits analyzed, with 16,609 commits considered for LD extraction. Additionally, it is the largest in terms of system size, with 4,414 entities (Table 4).

Based on the results from Table 7, the SD+LD combination with a strength threshold of 30 achieved the best MQ value of 0.149 and a MoJo of 1870. The SD+LD with a strength threshold of 10 achieved the best MoJo of 1842. Similar to Apache Tomcat, the best values for both metrics are not at the same strength threshold, but even so, SD+LD[10] has a better MoJo value than SD-only.

LD-only produced the best MQ and MoJo values at 100%, but the system coverage is again limited, with LD[100] covering only 8.07% of the system, the lowest percentage among all systems studied. This low percentage can be connected to the number of commits compared to the number of entities. For Apache Tomcat, we had 22,698 commits and 662 entities, for

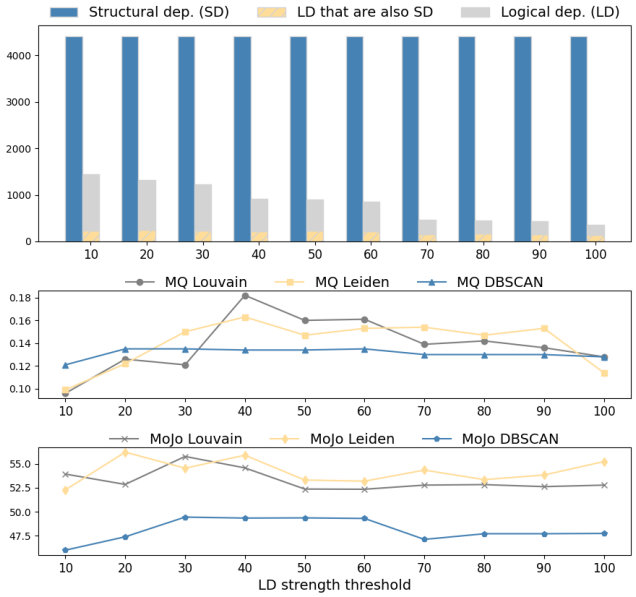

FIGURE 7. Hibernate ORM: Overlap between structural and logical dependencies and its correlation with clustering metrics.

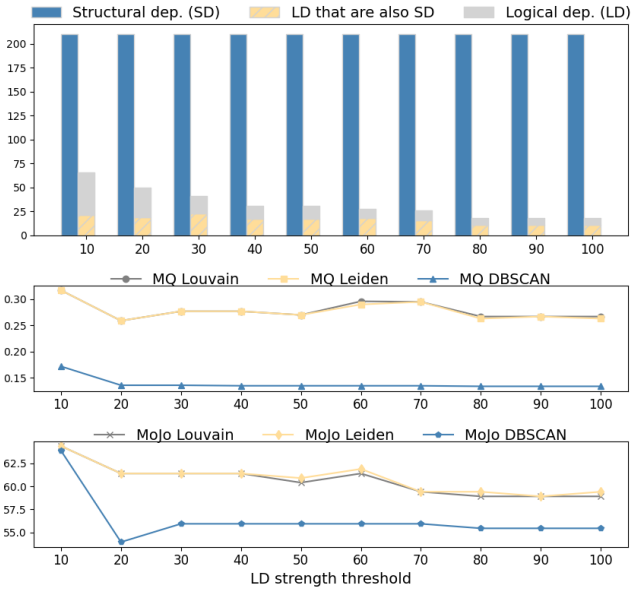

FIGURE 8. Google Gson: Overlap between structural and logical dependencies and its correlation with clustering metrics.

Hibernate, we have 16,609 commits and 4,414 entities. This most probably means that not all entities had a chance to be updated in the versioning system.

This can also be connected to the fact that Hibernate is the only system among those studied that reaches a lower MQ value than SD-only for the SD+LD combination. Meanwhile, all other systems maintain a slightly better MQ value for SD+LD compared to SD-only, even at the highest strength threshold.

Hibernate also has the lowest overlapping percentages between LD and SD, as shown in Figure 7. Similar to the other systems, the MQ and MoJo performance decreases for SD+LD as the strength threshold values become stricter.

The results for Hibernate highlight the challenge of achieving better clustering in larger systems with fewer commits relative to their size.

4) Google Gson

Gson has the smallest number of commits analyzed, with 1,772 commits considered for LD extraction, and it is also the smallest in terms of system size, with 210 entities involved in clustering (Table 4).

Based on the results from Table 8, the SD+LD combination with a strength threshold of 10 achieved the best MQ value of 0.215 and the best MoJo of 21. Similar to Apache Ant, the best values for both metrics are at the same strength threshold, and all SD+LD combinations have a better MQ value than SD-only.

LD-only produced the best MQ value at 40%, with an MQ of 0.635 and the best MoJo value at 80%, 90%, and 100%. It is the only system that produces a better result for MQ at a lower strength threshold than 100% for LD-only. This is likely caused by the very low number of entities remaining in the system at 100% (only 18 out of 210).

It can also be observed that Gson has the exact same metric values for MQ and MoJo for multiple strength threshold values. Again, the small number of commits and the size of the system contribute to the constant values of these metrics. This stability in the metrics suggests that smaller systems might not benefit as much from the combination of SD and LD as larger systems do.

Gson has relatively high overlapping rates between LD and SD compared to the other systems, as shown in Figure 8. Despite the constant values, the trend of performance decreasing with a stricter strength filtering for LD is also present for Gson.

The results for the system highlight the challenge of achieving better clustering solutions using logical dependencies in smaller systems with fewer commits. For such a small system as Gson, an improvement is still visible when using logical dependencies. However, the filtering should be done with less strict thresholds since there is a high chance of losing additional new information about the system after filtering.

VII. CONCLUSION

Why did the cat get a PhD?

Because it wanted to be a purr-fessor!

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