Factors Driving Developer Influence and Efficiency in the AI Community

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We analyze the AIDev dataset to understand the factors driving developer influence and efficiency in the AI development community. Focusing on user activity, repository metadata, and issue tracking, we investigate the relationship between contribution volume and follower count, predictors of popularity, and factors affecting issue resolution time. Our preliminary results indicate that contribution volume has a negligible relationship with influence ($r \approx 0$), while specific tech stack choices (e.g., Java, TypeScript) are strong predictors of popularity. Furthermore, we find that engagement levels do not significantly impact issue resolution time ($p > 0.05$).

CCS Concepts: • **Human-centered computing** → **Collaborative and social computing**; • **Software and its engineering** → *Software maintenance tools.*

Additional Key Words and Phrases: AIDev, software engineering, developer influence, issue resolution, GitHub analysis

1 Introduction

The rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) development has fostered a massive community of developers on platforms like GitHub. Understanding what drives influence and efficiency in this specific domain is crucial for both individual developers seeking to grow their impact and organizations aiming to optimize their workflows. This project analyzes the AIDev dataset, focusing on user activity, repository metadata, and issue tracking [**?**]. The primary objective is to identify the factors that drive developer influence (popularity) and efficiency (issue resolution) within this specific domain.

2 Research Questions

In this study, we investigate the following three research questions (RQs):

- **RQ1: Contribution Volume vs. Influence.** To what extent does repository creation frequency correlate with follower count, and does this vary by programming language?
- **RQ2: Predictors of Popularity.** Which developer features (account tenure, language, repository count) are the strongest predictors of a user's follower count?
- **RQ3: Factors Affecting Issue Resolution Time.** Does higher engagement (comment volume) affect the time-to-resolution (TTR) for issues?

3 Methodology

This section details the data wrangling and statistical methodology used to address the RQs.

3.1 Data Preprocessing and Wrangling

We utilized Python (Pandas) to clean and merge the AIDev dataset. Key preprocessing steps included:

(1) **Complex Merging:** We performed an inner join between the Users and Repositories tables by extracting the username from the repository `full_name` string (splitting "owner/repo") to match the `login` column.

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(2) **Issue-Comment Linkage:** We merged the Issues table with aggregated data from the Comments table using `id` and `pr_id` as foreign keys to calculate engagement metrics.
(3) **Time Standardization:** All timestamp columns (`created_at`, `closed_at`) were converted to UTC. We derived `account_age_days` and calculated Time-to-Resolution (`TTR_hours`) by subtracting issue creation time from close time [**?**].
(4) **Handling Missing Data:** We imputed missing values for `main_language` with "Unknown" and applied One-Hot Encoding to categorical language variables for regression analysis.

3.2 Analysis Approach

- **RQ1:** We aggregated user repository counts and correlated them with follower counts. We applied Spearman's rank correlation to handle the non-normal distribution of follower counts, segmented by the top 5 languages.
- **RQ2:** We constructed a Linear Regression model using features such as `account_age`, `repo_count`, and encoded `language`. We interpreted coefficients to determine feature importance.
- **RQ3:** We binned issues into "High" and "Low" engagement based on the median comment count. A Two-sample T-test was used to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in TTR between these groups.

4 Results

The following subsections present the statistical results of our analysis.

4.1 RQ1: Contribution Volume vs. Influence

Our analysis using Spearman's rank correlation reveals that the volume of contributions (repository count) has a negligible relationship with user influence (followers) across all major languages. The correlation coefficients are consistently near zero:

- **Python:** 0.0252
- **Java:** 0.0340
- **JavaScript:** -0.0111
- **HTML:** -0.0152

4.2 RQ2: Predictors of Popularity

The Linear Regression model identified distinct drivers for follower counts:

- **Positive Drivers:** The strongest predictors were specific languages: **Java (+4.27)** and **TypeScript (+3.21)**. Repository count had a moderate positive impact (+3.72).
- **Negative Drivers:** Users primarily associated with PHP (-13.7) and HTML (-6.3) tended to have fewer followers.
- **Neutral Factors:** Account tenure (`account_age_days`) had a coefficient near zero (+0.014).

4.3 RQ3: Factors Affecting Issue Resolution Time

We analyzed whether higher engagement (median comment count = 5.0) impacted resolution time. The Two-sample T-test yielded a p-value of ~ 0.30 ($t \approx -1.04$). Since $p > 0.05$, we fail to reject the null hypothesis; there is no statistically significant difference in resolution time between high and low engagement issues.

5 Interpretation of Results

5.1 Quantity vs. Quality

The findings from RQ1 suggest that developers cannot simply increase their influence by creating a large volume of repositories. The lack of correlation implies that the community values the quality or utility of a project over sheer quantity.

5.2 Tech Stack Influence

RQ2 results indicate that tech stack choice outweighs account longevity. The strong positive coefficients for Java and TypeScript suggest these ecosystems currently offer higher visibility. Conversely, the neutral impact of account age suggests that newer developers can gain influence quickly if they contribute to the right ecosystems.

5.3 Efficiency Dynamics

The RQ3 results suggest that discussion volume does not inherently slow down or speed up the resolution process. Future work will investigate if "Repository Stars" (project popularity) have a more significant effect on TTR than comment engagement.

6 Project Resources

- **GitHub Repository:** https://github.com/RoxyLiu66/data-wrangling-group-8.git
- **Dataset Source:** AIDev Dataset

7 Remaining Work

Milestone 3 will address: Do merge outcomes differ between Agentic and Human PRs after controlling for PR size and reviewer activity? Planned analyses include logistic regression, bootstrap confidence intervals, and per-language comparisons.

8 GenAI Usage Statement

We utilized Generative AI (ChatGPT) to assist in debugging Python syntax for the data merging functions and to refine the wording of the methodology section. All code logic and statistical interpretations were verified manually by the team.

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